

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



Life Lessons

By Doug Harrell

The following article is from Family Life Ministries and was so appropriate for Father's Day that I wanted to share it rather than write something of my own.

F-A-T-H-E-R: The Six Attributes of a Godly Father Sermons, What's New!

The following blog post is an edited version of Father Ken Anthony's sermon delivered on Father's Day 2014.

If there's anything in shortage today it is real fathers that take responsibility for their actions and take care of the financial, spiritual, emotional well-being of their homes. Real fathers serve God; real fathers are men of action; real fathers prepare their children for adulthood; real fathers take responsibility, and real fathers are reliable. Today I'm going to talk about six attributes of good and godly fathers using the acronym F-A-T-H-E-R.

Key Attributes of a Good Father

The "F" in father stands for Faithful – Good Fathers are Faithful. Good fathers are faithful people. They are first faithful to God and trust God with their whole heart, soul, and mind. Good fathers believe in God's promises, that God will preserve their families, and that our good Lord will provide their families everything needed for salvation.

Good fathers accept their role as the spiritual head of the household and set the tone for family worship. Good fathers know God's word; they have an active prayer life, attend church regularly with their families, and obey God's commandments.

The Bible lifts up the examples of several faithful fathers: St. Joseph – Jesus' earthly father was faithful because he trusted the angel when he learned that his fiancé, the Virgin Mary was going to give birth to Jesus. He also faithfully moved his family to Egypt when the angel warned him in a dream.

Abraham faithfully believed in God's promise that his wife Sarah would bear a son at over ninety years of age and he would be the father of a great nation.

The "A" in father stands for Action – Good Fathers are People of Action. Most dads like to watch their sports on television; some have a few hobbies, and engage in some "down time" to relax. Despite occasional laziness, good fathers are men of action, especially when their families need them. Good fathers just don't sit there, they spring into action when: The toilets overflow, the garbage disposal breaks, or when something important around the house that needs fixing. Good dads know how to get things done; they solve problems, and always rise to the occasion.

Good fathers also instill a good work ethic in their children and teach by example. Children need to see hardworking fathers and good fathers challenge their children to learn through activity. Good fathers watch over their children and give them the spaces they need to try new things; learn from the mistakes they make. Good fathers are active and engaged parents.

The "T" in father stands for Teacher – Good Fathers are Teachers. Good fathers are teachers and prepare their children to enter adulthood and face the tough world around them. This means that fathers give their children survival skills that will help transform them into successful adults. Unfortunately, most children do not listen to the advice of their fathers. In order to be good teachers, fathers must be credible and earn their children's trust and love. Ephesians 6:4 states: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Here St. Paul is cautioning fathers not to

criticize their children, but instead focus on teaching them with the same love and understanding that our Lord used when teaching the disciples.

The "H" in father stands for Hope – Good Fathers offer Hope to their Families. Good fathers are a source of hope and inspiration for their families. Dads are the family's pillar of strength and they are the ones that tell us that things will be all right when tough times are around the corner. Even though dads complain, good fathers are optimistic and resilient because they trust God.

Good fathers also trust their children and constantly encourage them to pursue their passions, fulfill their dreams, and plan for their future. Clare Boothe Luce once said, "Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present." In contrast, good fathers are as the Father found in the Parable of the Prodigal Son; good fathers are forever hopeful and inspire their families to push beyond themselves.

The "E" in father stands for Example – Good Fathers are a positive Example. Good impressions are important and good fathers are positive role models to their families. Children tend to imitate and adopt their parent's behaviors; therefore, fathers must be good husbands, live moral lives, and treat all people with respect and dignity.

As the home's spiritual leader, good fathers take an active part in their children's spiritual development. While mothers spend more time with the children in a traditional home, the importance of the father's role cannot be underestimated and St. Paul's advice to the Corinthian Church holds true in I Corinthians 11:1. "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." The most important example that father can make to his children is to love others.

Finally, the "R" in father stands for Reliable – Good Fathers are Reliable. Good fathers are reliable, responsible, and consistent. They work hard to "bring home the bacon" and provide for their family's needs. Good fathers are also helpful in times of crisis.

Sadly, many men today are not consistent in their fatherly duties and neglect to see the importance of their role as a father themselves. Fathers need to be reinstated to the level of importance that God intended for them! American morality and spiritual integrity is at an all-time low because of the declining value placed on the role of the father in today's society.

Children need attentive and reliable fathers to be their role models. Newspaper columnist Abigail Van Buren wrote, "If you want your children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders." Responsibility isn't a curse, it's a blessing. Booker T. Washington said, "Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him and to let him know that you trust him."

Yet, in order for children to grow up into responsible adults they need a stable and reliable role models. Good fathers are consistent in how they meet life's challenges. Irresponsible people run away from problems, unreliable fathers make excuses for their inconsistent conduct, and never lead a life of integrity. Good fathers are of proven character, they are faithful to their calling, and are reliable to those that need them.

A father's influence is paramount to a child's development into a happy, well-adjusted, productive adult. Fatherhood is not motherhood; however, it is an active rather than passive activity. Good fathers are involved in their children's lives and look out for their best interests. Dads have to make hard choices and realize that popular decisions are not always the best decisions. Good fathers are able to discern and develop their children's hearts, souls, and minds.

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"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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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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Our passion is to help connect the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the Fire of God transform our community, state, nation and world! (See John 17:21)

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

280 Chapel St.
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

**Where Everybody is Somebody
And Jesus Christ is Lord!**

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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Grassy Creek Baptist Church

793 Old NC 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
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
**"That Mitchell County
may know Christ"**

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
while ministering to the spiritual and
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

Sunday School • 9:45-10:40am
Worship Service • 10:45am
Sunday Evening • 6:30pm

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St. Lucien's Catholic Church

695 Summit Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone (828) 765-2224

Sunday Mass 9:00 am
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

**Knowing God, Seeing God, Serving
God, Submitting to God!**

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

The mission of Spruce Pine United
Methodist Church is to be a beacon on
a hill spreading the Good News of Jesus
Christ through: Worship, Fellowship,
Education, and Nurturing Service

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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God's Love

By Billy Graham

The following is adapted from the message Billy Graham preached June 3, 1973, to some 1.1 million at Yoido Plaza in Seoul, South Korea.

In 1952, I was here in Korea. It was at Christmas-time, and it was very cold. I've never been so cold in all my life, and I toured along what is now the DMZ. I was at Heartbreak Ridge, and on Heartbreak Ridge there were 12 soldiers who were huddled together. An enemy sneaked through the line. He threw a hand grenade into the middle of them. It was going to go off in three seconds.

A soldier saw it and jumped on top of it. He grabbed it, held it to his heart, and it exploded. He died, but his buddies were saved. They took what remained of his body back to the United States, and when they held the memorial service for that soldier, the source of the sermon was the same text that I want to use today: John 15:13.

It says, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Jesus said this just before He was going to go to the cross to die for the sins of the world. He was having His last meeting with His disciples. And He said, "I have one commandment to leave with you. Love one another" (Cf. John 15:12). Billy Graham in 1970 at Shea Stadium in Flushing, Queens, N.Y.

A big tornado hit not far from where I live. It destroyed many houses. One man was in the basement of his house, and he had two little boys. He heard the storm coming. He heard the house falling down. He grabbed his two little boys and put himself on top of them. People found them later. He was dead, but his two sons were alive. He had given his life for his sons.

The Bible says that God loves you. I want us to think about God for a moment. Do you believe in God? The Bible tells us what kind of a God He is. He is the creator of the whole universe. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), the Bible says. God is not only the creator, but God is a spirit, the Bible says. God does not have a body like yours. And because God is a spirit, He can be everywhere at the same time. When I am here in Seoul, I cannot be in New York at the same time because I am limited by a body. But God is a spirit.

The Bible also tells us that God never changes. The Bible says, "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6). The Bible teaches that God is a holy God. And because God is righteous and holy, He is also a God of judgment. There is a Judgment Day coming.

Jesus said, "Every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). The Apostle Paul said God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world (see Acts 17:31). You will have to give an account of every word you ever said, everything you ever did, every thought that you ever had.

But the Bible also teaches that God is a God of love.

The reason God created the human race in the first place was because He loved. He wanted some other creatures in the universe to love. So, He created man and woman and put them in a beautiful garden. God said, "You can have all the fruit in the garden except one tree. There is one tree in the garden that you're not to touch. If you touch it you will die" (see Genesis 3:2-3). And Eve looked at it, and then the devil came and whispered in her ear, "Take some of it. It will make you very wise, and it will make you like God, and when God said you would die if you eat it, He didn't mean it."

Eve could stand the temptation no longer. She picked up the fruit and started eating. She got sick. Then the man ate it, too, and he got sick. And every person since then has been sick with a disease called sin. It wasn't the fruit that made them sick. It was the fact that they had disobeyed God and broken God's law. And the whole human race has that disease. We read the newspapers. We watch the television. We know that something is wrong with the human race. What is it? The Bible says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

The Bible teaches that there are three kinds of death. There is the death of your body. All of you are going to die. We know that, but you can also be alive and your soul dead. Today there are many people whose body is alive but whose soul is dead toward God. And you don't have peace, you don't have joy, you don't have happiness, you don't have assurance that you're going to Heaven. It is your soul that's dead, and your soul needs God.

The third kind of death is when your body dies but your soul lives on, separated from God. And the Bible says for that soul, the future life becomes one of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The Bible has many words to describe the future of the lost soul. The Bible uses the word perish. The Bible uses the word condemn. The Bible uses the word punishment. The Bible uses the words everlasting fire. The Bible uses the word hell.

Whatever word is used, this death is a terrible thing: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

But the Bible tells us that God sent His Son to rescue the world in spite of our rebellion, in spite of our sins. God said, "I love you. I love the human race; I want to forgive them of their sins."

But how could He do it? He said, "If you rebel against Me, you're going to die." He had to keep His word, or He would have been a liar. So, what did He do? His Son, Jesus Christ, volunteered to come and live among us.

"But the Bible tells us that God sent His Son to rescue the world in spite of our rebellion, in spite of our sins. God said, 'I love you. I love the human race; I want to forgive them of their sins.'"

—Billy Graham



He made the blind to see and the deaf to hear. But the real reason He came was not to heal. The real reason that He came was not to teach. He came to die. Because on the cross, He took your sins, your death, your judgment, your hell. They took his clothes off Him. They took long leather whips with steel pellets on the end and beat Him until his back was bleeding. They put a crown of thorns on His brow until His face was bleeding. They put spikes in His hands and hung Him between Heaven and earth. And while on that cross Jesus prayed, "Forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He loves you so much that if you had been the only person in the world, He would have died for you. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). You're a friend of Jesus. He laid down His life for you.

And then something else happened. On the third day, He rose again. He is alive! And some day, the Bible says, He is coming back. Someday we will look up, and riding on a white horse will be the King of kings and Lord of lords, our Lord Jesus Christ. And those of you who know Christ, those of you who have given your life to Him, you are going to reign with Him. What a glorious future we have, those of us who love Jesus Christ!

Now, what does He want you to do?

First, He wants you to repent of your sins. The Scripture says, "God ... now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). If we are to be saved, if our sins are to be forgiven, we have to repent. Repentance means that you confess you are a sinner and are willing to turn from your sins.

Second, receive Christ into your heart by faith. The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him." You come by faith. You cannot buy your way. You cannot work your way. You come by simple, childlike faith—like a little child would come to his or her father.

Third, openly confess Christ. All the people Jesus called, He called publicly. You must be willing to take a public stand for Christ. Would you do that today?

Let Him come and change your life. He will give you a new love for everyone. You will be concerned about your neighbor. It will make you a new father, a new mother, a new boy or a new girl. I am going to ask you today to receive Christ. Say today, "I am willing to turn from my sins; I want Jesus in my heart." ©1973 BGEA

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version. Give your life to the One who loves perfectly.

Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? Malachi 2:10

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Celebrates Blessing of the Hands

By Brent Price
Mitchell County

When our hands respond to the calling of our hearts they carry out the sacred work of love. Our hearts and hands can indeed work miracles.

In honor of Nurses Week Hospice of the Blue Ridge recognized the calling of our nurses through the Blessing of Hands. This hand-washing ritual affirms their selfless dedication to the patients and families in their care. Other staff members were also invited to offer their hands for blessing as well.

As our nurses and other staff were blessed, they dried the hands of the nurse that followed as a witness to their servanthood. The Blessing of Hands reminds us of the importance of caring for the soul, especially when that service is so vital to those we serve.



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



I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
3 John 1:4

Cow Pattie Bingo

By Gloria Huskins
Mitchell County



Would you pay \$25.00 to win \$500.00?
If so, we have a great opportunity for you!!
Mitchell County Farm Bureau's Women's Committee will
Be hosting an exciting event.....Cow Pattie Bingo
Here is how it will work:

We will sell 100 rectangle spaces at \$25.00 each. We will set up a corral and mark off a grid on the grass with 50 rectangles. We will draw numbers from the hat for each individual that has purchased tickets and assign numbers before the event. Then we will release the Beastly Cow in anticipation of who the lucky recipient of a nice fresh Cow Pattie might be. This lucky person will win \$500.00. One Cow will be released at 10:00 AM and another Cow will be released at 12:00 PM. We will have 2 drawings and 2 winners!!

The event will take place at the Rhododendron Festival June 16th on the Creekwalk in Bakersville, NC
Proceeds will support the Annual Women's Committee Scholarship and Mitchell County 4-H Livestock Club
Please help us support these great causes by purchasing your tickets today.

YOU may be a winner!!
Please come join us for the festivities!!

Gloria Huskins is County Liaison/Licensed CSR at Mitchell County Farm Bureau and attends Altapass Baptist Church.

Do you have a joint replacement surgery scheduled? The Brian Center Spruce Pine invites you to reserve a room with us ahead of time. Call us a week before surgery to tour the building, meet our therapy staff and see where you will be staying. Its our goal to provide a smooth transition from the hospital to our building and get you back home as quickly as possible. Contact Karen McDowell @ (828)765-7312 or Heather Steuer @ (828)284-8362 to make your appointment today.

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Mine Creek Baptist Church

"I See Myself In Your Eyes!"

By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

This may be a story I've shared before, but even so, I think it bears repeating. It was probably when he was 4 or 5 years old. I and my oldest son, Gabriel, were wrestling around on the sofa one day. He was on my lap as we were laughing, pushing, pulling, tickling, etc. All of a sudden, he stopped and said, "Daddy, wait a minute!" He put his little hands on my cheeks and pulled my face close to his as he looked intently into my eyes. As I was wondering what he was doing, he suddenly exclaimed with excitement, "Daddy, I see myself in your eyes! I really can!" How he noticed this while we were wrestling around I don't know. Somehow, he realized that he could see his reflection in my eyes. He would say "Open your eyes wide Daddy so I can see myself." I was more than happy to oblige. He sat there for several minutes holding my face in his little hands with his nose almost touching mine looking into my eyes as big smiles spread across his face. For whatever reason, this seemed to intrigue him for a while. Then as with most kids, his feet hit the floor running and he was off to explore elsewhere.

If you have been fortunate enough in this life to have children, you have received a great blessing and privilege from God. In our culture today, children are sometimes seen more of a nuisance than a blessing. Abortion runs rampant today, in most cases, not for health concerns, but because a mother or father don't want a child to "interfere" with their life or career. We have become a selfish and self-centered society which thinks more about ourselves than we do others. Society sees divorce as the easy way out instead of putting the work into a marriage to make it strong. Somehow, the idea of a God-centered marriage has become an old-fashioned, outdated concept and we are seeing the detrimental effects of this assault with each generation that comes. We are reaping what we have sown in the previous generations. Satan is working tirelessly to destroy the Biblical truth of what a family is to be, even to the extent of trying to redefine what marriage has been for thousands of years. However, the truth of what marriage and family is supposed to be still stands, even with our failure to obey and fulfill God's commands; it does not change His truth.

Where do we begin in rebuilding what we have allowed Satan to destroy? First, I believe it begins with repentance. That's not a popular term in our world. No one likes to admit their sin and failure. Repentance is not just feeling sorry or bad about what one has done; repentance is turning away from a sin to not commit it anymore. Not only do we need to turn away from the wrong way we have been doing marriage and family, but we must turn toward the ways God wants us to live out our marriage and family.

Secondly, we must pray for God's help. The onslaught that Satan is bringing to our marriages and families is an attack from spiritual wickedness in high places. We must pray for the power and help of Almighty God to give us strength to fight this spiritual battle that Satan has declared on our marriages and homes. Jesus is our only hope. Apart from Him we can do nothing. To reclaim what God desires our homes to be we must pray for His help.

Next, I believe men need to step up to the plate. Regardless of what our world seems to believe, God has ordained man to be the head of the household. I'm not talking about a man being a dictator or "boss hog" to his wife and kids. What I am talking about is men taking the responsibility and being accountable to what God has called them to be as husbands and fathers. Men must lead their families. Loving our wives as Christ loved the church and raising our children to follow God. We have become so influenced by the society around us that we neglect to fulfill what God has commanded and we wonder why our families are in such dire straits. We need men to be men and realize that God has called us to be more than what the world is telling us. Our lives are not just about careers, money, material things, entertainment, hobbies, etc. God has called us to lead our wives and children. God has called us to be providers both spiritually and physically to our families. God has called us to glorify Him in all we do. Our sons will learn to be husbands by watching us. Our daughters will learn what kind of husband to pray for by watching us. This should make us all stop and take a serious look at how we as men are fulfilling our responsibilities before our families and most importantly before God.

Whether we realize it or not, our children will be a reflection of who we are. We only have them for a few short years until they go out to raise their own families. What legacy are we leaving them to pass on to the next generation? One day, God willing, when my boys are wrestling with their kids, they will see a reflection of themselves in their Daddy's eyes. Not just a physical reflection but a spiritual one that was passed down by their Daddy before them.

God help us as men to break this cycle of destruction that has wrecked havoc on our families. God help us to see our reflection in His eyes, so healing and restoration will come to our land. May we be able to look to our Heavenly Father and say "Father, I see myself in your eyes!"

Isaiah 38:19 *The father to the children shall make known thy truth.*

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



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Happy Father's Day!

Mercy

By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell Counties

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (Luke 10:37, KJV)
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. (Matt. 5:7, KJV)

I once had an argument with a Christian man about the message of the parable of the Good Samaritan. It was his position that Jesus was using this opportunity to shame His enemies as they sought to discredit Him. It was my position that Jesus was responding to the challenge of this 'expert in the Law' with an eye on the potential of this teacher to gain new understanding that could shape his perspective and thus impact the future...for him AND through him, for others!

Since you are reading this, I don't have to worry too much about your disagreement with my position. (Because talking to this newspaper could upset the people around you... @)

Imagine, if you will, the power of the Lord's words if this man later saw Jesus receiving no mercy at the hands of those who beat, whipped, mocked and crucified Him. Jesus would be the one having been beaten, and this teacher would find himself in the place of the people in the story confronted by the choice to extend mercy or to simply pass by and do nothing. I think this teacher may have had heard Jesus' words in his ears and in his heart... "Go, and do thou likewise". 'Go and Show' mercy.

Mercy is shown in many ways in the community in which I serve. It is shown by staff as they provide attention to an inmate who has experienced the serious injury or death of a loved one, and by case managers who regularly follow each man to encourage him to maximize the 'opportunity' he finds before him; to grow and to learn and to change.

Mercy is personified in the form of instructors from Mayland Community College who come into the institution to teach classes for Adult Basic Education and GED. They come with the desire to help the men learn the basic skills for success when they are released one day.

It is shown by offenders to offenders when they know that one of their fellow residents has been struggling emotionally or spiritually, and they listen to his pain. And it is shown by Community Volunteers who come into the institution on a regular basis to inspire, to teach, to equip incarcerated men for life on the outside. (Just to name a few.) Such acts of mercy are common on the inside.

In May, a group of men came showing mercy to some of the men who reside in our prison. (Kairos) They came to listen-listen and love-love. And as a result of their message of God's mercy, for some, Hope has come to life in this place!

On July 28, a team of volunteers from the outside will come inside and demonstrate mercy once again through a One Day with God Camp. On this day incarcerated fathers and their children will enjoy a full day of connection, love, fun and food wherein the children are 'blessed' by their dads in words and actions.

In the Fall, volunteers will begin serving those who are incarcerated with the opportunity to gain college credits through the Community Education Program provided through UNC. Mentors currently being sought in this area who are willing to show mercy by giving of their time, talents and training to assist inmate students with their studies as tutors and encouragers beginning in the Fall.

Each of these demonstrations of mercy has the potential to change lives forever! When the men see that someone has come to help them in their time of need, they learn the meaning of mercy firsthand, in a tangible way that is hard to deny.

There is really no need to argue about it at all. For the Lord said, the merciful will obtain mercy. If you are interested in showing mercy by giving of your resources of time, money and/or experience, please feel free to contact me at joseph.griffin@mcdps.gov and I will discuss with you how we might make that happen.

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



2018 Summer Fun

4-H Summer Fun is a special program sponsored by Mitchell County 4-H through the NC Cooperative Extension. Activities are open to all youth ages 5-18. There are 20 different activities designed for specific age groups with limited spaces. We invite you to join us for a fun and exciting time. You do not have to be a current 4-H member to participate.

To Enroll in 4-H Summer Fun, you must complete a registration form, available at the 4-H office, along with a Code of Conduct, Medical Release and Photo Consent. Payment should be made at the time of registration. Participants will receive a Mitchell County 4-H t-shirt with registration.

Early Registration for current 4-H members will be on Thursday, June 7th from 8am-6pm.

Early Registration for the public will be open on Friday, June 8th from 8am-6pm.

We will continue to accept registrations after this date until all workshops are full or until June 15th at which time registration will close. Please take advantage of the early registration dates to ensure your child's space in the workshop of their choice. Spaces are limited to the first 12 registrants.

Registration will be accepted at the Mitchell County Cooperative Extension Center located at 10 South Mitchell Ave., Bakersville. (828-688-4811). Payment is expected at the time of registration. No registration for Summer Fun will be accepted over the telephone.

All workshops and field trips will meet at the Mitchell County Cooperative Extension Center located at 10 South Mitchell Ave., Bakersville, (828-688-4811) unless otherwise posted. Light snack and water will be provided at each workshop.

For more information contact Kaley Brown, 4-H Agent at 828 688-4811, Email: kaley_brown@ncsu.edu or visit Mitchell County 4H facebook page.



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Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

Franklin Graham Preaches the Gospel in Lisbon, Portugal

By Franklin Graham

Recently, some people have had discussions about the state of evangelicalism today, almost referring to it as a politically related term. I can't speak for others, and I'm certainly not a spokesperson for any kind of evangelical movement, but I can tell you what I believe.

I believe in God. I believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. And I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe my God is three in one. I believe that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to take our sins. That He died on a cross and shed His blood for all the sins of mankind. I believe He took our sins to the grave, and I believe in the resurrection. God raised Him to life on the third day.

This is God's Gospel—and I believe there is supernatural, Holy Spirit-filled power in this message. Jesus told us to go into all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I believe without Christ, a soul will be lost, condemned to hell for all eternity. This should motivate all of us to share the Good News of God's love to a sick, dying and compromising world. I am called and committed to preaching this message as long as I have breath or until the Lord returns.

