

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



Youth Revival Submitted to God

By Carissa Blevins
Mitchell County

I was asked to write a letter about my experience of being part of the Tri-County Youth Revival. This revival has been a blessing to me and everyone that has been part of it. The experience of hearing the word of God from two high school boys is glorious. We need people our age to teach us about God because it shows us that God works on people even when we are young. Just walking into the church, you can feel God move.

During this revival, I got the opportunity to stand up and testify. Last year I faced a lot of sickness. I had four surgeries from kidney stones, and I have scar tissue. I had two stents as well. I also faced Anesthesia Depression and a disorder called PTSD. I have to go to therapy now, but I tell myself it is because I am strong. In March of this year, I went back to my doctor, and I got the best news I could have possibly received. God healed me. My kidney looked good. After that appointment, God told me I had to tell my testimony at this revival. I wanted to share what He had done for me.

Stories like mine were told at this revival, and it helped me to hear them. The singing at this revival was such a blessing. Our theme song at this revival was "It's Under the Blood". We sang this song every night just to remember God died on the cross to save our sins. We also sang "I'm Not Ashamed" because we aren't ashamed to stand and say that we love Jesus. The preachers, Josh and Keyven were wonderful. They have brought the word of God each night in a special way. They talked about how we shouldn't live our life with one foot in Heaven and the other one on Earth. They talked about how you can get saved, and how God forgives you. Also, Keyven preached about how we should be submitted to God. The way these two special men have helped the youth, and the way they can touch the adults is amazing. Many people have been saved, and many people have re-dedicated their lives to God. A young man named Tyler Boone even got called to preach. I, on the other hand, have made some new friends and have gotten closer with old friends. This is something that has truly been a blessing to me. I am so thankful to be part of something so committed to God. This revival has not only made me a better Christian, but it has everyone involved. I am so blessed to have been able to come to this because it has made a better person and made me closer to my God.



Youth Led Tabernacle Revival April 2018

By Ashley Aycok Stockton
Mitchell County

Oh, I love him, that's all I want to say! What a blessing it was to be a part of such an amazing 2 weeks of worshipping God with brothers and sisters in Christ! 9 souls saved by having the Blood applied, 1 God called man surrendered to Preach, and 30 plus people rededicated their lives to Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost was so present in these meetings you couldn't help but just smile and take it all in. 9:30 never felt so early after two and a half hours of worship service every evening. The difference in going through the motions and having church is the Presence of the Holy Spirit, and I thank God we experienced that every night! This meeting was birthed in the hearts of 2 fine young men of God, Bro. Josh Forbes, and Bro. Keyven Buchanan, who preached directly to our hearts and followed the leadership of the Holy Ghost. God gave these two a vision of what he wanted done, and they were obedient to what he had led them to do. The young people led this revival, leading the choir every night, and testifying to God's faithfulness! It should be a charge to every adult in attendance to remember what God said in His word in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." What a blessing it was to see 12-year-old boys shouting, and denominations of all our Christian faith come together for a time to worship. I feel like God gave us all a little taste of Heaven... Boy, that is what Heaven is going to be like. One of these days we will shout and sing the praises of our Father in Heaven with all the saints gone on already, what a day that will be!



Casey Stockton - Member of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, surrendered to God's call to preach the Gospel in May, 2017



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PROVIDERS

Margaret Sullivan, MD, Nisha Patel, MD,
Ellen Hearty, MD, Alison Christopher, CNM



Contents

In Every Issue

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm - p. 15

Life Lessons - p. 9

Your Government - pp. 32-33

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

Publisher/Co-editor - Doug Harrell
828-467-0280
dough@brcnews.com
Office Manager/Co-editor - Barbara Harrell
828-765-6800
828-467-3644
barbarah@brcnews.com
Sales:
Doug Harrell
828-467-0280
dough@brcnews.com
Church Directory:
Doug Harrell
828-765-6800
dough@brcnews.com

Distribution:
Mildred Parker
Sid Houk
Brent Ramsey
Carolyn McMahon
Graphic Design / Layout
Lynn Yaccarino
lynn@brcnews.com
Blue Ridge Christian News
261 Oak Ave.
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Office - 828-765-6800
Fax - 828-766-9157
info@brcnews.com

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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AUTOMOBILES - Service

John's Automotive (27)

BOOKSTORE

Dellingers Bookstore (34)

BUILDING SUPPLY

Summit Building Supply (12)

CHURCHES

Altapass Baptist (4)

Bear Creek Baptist (4)

Berry Chapel Baptist (4)

Burkmont Baptist (4)

Faith Fellowship (4)

First Advent Christian (4)

First Baptist Spruce Pine (4)

Grassy Creek Baptist (4)

Great Hope 7th day Adventist (4)

Morganton Seventh day Adventist (4)

Pine Branch Baptist (4)

Plumtree Presbyterian (4)

Spruce Pine United Methodist (4)

St. Lucian Catholic (4)

The Bridge (4)

West Burnsville Baptist (4)

CHILDREN'S HOME

Crossmore School (46)

CHIROPRACTIC

Cruz Chiropractic (40)

COLLEGE

Mayland College (30)

CPA

Jamie Miller (11)

DENTIST

Scott Murphy (31)

DSS

McDowell Co. DSS (39)

EVENTS

Billy Graham/The Cove (19)

Freedom Life (35)

High Pastures (43)

Valdese Tourism (42)

Yancey Chamber (21)

FARM SUPPLIES

Griffith's General Store (27)

FURNITURE

Buck Stove (45)

L&B Furniture (25)

Peoples Furniture (18)

Southwest Trading (15)

HAIR SALON

Rumors Salon (5)

HABITAT

Yancey/Mitchell Habitat (24)

HEALTH CARE

Bakersville Community Clinic (26)

Carolina Home Care (14)

Mission Health (1, 2)

Pruitt Health Care (47)

HOSPICE

CarePartners Hospice & Palliative

Care/McDowell. (12)

Hospice and Palliative Care of the

Blue Ridge, Inc (13, 39)

Hospice of Rutherfordton (13)

Hospice of Yancey (25)

HOUSING

Clayton (20)

INSURANCE

Andrews & Andrews (14)

Fortner Insurance (30)

Miller Insurance Group (41)

Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau (36)

Nation Wide / Trent (23)

MULCH

McClure Construction (17)

NURSERY

Lakeview Garden (44)

Christmas Tree Garden Center (35)

PHARMACY

The Prescription Pad (24)

PLUMBING/HEATING

Burleson Plumbing Heating (9)

REALTORS

Whitson Realty (18)

REHABILITATION/NURSING

Brian Center (6)

RESTAURANTS

Abeles Restaurant (23)

Bantam Chef (22)

Bubba's Good Eats (35)

DT's (9)

Western Sizzlin (5)

RETAIL

BB's Overstock (31)

Grassy Creek Clothing (16)

RETIREMENT

Mars Hill Retirement (48)

SMALL ENGINE REPAIR

Spruce Pine Small Engines (37)

THRIFT STORE

Hospice and Palliative Care of the

Blue Ridge, Inc (45)

TRANSPORTATION

Yancey Transit (34)

TREE SERVICE

Ray's Tree Service (43)

Church Directory



The Bridge Church of WNC

207 Pinebridge Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.bridgewnc.org

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

Sunday Service 10:30AM
Wednesday Service 7:00PM
Church Office M-F
9:00AM-3:00PM

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Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-6590
www.berrychapelbaptist.com

Pastor - Steve Williams

Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Care Meal/
Ministry - 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evening
Service 7:00 PM

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Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-684-8212

Pastor Rick Mercer

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Praise, Prayer & Proclaim -
7:00 pm
www.morgantonsda.org

Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.
Morganton, NC 28755
(828)-675-9284
www.fccn.org
www.fccnradio.org

Pastor: David Gillespie

Sunday School - 10:00 am
Worship Service - 10:45 am
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00pm
"The steps of a good man are
ordered by the Lord:
And he delighteth in his way."
Psalm 37:23

Altapass Baptist Church

3631 Altapass Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-0660
altapassbaptistchurch@ccvn.com
www.altapassbaptistchurch.org

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

Sunday School - 10:00am
Worship - 11:00am
Sunday Evening - 7:00pm
Sunday Youth Program - 7:00pm
1st & 3rd Sunday
(Conductors for Christ ages 5-11)
2nd & 4th Sunday
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)
Wednesday - 7:00pm

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793 Old NC 226 Hwy
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828-765-4620
www.grassycreekbc.org

Sunday School 10:00am
Morning Worship 11:00am
Sunday evening 6:30pm
Wednesday:

J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 7:00pm
Seekers (young adults) 7:00pm
Mid-week worship 7:00pm
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West Burnsville Baptist Church

222 West Burnsville Church Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828)-682-3990

Pastor: Terry Long

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Morning Service: 10:50 a.m.
Evening Service: 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.
Youth and TeamKid: 6:00 pm
Church vision: To become passionate
followers and servants of Jesus Christ
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physical needs of our church and community.

Burkemont Baptist Church

4668 Burkemont Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-2357

For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. David Mills, Sr. Pastor

8:30am - Early Worship
9:45am - Sunday School
11:00am - Worship
6:00pm - Evening Worship

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

4527 Hwy 19E
Plumtree, NC 28664
828-765-6919
www.plumtreepresbyterian.org

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org

Sunday School 9:45 am
Worship Service 11:00 am
Life Groups Tuesday-Thursday evenings, 7:00 pm
Fusion Youth Wednesday's, 6:30 pm
Healing Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 6:30 pm

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you
and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that
will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you
ask in my name.

Bear Creek Baptist Church

327 Bear Creek Road
Bakersville, NC 28705
www.bearcreekbaptist.com

Reverend Bruce Cannon

Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 10:45 AM
Discipleship 6:00 PM
Evening Worship 6:45 PM
Wednesday Worship 7:30 PM

**"For God so loved the world, he
gave his only Son..."**

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

2907d US Hwy 70 E
Morganton, NC
828-475-2040

Pastor Barry MaHorney

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study-10:00am
Sabbath Worship - 11:30am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday - Praise, Prayer &
Proclaim - 7:00pm
www.greathopesda.com

Pine Branch Baptist Church

48 Church Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone: (828) 765-9101
www.pinebranchbaptist.net

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

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Worship Service • 10:45am
Sunday Evening • 6:30pm

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Wednesday Faith Formation
6:00 pm
Food Pantry Wed. 1:00-
4:00pm

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

125 Tappan Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-9411
www.sprucepinefbc.com
www.splfbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

Sunday School - 9:45 am
Sunday Worship - 8:30 and 11:00 am
Sunday Evening - 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm

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Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

11090 Hwy. 226 South
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.sprucepineumc.org
spumc3@bellsouth.net
828-765-7446

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

Sunday School - 10:00am
Sunday Worship - 11:00am
Choir Wednesday - 7:00pm

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First Advent Christian Church

211 Lenoir Road
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-8206
www.faccmorganton.org

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw
Associate Pastor Javier
Guzman**
pbradshawfaccmorganton@gmail.com

Sunday School 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship 11:00 AM
Wed: Youth Meal 5:30PM -
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Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

Climactic Moment in History

By Billy Graham

The Greater New York Billy Graham Crusade, in June 2005, was Billy Graham's final Crusade, although he preached later at two Franklin Graham Festivals (New Orleans and Baltimore). The following sermon, preached on the final night of the New York Crusade, carried the same message that Mr. Graham proclaimed throughout his nearly 80 years of ministry: We are all sinners, but God loves us and will forgive us when we turn from our sin and by faith put our trust in Jesus Christ.

Almost everyone today understands that we are approaching a climactic moment in history. The world is going to come to an end. In the New Testament the new birth is mentioned nine times. Repentance is mentioned 70 times. Baptism is mentioned 20 times. The coming again of Christ is mentioned hundreds of times. Jesus Christ said that as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

When the situation in the world becomes the way it was in Noah's day, you can know that Jesus' return is near. In Noah's day the world was filled with wickedness, corruption, violence—every imagination of man's thought was evil. It was a world in which marriage was abused and violence prevailed.

Think of the headlines of our papers today. All of that is happening today, and I believe that today God is warning us.

Noah was a good man. The Bible says he walked with God. He was a man of moral integrity. He worshiped God. The Bible says by faith Noah, being warned by God of things not yet seen, moved with fear. People ask, "Is it legitimate for a person to come to Christ out of fear?" Absolutely. Many people in the Bible came to God because of fear.

But God is a God of love. The primary message about Jesus in the New Testament is that God loves you. Some of you feel unloved. Some of you feel depressed, or you feel you don't have purpose and meaning in your life. God is there to rescue you from that situation. If you repent, He will forgive your sins, because when Jesus died on the cross God laid on Him the sins of all of us.

"The resurrection of Christ ... changed the midnight of disappointment into a sunrise of joy; it changed the midnight of fear to a sunrise of peace."

—Billy Graham

It would be great if you could go home tonight and know that you're different, that you have a new strength with God, by faith in Christ.

When I read the news today, the only bright spot I see on the horizon is the return of Christ. I believe He is coming back. In the New Testament there are so many passages about the coming again of Christ. I could spend all afternoon reading them. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). If I died right now—and that's a possibility—I'd go straight into Heaven and see Jesus.

Most of the interviews that I've had here in New York have asked the same questions about death—"What happens when you die? Are you looking forward to death?" Yes. I'm looking forward to death.

We are going to die. We're all under judgment. War does not increase death. Did you know that? Think about it. Some may go a little quicker than others. Thousands of people were killed when the Allies invaded Europe in 1945 at Normandy. And thousands of people have died in Iraq, Vietnam, Korea and many other places. But that does not increase death, because we are all going to die; we're going to join them in death.

"The Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin."

—Galatians 3:22, NLT

But when we die, we're going to be divided. Some will be eternally lost and some eternally saved. We are saved through Jesus, if we put our faith in Him.

Jesus loves us, and He went to prepare a place for us. When Christ was ascending into Heaven following His death and resurrection, the angels asked His disciples, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Jesus is going to come back. Are you ready? Now when is that going to happen? When Jesus and the disciples met together, the disciples asked, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority'" (Acts 1:6-7). He also said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

But the Scripture says, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). There's going to come a day when you'll hear a gigantic noise from Heaven, a shout, and then the archangel is going to speak. At that moment, those who have died—your fathers, your mothers, your relatives, your friends who are dead in Christ—are going to rise from the dead.

"He who believes in [Jesus Christ] will not be disappointed."

—1 Peter 2:6, NASB

For years, every time I would come to New York, I would pass a graveyard on the way to Times Square. I don't know the name of it, but there are graveyards all over New York. And those graves are going to be opened, if they are people who knew Christ as their Lord and Savior. And we're going to join them. Those of us who are left here, who are still living, are going to join them in the air on our way to Heaven.

Then the Bible teaches us that there's going to be a great coronation, with millions of angels. Thousands of people who have followed Christ in their life here



on earth are going to have a gigantic banquet called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Jesus is the Lamb. He's going to be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, and what a glorious moment that will be.

I'm looking forward to that. In fact, George Beverly Shea, whom you just heard sing "How Great Thou Art," is 96, and I'm 86, on my way to 87. I know that it won't be long before both of us are going to be in Heaven.

"Repentance means that you say to God that 'I am a sinner, I'm sorry for my sins, I'm willing to turn from my sins. But Lord, You have to help me to turn.'"

—Billy Graham

Jesus said, "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:44). The Bible says, "Prepare to meet your God" (Amos 4:12). Are you prepared? Have you opened your heart to Jesus? Have you repented of your sins?

You ask, "What is repentance?" Repentance means that you say to God, "I am a sinner, I'm sorry for my sins, I'm willing to turn from my sins. But Lord, You have to help me to turn. I've tried so many times to give up things I know that are wrong, and I just can't do it."

Then, by faith, receive Jesus, who died on the cross for you. Open your heart and say, "Yes, Lord Jesus, come in. I'm ready to follow You." ©2005 BGEA Open your heart to Jesus today.

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Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

Bless Your Heart

By Brent Price
Mitchell County

Here in the South "Bless your heart" is probably one of the most common phrases I know. One day I decided to keep count and I heard those words uttered at least a dozen times. Yet each time the meaning was different. Think about it.

Someone offers you an unexpected kindness. "Well, bless your heart." Another person is experiencing a world of hurt. "Bless your heart" with an added hug. And over there—well he's just pure foolish. It doesn't look like he's ever going to be able to get it together. "Bless his heart."

There's a whole lot of blessing going on out there and you'd better be on your toes if you're going to catch it all. Not every "Bless your heart" is necessarily a blessing. Many of us have gotten careless with some pretty important words. I love you. I'm here if you need me. Bless your heart. These powerful words and important promises are often spoken far too casually.

The Hebrew word that we translate as "blessing" encompasses an entire world of meaning—a bowing down, an offer of praise, to make holy, to offer thanks. It is an increase of God's abundance and an affirmation of God's continuing desire to share more of Himself.

Maybe that's what the old hymn is trying to tell us when we sing "Come thou fount of every blessing." God's love overflows and runs over the sides blessing everyone in its path.

If God has blessed you with a new car, but no one else gets to ride, you haven't been blessed. If your house is warm, but no one else is welcome to sit in its warmth, where is the blessing? Are you headed for a nap after Thanksgiving dinner while your neighbor's children go hungry? Right again. You haven't been blessed.

When we share our blessing we become part of God's desire to consecrate and make holy. Hold it tight and it dies. Set it free and watch what God will do with "your" blessing.

Reverend Brent Price is a chaplain at Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge.



HANDS THAT PRAY
By: Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin

*A mother knelt beside her bed
With tears she made her plea
Father bless my children
Just the way that you've blessed me.*

*Her stature frail and shaking
Her hands were worn and dry
She held them up to Heaven
This was her feeble cry:*

*I lived by your instructions
And now they're on their own
You said that if I did my best
They'd make their way back home.*

*These hands are old and feeble now
I pray they've stood the test
Now as they stretch toward Heaven
Lord You can do the rest.*

AMEN



Joy is a resident of Madison County, where she now lives with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She is currently a member of Mt Zion Baptist church in Marshall, NC. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, "home away from home". She is currently singing with the Gospel Group "Jonah's Voice" out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song "Homecoming" will soon be heard by many.

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Opioid Deaths Prompt Ohio To Reimagine Classroom Lessons, Starting With Kindergarten
As Shared by Jeff Spargo
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

Kevin Lorson helped develop HOPE: the Health and Opioid Prevention Education program. (Courtesy of Wright State University)

By Sarah Vander Schaaff

Ohio, a state where 4,329 people died of drug overdoses in 2016, a death rate second only to neighboring West Virginia, is taking the fight against the opioid epidemic into the classroom with a new style of drug-abuse-prevention education. Ohio's plan, controversial in a state that prizes local control over schools, features lessons that begin in kindergarten. Instead of relying on scare tactics about drug use or campaigns that recite facts about drugs' toll on the body, teachers are encouraged to discuss real-life situations and ways to deal with them and to build the social and emotional skills that experts say can reduce the risk of substance abuse.

Joy Edgell, principal of Belpre Elementary School in southeastern Ohio, said that, until recently, kindergarten safety efforts typically focused on stranger danger and on avoiding household hazards. But three years ago, a first-grader brought a heroin needle to school in her backpack. She explained how her father used the needle and said that she brought it to school to keep a younger sibling from stepping on it.

"I gave her a hug," Edgell said. Then she called the police.

"This is here. This is real," Edgell told her staff.

This year, Belpre began a pilot of the Health and Opioid Prevention Education, or HOPE, program, developed by Kevin Lorson, a health and physical education professor at Wright State University and a team of educators with a grant from the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

In one lesson, 25 children sat on a carpet and helped their teacher make a chart. "What is an adult?" the teacher asked, writing responses on a large notepad affixed to the wall.

"What does the word 'trusted' mean?"

Finally, she put the two key words together and asked pupils to brainstorm about people who could help them make healthy choices and feel safe, people they could identify as "trusted adults."

A second lesson emphasized the importance of never taking or touching medicine "unless a trusted adult helps you." That prompted one child to tell the class about the time he fell, and his third-grade sister offered him pain medication she had been prescribed for an injured arm. "I told her I couldn't take her medication!" the boy announced.

From the mouth of this "smart cookie," as his teacher called him, came one of the core goals of HOPE: to instill in children at an early age the ability to make healthy choices and ultimately curb what Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine called "the worst public-health crisis in our lifetime."

HOPE also fulfills a practical need, one created in 2014 when the Ohio legislature passed a bill requiring schools to teach the connection between prescription opioid abuse and heroin addiction.

"You do know no one is doing this, right?" Lorson told state leaders in 2016 during a discussion of the bill's requirement. Schools lacked the tools to follow through, he said.

The signs that drug misuse was affecting some children in Belpre, a city of 6,500 separated from West Virginia by the Ohio River, had been appearing with more and more regularity, school officials said.

More kindergartners exhibited trouble regulating emotions and outbursts. In some cases, grandparents and other relatives served as primary caregivers, stepping in because a parent was struggling with addiction. And in 2015, Hunter Burkey, a popular senior at Belpre High School, died of a heroin overdose.

In response, the district added training to recognize signs of trauma and adverse childhood experiences. Educators learned to look at the circumstances that might be affecting a student with behavior problems.

Edgell described what might happen to a boy whose father was in jail. "He's living with Grandma. Grandma is sick. He's going to have a rough week."

With the drug epidemic affecting their small community, carving out time from core subjects to teach HOPE "wasn't a hard sell," Assistant Principal Elizabeth Braum said.

The lessons have helped illuminate complicated home lives. Fourth-graders doing a role-playing exercise to practice standing up for themselves and refusing drugs wanted to make sure the teacher knew a parent "was still a good person" even if he or she had trouble with addiction.

And a few sixth-graders "got emotional," teachers said, while thinking about misusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs. The reality at Belpre Elementary and other Ohio schools in the state is that some children's ADHD medication — Adderall is an easily misused stimulant — is taken or stolen by family members.

"We want our kids to know they are not alone. We want them to know that we

continued on page 11



Finding God's Will
By Timothy Eller
McDowell County



Finding God's will is not like searching for a needle in a haystack. It is simply just walking through the doors that God opens. The most important decision is determining which doors are being opened by God. In this crazy world we live in today everybody wants a title, however according to John Maxwell, most people don't desire a towel. And those grabbing for a title, few desire the towel of servanthood. According to Maxwell, Jesus never strove for a title, he picked up a towel and washed people's feet. You can only rise as high as you are willing to serve.

T.L. Osborne stated in his book "Soul Winning"; "Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves at a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in both Greek, Latin and Hebrew". "During his crucifixion cynics talked smut, thieves cursed, and soldiers gambled". Is this setting the best to win the lost? Where are you not willing to take Jesus?

Tim Eller graduated from Carolina Graduate School of Divinity and has been involved in prison and jail ministry for the past fifteen years. Currently he is operating in the capacity of a servant of Jesus Christ.

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Forgiven Ministry

By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell Counties

*And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children
and the heart of the children to their fathers... (Malachi
4:6, KJV)*

One Day with God is a ministry event sponsored by Forgiven Ministry, Inc. (located in Taylorsville, NC). This amazing organization, with the help of countless volunteers and generous donors, bring children of incarcerated parents together for a full day of caring and fun with their father/mother. At AMCI, I have the incredible honor of raising funds, helping to plan and then actually praying/serving throughout the day of One Day with God at our facility.

I have personally seen the impact of this ministry in the lives of many men and can testify to you that the Truth of Malachi 4:6 is clearly seen during these events! The motivation of being allowed a "normal" day of life with their child(ren) drives the men to check themselves to insure that their attitude and actions reflect their desire for personal growth and improvement. Some have said that they literally "live" for this day. They set their hopes on the possibility of sharing this with their children. And they desperately want to show their children how Dad is becoming someone who will be committed to them in every way possible while they are away from them.

On this One Day of the year, children come buzzing with excitement to sing, play, do simple crafts, eat and learn alongside their fathers! And fathers are taught how to bless and express God's Love to their children within the framework of each of these activities.