I am also committed to taking Samaritan's Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association into this new millennium, proclaiming this Gospel to as many people as we possibly can through every means possible.

I just finished preaching in Lisbon, Portugal, where we had nearly 30,000 people attend, with hundreds responding to the invitations to confess their sins, to repent and by faith believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Starting in May, I'll be going to California and the Pacific Northwest to pierce the "blue wall," not for politics, but for the Gospel. The blue wall represents progressive secularism, which is anti-God. I will be preaching in outside venues in 17 cities. The only hope for California, the Pacific Northwest or any other place in the world is the Gospel. Then when we finish the West Coast, I'll be going to England, Armenia and Mexico this year.

In addition to presenting a clear Gospel message during our tour of California and the Pacific Northwest, I will be asking for a renewed commitment to prayer and intercession on behalf of our country. We are in deep trouble as socialist-progressives have doubled down on their efforts to turn our legislatures, schools and communities into showcases for a godless, secularist agenda that is openly hostile to the Christian faith.

But I want to do more than just ask people to pray—though that is paramount. I also want them to be sure to engage in the political process, examine candidates' records, and be sure to turn out and vote in the upcoming mid-term elections. As I have said before, I believe God has given us a brief window of opportunity to at least slow down, and with God's help perhaps reverse, the steep decline that has put America in serious moral jeopardy.

The past year has seen some progress. A conservative Supreme Court justice has been appointed under the Trump administration. Steps have been taken in the White House to defend and protect religious liberty. Executive orders have been issued that protect the rights of those with sincerely held religious beliefs.

I am grateful for this, but the battle lines have been drawn, and the voices of those opposed to people of faith are growing louder by the minute. Their attacks against the sanctity of marriage and the right to life are more abusive than I can ever remember.

It may seem a bit early to talk about it, but I believe the mid-term elections coming up this fall are crucial in determining whether our nation will continue to



safeguard our religious liberties. Now is the time to inform yourself on how the agenda of those running for office align with basic Biblical principles. Now is the time for churches to gather congregations together for focused prayer on behalf of our nation. Now is the time for the Body of Christ to stand boldly together for our faith and Biblically informed convictions.

Just a few weeks ago, a bill to stop men from using women's restrooms was defeated in the voting booth in Anchorage, Alaska. This new law would have meant that people would be required to use the restrooms, dressing rooms and locker rooms that match the sex listed on their birth certificate. It was voted down by a very narrow margin—but only 35 percent of the city's registered voters even cast a ballot! It makes you wonder how the outcome would have been if every Christian and every church in Anchorage had gotten behind it.

My father was never afraid to take a stand for what he knew was right. He decried racial segregation in the '50s and '60s and refused to conduct Crusades unless people of every color were allowed to participate. He went behind the Iron Curtain in the '70s and '80s to preach the Gospel in communist countries, despite strong opposition. He was never hesitant to engage the culture, because he knew he was God's ambassador to a world that was lost and dying without Christ.

And that's exactly why I will continue to stand firmly against the godless proponents of secularism and progressive socialism who advocate destructive legislation and are antagonistic to the basic moral precepts of the Christian faith. If further empowered in upcoming federal, state and local elections, they will do all they can to silence us. The danger is real. Very real.

I promise you, I will never remain quiet about the sure testimony of Scripture on clearly defined moral concerns, because it is the authoritative Word of God that, when adhered to, brings all the blessings of obedience. However, when ignored, rejected and ridiculed, the bitter, destructive fruit of disobedience is not far behind.

This is not a time to relax our vigilance. This is not a time to withdraw from the culture. This is not

a time to remain quiet. This is a time for believers to pray fervently, work steadfastly and engage the world around us both with the truth of God's Word and the eternal hope of the Gospel. In our neighborhoods. In our schools. In our workplaces. In our communities.

"The righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1).

I'm going to continue to do what I have been doing for some 40 years—feed the hungry, clothe the naked, provide medical care for the sick, bring comfort to those ravaged by wars and storms—so that I can reach people with the truth of God's love, that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to earth to take our sins to the cross.

Evangelism is simply reaching the lost with this message. We should be concerned about how we can reach more, and not get sidetracked. A number of years ago Nike had a slogan that said, "Just Do It!" That's our job—that's what we are to do today.

I'm not interested in fanning out in all kinds of directions. I'm interested in focusing on one direction—reaching lost souls with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is calling people to cross the line from death to life, in Him. That's evangelism. And that's what evangelicalism should be about. ©2018 BGEA

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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A Mother's Apron String

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Pastor and radio Bible teacher, Chuck Swindoll, once shared a story about a good friend who was raised by a godly pastor's wife. The friend said his mother used to rock him to sleep, not by singing little ditties and lullabies, but by singing to him the great hymns of the faith. He said he could remember quite well his mother leaning over the crib and singing, "A Mighty Fortress is our God"; "And Can it Be?"; "More Love to Thee, O Christ"; "My Jesus I Love thee"; "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." She sang the deep songs. And he said, "I remember. I remember those hymns. In fact," he said, "when I got into church, I had heard and learned most of the hymns." Swindoll added that this young man's mother had made an investment in his life that would always be with him.

A cartoon, from several years ago, shows a baby kangaroo peeping out of its pouch. The caption underneath read, "His mother determines his point of view."

The virtuous things we learn at home are bonds that stay with us throughout life.

Laura E. Richards beautifully makes this point in The Apron String, where she writes:

"Once upon a time a boy played about the house, running by his mother's side; and as he was very little, his mother tied him to the string of her apron.

"Now," she said, "when you stumble, you can pull yourself up by the apron-string, and so you will not fall."

"The boy did that, and all went well, and the mother sang at her work.

"By and by the boy grew so tall that his head came above the window-sill, and looking through the window, he saw far away green trees waving, and a flowing river that flashed in the sun, and rising above all, blue peaks of mountains.

"Oh Mother," he said, "untie the apron string and let me go!"

But the mother said, "Not yet, my child! Only yesterday you stumbled and would have fallen but for the apron-string. Wait yet a little, till you are stronger."

So the boy waited, and all went as before, and the mother sang at her work.

But one day the boy found the door of the house standing open, for it was spring weather. He stood on the threshold and looked across the valley, and saw the green trees waving, and the swift-flowing river with the sun flashing on it, and the blue mountains rising beyond. And this time he heard the voice of the river calling, and it said 'Come!'

Then the boy started forward, and as he started, the string of the apron broke.

"Oh! How weak my mother's apron-string is!" cried the boy; and he ran out into the world, with the broken string hanging beside him.

"The mother gathered up the other end of the string and put it in her bosom, and went about her work again, but she sang no more.

"The boy ran on and on, rejoicing in his freedom, and in the fresh air and the morning sun. He crossed the valley and began to climb the foothills among which the river flowed swiftly, among rocks and cliffs. Now it was easy climbing, and again it was steep and craggy, but always he looked upward at the blue peaks beyond and always the voice of the river was in his ears, saying 'Come!'

By and by he came to the brink of a precipice, over which the river dashed in a cataract, foaming and flashing, and sending up clouds of silver spray. The spray filled his eyes so that he did not see his footing clearly; he grew dizzy, stumbled, and fell. But as he fell, something about him caught on a point of rock at the precipice-edge, and held him, so that he hung dangling over the abyss; and when he put his hand to see what held him, he found that it was the broken string of the apron, which still hung by his side.

"Oh! How strong my mother's apron string is!" said the boy. And he drew himself up by it, and stood firm on his feet, and went on climbing toward the blue peaks of the mountains."

The Scriptures instruct, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Contrary to the interpretation of some, this text isn't an absolute promise that whenever children are raised right, if they wander, they will always return. It's unfortunate, but the Bible, as well as experience, demonstrates that good parenting doesn't always result in good children. Children are not like machines that can be programmed, but instead they are moral agents who can choose either right or wrong.

But what the text does promise is that when godly values are passed along to children, this contribution to their lives never leaves them. It remains inside of them, constantly beckoning and pointing them to the right paths. It's an apron-string by which they may at any point draw themselves up, saving them from the treacherous terrain of life, even the loss of their own souls.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, can ever substitute for loving, godly parental leadership in the early development of children. And, as the poet William Ross Wallace so eloquently said it, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."

The Apron String was taken from The Moral Compass edited by William J. Bennet; Simon & Schuster, New York, N.Y. 1995.



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



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Marlene's Meditations

By Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin

MY DADDY

*My daddy's eyes have seen a lot
My eyes are almost new
I hope that I can see the things
My daddy has seen too.*

*My daddy's hands are very strong
My little hands are frail
I hope that mine can do the things
My daddy does so well.*

*My daddy's feet can stand so tall
Mine are just learning to last
I hope my feet can follow
Up close to my daddy's path.*

*My daddy's heart is loving
He's tender and so kind
He wants the very best for me
All this I hope he'll find.*



Singing God's Tune

By Marlene Houk
Burke County



*Zephaniah 3:17 The Lord thy God in the midst of thee
is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with
joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with
singing.*

Hop in your car, turn onto Interstate 40 East from somewhere in western North Carolina, and travel for about 22 hours. You will arrive at Tijeras, New Mexico. Exit onto Route 66 (eastbound-very important), and you will encounter the #1 Trip Advisor recommendation for this otherwise desolate and sparsely inhabited town.

Tijeras' arid climate contrasts our lush mountains that ring with the melody of the divine in its rippling waterfalls. Another intriguing difference is a must-see attraction when traveling to that area. Between mile markers four and five on this stretch of historical Route 66 in New Mexico, there is a different kind of song than the cascading waterfalls of our state. It is called the Singing Road. And we Americans can easily identify the tune! Engineers designed this quarter-mile stretch by placing rumble strips at exact distances to match the vibrations of the notes in "America the Beautiful." But the tune can only be heard when driving over the rumble strips at exactly 45 miles per hour!



Did you hear the precise requirements that a visitor must follow to hear the Singing Road?

- This singing road is in a certain location, and visitors must travel there to experience the delight of this unusual attraction.
- An exact speed of 45 miles per hour produces results, no more, no less.
- One must produce the right action (drive on the rumble strips) to hear the song.
- The song is easily recognized and is a specific tune.
- Some visitors drove over it several times before they heard it or repeated the action just for fun.

Just as we can enjoy the music of the Singing Road when we follow the guidelines, so in life, we must follow God's cues to hear His magnificent song. Filled with lyrics composed just for us, the exquisite melodies refresh our souls.

• The Singing Road is in a certain location: Likewise, we need to follow as God leads us to the specific places of still waters and green pastures where He feeds us and gives us strength to follow Him.

• We need to travel at the right speed. If we rush through the day without praising Him, praying to Him, and fulfilling His will for our lives, we can't hear the magnificent notes of His dazzling song. Like Martha, when Jesus told her she was "...troubled about many things." (Luke 10:41), we need to slow down to God's speed. Rather than rush frantically into the busy barrenness of the day, we should allow the strains of His love to hold our hearts.

• We need to choose the right actions (driving over the rumble strips.) When we choose to act and allow our feelings to follow, we can be in tune with His song for us. Like David, when spurned by Nabal, we need to overcome our anger and focus on claiming our rightful title as heirs to the kingdom. (1 Samuel 25:33).

• God has a specific song for each of our lives. Some contain more sorrowful, minor notes while others ring throughout the halls of Christendom with booming voices full of leadership and biblical truth. Still others flow joyfully through life, encouraging the bride of Christ and humming in our souls constantly.

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:

• Some of the Trip Advisor reviewers drove over the rumble strips several times before they heard the song. Likewise, for some, it seems to take a lifetime of driving over the rumble strips of God's song before we can hear the tune. We tilt our heads, listening carefully, finally hearing the notes from His heart, and our spirits join in the tune.