Everyone hears about the Love of God found in Christ Jesus, and sees that Love in action in many ways. There is a level of JOY in the place that one doesn't find every day!

That JOY is not limited to the dads and their children, but is likewise seen and felt in the staff who willingly work that day, (several who volunteer to work on a scheduled day off), and in the volunteers who work in an assigned area throughout the event. You can see it on the faces of every person, hear it in their laughter and singing, and feel it in the hugs shared between little ones and their Dads.

YOU can help make that JOY possible! Forgiven Ministry estimates that the costs associated with these events is \$175.00 per child for a full day with their Dad. That may sound expensive, but it actually is all inclusive! The food, the supplies, t-shirts, the materials, the special guests (clowns/jugglers/athletes/and much more), the backpacks for each child filled with school supplies and reminders of the day they've spent with their father are provided for the day!

Volunteers serve as 'hosts' to the children, and stay with them and their Dad throughout the day. Others serve by leading games and activities, helping with setup/cleaning and countless other ways. Your contributions fund this day! Your money, time, and energy make it happen and without you, it MAY NOT happen. Please prayerfully consider what you can/will do to make our One Day with God Camp possible this year! It is scheduled for Saturday, July 28, 2018!

Go to forgivenministry.org for more detailed information. Contributions can be sent directly to them at:

(Please specify your gift for One with God/AMCI in the memo section of your check.)

Forgiven Ministry, Inc.
PO Box 117
200 Macedonia Church Road
Taylorsville, NC 28681

Or, feel free to contact me personally at joseph.griffin@ncdps.gov I will gladly meet with anyone who can help make this a reality for these fathers and their children. And I am available to speak to your group/organization about this opportunity!

God Bless You for reading this and for allowing God to lead you to pray/give/serve to make this year's camp possible!

Jody Griffin is pastor of Central Baptist Church in Spruce Pine and Community Funded Chaplain at Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution.



Coaches vs. Cancer Fundraiser

Info supplied by: Debbie Atkins
Western North Carolina

Coaches vs. Cancer Fundraiser at Subway® Restaurants Scores \$18,213 for Local Families Battling Cancer

ASHEVILLE, N.C., — Eleven Division 1 head men's basketball coaches from North Carolina wrapped up a special Coaches vs. Cancer fundraising campaign and the net result was \$18,213 in donations to help fight cancer.

The contributions were collected in January and February from generous customers at local Subway® restaurants in Western North Carolina, the greater Charlotte area, and Piedmont Triad.

Outgoing men's basketball coaches Larry Hunter of Western Carolina University and Nick McDevitt of UNC Asheville volunteered their time for the awareness and fundraising effort.

Other coaches participated from Appalachian State University, Charlotte 49ers, Davidson College, Elon University, Gardner-Webb University, High Point University, North Carolina A&T State University, UNC Greensboro and Winthrop University.

To demonstrate their commitment to the campaign, the coaches served as guest Subway Sandwich Artists during lunch at local Subway® restaurants in their area.

"We are grateful to the coaches, Subway and the community who make it possible for us to continue supporting local outreach for cancer research, prevention and patient services like rides to life-saving cancer treatments and our 24/7 call line," said Ivan Schwartz, executive director of the American Cancer Society in the Southeast Region.

The Coaches vs. Cancer program is a collaboration between the American Cancer Society and the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC). Locally, the North Carolina Basketball Coaches Association has joined the effort to promote healthy-living, raise awareness and support for the fight against cancer. For more information on Coaches vs. Cancer, visit the American Cancer Society website at www.cancer.org.

About the American Cancer Society:

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 2 million volunteers saving lives in every community. As the largest voluntary health organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 25 percent decline in the cancer death rate in the U.S. since 1991, driven by less smoking, better treatments, and earlier detection. We're finding cures as the nation's largest private, not-for-profit investor in cancer research, ensuring people facing cancer have the help they need and continuing the fight for access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings and more. For more information, to get help, or to join the fight, call us anytime, day or night, at (800) 227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

About Subway® Restaurants:

Subway® offers a fresh alternative to fast food, serving 7.5 million made-to-order sandwiches a day. Guests choose from 37 million combinations of quality proteins, fresh vegetables, and bread baked daily. The world's largest restaurant chain serves nutritious and delicious subs, soups, and salads at more than 44,000 restaurants in 113 countries. The Subway experience is also delivered online at www.Subway.com and through the Subway App, available in select markets at the Apple App Store and Google Play. Founded by then 17-year-old Fred DeLuca and family-friend Dr. Peter Buck more than 52 years ago, Subway® is still a family-owned business today working with more than 21,000 dedicated franchisees in communities around the world. Subway® is a Registered Trademark of Subway IP Inc.



Local Subway owner Brandi Hillman, second from right, presents a check for \$18,213 to Kelly Jamerson of the American Cancer Society from this year's Coaches vs. Cancer campaign at the UNC Asheville vs. Western Carolina University baseball game Wednesday at McCormick Field in Asheville. They are joined by Janet Cone, UNC Asheville athletic director, and team mascots Paws the Catamount and Rocky the Bulldog. Coaches from both universities teamed for the joint fundraiser to help local families battling cancer.

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The Importance of Our Mothers

By Doug Harrell

Our mothers tend to set the tone in our homes as we are growing up and this can make all the difference in the world to our future success or failure. I think God gives women a special ability to love and care that men were never really created to have, and I do think God designed different roles for each of us to play in marriage. The man certainly has a role to play that is just as important, but it is different. Most of the time the woman is the great communicator. Study proves that the average woman will speak around 20,000 words per day while the average man speaks about 7,000 words per day. Now I prefer to call this communication rather than chatter even though some men might disagree. This desire to communicate is, I think, a God given gift that allows the mothers to really talk with the husband and the children and keeps the lines of communication open. I cannot even start to guess how many times in the past 54 years of marriage my lovely wife has said, "talk to me, we never talk", and I must admit that I am amazed she would say that. Why we just talked this morning, or last night, or whenever! I think back over the years of watching Barbara, my wife, confront our children and say, "what is wrong, I know something is bothering you because you are not talking to me", and I had not noticed it at all! Bottom line, she would not stop until the child sat down with her and opened up about whatever was bothering them, averting many different challenges that could have happened.

Mothers are the great believers in the children, the encouragers that give them support and faith in themselves. I can remember many times my mother would sit me down and talk to me about being able to do whatever in life I really wanted to do. I am blessed that my mother, now 93 years young, has been living with us for the past 6 years and it has been a true blessing. Her wisdom is still so special and her total faith in God remains unshakeable. We were having a conversation the other day and she made a statement that was so simple, yet so profound! She said, "Doug, God did not put us here to quibble and complain, but to build and lift up"! I have thought about that comment over and over the past month or so and it still makes me really stand still and take notice.

I am writing this article to lift up women, mothers especially, but women in general. With that said, I must admit that I feel many of the so-called women's movements today are straight from the devil, evil personified. Wearing vaginas on your head and singing praises for abortion are not what I see God encouraging in women. Mothers that let themselves get involved in drugs and things like that are not the image of the woman present in Proverbs 31 vision of a woman. I pray that women, and mothers especially, take time to read this chapter of Proverbs and pattern their lives in this manner. Women are not beneath men, in my world, they are on a pedestal, the ones to be admired and looked up to, the ones to be loved and supported. The ones that the husband should really be willing to lay down his life to protect and support.

Proverbs 31:30-31 *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.*

Doug Harrell is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, Owner of Harrell Hill Farms, Inc, a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church and Publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News.



Prayers of the Saints

By Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County

Thanks for returning to read another publication of "The Blue Ridge Christian News" and our article "The Inspiring Word".

The month of May provides the Christian with many opportunities for sharing and showing the power of God in our lives. I feel there is one event that takes place in May which if practiced properly will help the saints of God live a closer and more powerful life for Christ. This is the National Day of Prayer. Prayer is a privilege for the saint. Through it we have access to the throne of God. Yet, prayer provides for you and me the incentive to live a repentant and revived life. I want to write this month and encourage you to pray. Why, you may ask?

Prayers of the Saints are precious. We learn from Revelation 5:8 *And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.*

Prayers of the Saints ascend as incense before God. We learn from Revelation 8:3 *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

From the previous verses we learn how important prayer is to God, but how important should it be to you and I? Psalm 65:2 reminds us; *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. Everyone, will come to God in prayer.* Think of that and notice our world. Every time there is a disaster or traumatic event even the most liberal sceptic of God's word will ask for prayer on behalf of the afflicted. Prayer is such a wonderful and influential tool to the Saint of God.

With an encouragement to participate in prayer there is a promise from God's word to answer prayer. For example, in Psalm 91:15 the Lord answers the Psalmist with this *"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him."* Of course, this promise was made to the Saint, saved and sanctified for the presence of God. Who could forget this famous passage about prayer, found in Luke 11:9 *"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."* Then in John 14:14 the Lord provides this word *"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."* Our Bible is full of encouragement to pray.

I have tried to provide a foundation from God's word for you and me to pray. May I have a few minutes to tell you about someone directly affected by prayer. I know a man who spent his youth as far away from God as a young man could. He wasn't an outlaw from man's perspective but from God's perspective, he needed to be born again. This young man didn't know it, but many people were praying for him. Saints of God, every one of them. God did not act immediately but those prayer warriors did not give up. They kept on praying. One of them was his mother. Quietly but with resolve she prayed with many until one day this young man and son come to know Jesus as Lord and savior. This young man was me. I realize how powerful a dedicated prayer life is and how important it is to see the lost born again. I am reminded of one additional verse and I will share it as I close. James 5:16 *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* The saints of God should be strengthened by one another, able to confess and discuss our faults and failures knowing our brothers and sisters will have our back with sound counsel backed by prayer. God's word reminds us it will accomplish much. So, how is your prayer life? Until next time may God keep you firmly in His grip!

Terry Cheek is Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion.





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Tim's Treasures

By Tim Tron
Burke County

"And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." -Mark 9:35

The cold rain fell from the dark sky. It wasn't nightfall, but it might as well have been. As I pulled within eyesight of the Ruritan's building, I could see the line extended out past the overhang of the entrance. People were literally standing in the rain. I had seen the signs earlier that morning for the Chicken Dumpling Dinner starting at 4:30, but here it was only 4:38, and there was already a line out the door. I nearly turned around but something said to just buy some time, so I pulled into the General Store. I needed to drop off some newspapers anyhow, so it wouldn't be that far off of my to-do list.

Barney and Otis were at their usual spots, Otis by the bench and Barney curled up in the flower pot by the door. The store's overhang protected the dogs as they passed the dreary day in stride. There was lots of activity for the little town. "More than usual," I thought to myself.

I stepped inside and placed the April copy of the Blue Ridge Christian News in the place where papers were to go; they had run out of the previous month, a blessing for sure. Trina, the store's proprietor, was busy with several customers, so I didn't want to bother her. Instead, I walked over to the wall where there were several old-timey photos of Collettsville back in the hay days, before the flood that nearly erased all existence from the valley back in 40. As I scanned the images, I started looking at the huge map that covered most of the wall. There were the names and places that the elders of the church often spoke about, Edgemont, Mortimer. Then I started to notice all the schools listed, most with a "col." after the name. There seemed to be more schools than churches. Then I tried to find the name of the roads on which they sat and realized there was no Hwy. 321. Confused, I looked for a key for the map, and then it dawned on me, the date of its publication was 1931. This map was from the pre-flood days of antiquity.

"Another item of interest I must return to someday," I mused as I looked out the window to see if the line had dissipated; it had not. As the customers began to leave the store, I was finally afforded the chance to speak to Trina about the papers being in the right spot. She assured me that they were fine and that they had run out.

"Several folks have been in picking them up," she reported with a smile.

"That's great," I replied, then continued, "I thought I'd drop them off while I wait for the line to go down."

"Oh wow," she responded, "We were lucky, and somebody brought us ours," she said pointing at the styrofoam to-go containers behind the counter.

"Good for you." I looked out the window again to see if I could get in now without having to wait in the rain.

"They're having a fundraiser for the little girl with cancer."

At the sound of her answer to the question I had not asked, my heart sank.

"There's probably a lot of folks coming from out of town that normally don't come which is why it's so busy."

All I could do was shake my head yes. I thought of little Sam Holt back in Goldston and how I had come to know his family through the JAM program. When he was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor, many thought we'd never see him grow to become a young man, but the community of Goldston came together, not only in fundraising but as a community of believers in prayer.

Sam is still with us today, thanks be to God.

"Looks like I can make it now without getting too wet. Have a blessed evening I called back," as I headed out the door.

"You too," she said, waving.

The parking lot was full, so I parked over by the old medical center and walked. The front door of the Ruritan building was open with a few more people still filing out the door, but at least now the line was well within the shelter of the porch roof. Back in the day in Goldston, I would have already seen or spoken with several people I would have known, but now, in this new place, I rarely know anyone. So, I stood, scanning all the faces within, thinking of all the stories and testimonies that awaited to be told. There was nary an empty seat.

At this point, I still didn't know who the little girl was we were raising money to help. The thing that stood out was the number of people wanting to come to her aid. Not only were there people there to eat, but there was the army of volunteers working to provide the food, serve the tables, clean up, and to take the money. As the door swung open wider to allow guests to leave, a familiar face appeared who happened to be standing in the line; finally, someone I knew. It was one of my Facebook friends that had come out of a connection back to Chatham County, through his cousin Sam Cooper, John Fletcher Church and his good friend, Anna. The first and last time we had met in person was when they came to the last Lay Speaking engagement I had given in Sugar Grove, NC. There we formally introduced ourselves and John told me that most of his friends just call him "Fletch."

It was an honor to know someone that I had only seen on Facebook had shown up to hear me speak. But when I find myself thinking in those terms, I try to remind myself, that it is God writing through me, and that it would be God speaking through me that they come to hear. In all that we do, we should always know that when we truly serve the Lord, we do all for him and not for self. Thus, when I decided to give every family a copy of my book, "Bruecke to Heaven," as part of my presentation that day, it was almost amusing when I ran out before I got to my new



friend. We both laughed. In my mind, I knew it was God's way of saying, "You'll be seeing him again." It was then I said, "I guess I owe you a book."

So, when we shook hands in our brief reunion of sorts nearly standing in the rain in front of the Ruritan building in Collettsville, the first thing I said was, "Great to see you and yes, I've got your book."

As we made our way to our seats, it was heartening to find some of the members of the church I attend, Rocky Springs Baptist Church, seated and enjoying their meal. Their patriarch, Ray was there, a man that had been diagnosed a year ago with stage four lung cancer. His story alone is one of faith, miracles, and the healing power of prayer. We spoke briefly, as we often do at these type of functions, and then I moved on to try to catch back up with Fletch who was now also trying to find empty seats.

Once we were finally seated and squeezed around the table, Fletch's friend Anna asked the rest of the table if they wouldn't mind if we said grace. They all were more than happy to oblige. From the corner of my eye, I could see hands reaching out to hold others. It was then I began to see the world of connections open for my new friends. It seemed that nearly everyone in the place had been part of their lives at one point, yet they had never lived in Collettsville, which made it all the more surreal.

It all began innocently enough when Anna asked the lady across from her if she used to drive Brownies to a camp in a station wagon. The lady was still chewing her Chicken and Dumplings when Anna asked, so it took her a minute to swallow. You could almost see the wheels turning in her mind as she thought back through the many years. "Well, actually I drove Girl Scouts, she finally said, and that would have been when I was at Zion U.C.C."

"Are you Mrs. Lloyd," Anna continued.

"Yes, I am."

"Oh, my goodness," Anna replied almost dropping her fork. She was immediately transported back in time to when she was a young girl in 2nd grade. Mrs. Lloyd had only driven her once to a day camp for Girl Scouts, but they had brought Brownies along for the experience. You could see them both connect back to a time when their lives were much different. The elderly lady explained how she would drive them to camps in that old station wagon. From that point on, there were so many things to catch up with, children to share, and a lifetime of living.

As people passed by, either Fletch or Anna would wave to people they hadn't seen or spoken too in years, each barely recognizing one another.

As Anna was sharing with Mrs.

Lloyd, the lady next to her spoke up that she thought she remembered Anna from somewhere. It wasn't long before Fletch's friend had rediscovered Mrs. Eunice Watson, a former EC teacher at Patterson Elementary School. The myriad of tiny one-room school-houses came to mind on the map that I had seen earlier in the store as they continued to recall their shared work experiences. It was as if God had given me a glimpse of what was to come.

Then a lady, who was obviously related to the elderly lady Anna had made the connection too, sat down next to me. Her plate had been there for some time, untouched. She began to eat as she shared with Mrs. Lloyd how she had done all she could do to help.

At this point, I noticed Fletch intensely gazing at the lady that had sat next to me. He finally broke his silence when he called to her, "Mary?"

She looked up, again almost as stunned as Mrs. Lloyd had been when Anna had reconnected with her.

"Yes," she paused.

"Well, my apologies for seeming like I was staring, but I thought I knew you."

"John," she replied, smiling broadly.

"That I am," he grinned from ear to ear.

"I thought I knew who you were, but I wasn't sure," she said laughing. Later I would learn that it had been two years since they had worked together and not seen each other since.

Meanwhile, Anna, Mrs. Watson, and Mrs. Lloyd were still racing through the years of life.

Again, my mind drifted off to Goldston and all the families lives that were connected either through their church, their school, or their neighborhoods. Then in my new world, the school at which I teach, and how when we come together as one, we make all the more difference, not just in one life that might need help, but in all of those that become part of the greater being.

Mary and John went on to share with me their work at the LEOS in Lenoir, where homeless people were being taken in and the ministry they serve in that mission. They told me of the early days and how they had met while working the night shift for LEOS in the old high school gym and all the trials through which they had struggled. Mary went on to tell me about the problems they now face, most homeless either being addicts or alcoholics. "We still try to help those that really need the help, especially families that are in need."



continued on page 12

really are a safe place. Your parents didn't make a good decision. You are still going to be okay," Braun said. Teacher feedback about HOPE has been positive, particularly because the 20-minute lessons are developmentally appropriate, easy to implement and do not feel like "one more thing," Braun said.

But while early prevention education sounds good in theory, the state can't force its more than 600 school districts to follow a specific approach. Ohio is "a very strong local-control state," said Kenna Haycox, senior policy consultant at the Ohio School Boards Association. "Boards have the authority to determine their academic curriculum."

Ohio law prohibits the State Board of Education from establishing health-education standards. It is the only state in the country that lacks such standards. "You have the state with the opioid epidemic and a state without health-education standards," said Wright State University's Lorson, former president of the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.

The extent of opioid abuse in Ohio has galvanized the state's leaders to take the fight into the classroom.

Vernon Sykes, the ranking Democrat on the Ohio state Senate's education committee, has spent a year and a half working on a bill that would allow for state health education standards. He has been trying to overcome resistance from legislators who are concerned it will affect the state's abstinence-only approach to sex education.

Bumper stickers on state vehicles tout Start Talking!, a campaign Gov. John Kasich championed to connect communities with resources for discouraging misuse of drugs. The initiative also promotes HOPE on its website. DeWine, the attorney general, led a committee that last year endorsed prevention education beginning in kindergarten.

"We teach reading and writing every year," he said in a telephone interview. "What makes us think we can wait until the fourth or fifth year to do something about the drug problem? If this is as important as I think it is, we need to get serious about it."

"Prevention is not about one drug," said Michelle Miller-Day, a professor of communication studies at Chapman University in Orange, Calif., and an expert on prevention curriculum. "It is about social, emotional development in kids so that when they are faced with stressors or boredom or a quick fix for pain or 'I need to stay up late to study,'" they can deal with emotions naturally.

Social context is important, she said, and telling kids to simply say "no" is not enough when "the good-looking captain of the football team is offering me a beer," said Miller-Day.

Knowing how to make effective decisions (assessing options, reflecting on what will happen) should start long before hearing messages such as "Don't do drugs. This is what it does to your brain and liver," she said.

Reaching kids when they are 6 or 7 and forming habits and behavior is important, said Melanie Lynch, an award-winning health teacher in the North Allegheny school district in Pennsylvania. By the time students are in high school, Lynch said, "I'm not doing a whole lesson on vaping. I can't afford that kind of time." HOPE also relies on the classroom teacher rather than an outside guest or a special assembly.

"The teacher is so important. They are there every day. They are an insider. We trust that person," Lorson said.

The long-term effects of drug education are difficult to measure. Tim Bruckner, an associate professor of public health at the University of California at Irvine who has analyzed prevention programs in other states but is not familiar with Ohio's efforts, said effectiveness is based on many conditions, including funding, enforcement of best practices and engaging, interactive delivery.

"It's really hard to change people's behavior or delay initiation of adverse behavior," he said. Only 10 percent of substance-abuse-prevention programs used in middle and high schools show evidence of effectiveness, he said.

But the stakes are visible every day in Washington County, where Belpre sits near Ohio 177, a highway for heroin and cheap methamphetamines from Mexico, according to Josh Staats, a lieutenant with the Washington County sheriff's office. Earlier this year, 11 high school students in the region tested positive for methamphetamine. And a lab reported a batch laced with fentanyl. Crystal methamphetamine is cheap and abundant.

"I don't know if HOPE is the magic bullet," Lorson said. "But the focus on these key concepts and skills has given folks a place to rally around."

As the opioid epidemic rages, the fight against addiction moves to an Ohio courtroom

Nearly 1 million people were out of the workforce because of opioid addiction in 2015

Emergency room data shows the opioid crisis continues to accelerate

As this article shows, schools around the country are beginning to understand the importance of educating children early on about substance use and abuse - especially around prescription drugs. We are thankful that both Mitchell County and Yancey County Schools have partnered with the Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force and our Youth to Youth programs to implement this education in Kindergarten - 3rd grades through Samantha Skunk! Samantha Skunk teaches children not to touch or take any medication unless it is given by a trusted adult. If children are not sure whether something is candy or medicine, they are instructed to ask an adult before tasting it.

We are also thankful that Yancey County Schools is planning ways to utilize a partnership between PATH and RHA to provide substance use/abuse education in the classrooms next year.

Mitchell and Yancey may be small, rural counties, but we are utilizing cutting edge strategies for substance use/abuse prevention strategies in our communities! Thank you to our school systems and other partners for working to implement this prevention programming!

Jeff Spargo is the Director of the Mitchell / Yancey Drug Abuse Task Force.

These Days

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County



The only possible explanation for the condition of our society is that we are living in the end times. How many times have you and I said, "I never thought I would see the day when..." The Scriptures teach that when the Lord returns for His Church the condition of society will be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. They also teach that iniquity would abound, and the love of people would wax cold.

The days of Noah were characterized by the unheeding of man to the warnings of God through Noah and of wickedness being lived out in the open with no shame. Genesis 6:5 says, "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." For one hundred years Noah witnessed to those living around him that judgment was coming. With every board being placed and every nail or peg being driven, Noah witnessed that a flood of rain was coming that would destroy mankind. The only hope was for those who saw Noah building the Ark was to believe: to believe that Noah was acting as instructed by God and that the flood was indeed coming. Sadly, as we know, only a few were spared that judgment. Only Noah's three sons, their wives and Noah and his wife escaped.

There are so few today who will hear the message the Church is preaching. It seems, though there are some Churches succeeding in evangelism, but the majority of Churches are seeing little, if any, converts. The Word, if it is being shared, is falling on deaf ears. Another problem with people coming to Christ is that it is estimated that only two percent to five percent of believers are sharing their faith. Imagine, we have the greatest story ever told and ninety-five percent plus are not sharing it.

The days of Lot were much the same. Society was reset because all but Noah's family were destroyed. But in just a handful of Chapters in the Scriptures the same condition of society was evident. Jesus said in Luke 17:28-30, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

The need for parents to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is greater today than ever. The need for neighbors to pray for and work with neighbors to come to Christ is huge. Our evangelism field is wherever we go. We literally are in the presence of unbelievers wherever we may go. Tell them about Jesus. Work Him into every conversation somehow.

As I write this article the weather is beautiful. As I share conversation today I can say to those with whom I speak, "Isn't this a great day? Hasn't the Lord blessed us with a beautiful day?" I could very easily launch that conversation into an evangelism presentation.

Won't you do that today? Tell others about Jesus. They need Him so desperately. And, the Word will be shared. Who knows? Maybe the Holy Spirit can move that heart into a state of accepting Jesus as Savior. And, you would be a part of seeing a soul come to know Christ.

Share Him Today! You will never regret having done so!



Rev. Bruce Cannon currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Bear Creek Baptist Church in Bakersville. Formerly he served as Director of Missions for the Bladen Baptist Association and has served on the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.



Jamie Miller, CPA

Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC

1136 Greenwood Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

2301 Rutherford Road
Marion, NC 28752

phone: 828.765.4400
fax: 828.765.4880

phone: 828.652.6777
fax: 828.652.6755



jamie@highcountrycpa.com

www.highcountrycpa.com

About that time another couple women sat our table, Jennifer, and Ginny, and once again, they called out to John; more connections, more people who knew each other in a community that went beyond the four walls of the Ruritan's building.

Fletch turned to me at one point and said, "A small world," he said, half chuckling, "That would be another great story."

I nodded, "Yes, it would."

At that point, the room became a buzz of conversations and fellowship. Each story that was told had a connection to another, and with time, a shared memory was created, all for a cause that would ease the medical burdens of a young girl's family. We may not know Johanna, or we may not know her family; we may not know the stranger who we give a warm bed on a bitterly cold night, or we may not know the child that receives the gift box in a time of need, but in the end, when we come together as a family of faith, we become greater than we might ever know individually.

Jesus had taught his disciples that we cannot stand alone, but our calling is to serve those around us, to be the least of these. "Tend my sheep," he told Peter upon his last response to being loved. Then Jesus went on to help them to understand their position in His ministry as it was written in the gospel of Mark, "And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

When we put ourselves last, we put Him first, and in the end, serving as Christ is all that we should endeavor in this life. For this earth, God's creation, it's but a tiny existence in all of the heavens unto which we are born. In the massive scale of the universe, we are but a tiny speck; yes, a small world. For, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Tonight, we dined for a cause, to serve another. In essence, tonight, we broke bread with one another, and in so doing, shared the body of Christ.

Yes, we might live in a small world, but we serve a great God.

Thanks be to God.

For more information on donations for Johanna Hayes Cancer Fund, please contact Craig Styron, Principal of Collettsville School, at (828) 754-6913, or email at cstryon@caldwellschools.com

You can also follow her journey on Jo's Journey Facebook page.

Timothy W. Tron lives in Collettsville, NC, with his family. He is the former Director of the Trail of Faith in Valdese, where he still volunteers and helps with tours. He now teaches Math full time at Watauga High School in Boone. He is the author of a new Christian series, "Children of the Light," with the first book being, "Bruecke to Heaven," and his recent book, being the second, "The Light in the Darkness." He is an active blogger, artist, and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UF, and is a Lay Speaker. He can be reached at twtron@live.com

God's Powerful Voice

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County



I have met people with powerful voices. When they speak, people listen. They walk into a room and the entire dynamic changes. Maybe you recall the calming voice of your mother, or perhaps it's her commanding voice you remember most. Maybe the assuring voice of your father comforts you, or his correcting voice still confronts you.

God's voice exceeds them all. Consider the psalmist:

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" (Psalm 29:3-9, ESV)

In the beginning God created...with his words, his voice. He started with nothing and said, "Let there be," and there was. Here in Psalms we discover that his voice is not diminished at all. The God who created with words, shakes His very creation with the same voice with which he created it.

Jesus did too. Asleep in the boat, tired from the demands of his day, he was suddenly awakened by his disciples. The boat was rocking, waves crashing, fear mounting. They thought they were dying!

And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?" (Luke 8:24-25, ESV)

You may be in a situation right now that only God's voice can handle. Unless He steps in, there is no hope. A broken marriage, incurable cancer, unbelievable debt. You need God's voice. David ends his Psalm with this affirmation: "May the Lord give strength to his people, may the Lord bless his people with peace." (Psalm 29:11, ESV).

Ask for his powerful voice.
And ask again...and again...and again.

Jerry Lewis is Senior Pastor at Grace Community Church in Marion.



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Family Friday Nights

By Morrisa Angi
Burke County

Valdese, NC — Family Friday Nights in Valdese will begin the first Friday in May at 7:00pm located at the Wells Fargo/ Town parking lot and continues through the month of September. “We are so excited for this year’s Family Friday Nights Summer Concert Series. New bands will join us for the first time and many favorites are returning to the stage”, states Morrisa Angi, Community Affairs Director for the Town of Valdese. “The concerts are offered all summer long and are a great place to meet up with old friends or to make new ones.” The season offers a wide variety of music including everything from country to beach music.

Kicking off the summer series this year will be The Crew on Friday, May 4th at 7:00pm located in the Wells Fargo/ Town Parking lot. The Crew, an Asheville dance and entertainment band formed by William Jones and Steve Hughes in 1993. Through the years The Crew, has performed all over Western North Carolina at many public events, such as Bele Chere, the Hendersonville Apple Festival, and the Jackson Park Fourth of July Celebration. They have also been a favorite at local nightclubs, country clubs, weddings and private corporate events. Of course, there have been a few name changes throughout the years. The group started out as Hanson Ranson, then shortened the name to Ranson, and now they are simply known as The Crew. In the past several years they have directed their musical interest to the legendary classics of the 60’s and 70’s. Today they continually expand their sets with salutes to more great artists, including classics of the 80’s, 90’s and 2000’s. Their main focus when performing is to provide great music and a good fun atmosphere. Whether you are into toe-tapping, shoulder swaying, a blast from the past, or dancing like nobody’s watching, this band will deliver.

Concessions will be for sale during the concert series and different civic groups will offer 50/50 raffles every Friday. Season lineup cards will be available for pick up at the concession trailer and will feature special offers and discounts from participating merchants. Checkers, Tic-Tack-Toe and other games will be available for public use. Myra’s Cruise In will begin every Friday night at 6:00pm and downtown shops will remain open later. For further information about events in Valdese and the full Family Friday Nights Concert Schedule go to visitvaldese.com.

2018 Season Lineup:
MAY 4: THE CREW
MAY 11: THE CLYDES
MAY 18: THE BAND 28690
MAY 25: CHAD TRIPLETT & 2 LANE BLACKTOP
JUNE 1: THE TONY BAILEY BAND
JUNE 8: THE NIGHT MOVE BAND
JUNE 15: LITTLE JOHNNY TRAILER TRASH
JUNE 23: THE TRUE GRASS BAND
JUNE 29: INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION & FIREWORKS WITH TOO MUCH SYLVIA
JULY 6: THE SHAKEDOWN BAND
JULY 13: JASON LEE MCKINNEY
JULY 20: SHELBY RAE MOORE
JULY 27: ANGELA EASTERLING
AUGUST 3: CARSON HILL
AUGUST 10 & 11: WALDENSIAN FESTIVAL
FRIDAY: LITTLE JOHNNY TRAILER TRASH @ 7PM & THE ARTIMUS PYLE BAND @ 8PM - Honoring the music of Ronnie Van Zant’s Lynyrd Skynyrd
SATURDAY: THE BAND OF OZ @ 7PM
AUGUST 17: HANNAH KAMINER
AUGUST 24: FOX & COMPANY
AUGUST 31: SKATE RINK JUKEBOX
SEPTEMBER 7: GAL FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 14: BLIND JUSTUS
SEPTEMBER 21 & 28: TBA



Morrisa Angi is Director of Community Affairs and Tourism



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Sudoku Solution

7	6	1	4	8	2	5	9	3
3	2	4	6	9	5	7	8	1
8	5	9	3	7	1	2	6	4
2	8	7	9	5	4	3	1	6
9	1	3	7	2	6	8	4	5
5	4	6	1	3	8	9	2	7
4	9	8	5	1	7	6	3	2
1	7	2	8	6	3	4	5	9
6	3	5	2	4	9	1	7	8

Tipton Hill Community Foundation (Tipton Hill) – Country Breakfast, the first Saturday each month, 7:30 – 10:30 am, at the old Methodist Church, across from Jerry's Store. Come join us for homemade sausage, scrambled eggs, gravy, jellies, juice and coffee. Eat in or take-out, all funds support the Tipton Hill Community Foundation.

Women's Prayer Breakfast: If you would like to join a group of women who are dedicated to praying, learning about God's will, and fellowshiping, come join us for breakfast at DT's in Spruce Pine. We will be ending by 10:00am. Open to all-for more information call Barbara Harrell at 828-467-3644 or email at barabarab@brcnews.com. May meeting is 13th, at 8:00am.

Yancey County

Higgins - The Blue Ridge Emmaus Men's Walk will be May 17-May 20. Do you know Christian men that would be blessed by the gifts that a Walk to Emmaus has to offer? Please call Randall Garland 682-7490 or Peirce Bingham at 208-0299 if you have any questions. Missions will pay the first 4 sponsor-ships so please give us a call. This is life changing so if you have not attended, please pray about this and let us know soon!

Parkway Playhouse Invites You To Get Involved - Burnsville, NC: Become a member of the Parkway Playhouse Volunteer Guild. Volunteer to usher, bake a cake, cook a casserole, lend a truck or your muscles. However, you want to plug in, we can use you. By becoming a member of the Guild, you make the continued success of Parkway Playhouse and Parkway Playhouse Junior a reality, but you also get great incentives. You can earn a free ticket for every nine hours you volunteer. The biggest bonus is the family you will be joining and the fun and satisfaction you will get working with your new friends. Visit our website at www.parkwayplayhouse.com or send us an email for information on how you can get involved at guild@parkwayplayhouse.com.

For more information about Parkway Playhouse, including performances, classes, and volunteer opportunities, please call 828-682-4285 or visit the Parkway Playhouse website at parkwayplayhouse.com.

Blithe Spirit is set to open the 2018 Parkway Playhouse Mainstage Season on May 5th.

Shoals Creek Baptist Church - Relay for Life Survivor Brunch @ 10 am, May 5 Foot of the Cross Women's Conference with Liberty Hill Baptist Church @ Shoal Creek Baptist Church from 9am to 3pm on May 19th

Family Day and Flag retirement ceremony May 29th following morning worship service.

Yancey County Meals on Wheels (Burnsville) – Volunteers needed to deliver meals to Yancey County shut-ins, any weekday, 10:30 am - noon. If you would like to volunteer, please call the Yancey County Senior Center at 828-682-6011.

ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project), in partnership with Duke University World Food Policy Center, University of North Carolina Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and MAHEC, will present the Healthy Eating in Practice Conference August 26-29, 2018, at the Omni Grove Park Inn. Daphne Miller, M.D., author of Farmacology, will give a keynote address on the intersection of farming, food, and health.

On June 23 and 24, over 20 Appalachian Grown™ family farms will welcome visitors to their farms during ASAP's highly anticipated Farm Tour. This fun and educational weekend offers the public a chance to experience firsthand how food is grown and raised in the mountains, sample farm-fresh products, and meet the community's local producers.

This year represents the 10th anniversary of ASAP's Farm Tour. ASAP will present a variety of activities to celebrate the anniversary including contests, giveaways, and a special celebration of the Farm Tour at Asheville City Market on June 2, 2018.

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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of The Story

Doug Harrell

As you can see, this Funny Farm Story was written almost seven years ago and still rings through with Clint's uncanny ability to take the normal and really bring out the humor in the most delightful way. Skinning a deer, digging potatoes, stack cakes, things that most of us don't give a second thought, become totally hilarious when Clint put pen to paper! As usual, I am sure you will be doing belly laughs as you read the stories.

FUNNY FARM

Dear friends,

Heaven knows that hundreds of you seem to revel in my near misses with eternity...from close calls with rabid groundhogs to "shocking" encounters with electrified barbed wire, my life has been nothing if not exciting since moving to Mitchell County in 2010.

While my sojourns as Farmer Clint have obviously provided humorous moments around the kitchen table, other mysterious events marked my time on the farm. And I want to share a few of those as well.

Here goes...

"Peeling" Deer

My son Adam is a deer hunter, I am not. The only "hunt" I ever made was with my mama to the A&P Store meat department (does anyone out there remember that historic chain store?) Other than that, the only wild critter I ever saw killed was a rabbit from my Uncle Lum's property, where he also had a rather productive still!

As a senior executive with Verizon Corporation twelve years ago I often returned home late night from business trips all over the world. One night I returned, exhausted, to my Texas home after a journey to Sidney, Australia. As I pulled into the driveway, headlights on high-beam, I was puzzled to see that my newly installed cedar fence was now dark red. Moreover there was a monster of some sort suspended from the top of the fence and an amber substance forming a river down my new concrete drive. Upon close examination, and affirmed by the sound of Hank Williams Jr. crooning from a CD player in my garage, I determined that Adam had harvested his first deer of the new season. And while I was very little help, my son demonstrated how one goes about the business of "dressing" a deer. (I've long wondered why they call it "dressing" as you remove all of its organs, and then take its hide off...more like "undressing" if you ask me!)

Fast forward to Harrell Hill Road, it was fall 2010, another beautiful, crisp day in the mountains. My friend Doug had dispatched me into the hills to gather firewood (a story for another day) when I noticed a minor ruckus at Keith Masters' barn. Slowing my faithful, bucket-of-loose-bolts - ooops I mean Jeep - I saw what appeared to be large deer suspended from a cross-tie. (I witnessed a similar scene at Harrell Hill earlier that month so an upside down deer with tongue hanging out was not unfamiliar to me). What I couldn't figure out was why there was a chain hooked to the deer with a tractor attached to the other end. Remember, my son showed me how a man SKINS a deer...a time honored tradition I am sure.

The tractor, shiny and new like everything else Keith Masters drives @, was backing-up, slowly removing the hide from the deer. "Fascinating", I remarked to myself and myself alone. I decided to visit Keith, and Vic, and whoever the heck else was involved in this newfangled method of extracting edible flesh from a wild animal.

"Nice deer", I said naively to these mountain men. They acknowledged my presence, gave me that friendly yet cautious smile I get from many farmers - especially those who've learned of my outdoors prowess. I interpreted Keith's "Good mornin', Clint" as an invitation to approach and investigate the matter further. I felt accepted, like one of the guys, as though I were a native...ahhhhhhh, the joys of "belonging".

As I drew near the front of the tractor I mused to myself, "Hmmm, they aren't skinning this critter the way my son does"; clearly a new technique and possibly one invented right here on Harrell Hill. Could be I was on the "cutting edge" of a revolutionary movement in deer cleaning, so I remarked..."Never saw anyone peel a deer before, fellas!" That was all it took...

Well, I thought these men would fall off the tractor and run over their own selves...guffaws, chuckles, howling and carrying-on something fierce. Amidst snorts, gurgles and choking sounds Keith replied, "Did y'all hear what he said, 'peel a deer'? Yeah, that's it, Clint. We've gotta PEEL this deer."

All I know is, Webster's Dictionary says...peel = "to strip off an outer layer of skin"...I'm just sayin', I know what peeling looks like @, and he was peeling that deer!

Pickin' Taters

It seems to me that when a man lifts a fruit or vegetable from another spot on the earth he is PICKIN it...but you, of course, know that the term doesn't apply to harvesting potatoes! Sitting in the coffee shop one day, entertaining local



folks with tales of my idiocy, I reminisced about pickin' taters. That's right, you guessed it...peals of laughter exploded in this public setting; "Did you hear what he said, 'pickin' taters'?" Is there no end to my measure of public humiliation?

What? What did I do now? I mean the potato is down there, in the ground... you bend down and pick it up, don't ya? Now I have learned that I didn't pick that tater at all, I DUG it. A very nice lady, said, "You DIG taters, honey." And no amount of arguing was going to change her mind, so I agreed. Now I DIG taters... never pick 'em.

Pancake Cake

One day soon I plan to write about "Homecoming" and "Decoration" Days... because I never heard of such happenings until coming to the mountains - what a learning experience that has been.

Anyway, a while back I attended a reunion of my friend Barbara Harrell's family. (FYI, I'd never been to a reunion in my former life!) Well, being the only person in Mitchell County that isn't related to everyone else in Mitchell County, I mostly look forward to magnificent food at these gatherings (I would look forward to the people but I haven't met them yet!). I'm here to tell ya, there ain't nobody on this planet who can out-cook, out-taste, out-anything mountain folks! This particular Buchanan reunion was no exception.

I've learned the skill of "reinforced plate" which allows one to tote 15 pounds of delicious meats and vegetable delicacies on flimsy paper plates. And I can stack it HIGH; pyramid style is my preferred method. Whoa did I have some fine vittles; I mean DELUXE eatin' I don't care who ya are! But, to me, the main course is something a man has to survive to earn a ticket to the sweets collection!

Well, after having my fill of the entrée I circled that dessert table like a hunting tiger. The choices were overwhelming but I was honing in on one when I saw a very strange concoction... pancakes stacked upon pancakes...stacked upon pancakes..."Hmmm, wonder what that is?"

I discerned that it was indeed a cornucopia of pancakes, and it appeared to have peanut butter between the layers. "How interesting, and I adore pancakes and peanut butter," I self-opined. I returned to my table, ecstatic with my choices and especially the pancake cake.

"So," I began speaking to my bride, "bet you've never had a pancake cake," proudly proclaiming this novel discovery! Turning aside, shock and awe intertwined with mischievous giggles, Kay asked her neighbor, "Did you hear what he said, 'pancake cake'?"...Here we go again...polite giggles (since they are mostly ladies), heads turning aside to smile and suppress laughter, yada yada yada!

To be fair, Kay didn't leave me hanging out there to flap in a breeze of others' cackles forever. No, she patted my hand gently and whispered softly, "We call those stack cakes @, don't be calling 'em pancake cakes".

Well, never again will I make that faux pas...and it wasn't peanut butter cementing the layers...everyone knows it was homemade apple butter. And, just between us friends...Barbara's Aunt Juanita makes one magnificent pancake-cake, ooops I mean stack cake! In fact, I'm wondering if Aunt Juanita's stack-cake is similar to the manna which once fell from heaven @.



Still Humbled in the Hills,

Farmer Clint

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Victim
By Chelsea Blevins
Yancey County



Ever feel fearful of what lies ahead?
Yeah, me too. I am most definitely the awkward girl that sits in the corner and desperately wishes she had the confidence to go talk to those pretty girls who seem to be having so much fun.

Doesn't the devil love to come at us and tell us we are the victim in times of vulnerability? I know it can't be just me, right girls?

The victim of failure, rejection, and imperfection. Don't we all want victory but continue to hold onto the character of victim and rejection.

I get it. You're socially awkward, or you are uncomfortable, and you sit there and look at everyone else and their life seems perfect and you can't help but question where you messed up along the way.

Let me say I have certainly played my fair share of victim and rejection. But ya know what I've realized during those times...I've learned victim only keeps you from the victory in Jesus.

A few weeks ago, I went with a couple friends to a Christian retreat with FORGE ministry (go check it out if you haven't) and there were lots of unfamiliar faces. Everyone was having a great time and I was enjoying myself as well--honestly. But, then there was volleyball. I wanted to join in and play but I didn't want to be the awkward girl I mentioned earlier. I didn't want to be that girl who nobody knows and awkwardly joins in. A few moments later a friend of mine mentioned he wanted to go join in as well and he repeatedly kept expressing his interest. I think he was just waiting for someone to join with him. But nobody did. Not even me. Even though I really wanted to go join in as well. And so ya know what?

I didn't go and neither did he.

And I look back on that time and wonder why?

Instead of joining in, we watched others live in victory while we stood in the corner and played the victim.

I look back to that moment and I feel ashamed. Not because I wasn't good enough to play but because I talked myself into believing that I wasn't. I talked myself into believing I had been rejected without even reaching out first to get a response.

I reflect on this moment and I can't help but think that so many times we do this with Christ.

So many times, I live a life so different from the promises God has given me to live by.

We hold back from a love that He so desperately wants to give because we are afraid of rejection. And I sit and think how that must break His heart as He reaches out so desperately to give us the love we so longingly look for, yet we

turn Him away.

We run at a marathon pace to try and achieve what God simply wants us to slow down enough to receive.

I began to think about rejection and the sting of it and I was immediately brought to David. I read about David and I see that he encountered rejection and the pure sting of it as his very own father rejected him. But still David continued to trust Jesus in the midst of his crossroads. Don't get me wrong there were certainly times when David failed, but over and over I see him running to God regardless.

David says my father rejected me and called me unqualified for the job but God has called me fully and completely His own and so I continue to run to Him in complete trust that He will provide me with that, that I need.

David shows us that with God there is a fullness.

With God there is no lack.

In Psalms 23:6 David says: *6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

I think David is telling us something important here. I think God's love and plan for us is so much deeper than what we limit it to. I think what David is saying is that sometimes life is that sometimes people are gonna say you are the victim and you are gonna feel rejected. Sometimes some will say you will never face your giant. But God, says go and I will not only give you your giant, I will equip you with what you need to slay your giant in my name.

Sometimes we may be rejected and feel like somewhat of a victim, but we can't let that keep us from receiving the victory of slaying the giant God has for us.

David knows this to be true despite everything else... God's love will follow you.

We have to lay down those fears that keep us from receiving the love He so desperately wants to give us. We have to lay down those desires of proving yourself to someone whose opinion will never matter as much as God's opinion of you. We have to lay down each and everything that keeps us from remembering the simple truth David tells us; His goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.



It is then we walk away feeling free and held by a reckless, overwhelming, loving God.

It is then that we see that we don't have to truly understand each thing that happens for us to fully trust Him.

And though things may not go our way and our hearts get a little broken in-between God's goodness, He will eventually make it all right. You are not a victim to the card life has given you. You have been specifically designed for the game and with God, you win. Although we may not always see it, God is good. His plans are good. His requirements are good. His salvation is good. His grace is good. His forgiveness is good. His resurrection is good. His victory is good.

Here's the thing, the only love that will ever fill you, is Jesus.

And He sits and waits. He waits for every comfort, question, and affection but so many times we turn it away in fear of rejection or maybe even rejection to our plans according to His.

But y'all, He really does have everything worked out.

With Jesus, the gaps are filled.

With Jesus, the heartache is eased.

With Jesus, the needs are met.

With Jesus, the questions are answered, and the problems are solved.

Fully. Completely. Perfectly.

In him. With him. By him.

Take the time to sit with Him and turn to Him. Even in the times you feel exhausted running to Him, get to Him daily. He is there, and He is waiting.

Regardless of the rejection you've faced, this is what I know about Him: He is good and His love is great.

His love isn't based upon our circumstances or ability to play volleyball, or our level of social awkwardness. Instead, it's simply placed on us and it is the very place where she should live every single day. Loved. By a never-ending, overwhelming, reckless God.

His love grounds us in the face of rejection and storms.

With Him, we may feel the wind, but are never destroyed.

Man, isn't He awesome?

Because of this love I no longer live in fear of rejection or play the part of victim. Instead I gloriously live in victory because of the love of Jesus that follows me all my days.

I run to Him. I sit with Him. I get to Him daily.

And He fills me with victory in His love.

He has enough for you too.

So, I pray you run to Him, sit with Him, and get to Him daily regardless of how exhausted you may feel running to Him. Because by running to Him, you are running into a love that covers everything else.






Before the next big decision in your life, before the next step you take in your dream, before feeling less than, before feeling unqualified, before taking the next hurdle, heartbreaks or struggle...Run to Him.

Let him fill you.

Prepare yourself to the fullness of God.

Receive his victory and love.

And most of all, once you receive it... live by it with every single breath and step you take.



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God Still Tames Lions

By Rick and Cindy Mercer
Burke County

Have you ever had a bummer of a day? My guess is yes. We all have had days and situations that we do not care to repeat—ever. But often, after the fog clears, we realize that that tough time taught us something that made us a better person or at least challenged us to grow.