We can identify with little Samuel (1 Samuel chapter 1) when he mistook God's voice for Eli's three times. Or perhaps we love the experience of driving over and over the rumble strips of His melody for us, thrilling to the rhythm.

When we listen for God's singing, He gently croons His unique composition, a lullaby intended for our wounded souls. And the tune becomes a top attraction for life's journey.

Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. — Burthold Auerbach

Do you hear the music of the holy in your life? It can wash away the debris of life and refresh and cleanse. Can you imagine singing along with the Lover of your soul? Sing now!

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

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: Psalms 78:5-8



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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National Day of Prayer

Unity

By Monica Henley-Kritz
Mitchell County

The National Day of Prayer was held on Thursday, May 3. The theme for 2018 was "Pray for America: Unity." The theme verse from The Bible was Ephesians 4:3, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Prior to the National Day of Prayer, we scheduled 7 "days of repentance" at Riverside Park. Each day at 12:00 noon, we met and prayed for each major area of influence in our nation, 1 each day. These were: the government, military, media, business, education, the church, and the family. There was also a time of special music and a speaker, before we closed in prayer each day. It was such a special time, as well as an encouragement to see local people gather together, those who have a real concern for our nation.

On Thursday, the National Day of Prayer, my heart was thrilled to see approximately 100 people in attendance for the 12:00 noon gathering! Praise GOD! Our town of Spruce Pine mayor, Darla Harding, led in the national prayer from the National Day of Prayer task force, as we all read along with her, lifting our voices in unison to GOD. One of the goals of the National Day of Prayer task force was to have prayer gatherings in every county all across our nation, with people reading the national prayer aloud together. Can you imagine the sound of all of the voices rising up to GOD in unison? I pray that it was pleasing in HIS ears...not just a noise, but prayers from the heart!

We were also blessed to have Tri-County Christian School in attendance with us. They sang 2 songs, which ministered to our hearts. One was "Love Ran Red" and the other song was a solo, "More Than Anything", sang by Alexis Buchanan. These songs stirred and softened our hearts, as we were reminded of Who GOD is and how great HE is! This was a wonderful opportunity to come together as CHRISTians and worship THE LORD together, as well as seek HIS face in prayer.

In the 6:30 p.m. gathering, we prayed aloud together again, led by Mayor Darla Harding. Charles Allen sang a solo, "The Wonder of Wonders", which rang out across the river with a beautiful melody and words in praise to Our LORD and SAVIOUR. Also, in attendance was Miss Katie Blair, a student from Bethel Christian Academy, who prayed The LORD's prayer.

As the County Coordinator for the National Day of Prayer, I shared what GOD put on my heart. I had received an email from someone involved with the National Day of Prayer, and it included a link to an article entitled, "Come and See What God Has Done", by Carol Madison, editor of Prayer Connect. The following is from this article, which is one of the best I have ever read! Read it and let it settle into your heart and mind.

"Nestled in the mountains of Guatemala is a community of several thousand people called Almolonga - a place where residents claim God's presence has brought transformation of society and a healing of the land (2 Chron. 7:14)." Carol writes of traveling to Almolonga, along with 3 others to see this transformation with her own eyes. "After driving through village after village plagued with obvious poverty, we noticed a dramatic difference upon entering Almolonga. There was no denying the immediate change in the physical nature of the community. The streets were cleaner with less litter, the homes were better constructed and cared for, and many of the businesses had biblical names. In fact, a banner over the main street declared, 'Jesus is Lord of Almolonga.'"

"It was market time, and the streets were bustling with farmers carrying their produce. I was taken back by the abundance and enormous size of the carrots, cabbages, beets, and other produce. Just as the video had described, God had blessed the people of Almolonga with a healing of their land. The quality of their produce far surpassed the produce for sale in the market a few miles away...or in other villages."

"But more than that, I was impressed with the people of Almolonga. This

community was once known for crime, alcoholism, poverty, abuse and hostility to pastors, churches, and missionaries. But when God's people were most desperate, they cried out to Him in prayer. And now an estimated 80 to 90 percent of the people are followers of Jesus Christ. We sensed the accuracy of that high estimate as we initiated conversations. We asked questions and invited them to give us an explanation for the obvious differences between their community and other villages nearby. The vast majority gave all glory to God for the transformation of their families and town. Many of them spoke of physical healing. We met just one person over the course of two days who said she wasn't a believer."

Carol continues, "The townspeople sent us away with a message we heard over and over again - the need for humility and desperate prayer. 'When you go home,' one pastor said, 'you must tell the people that it is not a program or strategy. Tell them that they must humble themselves and pray. There is no other way.' I came away convinced that God's heart is for the transformation of communities. He stirred a new level of prayer and hope for my own community."

May this stir our hearts and cause us to seek GOD for our town and country, as well as our nation. We all know that we have problems here, just like anywhere else. But if we will follow GOD...seek HIM, I believe HE will take care of us and our economy, as well as our spiritual problems. GOD Himself said in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Please...please, Mitchell County...please, Spruce Pine...please join in prayer for our country, for our state of North Carolina, and for our nation, the United States of America! Here is the recipe for success! Humbling ourselves and praying! Confessing and repenting!

Both gatherings were closed by my dear husband, Jason Kritz, pastor of Crabtree Chapel Baptist Church, who led in passionate and powerful prayer with confession and repentance to Our Great GOD.

Monica Henley-Kritz is a member of Berry Chapel in Spruce Pine NC.



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The Inspiring Word

Father's Day

Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County



Wow, can you believe it's June? 2018 is half gone. But, June brings us to a very special day, Father's Day. This year I have been drawn, more so than in the past, to the wisdom of my parents. The older I get I seem to realize more the value of the wisdom they gave me. Lori and I both are blessed to have mothers with us still. Both of us have had to see our fathers promoted to eternity. We speak often of our parents and the things they taught us as children and young adults. For this issue of "The Inspiring Word" I would like to challenge you to reflect on your parents and the wisdom, experience and training they provided you. I realize some of you may not have had a memorable relationship with their parents; none of us have lived a storybook life. Maybe your memories are with grand-parents or foster parents or adoptive parents. Most of us have a parent role model in your life and they have worked tirelessly to make a godly influence in your life.

May I share a childhood experience with you? The house I live in was built by my father circa 1960. When the sunlight hits my parent's old bedroom door just right I can see small handprints, they were mine when I was a toddler. Dad worked third shift in a cotton mill, he would come home and go to bed, but I wanted to see him, so I would stand at the door and slap it with my hands. I'm certain I got into trouble, but dad and I were best friends, where he went, I went. This relationship is missing in too many families today. Men, if you have fathered children please make sure you're a father to your children. If something has gotten between you, there is time to put it to rest and start moving forward with the future God has set aside for you. Reach up to Jesus and reach out to family and watch God work.

Lori and I are fortunate to have many memories with our parents and I bet you do too. I know we live in a fast-paced world and social media seems to have taken the place of personal visits and even telephone calls but let me encourage you to put life in a slower gear, pour a cup of coffee, a glass of sweet tea or lemonade and find a quiet spot and reflect on your childhood. For example, my father was an outdoorsman, he trained me to shoot, hunt, and fish, garden and provide for myself in the most demanding of times. These are skills that are with me today, and skills that I try to pass on to my grandchildren. I recently bought a hunting knife blank. I wanted to finish it out myself. Buying a finished knife would be much cheaper. But, the skills I used were given to me by my parents and I wanted to use them one more time. The knife with English walnut scales turned out nice and it fits my hand just right. It's more than a purchase, it's an investment that can be passed along to the next generation. The important things in life don't necessarily come from books. They are life skills and they are taught, not read.

Those life skills would not be complete without Mom's input into my character. From prayer to church to Bible to manners and family skills she makes a big influence in our lives. Lori and I recently spent an evening talking about how we became who we are. We may have a long way to go but thanks to our parents we have a roadmap to follow. I bet you have a roadmap too. I bet someone in your life has invested in you. Think about whom that man or woman is and spend some time thinking about the skills, experience and wisdom they have invested in you. Look at yourself and consider this, are you investing in the lives of the children and youth in your life? Share skills, help them have experiences that will last a lifetime and don't forget your wisdom, pass it along to the next generation. They will put down the cell phones, the computers, the video games etc.... if they have a reason. Let's start giving them a reason. I found it a pleasure to learn new things with my daughters when they were younger; I still enjoy learning new things with all of them. I consider it a blessing indeed to have six wonderful grandchildren I can learn with. I'm never too old to learn and I find something every day I can invest in their lives. I believe this is the interpretation and application of Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." It may take some time, it did with me, but I retained my training because it was godly training and as I have gotten older I return to more and more of it. Parents invest yourselves into your children and remember this, being a father or mother is genetic, but being a Dad or Mom comes from the heart. You will be blessed in the end, I have been.

Terry is pastor of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Marion NC. You can contact Terry by email at terrycheek63@gmail.com or by phone at (828) 460-6120.

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Sudoku Solution

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

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story

Doug Harrell
This Funny Farm Story has a different twist than Clint's normal, hilarious tales of mirth. The attitude you see here is really more in touch with the genuine person Clint was in his walk with his Lord and the praise he gave Him on a daily basis. Even in moments of laughter, he never lost that love for his Creator and was continually giving thanks for the same things in life. His testimony will always live on in the lives of those he touched in the most magical ways. Go rest high on that mountain my dear Brother in Christ.

Dear friends,

I've been writing this column for nearly 3 years – in fact, this is my 36th tale from what I call "The Funny Farm" at Harrell Hill. A few months back I seemed to have exhausted my inventory of stories from that fateful summer of 2010... when I lived and worked alongside my friends Doug and Barbara Harrell. But, "poof", here I am again...another incident has come to mind! ☺



Drought Drama

Sitting here today, in our comfy FLOODED Mitchell County, it seems impossible that drought plagued the area not that long ago. In fact, the summer I went to "Farmer School" at Harrell Hill was a hot and very dry. Coming from the BIG City of Hendersonville, NC, I was clueless concerning the life and plight of the farmer. Like most "city folk", I thought tomatoes grew in my local Ingles store!
Farmer Doug was bemoaning the lack of rain, for just a second, when he decided that we needed to find water to irrigate the parched garden. Being the cynic that I am, I thought to myself, "FIND WATER? That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard!" After all, the fields were literally cracking from the extreme heat and lack of rainfall. Nevertheless, who was I to challenge Doug's ideas. So, as he mounted his GIANT earth moving thingamabob, I fell in behind him and went in search of life-giving water.

When we arrived in the field Doug stopped alongside what appeared to have been a ditch/stream – perhaps back in prehistoric times. If you laid on your belly beside it, you could ALMOST feel an itty-bitsy bit of moisture in the soil. Always the optimist, Farmer Doug had referred to it as a "stream"...I'm thinking to myself, "This IS NOT A STREAM...it's little more than a leak in the dirt!"

Farmer Doug sensed my disbelief, gave me that "Pollard you don't know nuttin'" smile, and patiently explained that we needed to carve a retaining pond to capture as much of the precious liquid as possible. "When pigs fly," I opined to myself. It reminded me of God's words to Adam following the Fall... "And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;" Genesis 3:17. Surely the scorched ground COULD NOT give up enough moisture to save our garden.

Journey to the Center of the Earth

My friend began dropping the giant front-end loader bucket/digger thingy into the packed ground, his machine straining and groaning in protest. He'd encounter a boulder which delayed progress and threatened to doom our lake building efforts...but Farmer Doug never gives up. Every so often I would climb into the expanding cavern to shovel it out, doing my part in this DRY HOLE! I recall feeling somewhat tentative about the effort...surely there were evil critters – perhaps a rattlesnake or two; maybe a killer groundhog; surely a venomous spider – beneath the surface, irritated that we were disturbing their homestead.

By this time I had lost at least 50 pounds of Farmer Clint fat...having gone from a size 50" waist (at 309 lbs) to a svelte 41" and 250 lbs. Although I was feeling more fit and trim than ever, the heat of the day nearly sent me to heaven... shovel and grunt...dig and sweat...another rock fighting against my shovel... ooooooh, ahhhh, ooooooh, ahhhh (that's the sound of a man working on the chain gang @ !)

I was pretty sure that I was only minutes, possibly seconds away from meeting Jesus when I noticed a tiny wet spot on the wall of the canyon...surely I was hallucinating – this must be a mirage.

Now more...a little more...more now...VOILA, a trickle began flowing from the center of the earth! Farmer Doug grinned...I stood in that hole, my mouth gaping, as water covered the toes of my Farmer Clint boots ☺. I watched in wonder as the makeshift reservoir began filling, ever so slowly but surely!



A Garden Party!

Remarkably, after a couple hours that doggone hole was FILLED with water! Farmer Doug, with me in-tow ☺, jury rigged an irrigation system with pvc pipe, a few sprinkler heads and some duct-tape...he started the compressor and primed the pump before plunging it into the muddy water...and we had LIFT OFF! Who needs rain when

you have a lake to draw from? ☺

It may be a bit of a stretch to say that those vegetables erupted in applause, but not much! As the cool mist fell upon our garden I could almost see and hear those withering leaves and stalks revive...amazing.

A Farmer's Praying Knees

During the Summer of 2010, my summer of restoration on Harrell Hill Farms, Lee Brice released a song titled "Love Like Crazy." I want to share a couple verses of that with you:

*Just Ask Him How He Made It
He'll Tell You Faith And Sweat
And The Heart Of A Faithful Woman,
Who Never Let Him Forget
Be A Best Friend, Tell The Truth, And Overuse I Love You
Go To Work, Do Your Best, Don't Outsmart Your Common Sense
Never Let Your Prayin Knees Get Lazy
And Love Like Crazy*

My friends, these words perfectly describe Farmer Doug Harrell, my friend above friends. At the risk of embarrassing him, I hope you will take this message to heart... Never Let Your Prayin' Knees Get Lazy!

I've told you before that Doug always woke me long before sunrise with a patented, "Pollard, we're burning daylight!" And I've described the delicious buckwheat cakes and homemade molasses he made to fill my belly. But before any of that happened...in advance of waking his helper...before stirring the pancake batter...Doug Harrell sat in the dim morning light, Bible in hand, seeking the face and will of his Father.

We had a productive garden in the summer of 2010...a time when much of Mitchell County looked like scorched earth. Corn...tomatoes...beans...okra...broccoli...survived despite the drought – and water flowed from dry ground. I believe, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that God rewarded the faithfulness of my friend Farmer Doug Harrell...the Lord made that water flow...all because he never lets his prayin' knees get lazy!

And the water continued to fill that muddy reservoir until the rain fell again. Praise God and Amen!

Still Humbled in the Hills,
Farmer Clint



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Our Need for Peace and Confession

By Rev John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

"If your offering is a peace offering, and you offer an animal from the herd, whether male or female, you are to present before the Lord an animal without defect." Lev 3:1

Now we come to the peace offering. In the peace offering we are recognizing another basic, fundamental need of the human heart. No proper life is possible without peace. I am not referring here to the peace of forgiveness. That will come in the next two offerings: the sin and the trespass offerings. It is not peace with God; it is the peace of God we are talking about here. It is peace, not in the sense of hostility ceased, but in the sense of emotional stability, of an untroubled heart. That is what we need — a sense of security, of well-being, of confidence that things are under control and that it is all going to work out. That is the kind of peace this offering represents. Perhaps you remember the story of the artists who were commissioned to paint a picture of peace. One artist depicted peace as an absolutely calm and tranquil sea lying under the moonlight without a ripple on the water. But the one who won the prize pictured a turbulent mountain waterfall, with its noisily plunging waters. But half-hidden behind the waterfall, in the midst of all the thunder and tumult, was a bird's nest with a mother bird sitting quietly and serenely on her eggs. That was peace. That is what this offering is all about — peace in the midst of trouble, in the midst of conflict. This kind of peace is perhaps best known and visible by its absence. We know when we are not at peace. We all have had the sense of tension and pressure, that knot at the back of the head, those butterflies in the stomach which won't leave you. There's a restlessness so intense you feel that you can't sit down, that you have got to do something, anything, to overcome the inability to get your mind off the subject that is troubling you. No matter what you do, it is there, throbbing away, and it keeps coming back again and again. You have a troubled heart, and that is the absence of peace. We all are familiar with the physical difficulties which can come with such an absence of peace. It is an excellent way to build a good case of ulcers. It can create all kinds of disturbances in the body — tics, nervous twitches, indigestion, stuttering, and various other maladies. Even emotional breakdown and nervous collapse can follow. So, it is very evident that we are dealing here with a fundamental need. If you do not think the Bible is practical you have not even begun to understand this Book. It deals with human life as it really is. Thank you, Father, for these eloquent truths taught through these Old Testament sacrifices. Give me an open and responsive heart so that I will recognize that in the dying of the Lord Jesus, and in his living again, I have all that it takes to bring me through my troubles and bring me peace. Application in life is our peace sadly dependent upon outward circumstances? Have we discovered the secret of inner tranquility as we increasingly trust in our Father's wise, loving and sovereign control of it all?



Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. Lev 4:30 In the book of Leviticus, the five great offerings specified there set forth for us so clearly and helpfully the basic needs of our humanity, needs which God has built into every one of us, and how these needs can be met — the only way

in which they can be met. Here we come to the fourth of these offerings, the sin offering. Remember that in the previous offerings, just as in the sin offering, blood had to be shed, and a death had to occur. But all the blood of the animal was poured out at the foot of the altar. But with the blood of the sin offering something unusual was always done. The blood had to be sprinkled seven times before the LORD. Then, in the case of the offering for the anointed priest as we see here, it had to be put on the horns of the altar of incense which stood in the holy place, right in front of the veil which guarded the Holy of Holies, right before the presence of the LORD. What is the significance of this? It is obvious that a special emphasis is being placed upon the blood. It is to be put in a visible place, and in a place, which is obviously connected with God. It is to be recognized openly as being on the horns of the altar before the LORD. And the individual for whom the offering is being made is to be able to see the blood there. That is the point. In other words, there is to be an understanding on the part of the one who sinned that this blood has now covered his sin, forgiven it, and before God it is acknowledged to be forgiven. And when he understands that, then his own conscience can be at rest. I find many people who have never seen that God accepts the death of Jesus fully on their behalf. They are always troubling themselves about some terrible degree of sin they have committed, and which they think God is not able to forgive. They do not see the blood on the horns of the altar. As a result, they torture themselves endlessly with guilt. But God is trying to make very clear that there is a way to be free of guilt. And once the blood is there on the altar, it provides a way out. There is no guilt left! He shall be forgiven, the Scripture says — not only of the sinful acts but of the guilt of his very nature. That is what this offering is teaching. It teaches us that this is the only way that man ever has of being free from his nagging, hidden, inward sense of guilt which alienates him from God. Men are always trying to find their own ways to be free of guilt. Some try to forget it. Most are trying simply to avoid the whole subject. They don't want to think of their guilt. But you remember how David said he felt when he tried that. These are his words from Psalm 32: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer." (Psalms 32:3-4) This is what unacknowledged guilt will do. It will dry up your life, will reduce it to a shallow, superficial level of living in which you have to be caught up endlessly in some diversion in order not to think about your relationship with God. And forgetting will never work either. Help me to be honest, Lord, about my guilt, and not try to avoid it but to know that there is no way out unless I acknowledge it. Thank you that there is a way out of my guilt, and that I no longer need to be far off from you. Remember honest confession and open repentance is never risk-taking with God, but rather the open door to forgiveness of all our sin. Do we seek this invaluable gift often and with joyful expectancy?

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



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Spread the Gospel

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Corinthians 16:9)

The Apostle Paul understands the need to spread the Word, and the opportunities to spread the Word, but also knows there will always be a battle when doing so. He understood, and we understand, the world mindset and the forces of evil attempt to combat the advancement of the Gospel every way possible.

Decades ago the opposition was nowhere near as powerful and prevalent as today. My mind goes back to grade school in the early 1960s when we would start every school day with prayer, the pledge of allegiance and readings from the Scriptures. During that same time frame, it was not uncommon for national and state leaders to call the nation to prayer. The House of God, and the people of God, were respected. God's Word was sought out when important decisions needed to be made. Prayer was always prayed "In Jesus' Name" at sporting events and other public assemblies of people.

Things have changed today! Christianity is the only mainline religion in the United States which is not growing, but rather is in a state of steady decline. Statistics from denominational headquarters bear this out. Look at the houses of worship around us. Contrary, Islam is growing in the United States as are other cultic beliefs. Why? They have no opposition from the forces of evil. Satan would love to have false teachings advanced because they have no power to oppose him. Only the Word of God is able to hold the forces of evil in check.

The need to spread the Gospel, the need to teach the principles of Scripture to our family, the need to seriously pray and the need to stand for Christ has never been greater.

As I write this article we are drawing close to remembering those who died in battle for our Country. As you read this article we will most likely have just observed Memorial Day. How I thank God for those who fought for our Country and died. Their fight was for our freedom.... freedom which has been either taken away or given away.

It breaks my heart to think about the many heroes who fought, bled and died for us. But what really breaks my heart is to think about the number of them who did so without even knowing Christ as their personal Savior. That makes the price of our freedom beyond comprehension!

In just over a month we will be celebrating the 4th of July. Again my mind will go back to these same thoughts and I will wish we were "one nation under God," and that "God" would only be defined as the Lord God, not a god of one's choosing. How I will wish we were that nation of days gone by where freedom to pray in Jesus' name in public places was honored and that our nation would honor those old Judeo-Christian values which shaped our nation and made it great.

As Irvin Berlin wrote, "God Bless America, Land that I love, Stand beside her And guide her Through the night with the light from above."

Please, Lord, hear our prayer and grant us a close walk with You. Please bless our nation again. Make its streets safe. Protect its citizens. Revive its Churches. Give us another chance to please You! In Jesus' Name! Amen!

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.



Body Parts

By Lana Ellis
Kingsport, Tennessee

The Human Body is a complex combination of intricate parts, each designed for a particular purpose, working in harmony with one another in order to complete the whole. From the smallest cell to the largest organ. From the tiny capillary to the aorta. From the brain to the sole of the foot. To function perfectly each body part has a role to perform and when one part is not functioning as designed the whole body is affected by it.

The same can be said about the Body Parts of the Church. Just as the human body has many parts/members with different functions so do we who are born again believers are parts/members of the body of Christ, the church. In order to function the human body needs a head which houses the brain. Psychology Wiki website puts it this way: "The human brain is the center of the central nervous system in humans. It controls "lower" or involuntary activities such as heartbeat, respiration, and digestion. The brain also controls "higher" order, conscious activities, such as thought, reasoning, and abstraction."

Just like the human body the church requires a "Head" to function at its best. First and foremost the Head of the Church is Christ, as opposed to a human being! According to Ephesians 1:22-23 God made Jesus head over all things to the church which is His body. We human beings equipped with spiritual gifts, make up the remainder of the body of Christ with each part having an essential function. In Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Ephesians he says these gifts were given for the common good of the body, to equip and build up of the body of Christ. Paul paints a picture for us in First Corinthians 12 comparing the parts of the human body to the church's parts emphasizing that one body part is no more or less important. If the spiritual gifts are not being activated properly the church will become crippled and its growth stunted.

Could the seat of a church's problem be the body part on which we sit? Let's get down to the bottom of it! There are church members who Sunday after Sunday "sit" on the body "sitting part" who exit the building after the benediction to do nothing in the coming week that would be for the common good of the remainder of the body of Christ. They are, as Jesus described, those who "have eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear." James could possibly have had these people in mind when he wrote in his epistle "What use is it if a man (human) says he has faith but he has no works" even that of not meeting a need of a brother or sister (James 2:14-15).