One of my favorite persons of inspiration is Corrie ten Boom. I never tire of reading the amazing difficulties that she went through, yet only to see beautiful triumphs following the valleys.

The following is a thought that a friend shared once that reminds us once again that God and His angels are always surrounding us.

The story that was shared and that maybe you are familiar with starts with one cold winter day toward the end of World War II, when a woman walked out of what had seemed even worse than a lion's den. She was leaving the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where countless human beings had been systematically starved and worked to death. As the heavy iron gates closed behind her, Corrie ten Boom could hardly believe that she was alive—and free.

Corrie had been arrested by the Nazis for hiding Jews in her home in Holland. She and her family believed in a God who gives refuge to all, and they committed themselves to this dangerous work. This quiet matron in her 50's had not imagined she could survive the horrors of a labor camp. But God had sustained her during the ordeal. Corrie saw many women brutalized at Ravensbrück. Many perished, including her dear sister Betsie. But many of those women died with the name of Jesus on their lips because of the witness of those two sisters. "Those women," Corrie wrote, "were well worth all our suffering."

Finally, as a result of what turned out to be a clerical error, Corrie was released. One week later all the women her age at Ravensbrück were gassed.

As she walked out of this lions' den, Corrie had learned something invaluable. Around the world she gave this testimony: "There is no place on earth so dark, so deep, that God's love is not deeper still."

God's love penetrates prison camps and lions' dens. Wherever God's people are, He is there. The old hymn states it well: "Just when I need Him, Jesus is near, just when I falter, just when I fear, ready to help me, ready to cheer, just when I need Him most." The God who sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths for Daniel is steadfast forever. Are lions roaring in your ears today? The lions of doubt and discouragement may loom in your pathway. You may feel like you will be consumed by the lions of anger and resentment. The lions of lust and sensual allurements may appear about to eat you up. But God still shuts lions' mouths and delivers from their dens.

When the devil "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8), God still tames lions. He did it for Daniel, and He will do it for you.

You can rejoice today because God still tames lions.

My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O King, I have done no wrong before you. —Daniel 6:22NKJ

Rick Mercer is the pastor of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church at 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton. They can be reached at 870-820-3549 or cjmercer@tds.net. Check out www.morgantonsda.org. Their passion is to share the love of Jesus with all who will listen.



"No Regrets Family"

Most Precious Things In Life

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

I did not really know which direction to go with this article until my son got hit in the mouth with a baseball. The line drive got him good, and thankfully he kept his lower teeth. The incident made me think about my family and how precious they are to Pam and me. A lot of illness and sadness has been going around here lately, many of my friends have been diagnosed with cancer, and some small children have had serious sickness, and some have gone to be with Jesus. The most precious things in life are not on four wheels, in my bank account, or the land my house sits on. The most precious thing in life is Jesus and the gift of salvation. Because of Jesus I can love and appreciate with much gratitude the family God has given me.

Life is so short we need to grasp every moment and the time we have with our families. Thank the Lord we will spend more time with our loved ones in heaven than we do on earth, but we often do not think of eternal life in this way. We tend to only think of the here and now.

When my children were younger, and we were getting ready to go somewhere, I would say, "Honeycutt's head um up and move them out" this would signal it is time to get in the van and leave the house. In the van I would on occasion take roll call starting with the name of the oldest and move to the youngest. It was fun hearing each one of them say "here". Our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and when we get to heaven Jesus is going to take roll call, and I am so thankful when He gets to our names we are going to be able to say "here".

Spend time with your family and build confidence in your children. Take time to pray with them and read the Bible with them. They will cherish what you cherish, they will value what you value, and they will follow what you follow. If they see Jesus is important to you, then Jesus will be important to them. One of the most precious things is to lead your children to Jesus Christ. Talk with them often about Jesus and why He came to earth. Pray for their salvation and at that God given appointed time lead them into a saving relationship with Jesus. So, when the "roll is called up yonder" the entire family can say "here."

Life is too short to find yourself at the end of it with a lot of regrets. After the passing of my dad in 2008 I was challenged to live a life of "No Regrets", and with God's help I am determined to make choices that will minimize regrets in my life, because we cannot change the past, but we can choose to live for God in the future. Each day is a blessing from God and every moment spent with family is precious.

The Lord bless you and Happy Mother's Day.



Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

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The Train is Coming...

By Morissa Angi
Burke County

In honor of Valdese celebrating 125 years since their founding in 1893, the Valdese Public Arts Commission and the Town of Valdese have come together to create a commemorative art piece that will be located across from Valdese Town Hall on Massel Avenue. The art installation will depict the arrival of the original Waldensian settlers who came to Valdese on May 29th, 1893 as they departed the "No. 11" train at the Valdese Depot.

The installation will be created by the artists of Oak Hill Iron & Wood of Morganton and will feature a full-scale train and silhouettes of original settlers made out of iron. Standing between twelve and fifteen feet tall and extending parallel to Massel Avenue for over thirty feet, the installation will honor those who founded Valdese. The original settlers will be listed on a bronze plaque which will be created by the Waldensian Heritage Museum. The project will be installed during the summer months of 2018 and will make its debut at the Waldensian Festival on August 11th, 2018.

The cost for the installation has been pledged by the Valdese Public Arts Commission, the Town of Valdese, and Waldensian Heritage Museum. The Valdese Public Art Commission would like to request your support for this tremendous project. Your contributions will be used for landscaping, lighting and a boardwalk extension. Those interested in making a donation can mail or bring check or cash to the Waldensian Heritage Museum or the Valdese Community Affairs Office located at the Old Rock School. No donation is too big or too small and any support you provide will be greatly appreciated. Your tax-deductible contributions will add additional features to the installation and will help to make this project even more of an iconic image for the Town of Valdese. Help us celebrate 125 years of our hometown!

Project updates will be available at www.valdese125.com | For inquiries about the project please call 828-879-2129

Donations can be made by:
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*Please note - 125 TRAIN ART - in the memo line
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Morissa Angi is Director of Community Affairs and Tourism



Dear Dave,

Why don't you recommend having short-term disability insurance while doing the first three Baby Steps of your plan? It seems like a good time for it, when you're in the beginning stages of getting your finances in order.
Bob

Dear Bob,

You could certainly do that if you want, possibly even through your place of employment. I'm a big fan of folks having long-term disability insurance when they're in their prime wage-earning years. But short-term disability is something I've always considered to be gimmick insurance, and that's something I don't recommend or buy.

I get the argument, too, that short-term disability coverage usually isn't very expensive. But during the first two Baby Steps — getting a \$1,000 beginner emergency fund set aside, and paying off everything but the house — you're trying to limit expenses as much as possible. Chances are you wouldn't need it in Baby Step 3, because that covers your full emergency fund of three to six months of expenses.

Hope that helps, Bob!
—Dave

Dear Dave,

My husband and I are trying to buy a house, but we both have low credit scores, so we're having trouble securing a loan. We've heard you talk about getting a mortgage loan with no credit score. Is this the same as a low credit score?
Laura

Dear Laura,

No, it is not. No credit score, means you don't have any credit or your credit score is "indeterminable." A low credit score indicates you've had — or still have — debt in your life, and you haven't done a good job of paying creditors on time. Two things will help solve the problem of having a low credit score. One is time. If you've had instances of late payments from years ago, time will help heal that to a degree. The older late issues become, the less they count against you.

But my guess is you two probably have some bad debt. By bad debt, I mean things that were never paid, or accounts that are in collections. If that's the case, you need to contact those people, and settle those debts in full — and in writing — as quickly as possible. Officially close the accounts, too, before you try to buy a home.

When it comes to buying a home, Laura, I always advise folks to first be debt-free and have an emergency fund of three to six months of expenses set aside.
—Dave

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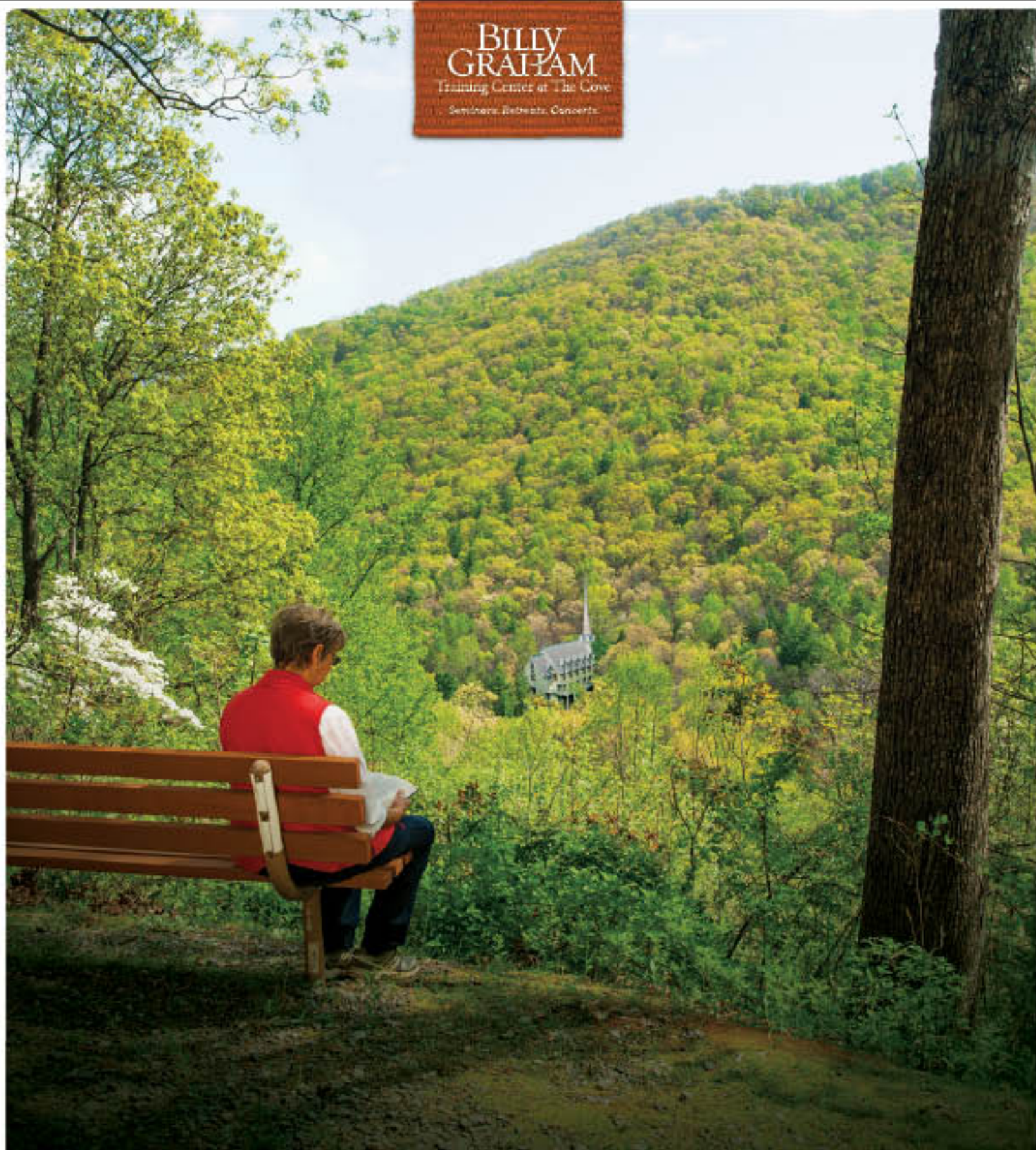
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Well Done
By Pastor Dan Qurollo
Burke County



The Bible uses several images to describe the nature of the Christian life. One of the more common is that of a race. This race is not a sprint; it is a marathon. We are not in this race for a short burst of time; rather, this race is a life-long course that entails many obstacles and dangers. Paul expressed his desire *"That I might finish my course with joy"* (Acts 20:24). Paul makes it very clear that each believer has a course designed by God. My course is not the same as your course; nor is yours the same as mine. We are each responsible to run the course which God has given to us as individuals. As believers, our motivating passion should be to hear the words *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."* What does it take to finish well?

1. A passionate love. Our love for God should be so strong that every other relationship should pale in comparison. The Bible teaches that we are to *"love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"* (Deuteronomy 6:5). Jesus said, *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:26). If we do not have a passionate love for God, we will not finish well.

2. A focused pursuit. Jesus taught, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matthew 6:33). Mary was commended for choosing the one thing that was needful (Luke 10:42). We are far too easily sidetracked by too many things. A disciplined runner knows the importance of keeping his focus solely on the finish line. A focused pursuit is vital to finishing well.

3. A frequent evaluation. We must take time to prayerfully consider where we are on our journey. With no time for evaluation, many have tragically veered off course. David prayed, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"* (Psalm 139:23-24).

Let's determine to implement these principles into our lives so that we might finish our race well.

Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website www.morgantonbaptist.net or find us on Facebook and YouTube.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
Exodus 20:12

Take a Seat Please
By Lana Ellis
Kingsport, Tennessee



Okay, everyone please be seated. No, not there! That's My seat! Just like Papa Bear's chair, Mama Bear's chair and Baby Bear's chair it's not unusual for us to have our own chair in our homes. My husband preferred a recliner but I like a cozy upholstered rocker instead.

Just as in our homes, some church going Christians have "our" seats in the church building also. Several years ago while visiting a church we chose a seat on the side aisle about half down the auditorium. In a few minutes we looked to our left and two bewildered ladies were standing there looking at us. I said, "Are we in your seats?" They responded with a nod. So...we, the visitors, politely stood and found another place to sit, hopefully not infringing on anyone's "private property." If these ladies were going to be so insistent they should have at least posted a "No Trespassing" sign! A pastor once said that he could always tell from the pulpit who was absent any given Sunday because certain people were not in their rightful place. Why do we who are told to love one another practice segregation in of all places our church services?

This is also true when it comes to "church fellowships". Who is sitting with you at your table during the fellowship meal? Most likely it's your immediate family, the same people you eat with every day. The church fellowship meal is a great opportunity to spread your wings and find someone different with whom to converse. It's a great time to reach out to the widow/widower or the single person who is there alone and especially any stranger in your midst. Something fun to do is have a "Surprise Birthday Party" church fellowship meal in the month of January. Each table is marked with a month of the year and everyone is told to take a seat at the table marked with the month of his/her birth. There's a cupcake with a candle at each place setting. When everyone is seated they are told to light the candle in front of them and sing, "Happy birthday to Me." It turns out that the "surprise party" is for everyone who will celebrate a birthday throughout the coming months. Everyone's ages they will be that year are totaled and "gifts" can be given to the youngest and the oldest table. This is not only a fun time but it's a great opportunity to "force" some people out of their comfort zones.

How about it? Are you willing to take the leap and wander into the "unknown" by sitting with someone different next Sunday? If you're not willing please post a "Do not Sit in My Seat" sign and save the visitor from having to relocate. To really mix things up the pastor could say to the congregation "Fruit basket turn over"! Goodness! In some churches that could be worse than choosing the color of paint or carpet!

Lana Ellis resides in Kingsport TN, next door to grandchildren. Church is West Colonial Hills Baptist Church.



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McDowell County 4-H

Young Guns Shooting Sports Teams

By Chad Ray
McDowell County

McDowell County 4-H Young Guns Shooting Sports teams traveled to Catawba Valley Wildlife Club in Vale, North Carolina for the District 8 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Hunter Education tournament on March 24th. Participants competed against teams from across the 8th district in shotgun, .22 rifle, archery and hunter skills. McDowell 4-H had both a junior and senior team. The seniors placed 7th overall with a score of 3198. Top Rifle shooter was Alyson Biddix with a 178, top shotgun shooter was Candace Hollifield with 190, top archer was Jocelyn Childres with 194 and top in Hunter Skills was Branson Peek with 169. Also competing were Clay Wilson, Adam Miller and Ethan McKinney.

Our Junior team finished 2nd place in the junior competition and qualified to move on to the state tournament to be held in Ellerbe, North Carolina on April 28th. Top shooters were Luke Lawing rifle, Joseph Gowan and Luke Lawing shotgun, Ty Allison Archery, and Gunner Diemrich hunter skills. Also competing were Ben Mast, Logan Crisp, Nathan Moore and Kellen Raison.

The McDowell 4-H Young Guns would like to thank all the parents and volunteers that made this possible with a special thanks to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Carolina West Shooting Club and the Friends of NRA. For information about McDowell 4-H please contact Chad Ray at (828) 652-8104.



Chad Ray is the 4-H Agent in McDowell County



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Bob Plott is a member of the Order of the Longleaf Pine, a Blue Ridge Heritage Area Artist, and an award-winning author of 5 books and numerous magazine columns in national outdoor magazines. His work has appeared on UNC-TV, The History Channel, and the John Boy and Billy Radio Show. He continues the family tradition of raising Plott Hounds on his Farm in Eufola, NC.



This project is made possible by funding from the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the NC Humanities Council



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Enjoying Everyday Life

The First Step to an Exciting Life

By Joyce Meyer



It's so amazing to me that God wants to be involved in every area of our lives. I remember when I got this revelation, and it changed my life.

At that time, I was part of a bowling league and we played once a week. I remember one night when I wasn't bowling very well, and I heard this prompting in my heart that said, "Ask Me to help you." Immediately I thought, "I can't ask God to help me bowl!"

But the truth is He wants to help us with everything we do. And when I started letting Him be involved in every area of my life – following the leading of the Holy Spirit – that's when life got really exciting!

What does it mean to be led by the Holy Spirit? Some may refer to it as being filled with – or sensitive to or anointed by – the Spirit. It sounds really spiritual, yet being led by the Spirit is actually a very practical part of living the Christian life. Simply put, to be led by the Holy Spirit just means to be obedient to Him. The Holy Spirit does such awesome, yet practical work in the lives of God's children. He is our Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener and Standby. He teaches us and guides us into truth...and He even brings the things we learn back to our remembrance as we need it.

And the best part of it all is that He lives in each of us. Ephesians 3:16 (AMPC) tells us that He enables us to be "...strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man

by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality]."

He comes to live in our hearts when we're born again, and then He teaches and guides us according to God's plan and purpose for us. One of the ways He does this is by convicting us of the sins in our life, and we learn what's right and

wrong as we grow in our faith. We may get by with things that are not right for a while, but the time comes when we need to grow up.

I remember when I would go to church every Sunday and then gossip about the pastor or whatever I didn't like about the service. Of course, I was not a very happy Christian during that time. And I couldn't have been a very good example of one to others either. Critical and judgmental attitudes like that, or murmuring, being unthankful, and complaining hinder our relationship with God and our representation of what a Christian is.

But eventually, I began to get this nagging, uneasy feeling every time I would say something negative about the pastor...or anyone else for that matter. I could feel that what I was saying was wrong, and I knew in my heart it was the Holy Spirit telling me it was time to grow up and mature spiritually.

I've come to the point in my relationship with God where it doesn't take long for me to be aware when I say or do something that is not pleasing to God. And this is what He wants for all His children: to develop sensitivity and obedience to His voice as He leads each of our lives. Romans 8:14 (AMPC) declares that "all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." This term "sons" indicates a level of maturity and intimacy in our relationship with Him.

God is not looking for spiritual robots; He doesn't want us all just following a bunch of rules for the sake of obedience. Jesus made a way, through His perfect sacrifice, for our sins to be completely washed away and removed from us so we can have a personal relationship with God. We are free to obey Him simply because we love Him, and we know that everything He tells us to do, or not do, is for our good. We just need to learn to follow His lead.

It's actually exciting to follow the Holy Spirit, and He wants to lead us all according to the plans God has for each of our lives. I'm not saying it will always be easy. King David was called a man after God's heart, but we know it wasn't because he did everything right. However, David had cultivated a passionate heart for God's will. He learned how to recover from his failures and move on in God, and because of that "God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do'" (Acts 13:22 NIV).

In our relationship with God, our part is to pray, study His Word, and learn to develop our own sensitivity and obedience to the Holy Spirit's lead. His promise to us is, "I will give them one heart [a new heart] and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stone [unnaturally hardened] heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh [sensitive and responsive to the touch of their God]" (Ezekiel 11:19 AMPC).

Trust the Holy Spirit and follow His lead. You'll discover His way is the best, most exciting journey you can find!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-teaching CD series Keys to Loving Your Journey. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *Overload: How to Unplug, Unwind and Unleash Yourself from the Pressure of Stress* (Hachette). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.



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Burke County Schools

Patton, Liberty Artists Recognized For Talents

By Student News Ambassador Robin Heeralall
By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County



The Asheville Museum of Art has recognized students from Patton High School and Liberty Middle School with Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Winners from Patton are:

- Cloe Graf, a sophomore, won the Silver Key for her drawing.
- Marissa Totty, a junior, won an Honorable Mention for her drawing.
- Joel Vasquez, a senior, won an Honorable Mention for his ceramic teapot.
- Dillion Zander, a senior, won an Honorable Mention for his ceramic blowfish.

Winners from Liberty are:

- Katelyn Thao, an eighth grader, won the Gold Key for a drawing titled "Fox and Feather," and an Honorable Mention for her piece titled "Mothers Skirt." Katelyn's "Fox and Feather" will be on display at the Biltmore Estate through May.
- Annabel Macias, a seventh grader, won a Silver Key, for a self-portrait.
- Hannah Shores, a seventh grader, won an Honorable Mention for an acrylic painting titled "Desert Wasteland."

Robin Bias, the visual art teacher at Patton, said, "I was so thrilled to know these students won the Scholastic Contest Art Awards. It's a great feeling when you see your students achieve success in the classroom, but especially when they gain recognition outside of the classroom. I'm very proud of their achievement."

Amber Rickertsen, the visual art teacher at Liberty, said "I am so proud of these three young ladies who worked so hard and are being recognized for such a high honor for middle school students to achieve."

As a Gold Key winner, Katelyn is eligible for the National Scholastic Art Awards Program. Judges look for works that incorporate creativity, originality, technical skill, and the artists' personal voice or vision.



Scholastic art fms: Hannah Shores, left, Katelyn Thao, & Annabel Macias



Scholastic art fms: Dillion Zander, left, Joel Vasquez, Mrs. Robin Bias, Marissa Totty and Cloe Graf

Cheryl Shuffler is the Public Relations Officer for the Burke County Public School System.



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The Women's Social Club

By Beth Davis
Mitchell County

"There are not strangers here; Only friends you haven't yet met." - William Butler Yeats



She walked in quietly...maybe even a little tentatively. Silently putting down her things, turning on lights, carefully pulling out her materials, making sure everything was "just so" to make everyone feel welcome. It was important that everything be perfect. How many women would show up. Would ANY women show up?

No one showed up.

Mildly disheartened, two weeks later she did the very same thing. Wash. Rinse. Spin. You know the drill.

Again, no one showed up.

Discouragement morphed into determination. Again, she quietly laid out her own personal Welcome Mat. And then she waited...and waited...and waited. And, then...

Two women very quietly, very tentatively tip-toed in. "Welcome, welcome! Please! Come in!"

And thus, finally, began the Women's Social Club that SafePlace Bilingual Advocate, Jennifer Arteaga, had so carefully planned.

They chatted and got to know each other, and it just so happened that two of them shared a birthday...on that very day. So naturally, the women had an impromptu birthday party. They talked about the first birthday they remembered, and each shared which birthday celebration was their favorite. It's conversations like these that help build unique bonds and foster deep friendships.

The Women's Social Club was created for our Latina sisters to feel more like a part of our community. It's a much-needed, pressure-free opportunity that provides camaraderie, support, and friendship. The Women's Social Club also helps Latina women feel connected, significant, appreciated, important, and safe in the community they call home.

In addition to spur of the moment birthday parties, there are also activities and crafts...sewing, jewelry making, baking and cooking, and even beauty days. Having Jennifer, who can help with resources and support with no language barrier, in the community is a tremendous bonus.

The Women's Social Club meets 10:00am-11:30am, every 2nd and 4th Thursday at the Trinity Episcopal Church Parish Hall, and welcomes all Latina women ages 18 and up. Transportation and child care are provided. For more information, please call Jennifer Arteaga at Mitchell County SafePlace - 828-765-4015.



Jennifer Arteaga

El Grupo Social de Mujeres

"Aquí no hay extraños; Solo amistades que aun no has conocido." - William Butler Yeats

Entro calladamente... de una forma un poco teme. Silenciosamente dejando sus cosas, prendiendo las luces, cuidadosamente sacando sus materiales, asegurándose que todo estuviera de manera que hiciera todas sentirse bienvenidas. Era importante que todo estuviera perfecto. ¿Cuántas mujeres llegarían? ¿Se atreverían asomarse?

Nadie llegó.

Ligeramente desanimada, dos semanas después ella hizo lo mismo. La misma rutina.

De nuevo, nadie llegó.

El desaliento se convirtió en determinación. Otra vez, calladamente con brazos abiertos se puso a esperar... y esperar... y esperar. Y luego...

Dos mujeres muy calladas y tímidamente entraron con los pies de puntita. "Bienvenidas, ¡Hola! Por favor, pasen, pasen."

De este modo, finalmente, empezó El Grupo Social de Mujeres que la Defensora Bilingüe, Jennifer Arteaga de Mitchell County SafePlace había planeado tan cuidadosamente.

Se pusieron a platicar y se empezaron a conocer, cuando salió a la plática que dos de ellas compartían el mismo cumpleaños...ese mismo día. Así que naturalmente, tuvieron una fiesta de cumpleaños pequeña y espontánea. Compartieron sobre su primera memoria de un cumpleaños, y cada una habló sobre cual fiesta de cumpleaños fue su favorita. Son conversaciones como estas las que ayudan construir vínculos únicos y fomentar amistades profundas.

El Grupo Social de Mujeres fue creado para nuestras hermanas Latinas, para que se sientan como parte de nuestra comunidad. Es una oportunidad libre de presión que proporciona camaradería, apoyo y amistad. El Grupo Social de Mujeres también ayuda a las mujeres Latinas sentirse unidas, significantes, apreciadas, importantes y a salvo en la comunidad que ellas llaman su hogar.

En adición a las fiestas de cumpleaños espontáneas, también hay actividades, manualidades, talleres de cocina, repostería, días de belleza, proveemos transportación y cuidado de niños. Teniendo a Jennifer quien puede ayudar con recursos y apoyo sin barreras idiomáticas en nuestra comunidad es una gran bonificación.

El Grupo Social de Mujeres se junta cada 2º y 4º Jueves del mes en la Iglesia Episcopal Trinity. Invitamos a todas las mujeres Latinas de 18 en adelante. Para más información y como conseguir transportación por favor llamar a el 828.765.4015 y preguntar por Jennifer Arteaga.

Beth Davis is the Resource Development Coordinator at Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-4015 or bethbdavis60@gmail.com.

The Rotary of Spruce Pine

Spruce Pine Rotarians Celebrate Doug Sudduth!

By Elaine Percival
Mitchell County

Meeting on April 5, 2018, The Rotary Club of Spruce Pine bid farewell to Rotarian Doug Sudduth, who has been a faithful and supportive member for twenty-four years. With prompts from fellow Rotarians, he regaled the group with a number of personal stories. In recognition of his many contributions to Rotary, the club presented Doug with an inscribed plaque and designated him as a Paul Harris Fellow. He and his wife, Billie Ruth, will be missed by the entire community. Doug truly exemplifies the motto of Rotary: "Service Above Self."

At a recent meeting of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine, (3/29/18) Mitchell County Manager, Kathy Young was presented a locally designed mug from Rotarian Reid Duncan.

If you ask Kathy Young, to describe a typical day in her job as Mitchell County Manager, you will quickly learn there is no such thing. Some days begin as early as 5:30AM and on others, she may take her last phone call after 10:30PM. Ms. Young has served Mitchell County faithfully in a number of positions and has worked with every Mitchell County Manager for thirty-eight years. Introduced by Rotarian Reid, she fielded a number of questions dealing with, but not limited to, taxes, traffic, tourism and oversight of employees. The Rotary Club of Spruce Pine appreciates Ms. Young's presentation and commends her for the excellent service she provides to the citizens of Mitchell County.



Elaine lives in Little Switzerland and is a member of the Rotary in Spruce Pine.

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~ Anne Richardson

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Forgotten Gospel

By Jason Koon
Burke County

This is the second article in a series on some of the central truths of the gospel that are slowly becoming endangered in today's Church culture.

The Kingdom

The word Gospel literally mean "good news." It was used to describe a town-crier running through the streets with an announcement. Sometimes, it would also have been used of a herald going into a town ahead of the King, announcing the King's arrival to the people. I wonder if that's what Early Christian's had in mind when they coopted this word and made it their own?

So, if the Gospel is an announcement, what are we announcing? Today's Church seems to lack a generally agreed upon consensus of what this primary announcement is. If we are carrying a message, what is the message that we are carrying? To some, the announcement is a list of rules to keep and behaviors to avoid, for others it is feeding the hungry or digging wells, for others the announcement is that God loves you, or maybe even that you're valuable and you need to believe in yourself because God believes in You. All these announcements – except the last one – are important pieces of biblical teaching. We are called to feed the hungry and dig wells. We are called to avoid sin, and to recognize and rest in God's love for us, and while these are all important teachings, they are not the central message that God has given us to announce.

In Matthew 24:14, Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world." The gospel, the good news, is the announcement concerning The Kingdom of God coming into the world. John the Baptist said the same thing, Matthew 3:2 summarizes his message as, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And according to Mark, Jesus, in the early days of His ministry, took up a similar mantra, "the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). I could go on and on, text after text, verse after verse, old testament and new, all showing that the primary focus of the Gospel message revealed to us by Scripture is The Kingdom.

Unfortunately, this message of the Kingdom of Heaven is largely absent from our gospel conversations today. If I were to summarize the message of the Church today the way Matthew and Mark summarized the messages of John and Jesus, I would have to say something like:

"Ask Jesus into Your heart, because He has a wonderful plan for your life."
Or, "Come feel the Spirit and have confidence that God is going to handle all your problems."

Or maybe, "pray to receive Christ so you don't go to hell."
There's nothing wrong with any of these messages. They're not unbiblical or incorrect, but they are incomplete. And to be honest, these messages don't even compare to the glorious announcement that the King has arrived, that He has taken our sins upon Himself, paid the price, and granted us participation in His work by placing His Wisdom and His Spirit inside us. These modern messages ring hollow and unexciting in comparison. But the King has come, the Kingdom has been established in the hearts and minds of His people. And while we are still foreigners living in a foreign kingdom plagued by sin and death, the Kingdom of Heaven is alive and well in our hearts and minds as we persist in the hope that He will soon return to fully and finally set up His glorious reign on the earth. Now, that's good news.

Jason Koon is Pastor of Bridge42 Church in Morganton, NC.

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Proverbs 6:20

Brunch and Run

By Don Ford
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

Relay of the Blue Ridge would like to invite everyone who is a cancer survivor or care provider to the annual Survivors' Brunch at Shoal Creek Baptist Church in Burnsville, NC on Saturday, May 5th at 10 AM. Door prizes will be given away at this special event. For more information about this and other upcoming Relay for Life events, please contact Rhonda Buchanan at (828) 766-1630.

RELAY FOR LIFE SPOTLIGHT – LOU EDWARDS

When you hear the word "catalyst," what comes to mind? One definition of that word is a person who is stimulating and helps spark an event. That only partially describes Lou Edwards, a volunteer for Relay of the Blue Ridge.

Mrs. Lou Edwards is sparking others to get involved with Relay for Life in Yancey County. She and her husband Bud live in Burnsville, NC. Mrs. Edwards is a mother, grandmother and pastor's wife, yet she still finds time to champion the cause to find a cure for cancer.

When asked why she is so passionate about Relay for Life, Lou responded, "So many in our family have been taken from us due to cancer.... including a sister, mother-in-law and sister-in-law." In addition, her brother-in-law Terry is a cancer survivor.

Lou is certainly involved in the RFL effort. She has secured over 20 sponsorships, sold over 100 luminaries and provided supplies to the Yancey County Relay teams. Lou also sold her homemade fried apple pies at the Hoops for Hope Fundraiser recently held at Mitchell High School.

Mrs. Edwards stated, "All of us ought to be involved since cancer has affected so many lives, but whether or not you have a team, the important thing is to get involved. If you have a family member with cancer, remember to live every day with them to the fullest." Anyone who would like to become a catalyst and join the Relay for Life effort, please call (828) 766-1630.

Don Ford has served the Lord as a minister for 40 years. He and his wife Deborah have one daughter who lives in Georgia.





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Burke United Christian Ministries

We Are Thankful

By David Burleson
Burke County



We are very thankful that spring is officially here, and, hopefully, most of old man winter is behind us. The Burke United Christian Ministries is very thankful and appreciative of all the churches, groups and individuals that supported our work during the cold, winter months. As a team, we were able to meet the needs of hundreds of our friends and neighbors who needed just a little extra to make in through the winter.

As we look back over the winter months, we see God working through our ministry to support and encourage others. For December, January, February and March, BUCM was able to do the following with the help of our community partners:

- Assisted 7,251 Families
- Assisted 15,680 Individuals
- Provided 386 Showers to the Homeless
- Provided 356 Homeless Food Packs
- Provided 195 Homeless Individuals with Tents, Sleeping Bags, Blankets or other Items
- Provided Fire Wood to 36 Families
- Provided Clothing to 1,276 Individuals totaling \$18,197.89
- Provided Heat Assistance to 401 Individuals totaling \$32,845.21
- Provided Rent Assistance to 64 Individuals totaling \$7,218.31
- Provided Assistance with Utilities to 108 Individuals totaling \$9,966
- Provided 20,884 Meals in the Soup Kitchen
- Served 2,859 families in our Food Pantry totaling 6,393 individuals with 217,248 pounds of food.

As evidenced by the above statistics, the winter months were busy at BUCM. This work could not have been accomplished without our wonderful volunteers and staff. On April 16 BUCM celebrated our volunteers at our annual banquet. A big thank you to the following who made the banquet happen:

- Mrs. Mary Ellen Weise, Committee Chair
- Mrs. Terre Colabella
- Mr. Glen Reep
- Mr. Stephen Kincaid
- The First Methodist Church of Morganton and Rena McMahon
- The Freedom and Patton Anchor and Interact Clubs along with the National Honor Societies along with their sponsors, Kelly Baker, Michelle Gregory and Tosha Haskins

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of BUCM. Each and every volunteer is vital to our ministry. A huge thank you to each soup kitchen team that prepares delicious meals for a daily lunch and dinner on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings. Our soup kitchen teams are as follows:

AARP 3262

Bethel Church of Christ, Bethel UMC, Blue Ridge Health Care, Bridge 42, Burke County EMS, Burkemont Baptist Church, Calvary Lutheran (4 Teams), Christ UMC, Continental Teves, Crosslink, Drexel Memorial, Easter Seals UCP, Enon Baptist, First Advent Christian Church, First Baptist Morganton, First Presbyterian - 2 Teams, First UMC, Gaston Chapel AME, Gibbs Chapel, Grace Baptist Seniors, Grace Episcopal, The Rising Church, His Image Ministries, Hopewell Baptist, Linville UMC, Mission AME, Morganton Elk's Lodge, Morganton Public Safety, Morganton Service League, Mt. Home Baptist (Youth, Brotherhood, Senior Group), Mountain Grove UMC, Mull's Grove Baptist, New Day Christian Church, North Morganton UMC (2 teams), Nowlings Chapel Freewill Baptist, Pleasant Ridge Youth, Rainhill Wesleyan, Rhonda's Girls, Salem UMC, Slades Chapel, Smyrna Baptist, South Mountain Children's Home, St. Charles (2 Teams), St. Mary's / St. Stephens Episcopal, St. Paul's Episcopal, Summit Community Church, United Baptist, Victory Church, Walker Road Baptist, WINGNUTS, Zion Baptist

We also want to thank our other volunteer groups:

Food Pantry Volunteers, Front Office Volunteers, Clothing Closet Volunteers, Clothing Store Volunteers, Crafters, Food Harvesters, Dining Room, Warehouse, Silverware, Wood Ministry

BUCM is asking our community partners for their input on the effectiveness of our ministry through an online survey. Our partners have or will be receiving an email with specific instruction on completing the survey. For those receiving the survey, please take time to complete it so we are better able to meet the needs of those we serve.

To continue to support our clients and provide them with an additional hand up, BUCM is opening a Learning Lab with 16 computer workstations and other teaching resources. Because of a generous grant from James Tool and Waldensian Presbyterian Church and the support of Western Piedmont Community College, our clients will be able to use this lab to work toward obtaining their high school equivalency (formerly a GED), enroll in on-line college classes, complete job training programs, do job searches, have food preparation classes, learn how to budget, and a variety of other activities. We also plan to offer tutoring in the lab for our students in the afternoons and during the summer months. Our prayer is that these new resources will provide new opportunities for those we serve.

BUCM would once again be asking for churches to do a Backyard Bible School during the summer for the children who come to our ministry. Last year's Bible School was a great success. If any church is interested just give me a call at (828) 433-8075 or email me at bucmdirector@gmail.com.

Also, BUCM, Burke United Way, the Outreach Center, and the Burke County Public Schools are collaborating to provide back to school supplies and clothing for our Burke County students during the annual, Build a Backpack event on Sat-

urday, August 18. Donations and sponsorships for this event are greatly appreciated. Back to school needs for families are a huge expense and any little bit helps.

Please continue to life our ministry in your prayers and come by for a visit any time. Let's be reminded of the words of the writer to the Hebrews "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." - Hebrews 13:16

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries

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Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4



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Avery County

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Avery County Chamber: May 14, 2018 Golf Classic, Linville Golf Club

Plumtree Presbyterian Church - You are invited to join Plumtree Presbyterian for special meetings with Rodney Hogue on the weekend of May 4th - 6th. The schedule for the weekend looks like this:

Friday - May 4th 7:00pm

Saturday - May 5th 7:00pm

Sunday - May 6th 11:00am and 6:30pm (Healing Service)

Dr. Rodney Hogue has been in full-time ministry since 1977. He pastored over 32 years on the west coast in Washington state and California, his last being 23 years at Community of Grace in Hayward, California. Rodney began to minister in the areas of deliverance and healing in the 1980's while pastoring in churches in Washington state. His passion is to equip believers to minister in power for healing, deliverance, and to see the restoration of lives to fulfill one's destiny. Rodney now ministers itinerantly equipping believers nationally and internationally to walk out their identity and expand God's Kingdom which includes demonstrating the Kingdom of God with power. He and Mary reside near Abilene, Texas.

Burke County

Be There at the Job Fair! Area employers are invited to participate in the Fourth Annual Burke County Public Schools High School Job Fair on Wednesday, May 9, 2018. This annual event is a great time to connect with over 400 Juniors and Seniors searching for job openings and career opportunities.

We will promote the event to students who may be looking for full-time careers/jobs upon graduation, as well as those seeking part-time jobs in any capacity.

This year we will host the event at Jimmy C. Draughn High School at 709 Lovelady Road in Valdese. Set up begins at 7:30 am, and the event will last until 12:30 pm.

If you have questions, please call Ms. Jamie Norton, MEd, CTE Coordinator. Career Development/ Instructional Mgmt. and Internship Coordinator for BCPS at 828-438-2997.

Save the Date!

June 1, 2018

at Silvercreek Plantation Golf Course

Burke County Chamber - The Burke County Chamber is currently looking for our next President/CEO to lead the chamber. Please see the job description at this website. <https://tinyurl.com/y8or4cjp>

Catawba River Baptist Association - Our community is blessed to have so much diversity and with that comes opportunities for churches to show the love of Jesus. We have many families with children with special needs and the church is in a perfect position to minister to these families with love, patience and understanding. With that in mind, CRBA will be offering training for churches and individuals on Tuesday, May 15th from 6-8 p.m. at our CRBA office in Morganton. Please put this on your calendar and make plans to join us.

Our first ever Friends of Catawba River Baptist Association Benefit Banquet will be Tuesday, May 22 at 6 p.m. at Mount Home Baptist Church. Our special guest will be Rev. Dannie Williams who pastors the First Baptist Church of Lyons, Georgia. Dannie loves the Lord who has used him mightily as pastor, church planter, and church revitalizer having a world-wide ministry. Please join us as we ask God for the miracle of being a debt free Association. For FREE tickets and more information please give us a call at 828-427-0137.

CRBA Men's Ministry will be hosting CRBA's Annual Family Skating Party for Burke County. Join us Sunday, May 20th from 2-4 p.m. at the Skating Pavilion in Morganton. This will be a lot of fun so bring out the family and join us. Also, Catawba River Baptist Association will be taking care of the entrance fees and skate rentals so feel free to bring your family and friends!

World Changers (helping CRBA change Burke County one family at a time) will be happening July 16-21 and we need your help. We need 12 additional men/women who will serve as Crew Chiefs for the teams of students. These folks

should have some construction skills. We also need 2 more churches who will provide lunch for a team Tuesday through Friday. Lastly, we need churches to help clean the school each morning after the students leave for worksites. If you or your church can help us with any or all of these needs, please give us a call at our CRBA office at 828-437-0137.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County

1. God's Closet-May 4-Friday from 9am-12 pm

Visit us on Facebook at God's Closet-Morganton for more info

FREE Infant, Children and teen clothing, shoes and bedding. No documentation required. Only \$1 entry fee and you shop for 1/2 an hour and get free stuff! Drawings for free prizes and gift cards and free childcare while you shop! We take donations all year long.

2. Health for Life-Burke will be hosting their free, monthly plant-based health social on May 20, 2018-Sunday at 5:30 pm. Everyone brings a plant-based dish and the recipe and enjoys a great healthy meal together! Location rotates between volunteers' homes. Please call Cindy at 870-510-8048 or email at cjmercer@tds.net for more information and directions to event.

3. Carolina Conference Seventh-day Adventist annual camp meeting at beautiful Lake Junaluska! May 27-June 2, 2018. For more info visit-www.carolinadasa.org

God's Closet - Morganton

Phone - 828-244-3876

E-Mail - morganton@godscloset.com

Website - www.godscloset.com

Facebook Page - God's Closet - Morganton

@GodsClosetMorganton

After visiting the God's Closet - Morganton Facebook Page please Like and Share with your friends!

Town of Valdese Community Affairs & Tourism

May 25, 2018: 6:00pm. Home brew competition at the LPDA.

May 26, 2018: 10AM Festival at LPDA that will have family-friendly activities for all. Activities will include: bocce lessons, courenta, grape-stomping, basket weaving, and special food!

Festival Di Birra: 3-7pm at Waldensian Mill

May 28-June 1, 2018: Waldensian Archives/Genealogies and special events at the Waldensian Heritage Museum. Meet with a representative from the Archivio Tavola Valdese of Italy to learn more about your heritage. By appointment only.

June 1-2, 2018: A Cultural Symposium- Four Faces of Waldensianism. Four Faces of Waldensian Witness: Italy, France, Germany, and South America. Special presentations by:

• Claudio Pasquet: Pastor and Historian of the Waldensian/Methodist Church of Italy.

• Gabriel Audisio: Writer and Historian of the Southern French Waldensians of the 15th & 16th Centuries.

• Albert de Lange: Writer and Historian of the Waldensian Settlements in Germany.

• Javier Paoli: Waldensian Historian from Uruguay on the settlements in Argentina and Uruguay and their ongoing witness today

McDowell County

Cross United Methodist Church - 24/7 Sharing Food Pantry at Cross United Methodist Church in Marion. The food is available for anyone in the county who is in need and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with no questions asked. We do ask however that you take only what you need so items will be left for others who may be in need. The church is located at 85 West Cross Street in Marion just past Blue Ridge Terrace Apartments in the Cross Mill Community. Donations of non-perishable food items and gently used blankets are very much needed and can be dropped off at the pantry site or you may call 828-442-8098 or 828-460-9257. If you would like to make a monetary donation, make checks payable to Cross United Methodist Church c/o of Susan Gossett, 66 Willis Drive, Marion, N.C. 28752. Your continued prayers for this outreach ministry are very much appreciated!

First Baptist of Marion - Priscilla Shirer Simulcast Saturday, May 19 9:00a.m. - 4:00p.m. Blanton Family Ministry Center \$10/Ticket Light Breakfast & Lunch Tickets available in the Church Office

New Wed. Night Groups: We all Struggle to know how to structure our lives around God. Join this group as they explore and practice sacred opportunities to connect with your Creator. You might add a few new practices to your spiritual toolkit along the way! Led by Dr. Mark Burton Food as Medicine Did you know that diet has become the #1 contributor of diseases that cause death and disability? Did you know that some of our leading causes of death and disease, including diabetes and heart disease, can be reversed by diet? If you are curious about how food can be used as medicine to improve your health, you are invited to a 7-week study on Food as Medicine by Dr. Melanie Orange. Sinning Like a Christian Led by Scott Hagaman. Study will continue throughout the semester. Location: Blanton FMC Lobby

Grace Community Church--Ecuador Mission Trip

We will be taking a group to Ecuador in June of 2018 to help with construction, medical assessments and support for women and children. The cost is \$1500 (more info to come). If you are interested email:robin@graceforall.org

Mitchell County

Bear Creek Baptist Church - Women's Prayer Breakfast May 11th, 8:00am at DT's.

Senior Adult Rally: Berry Chapel Baptist Church Monday May 7th at 10:00am
Lunch provided.

Celebrate Recovery

This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving hip and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise@385-0061

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church: Benefit Singing for Magnolia Burleson Saturday May 19, 2018 at 5pm.

Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine - Calvary Chapel Church in Asheville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm at 79 Sean Dr. (Estatoe area—off Brushy Creek Rd). Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Mitchell County Historical Society: We are pleased to announce our second presentation in our Speakers Series with The Story of the Plott Hound: NC's Official State Dog. Our speaker is Bob Plott, NC Humanities Road Scholar, who will share the harrowing and, sometimes hilarious, true stories of the breed that his G.G.G. Great Grandfather George Plott first brought to this country in the 1770's.

An extra treat is that our own Will Ritter will be joining Bob in this program as a special musical guest.

This event will take place at the MITCHELL SENIOR CENTER in Ledger, NC on MAY 21st at 7:00 PM. If you are unsure of the location of the Senior Center, please give us a call: 828-688-4371.

Please come and enjoy the fun!

Main Street Spruce Pine

Run for Holland, May 26, Downtown Spruce Pine

First Friday Concert, June 1, Central Park

Troutacular, June 2, Downtown Spruce Pine

TRAC Studio Tour, June 1-3, Mitchell & Yancey Counties

Downtown Day, June 9, Central Park

Movies in the Park, June 29, Central Park

4th of July Celebration, July 4, Downtown Spruce Pine

Movies in the Park, July 13, Central Park

BBQ & Bluegrass, July 20-21, Riverside Park

Movies in the Park, July 27, Central Park

Mineral & Gem Festival, Aug 2-5 Grassy Creek

First Friday Concert, Aug. 3, Central Park

Empty Bowls Fundraiser, Aug. 20, First Baptist Church

First Friday Concert, Sept. 7, Central Park

Fall Clean Up, Sept. 15, Downtown Spruce Pine

Greenlee Mapping Day, Oct. TBD, Downtown Spruce Pine

Antique Festival, Oct. 13, Downtown Spruce Pine

Potter's Market, Oct. 13-14, Cross Street Building

Merchant Trick or Treat, Oct. 31, Downtown Spruce Pine

Small Business Saturday, Nov. 24, Downtown Spruce Pine

Kiwanis Christmas Parade, Nov. 24, Downtown Spruce Pine

TRAC Studio Tour, Nov. 30-Dec. 2, Mitchell-Yancey counties

For more information about any of these events, call SPMS at 828-765-3008.