Next Sunday when we enter our places of worship and sit on the body "sitting part" let's have eyes that see and ears that hear. Upon the benediction let's exit with a renewed spirit to put into action the spiritual gift/s that God has given each of us, always putting our faith in Jesus, the Head of the church. It is He who will equip us in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in God's sight. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

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



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Graduation

By Teresa Young
Mitchell County

Tri-County Christian School of Spruce Pine completed our 35th school year May 25, 2018. Following the morning Kindergarten Graduation and Awards Day, Senior Graduation was held that evening at 7 pm. TCCS 2018 Graduates include Jillian Crowe (graduating with Honors) Noah Shoupe



(graduating with Highest Honors) and Matthew Singleton. Each of these students have participated in the Career & College Program at Mayland Community College during their Jr/Senior years, earning credits toward an early start of a college education. We are proud of our students' academic success, but even more, the depth of Christian character, which is of greatest value throughout life and eternity.



Teresa Young is the Principal At Tri-County Christian School in Spruce Pine.

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Singing in the Cave

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County



Singing comes natural when life is good, the bills are paid, the family is well, and the future looks bright. However, when the news isn't good, singing often escapes us. David taught us in Psalm 57 to sing in the cave. Running for his life, with his enemies camped all around him, he wrote:

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. (Psalm 57:1, ESV)

Before David sang, he cried out to God. His singing never glossed over his fear, never ignored his dilemma. When you're in the cave, there's no need to pretend life is good. Problems are problems. Hurts are hurts. Bad news is bad news. A troubling diagnosis is a troubling diagnosis. David calls his enemies lions, fiery beasts with spears for teeth and swords for a tongue!

But he doesn't stay there.

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! (Psalm 57:7, ESV)

This is the same Psalm! David is still sitting in the same cave. Saul is still pursuing him. None of that has changed. When you're in the cave, you will have to will what you do not feel. David reflects on the character of God (he wills to see God in spite of his circumstances) and as a result reflects the character of God (he feels God's presence).

What is your song? When life unravels, what fills your mind? Your house? Your car? Beginning today we will release songs we have recorded here at Grace. Savor them. Memorize them. Sing them!

Here's one we sang recently at Grace. Worship. Enjoy.



Death Was Arrested North Point Inside Out

Alone in my sorrow and dead in my sin
Lost without hope with no place to begin
Your love Made a way to let mercy come in
When death was arrested and my life began
Ash was redeemed only beauty remains
My orphan heart was given a name
My mourning grew quiet my feet rose to dance
When death was arrested and my life began
Oh, Your grace so free
Washes over me
You have made me new
Now life begins with You
It's your endless love
Pouring down on us
You have made us new
Now life begins with You
Released from my chains I'm a prisoner no more
My shame was a ransom He faithfully bore
He cancelled my debt and He called me His friend
When death was arrested and my life began
Oh, Your grace so free
Washes over me
You have made me new
Now life begins with You
It's your endless love
Pouring down on us
You have made us new
Now life begins with You

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

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“Release the Arrow”

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

I hope you have a wonderful summer. Hot dogs, swimming pools, and vacation; it's all good and things we look forward to because we get to take a little time off and spend with the family. I usually write articles about the family because I have a strong burden for godly families. I write from most of my own experiences from the family I grew up in and the family Pam and I have now.

Most people our age have already seen their children move away from home and are in the “empty nest”. But, we have a large family by today's standards; the average American home is about four people (U.S. Census Bureau 3.14). We have seven. We have already had three high school graduations and two college graduations; and we have two more to go. I will be fifty- six when our youngest graduates from high-school “Lord willing”. The Lord has really blessed us with wonderful children, and your children are wonderful too.

Training and discipling your child is a lot like releasing an arrow. You aim the arrow at the bull's eye and hope it strikes the center, based on the preparation you made before shooting and the skill you have developed. The Bible says children are a blessing from God and compares them to a man who has a quiver full of arrows. Psalm 127:3-5 (KJV 1900)

3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD:
And the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man;
So are children of the youth.

5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:

I like to think of our children as arrows, and we will not release them until they are ready to hit the bull's eye. The bull's eye or center mark is a vibrant personal and growing relationship with Jesus Christ. The area around the bull's eye may represent marriage, college, job, or even success, but those areas are not the bull's eye and to hit any where else on the target is to miss the main mark which is again a relationship with Jesus. We are not called to be “fans” of Christ but “followers”.

The Bible teaches us that we “have all sinned and come short”; we have all missed the mark. God's only begotten Son died a horrible painful death on a Roman cross. Jesus was our substitute; He took our place and paid for our sin with His sinless life and blood. And God is satisfied, and Jesus' death is propitiation for our sin against God.

So, our job as parents is to lead our children to Christ, train and discipline them to fear the Lord. This is the bull's eye, nothing else matters. To fail at a job, get a bad grade on a test, experience a heartbreaking relationship, is minor compared to standing before God one day and giving an account of a life lived for Him.

You are going to release an arrow one day, make sure you release it well. Prepare now for that time. What is important to you will be important to your children. They will be as close to God as you are. (Think about that) The arrow has been in good hands and is ready to hit the mark. When it takes flight, it cannot be retrieved.

God bless you and have a great summer.

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.



Main Event: Friday, June 22, 2018

By Don Ford
Mitchell County

The time is here! Relay of the Blue Ridge is having a celebration at Mitchell High School in Ledger, NC on Friday, June 22nd at 6 PM and you are invited. This is the annual event sponsored by local teams and volunteers to fund research, as well as empower victims and care providers to take a stand in finding a cure for cancer.

Relay of the Blue Ridge encompasses Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties. Residents of all three counties are encouraged to participate in the main event at MHS. Music and entertainment will be provided by The Laws Family, David Brewer, Jader and the Maters, Dawn Hughes and Elvis and Dolly impersonators. Other activities include a frozen t-shirt contest, games, corn hole, inflatables, and dancing too.

Blue Ridge Regional Hospital staff will be selling Chick-fil-A sandwiches and tickets for several prizes. Cloudland Baptist Church will also be selling barbeque at the event. There will be homemade fried apple pies and coconut pies too. You can also purchase luminaries from Ms. Jackie Thomas “In Memory, In Honor or In Prayer” for those affected by cancer. A luminary ceremony will be held at dusk.

So, bring a lawn chair, some comfortable shoes and enjoy the fun and festivities. For more information, please contact Rhonda Buchanan at (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.



JULY 4 - JULY 7, 2018

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4

- FREE ADMISSION
- 5:00 CORNHOLE, VOLLEYBALL, MINI GOLF, CONCESSIONS
- 6:00 FROG JUMPING CONTEST
- 7:00 DOUGHNUT EATING CONTEST
- 7:30 - 9:00 MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT
- 9:15 STAR SPANGLED BANNER
- 9:30 FIREWORKS

FRIDAY, JULY 6* \$5 LUNCHEON ON JULY 6TH

- 1:00 SHANNON SLAUGHTER
- 2:30 VOLUME FIVE
- 4:00 MOUNTAIN FAITH BAND
- 5:30 ALBERTA HALL
- 6:30 VOLUME FIVE
- 8:00 MOUNTAIN FAITH BAND
- 9:30 DIAMOND RIO

THURSDAY, JULY 5

- 1:00 LOOSE STRINGS BAND
- 2:30 CAROLINA BLUE
- 4:00 LONESOME RIVER BAND
- 5:30 SUPPER BREAK
- 6:30 CAROLINA BLUE
- 8:00 LONESOME RIVER BAND
- 9:30 BALSAM RANGE

SATURDAY, JULY 7

- 1:00 SIDELINE
- 2:30 TERRY BAUCOM'S DUKES OF DRIVE
- 4:00 RUSSELL MOORE & IIRD TYME OUT
- 5:00 KIDS CAMP
- 5:30 SUPPER BREAK
- 6:30 TERRY BAUCOM'S DUKES OF DRIVE
- 8:00 RUSSELL MOORE & IIRD TYME OUT
- 9:30 LARRY SPARKS
- 12:00 SIDELINE CAMPGROUND JAN SESSION



ARTIST LINEUP SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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Toe River Arts Council

New Executive Director

By Dr. Dan Barron
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

The Toe River Arts Council has appointed Nealy Andrews as Executive Director, a position that Denise Cook exemplary has held for 30 years. Nealy is from Hickory, North Carolina with a degree in Arts Education from Appalachian State University at which she is completing a MPA with a concentration in nonprofit management. She has held administrative positions at Artspace in Raleigh, The Turcin Center for the Visual Arts at ASU, and Mayland Community College. Nealy says, "Stepping into this new role with TRAC feels like the perfect marriage of my love for the arts and my passion for growing and enhancing the community that has come to mean so much to me." "We had a significant number of well-qualified potential candidates for the position," said Chair of the TRAC Board, Dr. Dan Barron, "however, Nealy was the unanimous choice of the Search Committee, the Board and the

TRAC Staff. We are looking forward to working with her to continue building on the strong foundation established by Denise Cook."

Dr. Daniel Barron was a distinguished Professor Emeritus at University of South Carolina. He was the former director of AMYS Regional Library. Dan is now retired.



Happy Father's Day

To My Dad, My Father, My Hero!

The Rotary of Spruce Pine

Governor's Volunteer Service Award Winner

By Elaine Percival
Mitchell County

Mitchell County resident, Dr. Marvin Walker, has become the recipient of the 2018 Governor's Volunteer Service Award. Dr. Walker gives many hours to volunteer service projects such as; Coordinator for Mitchell/Yancey Rise Against Hunger, Habitat for Humanity, numerous International and local disaster relief assistance projects, Spruce Pine Rotary local support projects, and many more.



The recognition is part of the N.C. Governor's Award for Volunteer Service program, which honors individuals, groups, teams and businesses that make significant contributions to their communities through volunteer service. Since the program began in 1978, more than 16,000 individuals have been recognized for their service. County coordinators and local selection committees receive and evaluate the nominations. Mitchell County's local coordinator is Jeff Vance of Mitchell County Cooperative Extension. Dr. Walker was honored with the presentation by his fellow Rotarians at the Spruce Pine Rotary Club meeting held May 3rd where "Service Above Self" is the Rotary motto. Dr. Walker was nominated for the award by fellow Rotarian, Alex Glover.

MAY Coalition is a nonprofit corporation whose mission is "to help create high quality employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents of Mitchell, Avery and Yancey Counties." It started with a \$1 million grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation in 1992. As a non-profit community development loan fund, the corporation uses funds to make small loans to entrepreneurs and too low to moderate income business owners. The Coalition participates in the U. S. Department of Agriculture which allows MAY to make larger loans to qualified businesses for job creation and preservation. Mr. Thiele stressed that MAY is a local program. The board is local, the office is local, the loans are local, and when the money is repaid, it stays in this local area.



Rotarian Reid Duncan presents a locally designed mug to MAY Coalition Director, Eron Thiele, at the meeting of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine on May 10, 2018.

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

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Berry Chapel Baptist Church

Never Enough

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County

The Bible tells us in Luke 12:15,23 that Jesus said: 15 ...Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.....23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

We live in a society where people seem to never have enough. They can never seem to be happy or satisfied with what they have. In their mind they are thinking just a little more and I'll have what I want, and I'll be happy. Well I hate to tell you that kind of stinking thinking, has been affecting people since the beginning of time and it is still showing its ugly head in the day that we are living. As you look at people today they seem to be more infatuated with things. Now understand I'm not saying it's wrong to have things, but what's wrong in today's society is the things people have, have a great hold on them. You see so many people putting the things God has blessed them with in front of God, and when this happens, we see people missing out on the great blessing of God.