First Baptist Church - A Self-Defense Class will be offered by Pastor Rocky on Saturday, May 12th. Three Classes will be offered (10:00am-11:30am; 12:00noon-1:30pm; 2:00pm-3:30pm) Classes are limited to 10 per class. A sign-up sheet is in the vestibule.

Relay For Life, Relay of the Blue Ridge would like to invite everyone who is a cancer survivor or care provider to the annual Survivors' Brunch at Shoal Creek Baptist Church in Burnsville, NC on Saturday, May 5th at 10 AM. The American Cancer Society has been instrumental in leading the way in cancer research for many years. Relay of the Blue Ridge planning meetings are held at the Mitchell County Senior Center in Ledger on the first and third Tuesdays each month at 5PM. Anyone from Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties interested in helping with the Relay for Life effort is invited to attend. For more information, please contact Rhonda Buchanan at (828) 467-3439.

North Carolina Rhododendron Festival Celebrates 72 Years and 2 full days of family fun. On June 15 and 16, the Town of Bakersville, "Gateway to the Roan and Home to the Arts," will host its 72nd North Carolina Rhododendron Festival which is among the oldest and most respected festivals in the Southeast. The Rhododendron Festival Arts and Crafts Fair on both Friday and Saturday will have live music all day; a special children's interactive play on Saturday; food vendors including local farm to table selections, authentic Hispanic and Oriental choices, wood fired pizza, and popular sweet treats; regional arts and crafts people; commercial vendors; inflatables and train rides for the kids; nonprofit exhibits, and the famous Ducky Derby. There's a classic car show on Saturday as well as a 10K run and street dancing both Friday and Saturday nights til midnight. The Festival will feature the Rhododendron Festival Pageant on Friday and Saturday evenings. Come to Bakersville! You will be a few steps away from 2 world class galleries

and other great local artists. Arts and Crafts people as well as commercial vendor spaces are available: Contact Dr. Dan Barron drdanbarron@gmail.com or 828-284-1914 <http://www.ncrhododendronfestival.org/>.

Support Group For Caregivers Of Those With Memory Loss to hold meetings the first Friday of each month from 1-3pm

Care & Share, a newly-formed support group for caregivers of loved ones who have memory loss, will hold monthly meetings at the offices of Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, 236 Hospital Dr. in Spruce Pine, from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. High Country Caregiver Foundation welcomes and encourages all caregivers to attend.

Families dealing with a loved one with memory loss can quickly become exhausted, traumatized, and isolated, and this new group intends to provide support, friendship, education, information and referrals for caregivers. Monthly meetings held on the first Friday of each month will offer refreshments and fellowship. There will be opportunities for caregivers to tell their stories, learn useful tips, trade information, and give and gain support to others in the same situation.

For further information about the group and the meeting please contact Suzanne Russell at (714) 614-5867 or Janet Ouzts at jnutozts@yahoo.com.

Downtown Spruce Pine

I have completed the 2018 calendar of events for downtown. This year, we have added a new event- "Downtown Day". This will be a day geared to bring our locals downtown to celebrate Main Street and all we have to offer. We are still working out the details, but will have activities, games and music planned and hope you will be part of the day. We have also scheduled 3 outdoor movies, in addition to the summer concerts. (Sponsorship opportunities are still available for these events if you would like to help. Many thanks to Tree House Mountain Realty, Peoples Furniture, Superior Installation and Tropical Grill for their support this season).

- Restaurant owners- we would like to get your ideas/feedback on how we can help get more patrons to your door when we have our concerts/movies/farmers market. There is definitely a missed opportunity here. Coupons? special sales? Brown bag lunch? If you have ideas, please call or email me and share. I will take all ideas back to the PR committee for discussion.

- If anyone wants one of the Historical Society Depot ornaments, I have them in my office still. Just let me know when you are coming if you are interested in one.

- I have multiple businesses interested in locating downtown. If you have a "move in ready" space available or one coming available, and I have not been in touch, please contact me asap.

- In case you missed it.... we are excited to partner with the Spruce Pine Farmers Market by hosting the event in Central Park every Wednesday, beginning April 18th. The winter market will be in the visitor center the first Saturday of March.

Mitchell County Baptist Association - Mitchell Association has volunteered to be a drop-off point for churches to bring in their old material, bibles and literature to be used by the organization "Love Packages." This material will be picked up on a regular basis.

For more information on this organization, please go to lovepackages.org. Their purpose from the beginning has been to equip and strengthen the Church overseas. They are enabling missionaries and workers around the world to reach the lost, plant churches, train leaders, disciple believers and serve the poor.

The office has a list of what can be used.

Good News Bible Clubs: There will be a new chapter for Mitchell Yancey Avery and McDowell Counties. Growth is always good. Training dates for the new volunteers is: Aug. 4th Burke and McDowell -Glenwood Baptist Church 9-3 Aug. 18th-Avery and Yancey County location to be announced 9-3.

Senior Adult Day Monday May 7th 10:00am Berry Chapel Baptist Church, Guest speaker Renea Henderson, Good food and Good fellowship.

Mitchell County Chamber

Spruce Pine Farmer's Market Finds New Home

We have a new winter location for the market!!

We will be at the community room of Spruce Pine Main Street at 167 Locust street. We will be inside from 12-4pm. This will be our winter location the 1st Saturday of the month from January till April. Come shop local with us.

The NC Mineral and Gem Festival is one of the largest and longest running events in our area and it takes everyone to make it happen each year! Please consider joining our team as an event sponsor this year!

It takes nearly a hundred volunteers to make this event happen for our community every year! And it takes our great sponsors too!

Our sponsors' support helps us spread the word about the event throughout the southeast to help bring more people to the event and to our local businesses.

Email us for sponsorship information!

Springmaid Mountain: Equestrian Camp July 10-13,2018!

We are pleased to offer an Equestrian Day Camp for riders of various skill levels. Campers will work on general horsemanship, riding skills, trail work, and equestrian arts and crafts projects. Campers will also perform their newly acquired skills for their friends and family on Friday. Camp will be held Tuesday-Friday 8 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Camp is \$150.00 and is for children ages 8-14. For more information please call 828-765-2353.

continued on page 14

Marlene's Meditations

The Right Angle

By Marlene Houk
Burke County



As I watched, the confident young man lurched back just in time to narrowly miss tumbling over the cliff. But, wait, that couldn't be! We were in the middle of a busy city street. My eyes couldn't fathom the tangled jungle of branches and frightening drop-offs in front of me. While my heart slowly resumed its normal beat, I saw him carefully look at what had caused his near miss with death. Across the chasm, the anamorphic drawing leered menacingly, mocking our surprise. But, when I looked at it from a different angle, I realized that it was simply two dimensional, not three. What the young man had feared did not exist. What he had assumed was irrelevant. And the sudden change of direction was unnecessary.

Do you know the definition of anamorphic art? According to the Britannica.com website, Anamorphosis, in the visual arts, [is] an ingenious perspective technique that gives a distorted image of the subject represented in a picture when seen from the usual viewpoint but so executed that if viewed from a particular angle, or reflected in a curved mirror, the distortion disappears and the image in the picture appears normal. [It] was first employed in the 17th century, ... The first examples appear in Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks.



Look up <http://tracyleestum.com/portfolio/> for some examples of street art using this anamorphic method. They look so real that it's difficult not to react to the emotion of what your brain is assuming. The clever angles distort reality and absorb our minds, distracting us from walking on down the sidewalk.

This method of art reminds me of a biblical principle. Sometimes, our lives slither into distortion when we view it from our perspective rather than the Bible's insight. Our issue becomes frightening, looming like an ogre. But, when we look at the problem through the particular angle of Scripture, our lives return to normal, and our fears slink away, possibilities bloom and hope is reborn! The following verse urges us to look at the correct angle of our lives, through the eternal perspective rather than an earthly one.

2 Corinthians 4:18 *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

This correct perspective will restore our hope and trust in the LORD who designed the portrait of our lives with His own palette of stunning colors. The right angle to assessing our own situations is so succinctly stated in Philippians 1:6 Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

The women in the Gospels underscore this critical idea of looking at life through the right angle of God's Word. Mary Magdalene was from the town of Magdala, a prosperous Galilean seacoast village even in biblical times. But to Mary, the town held unimaginable memories of the horrors of demon possession. The anamorphic picture of her past labeled her with the shame and fear of her tormentors. The roaring lion of evil had possessed her with his immense power and hovered on the verge of consuming and consigning her to hell. But a miracle of epic proportions instantly changed her life when Jesus cast out seven demons. She gratefully followed him, traveling and serving with him in his 2.5 to 3.5-year ministry. Magdalene was the name for her ugly past, and she was forever linked with its humiliation. Sometimes our past follows us inexorably into the future, mocking our efforts to lose it.

But, once I learned that the word, Magdala, actually means tower, the first verse that occurred to me was

Proverbs 18:10 *The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*

The LORD Himself had become her Magdala, her strong tower! From her new angle, the degradation and terrors no longer frightened or condemned her. She was Mary, and her past had been redeemed by her Magdala, her strong tower! She had run into her strong tower, Jesus, and was safe! Safe from the possibility of falling into the anamorphic pit of her past! Safe from the shame of falling into the deep dark of inadequacy, poor choices and gossip! Safe from tumbling into a life of aimlessness and desperation! Her past was two-dimensional and powerless before the King of the Universe!

So, today, when we look at our own lives, we, like Mary Magdalene can choose to look at it from a different angle. We can look at it from the angle of Romans 8:28 where God redeems our victimization, our betrayals and our shame. Jesus Christ our Savior gives us a new angle full of hope and forgiveness and tells us to walk on in faith!

As he stumbled backward a couple of steps, the sidewalk traveler realized the art designed to trick him, and then simply walked confidently over the crevasse of the jungle, ready to resume his journey in life.

So, the next time you are tempted to believe what your eyes see, take a step back, look at your problems, perceptions and pleasure from the biblical angle of eternity as directed in 2 Corinthians 4:18. It'll clear up the distorted images of life, relax the soul and provide powerful biblical thinking to overcome the anamorphic misperceptions of life!

Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net

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Jesus Is Still The Answer

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Because he will be away from home in June, and knowing my love for old books, my son recently gave me my Father's Day gift early. It's a first edition copy of Joseph Angus' Bible Handbook: An Introduction to the Study of Sacred Scripture, dated 1856.

As I thumbed through its tender pages, I came across Angus' beautiful description of Christ and his ministry. It reads:

"He [Christ] is himself, in truth, the gospel. His coming and work, apart even from all he directly taught, constitute the glad tidings of great joy unto all people. Did men need a real sacrifice for sin, in which the rites of the law should find their explanation and end? That sacrifice he offered. Did men need a perfect rule of life? That rule he gave when he dwelt among us; and immortality he brings to light, not so much by teaching it, or promising it, as by the actual fact of himself rising from the dead in our nature, and on our behalf. There is, indeed, no question in religion which it is essential for us to know, which the life of Christ has not solved."

How marvelously succinct are Angus' words! They are so eloquently stated that it seems almost sacrilege to say that they reminded me of the bumper sticker I placed on my car not long after giving my life to Christ as a teenager. It simply read, "Jesus is the Answer." For me, Christ had addressed every issue of the human condition. My conviction then has in no way diminished through the years.

What is it that Christ has not touched for the better? What problems does his person or purpose not solve? Did he not say, "Behold, I make all things new"? (Revelation 21:5)

Before Christ, human life was exceedingly cheap. But it was Christ who gave it dignity – dignity for men and women; dignity for children; dignity for every race, red, yellow, black, and white; dignity for the slave; dignity for the poor; and dignity for the elderly.

Poverty has been a part of every era, but it was Christ that inspired relief for the impoverished as no one before him or since. Were you aware that before Christ there was hardly a trace of an organized charitable effort? But when he came, and the Bible was spread throughout the world, charity began to thrive.

Education is something that has always been around, but it was almost exclusively for the elites in society. But because of Christ and the interest manifested by him for all men, there developed the motive for providing education to the masses.

It was because of the Savior that the concept of civil liberties was born. Noah Webster put it this way:

"Almost all the civil liberty now enjoyed in the world owes its origin to the principles of the Christian religion...The religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and his apostles, which enjoins humility, piety, and benevolence; which acknowledges in every person a brother, or a sister, and a citizen with equal rights. This is genuine Christianity, and to this, we owe our free constitutions of government..."

I suggest the issue of civil liberties has never belonged to the ACLU but instead is really the domain of Christ who gave rise to civil liberty.

It might even be argued modern science would have never existed were it not for Christ. The American Evangelical Theologian and Philosopher, Francis Schaeffer, writes about this and rightly contends:

"Both Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) and J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) have stressed that modern science was born out of a Christian worldview. Whitehead was a widely respected mathematician and philosopher, and Oppenheimer, after he became director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton in 1947, wrote on a wide-range of subjects related to science....Whitehead [in his 1925 book, Science and the Modern World] said that Christianity is the mother of science because of the medieval insistence on the rationality of God."

So many other proofs of the incomparable impact of Christ on the world might also be given.

But Robert J. Hutchinson, a veteran religion writer, eloquently summarizes the question, saying:

"What is undeniable to the honest historian is that this one man's life, teaching, and symbolic acts eventually created a social and cultural revolution that reverberated far beyond Palestine and altered almost every institution on earth – and is still felt today.

"In short, Jesus changed everything: politics, art, science, law, the rules of warfare, philosophy, sexual life, the family.

"Even Napoleon was amazed: 'Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but upon what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for him.'"

Think of it. If Christ changed the whole world in this manner, how much more could he change your little life if you were to personally trust him for the forgiveness of sins? Think of what he could do if you were to completely turn everything over to him.

Yes, Jesus solves every dilemma – every problem – every challenge. Jesus is still the answer.

Perhaps that message would make a great new bumper sticker.



Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-0606

Grant Money

By Denise Murphy
Mitchell County

On Thursday, March 29th the Western Region FFA Coordinator, Andy Von-Cannon traveled to Mitchell High School to deliver a check to the Mitchell High School FFA. The presentation was part of the NC Tobacco Trust fund grant program and was presented to Mitchell High FFA Officers and FFA Advisor Mr. Chad Huggins. The Mitchell High FFA applied for a received a grant totaling \$3,055.00. The money from this grant was used to purchase a new spreader for use with FFA agricultural projects as well as classroom projects. Pictured below with the check and new equipment are (left to right): Shelbi Stewart-FFA Secretary, Dakota Clark-FFA President, Mr. Chad Huggins-FFA Advisor, Sean Hobson-FFA Vice President, Elijah Smith-FFA Sentinel, and Tucker Hobson-FFA Chaplain.





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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

US House of Representatives NC District 11



Holding the Department of Justice Accountable

Many of you have probably seen the news recently about former Deputy Director of the FBI, Andrew McCabe. Attorney General Sessions fired McCabe late last month for lying to the FBI about his conduct during the Clinton email investigation.

As more and more information continues to come to light, one thing becomes clearer: we need a second special counsel to investigate the inappropriate conduct that seems to have occurred at the Department of Justice. Remember, Andrew McCabe was a central figure to the investigations leading up to the 2016 presidential election, including the investigations of the Hillary Clinton email server and the Trump campaign. His firing is an important indicator of why we need more information about the Department of Justice's activities.

Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) and I interviewed with Laura Ingraham on Fox News about the issue.

In the coming days, weeks, and months, I will keep working with my colleagues to ensure that officials in our federal justice system are honest, transparent, and forthcoming about misconduct that has occurred. You deserve nothing less than the full truth about what occurred. We will keep working to get it to you.

Visit to Coats

Our district continues to be well represented in the nation's business leadership community. Great to meet the team at the Marion, NC location of Coats! They're one of the global leaders and suppliers of industrial thread and consumer textile crafts business.

Working to Fight the Opioid Epidemic

I recently had the chance to meet with some of our local team in Hendersonville for the Henderson County Opioid Leadership Forum. Our local officials and law enforcement are doing an incredible job to confront this problem.

As a reminder, if you haven't done so already, I want to encourage you to visit my website and read about the bill my office introduced recently on this issue—H.R. 4482, the Opioid Abuse Deterrence, Research, and Recovery Act. You can read the full bill, a section by section summary, and letters of support from experts like those at the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. We want to do everything we can at the federal level to help provide appropriate resources and assistance for our local officials to combat the problem of opioids.

NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise
Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net
919-733-3460

The media has widely covered the Atlantic Coast Pipeline infrastructure project and the fund set up by Gov. Cooper in January into which energy companies paid \$58 million prior to the governor's issuance of a permit allowing construction of the pipeline to begin. Many questions have been raised about the ethics and legality of the \$58 million fund. Through a public information request, WRAL-TV obtained selected documents from the Cooper administration. However, the documents provided no details on how the funds would be distributed and the governor, despite being required by law, has not responded to lawmakers who have made multiple requests for the same documents.

Legally, control and disbursements of state monies is under the control of the legislature, not the governor. An overwhelming bipartisan majority of legislators took action in February and passed House Bill 90, shifting the \$58 million from the governor's fund to school districts in the pipeline corridor. Although Gov. Cooper has repeatedly claimed that increased spending on schools is a priority of his, he has made clear his intention to halt the flow of money to school districts in the affected counties and place it back into his fund, which he claims is for economic development and environmental mitigation. Gov. Cooper and his brother own several properties in close proximity to the proposed pipeline and could stand to benefit from this pot of money.

On February 12, Sen. Bill Rabon, Senate rules committee chair, and Rep. David Lewis, House rules committee chair, sent a demand letter for answers to fifteen questions regarding the fund. Gov. Cooper's office gave either no response or partial response to the questions. On March 7, Sen. Rabon called for Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore to initiate a formal investigation into the governor's pipeline/slush fund arrangement. A week later, state GOP leaders filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice asking for an investigation into whether Gov. Cooper violated the Hobbs Act in requiring a pay-to-play scenario for issuance of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline permit.

I urge the governor to be transparent and answer truthfully and completely all questions posed by Sen. Rabon and Rep. Lewis; turn over all requested relevant documents; and end his effort to return to his personal slush fund the \$58 million that the legislature transferred to school systems in the counties affected by the construction of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Instead of being self-serving, do the right thing, Gov. Cooper!

As always, please share your thoughts with me on issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.



YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 46



Sen. Warren Daniel
Warren.Daniel@ncleg.net
919-715-7823

As the General Assembly prepares to reconvene for the 2018 short session, I thought I would recap some of the recent accomplishments that we hope to build on this year.

For the past several years, tax reform has been a top priority for the Republican majority. In October 2017, the nonpartisan Tax Foundation ranked North Carolina 11th best for business, up from a low of 41st, passing 30 states in 3 years. North Carolina is also currently ranked as Site Selection magazine's most competitive state for business, as Forbes' No. 2 best state for business, Chief Executive Magazine's No. 3 best state for business, and CNBC's No. 5 best state for business. This sharp increase in our economic competitiveness means more jobs, higher wages and better opportunities for North Carolina families and businesses.

In 2017, the General Assembly again reduced the tax burden on families and small businesses by cutting both the personal and corporate income tax rates. The 2017 budget, which was passed over Governor Roy Cooper's veto, includes several large tax changes.

- Individual Income Tax: On January 1, 2019, the individual income tax rate will decrease from 5.499 percent to 5.25 percent.
- Standard Deduction: The standard deduction will increase in 2019. For single filers, the deduction will increase from \$8,750 to \$10,000, while the deduction for married filers will increase from \$17,500 to \$20,000.
- Corporate Income Tax: Also on January 1, 2019, the corporate income tax rate will decrease from 3 percent to 2.5 percent.

These changes continue the major tax reforms Republicans have made since taking the majority in 2011. In 2011, the top personal income tax rate in North Carolina was 7.75 percent. By 2019, it will have fallen to 5.25 percent. At the same time, the standard deduction has grown from \$6,600 for married filers in 2012 to \$20,000 in 2019; and the corporate income tax rate will have decreased from 6.9 percent to 2.5 percent in 2019.

2017 was also a record year for employment in North Carolina, with unemployment rates reaching a 17-year low and the creation of over 91,000 new jobs. All of this was accomplished while eliminating a 2.5 billion dollar deficit, paying off a 2.5 billion dollar debt to the federal government, and increasing the Rainy Day Fund to a record high 2 billion dollars.

Despite all of this good news, there are still major challenges before us: the recent security crisis in our state prisons, as well as the national focus on making our schools safer and more secure. The NC House recently created a Select Committee on School Safety to make recommendations for the General Assembly to consider, and I am currently working on a school safety bill which I plan to introduce as well. More to come on these topics after the General Assembly convenes on May 16th.

It is an honor to represent Burke and Cleveland Counties in the NC Senate. – Warren Daniel



Senator Burr Introduces Military Medic Program Expansion Bill & Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day Resolution

I was proud at the end of last week to introduce legislation with Senator Patty Murray which would expand upon a successful public-private partnership between the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, the Carolinas Healthcare System, and Wake Forest University, effectively shortening the time of post-military Physician Assistants' certification from 2 years to 5 months for military medics. The bill would require the Pentagon to partner with medical schools and healthcare systems in states with a Special Operations (SOCOM) presence to allow military medics to transfer their field experience into credit for a Master's Degree to become Physician Assistants (PAs).

There's no question that our nation's medics in the field have substantial experience in saving lives. Doctors and hospitals across the country would benefit from the skills medics already have from their service, and with this bill, medics can get their certification to become a physician's assistants in one quarter the time under current law. This pilot program is successful here in North Carolina, and the universities and medical professionals agree. Rolling this out nationwide is a great solution and I look forward to the Senate's passage of this bill.

I also was honored to introduce the 'Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day' Senate Resolution with Senators Heitkamp and Tillis this week. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the program encouraging parents across the country to bring their children to work to empower and inspire them through the example they set in their professional workplaces. The key to every child's bright future is in their education. This program exemplifies the tangible results of a good education and shows each child what they're working towards. I couldn't be more proud that the Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Foundation calls Elizabeth City, North Carolina home and with 40 million kids involved annually, I know this program will only grow and continue to help show each child his or her full potential.

NC House District 118

SpaceX gets satellite internet approval

When I took office in 2013, only about 22% of K-12 schools had access to broadband internet.

Today, 100% of public K-12 schools in North Carolina have access to high-speed, broadband internet. 98% of those schools have a dedicated fiber connection.

While students benefit greatly from high-speed internet access at school, many of my constituents -- especially in more rural areas -- lack access to high-speed internet at home.

On March 29, the FCC released its approval of SpaceX's plan to launch satellite internet that would provide worldwide coverage.

Traditional methods of building internet infrastructure present unique challenges in mountainous Western North Carolina. Entities that build internet infrastructure may be inclined to avoid large investments in infrastructure that only serve a handful of homes.

SpaceX's ambitious satellite internet plan, which they call Starlink, holds great promise in alleviating infrastructure concerns caused by Haywood's, Madison's and Yancey's terrain.

Most current satellite internet service providers have satellites that orbit about 22,000 miles above the Earth. Even as internet traffic is sent to and from these high-orbit satellites at the speed of light, users on the ground experience slow internet speeds due to the great distance signals must travel.

SpaceX plans to launch their Starlink satellites into orbit at an altitude of 715-790 miles above Earth's surface, which will reduce latency and improve end-user experience.

As part of the FCC's approval, SpaceX is required to launch half of the 4,425 satellite array by 2024, and the full array by 2027.

Marshall company sits on cutting edge of packaging

Printpack, a packaging company in Marshall, Madison County, proves every day that packaging impacts many more parts of our lives than food, retail and e-commerce.

Printpack in Marshall specializes in flexible packaging for the medical industry. They were kind enough to give me a tour of their impressive operation in March.

Printpack ships their products all over the world. Their cutting-edge packaging helps save lives.

I would like to thank them for inviting me down a visit, and for continuing their important work in Madison County.