In Luke 12 Jesus told a parable about a rich man experiencing his best days ever. He accumulated so much wealth he didn't have enough storage space. The rich man's solution was to tear down his barns and build bigger ones that would hold more possessions. And then he would retire and make life one big party. This man thought accumulated wealth guaranteed a great, full life. His only problem was that he wasn't prepared for his coming death that very night. Jesus' story teaches us that we can live life for the Present or for the Future, for the Visible or the Invisible, for the short day or for the long tomorrow for Time or Eternity. Life is far too short to live for what is passing. We should live for what is lasting! Jesus' point was that we should invest our lives in what lasts. The rich fool lived for this life, not eternity. His possessions owned him, and he trusted them to bring him what only God could bring.

I read an article the other day that said that there are more than thirty thousand self-storage facilities in America providing over a billion square feet for our stuff. In the 1960's the industry did not even exist. Now today Americans pay 12 billion dollars a year to store their excess. Yet people aren't happier. They are stressed and working longer hours to get where the rich fool was, having perceived happiness from accumulated wealth. However, Jesus message is different than that of our culture. Jesus Says in Matt 6:19-21 "19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." I believe Jesus is telling us to: Enjoy Eternity, and you will enjoy a life of joy and value.

Words of Wisdom

- A little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money. John Ruskin
- A rich man is nothing but a poor man with money. W. C. Fields
- Don't let making a living pervert you from making a life! N/A
- Money cannot buy peace of mind. It cannot heal ruptured relationships, or build meaning into a life that has none. N/A
- Money has never made man happy, nor will it, there is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more of it one has the more one wants. Benjamin Franklin

Never Satisfied

Two friends met in the street. One looked sad and almost on the verge of tears. The other man said, "Hey my friend, how come you look like the whole world has caved in? The sad fellow said, "Let me tell you. Three weeks ago, an uncle died and left me 50-thousand dollars."

"That's not bad at all...!"

"Hold on, I'm just getting started. Two weeks ago, a cousin I never knew kicked-the-bucket and left me 95-thousand, tax-free to boot."

"Well, that's great! I'd like that."

"Last week, my grandfather passed away. I inherited almost a million."

"So why are so glum?"

"This week - nothing!"

I thought this was funny, but you know it almost sounds true in the day we live. That's Sad

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



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5 Financial Priorities for Your College Student

By Anthony O'Neal



If you're the parent of a child already attending or about to enter college, you probably have a lot on your mind. That's understandable. College is an exciting time of life, full of big choices and exciting opportunities. But let's face it, it's also a stage of life that can bring temptations — money troubles in particular.

If you have a few concerns about how your child will handle their money in college, you're not alone. I'll never forget my own early financial experiences as a young college student—or the day I opened my first credit card bill and saw what I owed.

"Man, that was an expensive pizza!"

The folks who signed me up told me my credit card came with a free T-shirt and a pizza. I got both of those, but they were far from free. They came with consequences no one had warned me about. It started with a few thoughtless purchases—a dinner out, a shopping spree for gifts—but it added up quick.

Somehow, I hadn't realized the stuff I was buying and enjoying on credit was going to come due as a bill. Throw in the student loans I had taken on, and I was getting into some serious financial trouble. Before I knew what was happening, I was 19 years old, \$25,000 in debt, and — for a short time — even sleeping in my car.

But here's some encouragement. I made it all the way back, got out of debt, and learned the right way to handle money. And your child can win with money, despite a world of pressure to do otherwise. It's true! As a youth pastor and speaker, I've met, worked with, and walked beside many young people who graduated college as strong budgeters, with a clear plan for the future and no debt. So, can the college student in your life!

The Big Five

While your child is in college, they can lay a solid financial foundation by focusing on just five priorities for managing their money. With this foundation in place, at least two great things will happen for them: They will be in a strong position to build wealth throughout their life, and they will gain an awesome amount of self-discipline to help them in their career.

1. Save a \$500 Emergency Fund. It might not sound like a lot. But \$500 is usually enough to see a college student through most of the financial emergencies that come up, like a broken phone or computer. I know you're going to want to help them out as you're able, but it's also a great idea to let a young person feel what it's like to solve a money problem with their own money, instead of using yours or a credit card.

2. Get Out of Debt. You probably remember from your own time on campus that college students are a major target for credit card companies. Help your child understand that going into debt is no way to start adulthood. If they already have credit cards, encourage them to cut those up and pay them off. The sooner they're debt-free, the sooner they can begin using their money to go after their dreams.

3. Pay Cash for a Car. Most college students will need a car either right away or soon after graduating. But the need for wheels is no excuse to take on a big monthly payment. Paying cash will save your child a lot of money, and they will get a lot more enjoyment from something they actually own.

4. Pay Cash for College. You've probably noticed student loans are getting out of hand in America. In 2016, The Wall Street Journal reported that the average college student is graduating with more than \$37,000 in student loan debt to pay back. That's insane! Let your child know that paying for tuition and books is no different than paying for food and gas. By paying for college with cash they'll immediately be able to use their pay for things they want, instead of paying off debt for years.

5. Build Wealth and Give. This one is my favorite, because there's no better feeling than the one you get while using your money to help those you care about. As Jesus himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And who has the most freedom to do a lot of good with their money? Those who have been fortunate enough to stay out of debt and build wealth.

One more tip: It's easy to assume you can only build this foundation if you begin early enough in life. Believe me, that's not true. It's never too early to start, but it's also never too late. Whether your child is just beginning to think about college, or is already enrolled, they can apply these principles to take full control of their money — in school and beyond!

Since 2003, Anthony O'Neal has helped thousands of students make good decisions with their money, relationships and education to live a well-balanced life. He's the National Best-Selling Author of *Graduate Survival Guide: 5 Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make in College*, and travels the country spreading his encouraging message to help teens and young adults transition into the real world. His latest book and video kit, *Teen Entrepreneur Toolbox*, released in April 2018. You can follow Anthony on Twitter and Instagram @AnthonyO'Neal and online at anthonyoneal.com or [facebook.com/aoneal](https://www.facebook.com/aoneal).



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Mitchell County 4-H

Jr. Robotics Has Busy Schedule

By Kim Slotnick
Mitchell County

Gouge Elementary School's 4-H Jr. Robotics teams found themselves in high demand as they recently presented their accomplishments to the County Commissioners, the School Board, Gouge School's student body, and their parents. The teams annual trip to present at a FIRST Lego League Jr. Expo at UNCA Asheville on March 24th was canceled due to snowy weather. The teams were able to make up for this missed opportunity by presenting their hard work to a number of different audiences which helped them work on their presentation skills and gave them a chance to show off their knowledge and technical skills.

This year the teams participated in a worldwide challenge called Aqua Adventures. This is a FIRST Lego League challenge that encourages young people, ages 6-10 to research where their water comes from, how it gets to them, and what happens to the water before it reaches their faucet. Each team makes a model from Lego parts that displays something they have learned from their research. The model must contain a moving/motorized part that incorporates engineering and technical skills. Teams also make a poster that tells about the team, their model, and the research. The teams got to meet several members of our community that deal with water. Mayor Charles Vines came and spoke to the teams about the unique water system in the town of Bakersville. Dennis Johnson, Environmental Supervisor at Unimin Corporation spoke to them about treating water at Unimin. John Silver, Mitchell County Environmental Health Specialist spoke to the teams about all the different sources of water in the county and how they are treated.

The 3 Jr. Robotics teams were; the Amazing Aquaneers, the H2O Bros, and the Water Warriors. The Amazing Aquaneer's six members were; Alivia Burleson (2nd grade), Jonathan Byrd (3rd), Kyleigh Garland (2nd), Hannah Johnson (2nd), Samuel Jones (4th), and Olivia Thacker (2nd). The H2O Bro's five members were; Logan English (2nd), Dalton Jones (2nd), Landon McKinney (4th), Sawyer McKinney (2nd), and Carter Sturgill (4th). The Water Warrior's six members were; Ethan Peterson (3rd), Hudson Buchanan (2nd), James Cable (4th), Layla McKinney (2nd), Layla Shotwell (2nd), and Owen Young (2nd). The team's coaches were Mrs. Renee Johnson, 2nd grade teacher, and Julie Thacker, 4th grade teacher at Gouge Elementary School. The team mentor was Kim Slotnick, 4-H Program Assistant with Mitchell County 4-H. The school's 4-H Jr. Robotics program is in its 4th year of a successful partnership with Mitchell County 4-H.



Kim Slotnick is 4-H Program Assistant for the NC Cooperative Extension-Mitchell County Center, you may contact her at kim_slotnick@ncsu.edu.



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Reflections on Memorial Day: The Chasm in the Middle of the Forum

By Rev. Mark Creech



The Forum in Rome was central to its civic life. It was surrounded by temples, legislative chambers, the market-place, and other public accommodations.

There is a legend that Rome was once shaken by a mighty earthquake that resulted in a remarkable chasm in the middle of the Forum. The empty space was so deep no one could see the bottom. Citizens brought mammoth stones and mounds of earth to fill it up. Still, no matter how much was thrown in, the crater was only worse than before.

The Senate consulted the oracles of the day, who counseled the void could never be filled until what was most valuable in Rome was cast into it.

"Heed this," said the augurs. "Your most sacred treasure must be dedicated to the gods if the City is to stand fast."

And so, the people, horror-struck and aghast, rushed to the edge of the great pit and started casting into it their most prized possessions – fine jewels, silver, gold – but to no avail. The cavity was deeper than ever.

Perplexed and agonizing over what step to take next, a noble youth named Marcus Curtius rode forward, armed for battle.

"What is more valuable to Rome," he cried, "than courage?" "What is more valuable than a citizen who is willing to give himself for his country?"

All the people stood silent with their eyes fixed on Curtius. As Curtius gallantly surveyed the Forum and its surrounding landscape, he stretched forth his arms toward heaven. Then, with his sword raised in his hand, he spurred his horse and leapt into the enormous gulf.

At once the ground closed behind him and neither he or his horse was ever seen again. Everything returned to normal – just as matters were before the earthquake.

War is the mighty chasm in the Forum of nearly every generation. When a nation and its justified interests are threatened by invaders, when its people are killed, when its property is destroyed, there is no choice but to resist – by any means and at any cost. There are some matters more important than life itself. To live underneath the tyrant's boot can be a form of living death.

One of America's best theologians was the late Dr. Lorraine Boettner. Many years ago, Boettner shared with me that much of America was under the spell of pacifism before World War II. In 1940 he felt the need to speak truth to this issue in a book he authored, *The Christian Attitude Toward War*. It turned out his book was strategic in helping prepare the country's leadership for the world conflict ahead.

In his book, Boettner argued, "Some time we hear it said that all war is wrong – wrong for the defenders as well as for the aggressors – and that even when waged with the sincere purpose of restraining evil, it tends to produce greater evils than those against which it is directed. . . . We are under no illusions that it is a dreadful thing to be engaged in mortal combat with another human being or with another army. But under circumstances that sometimes occur, not only is such combat sanctioned by God, but it is our duty to perform it with all available resources. Conditions may arise in which it becomes our Christian duty to fight or wage war. . . . it is nothing less than criminal to fail to provide our nation with an adequate defense."

Through the decades, more than 650,000 American airmen, soldiers, and sailors have given in battle what Abraham Lincoln referred to as that "last full measure of devotion." Each of them was noble, most of them young, while all of them like Marcus Curtius leapt into war's hellish hole. Because of their sacrifice the ground closed in behind them. Because of them, life returned to the way things were before – our freedom, our property, and our prosperity preserved.

What could be more valuable to any people?

Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 16:13).

Memorial Day isn't about barbecues, picnics, parades, political speeches or a day off from work. Instead, it's observed lest we forget. What an indictment to think we could ever forget. Yet we can and do.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt admonished, "Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them."