Rep. Michele D. Presnell
Michele.Presnell@ncleg.net
919-733-5732

God Bless America

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

A Biblical World View

By Franklin Graham

In late January, the United States Senate failed by nine votes to pass legislation that would have banned abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy. Since Roe v. Wade made abortion legal in 1973, more than 60 million children have been murdered in their mothers' wombs.

In New Mexico, Oregon, Colorado and Washington, a photographer, bakers and a florist have all been fined and accused of illegally discriminating against same-sex couples for not participating in a gay wedding. Businesses have been shuttered and livelihoods taken away by government authorities.

The nation's highest court infamously ruled in 2015 that states must allow same-sex marriage.

At the University of Iowa, the school tried to ban a Christian group from campus after they refused to allow a practicing homosexual to lead in prayer.

In many European nations, especially France and the United Kingdom, fundamentalist Islam has gained a strong foothold. Despite its brutal treatment of women and complete disregard for their basic rights, opposition to it is designated as "Islamophobia."

In Canada, the mere preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and God's authoritative Word has the potential to be branded and treated as a hate crime by provincial authorities.

In each of these scenarios, and most every aspect of personal and public life, a worldview lies at the heart of the prevailing thought, sentiment and ultimate judgments. A worldview is the way a person views the world and himself. It is the lens through which an individual sees issues and relationships, and it becomes the foundation and framework for all decision making.

For example, just recently, a tragic shooting occurred at a high school in a small Kentucky town, killing two students and injuring 18. Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin, a social conservative and strong evangelical with a clear, Biblically informed worldview, quickly responded that more gun laws were not the solution.

Gov. Bevin instead challenged Americans to "wake up," recognize that such shootings are a "cultural problem," and to determine their "root causes." The governor went on to say that "we can't celebrate death in video games, celebrate death in TV shows, celebrate death in movies, celebrate death in musical lyrics and remove any sense of morality and sense of higher authority and then expect that things like this are not going to happen. Our culture is crumbling from within."

Courageously, last summer, Gov. Bevin proposed a bold, Bible-centered approach to address a scourge of violence that has gripped Kentucky's largest city, Louisville. Bevin called for Christians to gather in "small groups of 3-10 people ... quietly walking one block, in one troubled neighborhood at 7 p.m. several days a week for one year, praying as they walk."

Gov. Bevin believes in the power of prayer, but as you can imagine, his comments were met with disdain from the secular media and institutions, who obviously don't consider prayer of any particular importance or value.

An individual with a Biblical worldview looks at the world and sifts all information through the lens of God's Word. Scripture informs his thinking and behavior, guiding his intellect and moral determinations. The Bible is the bedrock that undergirds his entire life.

First and foremost, the Biblical worldview says emphatically there is a God who has created all things in Heaven and earth. Think about it for a moment. The evolutionist is always searching for how to describe the origin and development of life in purely quasi-scientific or materialistic terms. He completely dismisses any notion of a Creator God, and thus is forced to come to ridiculous and preposterous assumptions, unsubstantiated by proof.



An atheist communist state rejects any acknowledgment of God, and thus seeks to assert itself as the sovereign authority, leading to inevitable ruin and misery. Just a few weeks ago, Fidel Castro's son, a nuclear physicist who studied in Russia, took his own life. With no God, there is no hope.

The secular worldview dismisses God as irrelevant in the affairs of men and government, and views critical moral issues as independent of God's moral character and principles. Clear definitions of right and wrong are impossible to determine, having been replaced by cultural whims and situational ethics.

Over and against every competing worldview, the Bible forcefully declares, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Romans 12:2). In other words, the only way to see all of life accurately is through the transforming lens of Scripture.

The Biblical worldview says there is a God—One who is personal, powerful and caring—who created the world and everything in it. It states unequivocally that man is created in God's image, living in essence as God's co-regent over creation. Mankind—born and unborn, rich and poor, able and disabled—has intrinsic worth. Almighty God is a sovereign God, ruler over nations, states, empires and governments. He is to be worshipped and obeyed through the precepts and principles revealed in His infallible Word. He not only exists, but He is sovereign over all of history according to His wisdom and purposes, and He is intimately involved in every aspect of life.

The Biblical worldview also asserts the existence and reality of sin and evil. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). War, disease, violence, injustice and the myriad of problems that beset the world are the result of man's rebellion against God. No amount of higher education, no enlightened political agenda or social program can cancel or remove the devastating consequences of sin. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick" (Jeremiah 17:9).

The Biblical perspective also recognizes the active opposition of a personal adversary, the devil, who is constantly on the prowl to tempt and destroy. The devil aggressively opposes God and His people, wreaking havoc in virtually every arena. A deceiver, a liar and a murderer, he seizes every opportunity to carry out his diabolical schemes.

Any attempt to create a utopian society, to permanently solve global problems, is doomed to fail.

For now,

But one day soon, as the Biblical worldview triumphantly proclaims, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth, meting out eternal judgment to those who have rebelled against Him while gathering to Himself the saints, who will rule along with Him in a new Heaven and a new Earth. There will be no more sickness, no more death, no more disease, no more violence, for our enemy will be cast into an eternal lake of fire, and sin will be no more (Revelation 20:10).

This is the only worldview that sees clearly, rightly and rejoices the heart for eternity. ©2018 BGEA

Do you have a Biblical worldview? Receive Christ today.

Reverend Franklin Graham is President and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief organization.



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Mine Creek Baptist Church

What Comes First

By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

This generation has been accused of being a generation that lacks commitment. That may be true in a sense but actually if this generation is guilty of anything its being overcommitted. That is to say we commit ourselves too much to things that we could really do without. Our society has conditioned us to believe that if we aren't busy all the time with something we are missing out on a full life. Social media posts are replete with photos of all the activities families are involved. Recently an automotive commercial highlighted an SUV that has all the room to carry the things needed for a family that fills up their entire schedule. The parents proceeded to tell their neighbor about all the activities in which the family was involved. Obviously, the point was to sell the vehicle, but what caught my attention was the fact that the family portrayed had their entire calendar filled with so much.... too much.

What I have witnessed being a pastor for around 17 years is how so many Christians and their families seem too busy for the things of God, but always have time for all the other activities. When called upon to serve in some capacity in the local church the response is often, "Well pastor, I just don't think I have time to commit to that. Let me pray about it and I'll let you know." For the most part what they are hoping is while they are "praying about it" someone else will commit to it. The problem is that most everyone else is thinking the same thing and churches have about 10% of their members doing 100% of the work while the 90% who have been "praying about it" complain about what the 10% are doing!

Talking with other pastors over the years this problem is rampant in most churches. Christian families commit to so much stuff they have no time or energy left over for serving the Lord through the local church. The things of God are scheduled around everything else when everything else is supposed to be scheduled around the things of God. Not only is it hard to find Christians who are willing to step up and serve in their church, it's getting harder to find Christians who will place a priority on even attending services regularly. While larger churches may not feel the effects as bad, smaller local congregations often struggle from week to week because Christian families do not place a priority on worship attendance or discipleship. Parents who should be leading their children to church and setting the example of church attendance will all too often teach their children that it is okay to let everything else come before worshipping or serving the Lord with other Christians. What many parents don't realize is that they have shown by example that church attendance is not important. Each generation will place less and less priority on the most important thing a family should be doing together, worshipping together with the church. God's plan for teaching our families always begins at home. We as parents are ultimately responsible for discipling our kids. If we are so busy and committed to so many things that we don't have time to lead our children to church, folks we are too busy!

The Bible teaches us that the church is like a body with many different members (1 Corinthians Chapter 12). Each member of the body has a specific function. Even though each member is different with different gifts, each one is needful for the body to function properly. If you have ever experienced an injury to a member of your body, say your foot, the entire body is affected by having to compensate for the member of the body that isn't functioning as it should. Paul wrote that the eye cannot say to the hand that it has no need of it anymore. The head cannot say to the feet that it has no need of feet anymore (vs 21). Just as our physical bodies need all members to function as it should, the church as the body of Christ needs all the members to function as it should. I've heard people who proclaim they are Christians say that they don't need to attend church. That statement goes against scripture my friends. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, we need each other! We need every member to fulfill the function God has given them as part of the body of Christ. The eyes guide the hand to grasp, just as the hand grasps what the eyes see. The head guides the feet on a path, the feet carry the head down the path the head wants to go. We are many members of one body. There is to be no division in the body so that the members have the same care one for another (vs. 25). Just as a member of a physical body would wither and die if separated from the rest of the body, so would a Christian who has separated themselves from the body of Christ, the church body.

As a pastor, over the years I have personally witnessed this happen to Christian individuals and families. It happens a little at a time. Miss a service here, miss a service there, miss several in a row; miss a month; attend only on special occasions, etc, etc. Then before you know it there's no desire at all. The excuses began to flow, sin begins to creep in, the spiritual life is drained, and often a total collapse of morality takes place and consequences begin to raise their head. Many times, the one who walked away from the very thing that was sustaining them with life giving nourishment, is what they will blame for the consequences they are suffering! They'll blame God, blame the church, blame some individual, etc, etc. And remember, this all started because they allowed everything else to come



between them and Jesus and His church.

The point I'm trying to make is this: Let's keep our priorities in order. Let's not forget that learning about, serving, and worshipping Jesus should be the most important thing in our lives. He is to be first and foremost in our life and family. Would you stop for a while and take stock of what is going on in your family? What does your family as a whole place a priority on? Is it the things of God or the things of this world? Are you as a parent leading your family to worship with His church or are you leading them to believe its ok for anything or everything else to come before Him? Would you pause for a moment from all the chaos and ask yourself: What comes first?

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Preacher Chris Rathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.

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Thus, It Is Written

By Rev John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

This month we will be looking at Luke 24:44-48: *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it beloved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.* Bless the Lord for his Holy Word, which brings us wisdom, guidance, comfort, and countless other blessings. Rejoice that its message can transform our grief into joy, just as it did for the two who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus. LORD, we praise you for the wonderful gift of your written Word. Thank you for the example of Jesus, who faithfully followed and taught the Scriptures. Instill in us his deep love and regard for your Word. Give us understanding so that we might teach your truths to others and proclaim the good news of your gospel to a needy world. Sharing the Word (46-53). God opens our eyes (v. 31) and opens our understanding (v. 45) so that when He opens the Scriptures to us (vv. 27, 32), we may open our mouths and tell others about Him (v. 48). Jesus gives us the commission, the power, and the message. There is no reason to be silent! When we experience joyful worship (vv. 52-53), we will have little problem giving the world a joyful witness. We reflect on Luke's version of the Great Commission. In it the risen Lord summarizes the gospel in five truths, each of which is double. Firstly, there is the double event, namely the death and resurrection of the Messiah (v. 46). The Good News begins with history. It was an event before it could become an experience. Secondly, there is the double proclamation. On the basis of the name of Christ crucified and resurrected, forgiveness (the gospel offer) and repentance (the gospel demand) are proclaimed. True, the gospel is a free offer, but what is free is not always cheap. We cannot turn to Christ without simultaneously turning from evil. Thirdly, there is the double scope. The gospel is to be made known "to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (v. 47). That is, in opening the door of faith to the Gentiles, God did not close it on the Jews. We must firmly reject the extraordinary teaching of a "two-track" gospel, which maintains that there is no need for Jews to believe in Jesus because they already have their own covenant with Abraham. But everybody needs to come to Christ! Fourthly, there is the double accreditation of the gospel. On the one hand, there is the Old Testament witness to the Messiah (vv. 44, 46), while on the other, "you [the apostles] are witnesses of these things" (v. 48). Thus, the death and resurrection of Jesus have in the Old and New Testaments a double attestation. Fifthly, there is the double mission. The Great Commission involved a double sending (v. 49)-the sending to them of the Holy Spirit and the sending of them into the world. The two missions go together, for the Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit. Thus, the risen Lord has given us a beautifully balanced and comprehensive account of the gospel. We are commissioned to proclaim repentance and forgiveness on the basis of him who died and was raised, to all humankind (Gentiles and Jews), according to the Scriptures (Old and New Testaments), in the power of the Spirit given to us. Let's keep these things together.

John McCoury is pastor of Evergreen church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Roan Highlands Nursing Center.



New Study in Bible Study Fellowship International (BSF)

By Angie Duncan
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

Q. Are you thinking you would like to know more about the history of Israel or more about the Bible??

A. If you answered "yes", then you might like to join Bible Study Fellowship International now! BSF is a multidenominational organization that offers in-depth Bible study. You may join now locally and finish out the current study of Romans and get your name on the registration list for next September when we delve into a new study, "People of the Promised Land". "People of the Promised Land Part I" covers the history of Israel's leaders from Joshua to Solomon and includes some of Psalms and Proverbs.

Q. You may be asking, "Isn't that a lot of material?"

A. Yes! That is a lot of material, but we only meet once a week during the school year and you may take time to study during the week. BSF starts a study each year after Labor Day - Sept. 13th through May 3rd (this year). They have developed 10 studies designed to be presented during the school year. Participation in a discussion of questions in class is encouraged but not required, and no one should be put "on the spot". Like any class, "you get out of it what you put into it" to a point. The hope is that God will speak individually to participants through the Scriptures as they study the Bible.

Q. What is Bible Study Fellowship (BSF)?

A. Bible Study Fellowship is a multi-denominational, multi-lingual, multi-ages Bible study which meets in whatever local church opens their doors and has internet facilities. Their headquarters is located in San Antonio, Texas. The "multis" above means that there are Ladies, Men', Young Adult, and Children's Classes and there are English, Chinese, Hispanic, classes which have printed Lessons written in their language. There are over 2,000 Classes all over the world and those classes extend via Satellite to 39,000 Satellite classes who receive the class teaching both by video and the printed Lesson notes each week. Spruce Pine classes are an extension of Asheville classes. Asheville Day BSF ladies class has over 500 members including 3 Satellite locations; two in Spruce Pine and one in Sylva.

Q. Where are the class meetings held?

A. Locally, the Ladies' classes are held at First Baptist in Spruce Pine on Thursdays 10:00 AM-11:30 and Grassy Creek Baptist 5:30-7:00, on Tuesday evenings. The Men's Evening Class meets at Higgins Methodist Church in Burnsville at 6:55on Tuesdays. All denominations, all ages of adults, come together in unity to study God's Word and classes meet all over the world in various churches, office buildings, wherever doors are opened studying the same Scriptures.

Q. How do I join?

A. You are welcome to join and the more cultures, denominations, ages we have, the richer the discussion. Newly published lessons written in Spanish are now available, as well as on-line Spanish Teaching Leaders give lectures in Spanish. Lessons are available in 2 dialects of Chinese language and in English. We are all studying the same Scriptures in the Bible. To join us, you are invited to attend a class and register. There is no fee, however, optional donations for lesson materials are accepted. Lesson notes are 8 pages of Bible notes researched by several theologians and cost approximately \$3.50. Just show up at class time or for more information for the Men's class contact Pierce Bingham at 828-208-0299 ; for the Day Women's class contact Angie Duncan 828-467-1091, for Evening Women's class Angie Woody at 828-467-3830. You may also go on-line to the BSF website at www.bsfinternational.org to locate a class. Some materials are available on-line to download for non-members, including Home Training Lessons for Children. "Lesson Notes" are currently available only to registered class members during classes. Check us out!



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Happy Mother's Day

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

Who's Keeping the Score

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County

We live in a day where accountability is a problem. From the White House to our house people don't think they will be held accountable. Just look at our government leaders, and our public officials; they have failed to be held accountable and now look at where our nation is. Even worse than our government we need to look at Christians and our churches, and where we are. Many churches and Christians have fallen into the same mind set as the world. They think others will be held accountable, but not them. Followers of Christ have a responsibility to preserve the Christian foundation of our society and stop the tidal wave of moral decay. Christians have the responsibility to protect and uphold biblical values, because we will be held accountable on what we have let happen. People today may think there's nobody keeping score, but they are really mistaken, because God is.

Look, Christians have failed to take serious responsibility. We love our many freedoms we have that are protected by our Constitution and should be grateful for the liberties we have. However, along with our wonderful rights come important responsibilities. As believers, we need to also understand that we have responsibility to God in which we will be held accountable. Christians have a God-given responsibility to teach and defend our beliefs. There are some things, I believe, believers can fight for in the political realm, like the Right to Life, Sanctity of Marriage, lower taxes, and better stewardship of how our tax money is spent. And we also need to be better stewards of our natural resources, just to name a few. We need to preserve and protect our values that we hold so dear.

Our liberty in Christ does not give us the right to be Slackers in our walk with Christ in this world, and our duties in this world. Accountability simply means you will be held responsible for your actions. Remember, God is keeping the score. I realize in the day we are living many people are not held accountable for their actions. The society we live in tries to tell people they are not responsible for their actions. They tell people you were born that way or it's nobody else's fault you are the way you are. Well, if you want to believe that lie you will be in for a rude awakening one day. Because the Bible says in Romans 14:11-12 "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So, then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." So, remember— God's Keeping the Score, not you.

Our liberty in Christ does not give us the right to be Slackers in our walk with Christ in this world, and our duties in this world. Accountability simply means you will be held responsible for your actions. Remember, God is keeping the score. I realize in the day we are living many people are not held accountable for their actions. The society we live in tries to tell people they are not responsible for their actions. They tell people you were born that way or it's nobody else's fault you are the way you are. Well, if you want to believe that lie you will be in for a rude awakening one day. Because the Bible says in Romans 14:11-12 "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So, then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." So, remember— God's Keeping the Score, not you.

Words of Wisdom

- Accountability breeds responsibility. Steven Covey
- Candor and accountability in a democracy is very important. Hypocrisy has no place. N/A
- I think we need more accountability and more transparency. John Thune
- Honesty, integrity, and accountability should be the hallmark of a Christians life. N/A

Questions you need to ask yourself?

- What will I be accountable for this week?
- Who will I be accountable to?
- How will I demonstrate my accountability?

Steve Williams is the Pastor of Berry Chapel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine.



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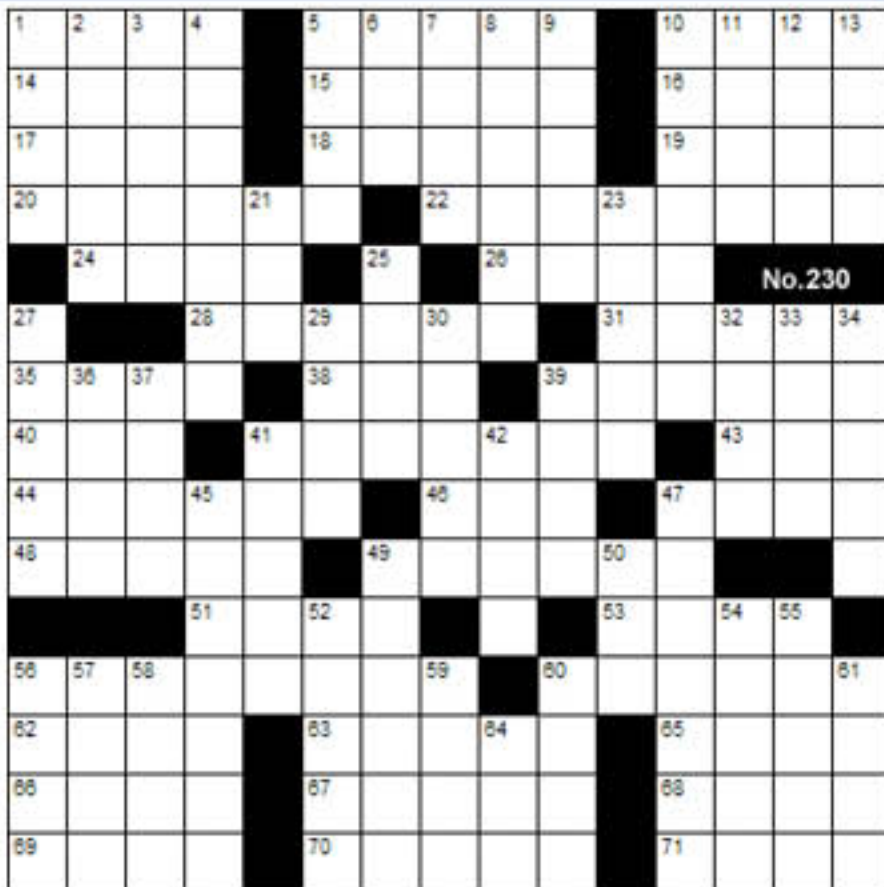
ACROSS

1. He is not ____; he has risen, just as he said (Matt 28:6)
 5. The lazy man does not ____ his game (Prov 12:27)
 10. anyone who says to his brother, ____, 'is answerable to (Matt 5:22)
 14. Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth ____ (Josh 7:2)
 15. they strike my cheek in scorn and ____ together against me (Job 16:10)
 16. ____ put forth his left hand, and took the dagger (Judg 3:21) KJV
 17. do not let your ____ hand know what your right hand is doing (Matt 6:3)
 18. The son of Ulam (1 Chron 7:17)
 19. They crossed at the ____ to take the king's household over (2 Sam 19:18)
 20. struggling with all his ____, which so powerfully works in me (Col 1:29)
 22. Esau was the father of the ____ (Gen 36:9)
 24. the darkness is passing and the ____ light is already shining (1 Jn 2:8)
 26. You will rule them with an ____ scepter (Ps 2:9)
 28. send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, ____, Pergamum (Rev 1:11)
 31. shekels of silver, and a ____ of gold (Josh 7:21)
 35. Tell them everything I command you; do not ____ a word (Jer 26:2)
 38. men and women of ripe old ____ will sit in the streets (Zech 8:4)
 39. ____ is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth (John 4:37) KJV
 40. son in Hebrew
 41. We ____ whenever we are weak but you are strong (3,4) (2 Cor 13:9)
 43. I will also give you wealth, riches ____ honor (2 Chr 1:12)
 44. ____ to us, O God Almighty! (Ps 80:14)
 46. struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ____ (John 18:10)
 47. have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone ____ (Rom 2:1)
 48. put an end to sin, to ____ for wickedness (Dan 9:24)
 49. In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like ____ (1,5) (Prov 23:32)
 51. What a ruin she has become, a ____ for wild beasts (Zeph 2:15)
 53. shout (Jer 51:38) (KJV)
 56. Touched or stroked lightly (Ezek 23:21)
 60. He committed no sin, and

no ____ was found in his mouth (1 Peter 2:22)
 62. there was what looked like ____ of glass (1,3) (Rev 4:6)
 63. and ____ to be desired to make one wise (1,4) Gen 3:6)
 65. ____ heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine (1 Tim 4:16)
 66. each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not ____ (Judg 20:16)
 67. and wave them before the LORD as ____ offering (1,4) (Ex 29:24)
 68. for he commandeth ____ the winds and water (Luke 8:25) KJV
 69. Do not set foot on the ____ of the wicked (Prov 4:14)
 70. Your enemies will ____ before you (Deut 33:29)
 71. The animals take cover; they remain in their ____ (Job 37:8)

DOWN

1. lest he ____ thee to the judge (Luke 12:58) KJV
 2. there is one ____ to the righteous, and to the wicked (Eccles 9:2)
 3. I ____ to those whose sin does not lead to death (1 John 5:16)
 4. ____ him to my care, and I will bring him back (Gen 42:37)
 5. In the first row there shall be a ____, a topaz and a beryl (Ex 28:17)
 6. They speak vanity every ____ with his neighbour (Ps 12:2)
 7. Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' ____ (Num 11:28)
 8. high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 ____ (Rev 14:20)
 9. for after the ____ of these words I have made a covenant (Ex 34:27) KJV
 10. He will sit as a ____ and purifier of silver (Mal 3:3)
 11. branded in their own conscience as with ____ iron (1,3) (1 Tim 4:2) ASV
 12. authority to drive out all demons and to ____ diseases (Luke 9:1-2)
 13. The fear of the LORD ____ length to life (Prov 10:27)
 21. precious stone (Exod 28:11)
 23. you failed to pay the workmen who ____ your fields (James 5:4)
 25. the Pharisees began to ____ him vehemently (Luke 11:53)
 27. venom of a snake, like that of a ____ (Ps 58:4)
 29. with purple and blue and crimson ____ and fine linen (2 Chr 2:14)
 30. Then Abram set out and continued toward the ____ (Gen 12:9)
 32. O Sovereign LORD, ____ well with me for your name's sake (Ps 109:21)
 33. a net by the wayside; they have set ____ for me (Ps 140:5) KJV
 34. So he ____ their days in futility and their years in terror (Ps 78:33)
 36. together with them in the clouds to ____ the Lord in the air (1



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Thess 4:17)
 37. Jesus was led by the Spirit ____ the desert to be tempted (Matt 4:1-2)
 39. Praise the LORD with ____; sing unto him with the psalter (Ps 33:2)
 41. Forts and towers in the wooded ____ (2 Chron 27:4)
 42. Saul and Abner son of Ner had ____ down (1 Sam 26:5)
 45. In my wrath I will ____ a violent wind (Ezek 13:13)
 47. He ____ the pillars at the portico of the temple (1 Kings 7:21)
 49. Also there ____ olive trees by it (3,3) (Zech 4:3)
 50. he cometh with clouds; and every ____ shall see him (Rev 1:7)
 52. Son of Abraham (Gen 21:3)
 54. Let love and faithfulness never ____ you; bind them around your (Prov 3:3)
 55. To whom will you ____ me that we may be compared?

(Isa 46:5)
 56. it came between the ____ of the Egyptians (Exodus 14:20)
 57. not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all ____ (Acts 19:26)
 58. ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you ____ (Matt 11:28)
 59. a Samaritan woman came to ____ water, Jesus said to her (John 4:7)
 60. the roebuck, and the fallow ____, and the wild goat (Deut 14:5)
 61. Our sheep will increase by thousands, by ____ of thousands (Ps 144:13)
 64. member of the first family of the Bible

Solution on page 14



Walnut Grove Church

The Importance of Pain

By Pastor Kurt Bomar
Avery County

Last month I wrote about the importance of worship and reconciliation. This time I want to look at something we often try to escape. Pain. I think we all understand the value of physical pain that teaches us long term safety. But is there a spiritual value to pain? I think so.

Remember the story of Jacob wrestling with The Angel of God? When the match was over Jacob would not let go of Jesus. "I won't let you go until you bless me!" What did the Lord do? He touched his hip socket dislocating his hip. From that day on Jacob limped through life.

Gen. 32:32 *Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.*

Even today, the orthodox Jews commemorate not Jacob's cleverness, ingenuity or intelligence—they commemorate his pain.

But let's look at another character in the Bible who was very familiar with pain. We find a lame man in John 5:6 *When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"* 7 *"Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."* 8 *Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."* 9 *At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, 10 and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."* 11 *But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"*

12 *So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"* 13 *The man who was healed had no idea who it was...*

"Wahoo, I can walk!" he shouted. "wait a minute" the leaders said, "who healed you." "I don't know, I'm just so happy that the pain is gone!" Later we would see Jesus scolding this pain free man.

You see, one of the purposes of pain is to lean on Jesus. We need to talk to him, get insights from him and to be intimate with him, not just say "Wahoo" and forget about him.

I would love to be free from all pain, but not at the expense of forgetting about Jesus.

God knew that Jacob would have a great impact on his descendants. But He said, Jacob I can only use you if you empty yourself of all your "talents" and lean on me so I'm going to have to hurt you.

Think about those you respect and love the most. Do they hold that position because of the money they've made or their popularity or power? Not likely. It's more likely because you've seen how they have endured under pain.

Mom and Dad, the degree that your friends, kids and grandkids see you limping through life and drawing from Him strength, character and depth is the degree that they will cherish your legacy.

Dedicated to Dennis Robinson

Selah, (think about it)

(inspired by "A Pillar by Day" Jon Courson)



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Making Each Moment Count

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



From
The Blue Ridge Christian News

Joins the Teleios Collaborative Network

By Ronnie Gregory
Yancey County

Ronnie Gregory, CEO, Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care, is pleased to announce the organization has joined the Teleios Collaborative Network (TCN). The TCN model allows non-profit hospices to leverage best practices, achieve economies of scale, and collaborate in ways not possible as a stand-alone organization. TCN uses collaboration to better prepare each agency to participate in emerging alternative payment models that will ultimately advance their charitable missions.



“In today’s healthcare environment, an opportunity to join a larger network of providers often carries with it the disadvantage of losing an organization’s local identity,” said Ronnie Gregory. “However, the TCN model not only offers significant benefits of a larger entity, but also focuses on each hospice maintaining its local identity, leadership, board of directors and staff.”

By joining together and sharing resources, community-based non-profit hospices across North Carolina can achieve a lower cost of service. With lower costs and increased economies of scale TCN and its members offer a service model that delivers care the way it should be. Equipping community based non-profit hospices to succeed reflects the essence of the original hospice movement; taking care of the needs of people in their community who are dealing with advanced illness.

Ronnie concluded, “This model of community-based hospice caring for our neighbors in our community is consistent with the ‘higher standard of care’ Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care has provided for the past 36 years.”

Ronnie Gregory is from Burnsville, NC. He is the Executive Director of Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care.



“In today’s healthcare environment, an opportunity to join a larger network of providers often carries with it the disadvantage of losing an organization’s local identity,” said Ronnie Gregory. “How-

Roots, Wings And An Anchor

By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County

When a child has one parent leave, his biggest concern is that the other parent will stay. As the staying parent, I had to answer those tough questions from my pre-school child.

He was seeking stability in the roots of his family. Would those roots dig deeply enough to keep him emotionally secure and physically protected? I prayed and trusted God to help me give him security.

As he grew, he began to inch out for some independence, wanting to walk to school with a friend and sometimes alone. I held back for a while until one day I realized I needed to trust him and God as I let go in small, appropriate ways. At first, I walked with him part way. Later, he walked alone in the same direction I’d travel to my part-time job. I’d ‘catch up’ with him as I slowly drove by. Seeing his progress, I’d wave and drive on ~ praying fervently ~ knowing he was testing his wings.

Roots and wings develop healthy self-confidence ~ two keys moms hold in their hands.

By creating a loving, nurturing and safe home where our children are cherished, they dig deep roots. This is home and it is good. This is family and family loves, cares and protects.

Once a child feels secure at home, his ‘wings’ itch to spread a bit further. By giving our children appropriate freedoms according to their age, abilities and trustworthiness, we have turned the key to self-confidence and adventure. But, there is another key that is essential. That key opens the door to grounding them spiritually.

Their roots and wings will be more effective when their anchor in God holds fast. With faith in God through an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ, our children can face the storms that may threaten their roots or render them incapable of flying for a time.

As moms, we have the awesome privilege of training our children in the things of the Lord and helping them get to know God personally. As we love God with all our heart, soul and strength, we can teach our children by our words and behavior as seen in Deuteronomy 6:7, NKJV, where it says, “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

Roots, wings and an anchor for the soul ~ three keys a mom needs on her key ring. Selah



HEART OF THE MATTER

*The bee’s work has just begun.
But in order to fulfill its design,
the bee must begin with the flower’s core.
We, too, must find our center.
A heart seeking God will find its quintessence.
“And you will seek Me and find Me,
When you search for Me with all your heart.”*

Jeremiah 29:13



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan’s new blog @ pauseandconsider.net, Journeying with Jan; and Ken’s photos at kenmeropphotography.com.

Check out our new Website
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Toe River Arts

On Top With Taps

By Kate Groff
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

A few weeks ago, Gabe and Trey Boone, Brent and Noah Buchanan, Levi Jones, and Jayden Woody performed in a free-to-the-public bluegrass and old-time music concert at Black Mountain. Ron Powell, Traditional Arts Program for Students (TAPS) instructor at the Yancey middle schools, looked on with pride at these current and former TAPS students. Presented by the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) on behalf of the NC Arts Council, the concerts series, "JAMming Across the Blue Ridge," offers the public a unique opportunity to experience up-and-coming traditional musicians from the mountains of North Carolina.

"This is one of our most exciting programs because it allows us to sustain the diverse traditional arts that are valued in our communities," said Wayne Martin, executive director of the NC Arts Council. "When we inspire future generations to learn about their artistic heritage we are celebrating and strengthening the unique character of our state."

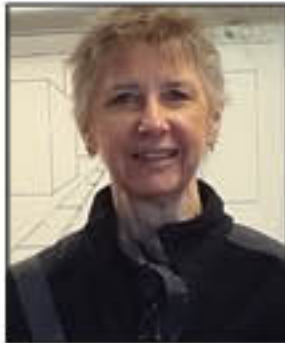
TAPS is made possible, in part, through grants from the NC Arts Council. This year Toe River Arts is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$1,000 grant from the scholarship fund of the Wayne C. Henderson Music Festival, Inc. The money will be used to help bring the region's musical heritage to life as part of a TAPS experience. The ETSU Old Time Ramblers, booked to perform and work with the kids in the program this spring had to postpone due to weather. Monies received from the Wayne C. Henderson Festival, Inc. will help defray additional costs as the Old Time Ramblers kick off the program in September and perform at the Harris School auditorium.

Each year, since the festival began in 1995, a percentage of the proceeds has been set aside to fund scholarships to "aid young, local, traditional musicians in continuing their music exploration and education" and "non-profit organizations teaching traditional music to students." More than \$198,500 has been awarded through the 2017 festival organization. And this year, Toe River Arts was chosen as a recipient.

Toe River Arts' TAPS is one of the most successful programs in the organization. Each year, middle school students in both counties are given an opportunity to play old time music on instruments loaned from the arts council. They meet weekly to learn the basics of their banjos, guitars, or Appalachian dulcimers, and the heritage music and stories so prevalent in our region. Last year, over 30 local children participated in the program. Toe River Arts hopes that number will continue to grow over the coming school years.

To learn more about the arts council's educational programs or to contribute to Toe River Arts programs, please visit the website, www.toeriverarts.org. On the home page, you'll find a link to a short YouTube video of the kids' performance at Black Mountain.

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.



Black Mountain Festival. From left to right: Gabe Boone, Noah Buchanan, Trey Boone, Jayden Woody, Levi Jones, Brent Buchanan

CMA Servants of Righteousness

"Moving" in the Will of the Lord

By Marion Stephan
McDowell County

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee...'" (Genesis 12:1).



After meeting in Icard for 17 years, the "Servants of Righteousness" chapter of the Christian Motorcycle Association (CMA) has picked up its roots and relocated in Morganton. Why? "God moved us," asserts Randy Carswell, president of the chapter.

Carswell explains that a CMA chapter recently opened in Hickory and could minister to the nearby Icard area. However, Morganton has been untouched by the organization's evangelical ministry.

The "Servants" discussed the idea of moving and voted unanimously to do so, says Carswell. And "you don't do anything in this day and time and it be unanimous."

As of March 24, the chapter is meeting at Morganton's Golden Corral restaurant, 685 W. Fleming Drive, on the fourth Saturday of each month. The agenda includes an optional breakfast and fellowship at 8 am, followed by a business meeting, sharing, and prayer at 9. The next meeting is Saturday, May 26.

Meetings are open to motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists who share the organization's emphasis on evangelism, missions, and fellowship in Christ, according to Carswell. Servants of Righteousness ministries include visiting persons in prisons and hospitals, participating in the annual "Bikers with Boxes" motorcade for Samaritan's Purse, and evangelizing through local biking and non-biking events.

"If you love biking, sharing, and spending time with other folks," the CMA is here for you, Carswell says. "It's not a gang and it's not a club." The organization's motto is "reaching the world one heart at a time."

For more information, call Randy Carswell at (828) 448-7514, or email him at rtwell@yahoo.com. The chapter's website is at cmaser6.org/NC/SERVANTSOFRIGHTEOUSNESS/default.aspx. The chapter also has a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/servantsofrighteousness/.

Marion Stephan is a Christian freelance writer and attends New Covenant Community Church in Marion.



The Servants of Righteousness minister at the Hare Scrambler Motorcross in March 2018.



The Servants of Righteousness assemble Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes in September of 2017.



The Servants of Righteousness at Burke United Christian Ministries in Morganton, where they helped distribute treat bags for children in December 2017.

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A New Puppy!

By Christy Lowman
Burke County

We have almost made it completely through all of the armor of God. There are only a few more to discuss. I thought we would take a break and talk about something else this month. My family and I have been super busy lately. Can you guess why?

We got a new puppy! It took a lot of persuading but I am so glad I said "yes!" At times she can be a handful, but she is a very good girl. Sometimes the puppy acts more human than dog! Her name is Ruby and she is a Rottweiler. She is 8 months old and already 80 lbs. so she is a BIG girl! She listens to commands and loves being around us. Ruby loves pepperoni, and peanut butter cookies. She also loves baths and rooting and digging holes in the dirt. One thing she doesn't like is the leash. Ruby is terrified of the leash! She is afraid it is going to attack her! Silly, huh?

Unfortunately, Rottweilers have gained a bad reputation. So, I thought I would tell you some cool facts about them.

Rottweilers are a breed dating back to ancient Rome. The Roman army would use them to herd their cattle. While the army slept they proved to be excellent guards. Their name Rottweiler Metzgerhunds means "butcher's dog." In medieval times butchers would travel to towns with a cart full of meat to sell. The cart was pulled by a Rottweiler because of their size. The butcher would also stow



his money in pouches around the dog's neck to keep thieves from stealing it! After the railroad came into play, these dogs were not needed anymore and almost became extinct. In both World Wars these dogs were used as police dogs and gained back their popularity. They had several jobs including search and rescue, messenger, draught, ambulance, therapy and guard dogs. Rottweilers love spending time with their human family and think they are lap dogs. The first one was brought to America in the 1920s by a German emigrant. They are big dogs and can reach up to 130 lbs. They are extremely loyal, very stubborn and oddly timid for their large size. They rank in the top 10 breeds for being very smart! I have been surprised at how easy it has been to train Ruby. She loves learning new things and wants to please her human family.



Recently I was looking through the pictures we have taken of Ruby. What I discovered was that in all of them she was smiling. I realized that Ruby is a very happy dog and she is excited to be a part of our family. This made my heart smile. I thought to myself "What is God wanting me to learn from Ruby?" First of all, she taught me to not "judge a book by its cover." On the outside Ruby looks scary with her large size, piercing brown eyes, and thunderous bark. She's so big that she looks like an adult dog. But once you get to know her, you will see that she is a sweet, friendly, loving, and gentle puppy. In the Bible, Rahab had a bad reputation. But Rahab was able to overcome her reputation. Despite what she was known for she was a good person. She hid the spies that God sent into Jericho and saved their lives. It helped God's people take over their promised land. Just like Rahab, Ruby has chosen to rise above her reputation and be a good dog.

Second of all, I realized that Ruby was teaching me something very valuable. Ruby was teaching me to always look up and stay focused on Jesus. I might be having the worst day ever, but instead of focusing on the bad I should always focus on the good in my life. I have so much more good things going for me than bad things. And I have so much to be thankful to God. So, every time something happens that makes me sad, stressed, or mad I think of Ruby and her smiling face looking back at me and I remind myself to smile and focus on Jesus. Jesus can and will make anything and everything better. He is our one and only true best friend.

Did you know that smiles are contagious? Try it and see, if you smile it will cause other people to smile. Smiling also sets what kind of day you are going to have. If you are always smiling, chances are you are going to have a great day! Most importantly smiling makes your heart happy.

There are many Bible verses that go with this lesson, that I could not pick, instead I included them all.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8 KJV

If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile,' Job 9:27 NIV
Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

3 The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Psalms 126: 2-3 NIV

A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. Proverbs 15:13 NIV

Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." John 7:24 ESV
You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Matthew 7: 16 NLT

Dear Lord, please help us to always smile and give our problems over to Jesus. Help us to be thankful and to concentrate on all the good things in our life. We have so many things to be thankful for. Help us remember that it is only by your good grace that we have these things. We give all the glory to You, Lord, and we come to you with a thankful heart. We praise you for everything you have given us! I ask Dear Lord, that you help each one of us to not judge a person by appearances, but instead give each person a chance despite their reputation. Help us remember that actions speak louder than words. In Jesus's name we pray Amen.

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<https://blog.pawedin.com/dogs/64-fun-facts-rottweilers/>
<https://fourleggedguru.com/rottweiler-facts/5/>

Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and HCL. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. If you enjoy her books, 'like' her author page on Facebook and let her know! You can buy her books at https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank You can reach her at <https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/> or christyssoaps@yahoo.com.

Sample Day Trip

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Prestigious Full-Tuition Elizabeth McRae Scholarship Recipients Announced

By Nina Mastandrea
Avery County

BANNER ELK, N.C. — Two incoming fall 2018 students, Emily Griffith of Connelly Springs, North Carolina, and Lucas Price, of Hudson, North Carolina, were named beneficiaries of the celebrated, full-tuition Elizabeth McRae Scholarship.

The recipients who were ultimately chosen as the winners initially competed on February 17 as part of the College's annual Scholars Day. Hosted by the Lees-McRae Honors Program, the day invites qualified Honors Program students to participate in essay and interview competitions.



Emily Griffith

More than 140 students qualified for the prominent Lees-McRae College Honors Program, having attained a 3.75 high school GPA and SAT score over 1150 (ACT score over 25).

Griffith, an upcoming graduate of Burke Middle College, intends to study wild-life biology during her time at Lees-McRae.

She said her decision to come to the College largely hinged on the school's one-of-a-kind location, community and programming.

"The atmosphere at Lees-McRae is so different than that of any other college I have ever visited," Griffith said. "There's just something about the campus and community that makes it feel like home. I am so honored to have been given the opportunity to be a part of the Bobcat family!"

Price is completing his final months at Caldwell Early College. Similar to Griffith, Price gravitated towards the College's atmosphere, faculty and staff. He will also pursue a degree in wildlife biology during his time at Lees-McRae.

"I feel that at Lees-McRae I will get a unique, experiential education and develop relationships that will last a lifetime," he said. "Aside from the atmosphere of the campus, I chose Lees-McRae because of the awesome location, nestled in the mountains of western North Carolina."

The Elizabeth McRae Scholarship was named after Elizabeth A. McRae, one of the two namesakes of the College. McRae was a summer school teacher at Lees-McRae in 1900 when it was an all-female school led by Lees-McRae founder, Rev. Edgar Tufts.

Lees-McRae College awards more than \$14 million annually in institutional scholarships and grants and helps facilitate more than \$27 million in financial aid. For more information on scholarship opportunities at Lees-McRae, visit lmc.edu/typesofaid or contact the Office of Financial Aid at 828.898.8740.

Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, Lees-McRae College is a private, four-year college offering diverse baccalaureate degrees, strong athletic programs and outstanding faculty. Field-specific career preparation and hands-on learning enhance the broad core curriculum. For more information, please visit www.lmc.edu or call 828.898.5241.

Nina Mastandrea is the content manager of Lees-McRae College



Lucas Price

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Sudoku

Solution on page 14

7					2			
							8	1
		9	3		1		6	4
				5	4		1	6
	1						4	
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4	9		5		7	6		
1	7							
			2					8

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The Sin of Indignation

By Shawn Thomas
Burke County

"Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James & John." (Mark 10:41)

This verse highlights a danger that good Christians need to beware of. James and John had just asked Jesus that they might sit on His right and left in His glory. This was over-ambitious, prideful, and over-reaching. Jesus dealt with them graciously (thankfully He does the same with us!) but :41 indicates that the fallout from their request was now infecting the other ten disciples in dangerous way:

It says when they heard this conversation that James and John had with Jesus, "the ten" (the other disciples) "began to feel indignant." It was one thing for James and John to sin with their ambitious request. That was indeed wrong. But now the difficulty was not that of the two brothers — they had been corrected by the Lord — now the danger lay in the RESPONSE of the other ten towards those two. Hard feelings could hinder their fellowship, tear the group apart, and destroy their ministry. So, Jesus called them to Himself (:42) and spoke about the importance of serving one another.

Christians today need to beware of this same temptation to indignation. It is one thing for someone we know to sin, whether it is a sin like James & John's or something different entirely. The Lord will deal with that person, just as He did with the brothers in Mark 10. But those who know the sinful person now face the same temptation which lured the ten in this passage: becoming indignant towards the sinful one. Our bitterness over what they have done, is just as much a sin, and can be just as harmful, as their original trespass!

The older brother in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) is an example of this. The younger brother was the "original sinner" here. He is the one who left home and squandered his fortune on loose living. But the older brother also ended up sinning: by becoming indignant towards what his younger sibling had done. In fact, his bitterness towards his brother, if never resolved, may have been the more damaging, longer-term sin. We face similar dangers with erring brothers and sisters today.

Indignation is especially a temptation for the very "moral," "religious" person. Like the older brother in Luke 15, they may feel that they themselves are walking the narrow road, so their temptation is to despise the brother who is not. So even when we are not the instigator of a certain sin, we may still be lured into sin through our own bitterness at the sinner! These are SUCH difficult waters to navigate. No wonder the Lord told Cain in Genesis 4:7: "Sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for you." Sin is so deceitful; so insidious.

So, our own bitterness towards a sinning person, may end up doing as much damage as the sin of the person we have grown to despise! We must be on guard not to be tripped up by indignation, what we might call "the sin of the older brother."

Shawn Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at www.shawnethomas.com



Collaborations Workshop at Grandfather Mountain

By Susan Larson
Burke, McDowell, Mitchell and Yancey Counties

WNC Nonprofit Pathways will sponsor a workshop on Tuesday, May 15, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., in the Sun-room of the Nature Museum at Grandfather Mountain near Linville. The topic is Collaboration: Best Practices, Benefits and Challenges, and it will be led by a veteran collaborator, Meghan Merritt, who is the Executive Director and CEO of the Corpening Memorial YMCA in Marion.

Participants In this workshop nonprofit staff and board members will learn steps to build collaborative partnerships with area agencies and accomplish more to improve their communities than they ever could have done alone. The first half of this session will answer three very valid questions; why should we partner in the first place? Is it worth the potential benefits? How do we overcome typical challenges that get in the way? The second half of the session will allow for collaborative brainstorming on potential partnerships that could be formed to address issues specific to Avery, Burke, Caldwell, McDowell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties. If groups have ever thought about the need to build a partnership or coalition to improve their communities, this is a golden opportunity, especially if potential partners attend together.

Meghan believes in the strength of rural communities working together and has championed collaboration through her various roles with the McDowell County Health Coalition, the McDowell Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Marion, WNC Non-Profit Pathways, and other community organizations. Through her collaborative spirit, she has developed enduring partnerships with school systems, area employers and health systems and is known for her diplomacy in helping organizations work past any "red tape", empowering them to be better together. Meghan is a certified faculty trainer for the YMCA of the USA and has received the Triple Circle award for her dedication and service to advancing the collaborative culture of the YMCA of Western North Carolina. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Non-Profit Arts Management from Lees-McRae College and a Master's Degree in Human Resources Training and Development from Amberton University.

The cost to attend the workshop is \$25 for the first participant and \$20 for up to three more from the same organization. The fee covers lunch and materials. Grandfather Mountain has generously waived the admission fee and invites participants to enjoy all that Grandfather Mountain offers that day. This workshop is made possible with the support of Duke Energy.

Registration in advance is required. Please send an email by May 12 to Susan Larson at sjanelarson@gmail.com for a link to register. For more information, call 828-765-2652.

Susan Larson coordinates programs of WNC Nonprofit Pathways in Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties. She lives in Mitchell County with her husband, retired physician David Larson.



Meghan Merritt



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By Kay Ellis Pollard
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

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Kay Ellis Pollard lives in Mimpro in Mitchell County. She is a free-lance writer. She serves on the SafePlace and Blue Ridge Hospice boards.

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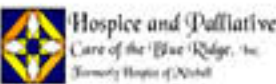
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Poetry Fields of the Blue Ridge

Artist - Julia Ralston

Thursday, August 9, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

These Many Distant Horizons

Artist - Rebecca King

Thursday, September 6, 5:00-7:00 p.m.



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