Someone once said, "Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it. It flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it."

On Memorial Day we honor our war dead.

There is another Hero, however, whose mention is not simply an afterthought to these reflections, but the very source of soul and civil liberty. It is imperative to remember this righteous warrior! His name is Jesus Christ.

Christ leapt into that great conflict between good and evil like none before or after Him. By way of the Cross, the blood, the forgiveness of sins, and the sword of His mouth, that yawning abyss, the pit of eternal perdition, closed behind him. But unlike the Roman legend of Marcus Curtius, Christ actually resurrected – reappeared alive again – and now holds within His hands the keys of death and hell.

One day Christ will return to this earth. The Bible says in that hour "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4). In that day, His City, His Forum, shall be without end.

If we forget Jesus, if we neglect to repent of our sins and place our faith in Him and His atoning work, if we fail to surrender to His lordship now, then we shall surely be lost in the abyss forever.

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



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Yancey County Hospice

"Time to Smell the Roses"

By Jacob Willis
Yancey County

Matthew 14:22-23 says, "Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night he was there alone." My grandmother gave good advice. She would say, "Life is short, take time to smell the roses." As a small child wishing life away I really didn't understand what she meant. As you grow older you realize a need for introspection and self-renewal. It is this kind of refreshing we find Jesus taking for Himself throughout the gospels.

No one can fully imagine the load of responsibility that Jesus walked around with. Everywhere He went He was pursued by countless poor, needy, crippled, and hopeless people. He gave so much of Himself to others and was drained of His own energy. Jesus saw the need to get away, to stop and smell the roses. As we approach summer time many will take a "holiday". It is important that we as believers take spiritual holidays just like Jesus did. Jesus was God incarnate. If He needed to rest and rejuvenate, then how much more do we need times of refreshing with God?

Prayer was the center piece of this rest. Jesus went to spend time with the heavenly Father. He needed time to meditate, rest mentally and physically, and re-center Himself on His primary mission.

It is possible for us to get so busy doing things for Jesus that we forget about Jesus. It is possible to be about healing others, and forget that we need healing ourselves. It is important to remember that our purpose in life is to glorify God and enjoy him. When time alone for God is our priority, then the rest of life falls into place. We begin to say no to people and yes to God, we then are free to operate in his power, and not our own.

Taking time to smell the roses prevents us from burning out due to the demands of this life. It is so important for people in ministry to commit to self-care and prayer. Taking care of you and calling a time out when you need to energize will make you a more effective minister.

Jacob Willis is an ordained pastor and Bereavement Coordinator for Yancey County Hospice. You may contact him at jacobw@hospiceofyancey.org.



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We cannot change the outcome, but we can affect the journey.

~ Anne Richardson

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Our World
By Allen Buchanan
Mitchell County

When thinking of what my article should be, I start looking for hints, an idea to expound on. My first thing is going to God in prayer. I write for Him. I want Him to use me as a vessel to inspire you, the reader. It's my prayer that you are encouraged and strengthened to know God loves you. God then provides the hints.

This time, one moment I am thinking of Daniel 3 and the next Philippians 4. Then out of the blue, our pastor is on vacation and Rev. Dale Buchanan brings the messages for the day. Amazingly, he preaches from passages that I'm thinking on. His words followed along with what I had on my mind.

Our world today is running rampant. It seems like with each day, we are quickly drawing closer to the day of Jesus' return. With that, the devil is throwing all he can at us. Temptation meets us head-on in every direction. The Christian life is a daily fight to stay on the Lord's side. We must! In the end, we will win! Paul pinned Philippians 4:8 to encourage us.

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

Dale talked about television in his personal and family life. I too struggle with what to watch. The world will have you believe that since you deal with sin through your day by listening and meeting those around you, you should not have any problem watching any and everything on TV. I disagree.

I recall a time when TV was clean and fun. No cursing. Crimes against nature were never mentioned. Most of us didn't have a clue certain terms even existed. My definition of "gay" referred to happy, feeling good. Who would ever have thought what gay means today? Since the beginning of 2018, a few new shows have slipped Jesus Christ in as a swear phrase. My heart shivers and I turn the channel. Only to find a homosexual couple. Our news programs have embraced all lifestyles that go against God's teachings.

Have we become a numb society? Doesn't anything shock us? Garbage in, garbage out? Is what we take in slowly hardening our hearts, pulling us further from Jesus? "Sin is sin" has always been a saying, but I feel its raging higher and stronger as the end of time draws closer. Sin is on fire! It has the potential of burning our relationship between us and Jesus. The devil wants each one of us to be tossed into the fire with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. To let down our guard and live life as anything goes. How many of us are willing to admit we've allowed a Nebuchadnezzar to tell us what to do?

I'm Not Going to Bow!

Allen Buchanan is a freelance Christian writer. Allen attends Bear Creek Baptist church.



Bedrock Truths for Difficult Times
By Pastor Dan Qurollo
Burke County

At times, we face some extremely difficult and unexplainable circumstances in life. As believers, we know that God is at work in our lives; yet, if we were to be completely honest, we would all admit it is extremely difficult to understand what God is doing. At times, His work even seems unfair. How do we get through these difficult times? What do we cling to when it seems as though our world is falling apart? When everything is stripped away, we will find that we come to some very basic principles, the bedrock truths of the Christian life. In order to respond properly to the difficulties of life, we must keep these bedrock truths always in the forefront of our mind so that we might recall them frequently.

1. God's way is always perfect. At times, we all struggle with what God is doing. His way often does not seem to make sense. It made no sense to build an ark when the earth had never seen rain; yet Noah remained confident in God's way. It was David who confidently stated, "As for God, his way is perfect" (Psalm 18:30). Although it may not make sense to us now, we must remain confident that God's way is always perfect; there are no exceptions.

2. God's timing is always best. God has never been late, nor has God ever been early. His timing has always been perfect. Paul described the birth of the Messiah as taking place "when the fulness of the time was come..." (Galatians 4:4). In other words, Christ's birth was at the perfect time decreed by God the Father before the foundations of the world were ever created.

3. God's nature is always good. Once again, David stated adamantly, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart" (Psalm 73:1) and then described the specific way in which God he experienced God's goodness. A casual look over our lives will quickly attest to this reality: God's nature is always good.

4. God's work is always good. Because His nature is always good, everything He does is good because it stems from His very nature. Jesus asked, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:11). James wrote, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Because His work is a natural product of His nature, believers can confidently "know that all things work together for good..." (Romans 8:28).

5. God's product will be completed. God is not content with unfinished products or partially completed projects. The work that God begins will be completed one day. We can be confident of this very reality. Though Job did not understand all that God was doing, he was able to confidently say, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Paul wrote in 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." We can be assured that our salvation will one day be completed; there are no exceptions.

God allows challenges into our lives, many of which will bring us back to these bedrock truths. Keeping these truths in the forefront of your mind will enable you to glorify Him, even when the challenges abound, and the questions remain unanswered.

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



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Charis Children's Foundation

Serving a Mighty God

By John and Steph Limongello
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Habbakuk 2:3

When God gave us the vision for the Charis Children's Foundation it seemed like we were in a dream. Day after day God showed His hand of direction and blessing as we were able to get everything set in order in what can only be considered miracle time. We were excited, overwhelmed, and anxiously anticipating the next step.

Then the doors seemed to stop opening, and as day after day of the heavens being silent we questioned had we missed His direction. We found ourselves in the midst of unanswered questions and seemingly unscalable obstacles. Everything that could be shaken in our life was being shaken.

We set our faces to seek God's direction for CCF, and yet no answers seemed to come. We applied for a large grant to get the Charis Community Health and Healing Center open so we could provide health care at low or no cost to our community, but it was denied. It seemed support was waning, and the bustle of life was crowding out the vision.

As I sit writing this update we still don't have all the answers. But it occurs to me this must have been how the children of Israel felt when they were miraculously delivered from Pharaoh, saw his armies destroyed then found themselves wandering in the desert. God's promise had not changed, they just didn't understand that the desert was part of God's plan.

The desert is a place of inner working, God bringing the vision to reality in the hearts of His people so that nothing can make them turn. We have been blessed to have several volunteers come along beside us during this time. When the next door opens we will be ready to take the next step. We currently have volunteer medical providers, office staff, counselors, custodial staff to provide a weekly free medical clinic when the funding to open the Charis Community Health and Healing Center becomes available. In the waiting we are continuing to help families with the resources we have available.

John and I know what God has called us to do. The vision to provide hope to foster and at-risk children in our area through the love of Jesus has not changed. We find ourselves in an uncomfortable place of waiting, praying and waiting some more. Part of the waiting process means we have been focusing on The Charis Project: Live it Out Album.

God told us the music would open the hearts of people to hear the message. On June 2, 7 PM at The Bridge of WNC, The Charis Project: Live it out will be recorded live in a free concert. We would love for everyone to join us to celebrate what God has done, and praise Him for what is yet to come. The vision for CCF is still alive and God is still in control.

We are confident that He who began a good work in us is faithful to complete it. Phil 1:6. We are still in need of volunteers to start our respite care program for local foster families. This is a program that requires minimal funding, but tremendous manpower. If you have a heart to speak hope into the life a child, please contact us.

Thank you to everyone that has stood behind us during this time of waiting. We believe God is about to show himself mighty on behalf of the children in our community through Charis Children's Foundation. We serve a mighty God! We encourage you as we are to keep pressing into God, don't let go of the dream He has given you, and though the vision tarry, wait for it!!

John and Stephynia Limongello reside in Burnsville, NC. They were married in 2009 and have two beautiful young boys, John David and Daniel. John was raised in New Jersey. He has earned his Bachelor's and Master's in Social Work. Stephynia was raised in Yancey County, NC and works as a Nurse Practitioner. They attend the Bridge Church of WNC. View our video and donate at <https://www.gofundme.com/charischildrensfoundation>. Contact at charischildrensfoundation@gmail.com. Facebook: Charis Children's Foundation and The Charis Project: Live It Out. Call 828-467-5485 for more information.

As part of our spreading "Good News", we have provided these pages for information for your organization or church that would be of interest to the public. I send out reminders in a group email to remind those of you who have requested it, or used this service regularly. If you wish to be added to the email please email me at barbarah@brcnews.com. One of the things any of you using this service needs to remember is that we publish only once a month and the info has to be submitted a month ahead. When sending info please send to my email: barbarah@brcnews.com.

A great way to get your meeting dates, events, and other info to the public.



Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.
Proverbs 19:18



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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*

Avery County

Avery County Events:

June TBD Wine and Beer Festival

July 20-22 July Fine Art & Master Crafts Festival, Downtown Banner Elk

Burke County

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>

Sherri's School of Dance is excited to announce the first annual 2018 SUMMER DANCE CAMPS WITH KESHA! If you have any dancers in your life ages 3 and up, please tell them about the summer camps! We will have lots of fun and do lots of dancing in many genres! This is the perfect opportunity for dancers to experience different forms of dance in a creative environment with dancers of all levels from beginner to advanced.

You can register online at www.sherrisschoolofdance.com/summercamps or in person at Sherri's School of Dance.

Please contact Kesha Nichols at keshanicholsnyc@gmail.com or 646.789.9227 for additional questions and information.

Catawba River Baptist Association - 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 - Vacation Bible School - The Parables of Jesus! - EVERYONE is invited! June 25th - June 29th, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. (Exit 98, Causby Road from I-40). For more information, please contact Shelly at 828-390-6899. Please bring your children and explore the Parables of Jesus! There will be snacks, games, music, crafts & more!

Health Social - Sunday, June 10th, at 5:30 p.m., for directions and more information, please contact Cindy at 870-510-8048.

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Town of Valdese Community Affairs & Tourism - 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.

The Valdese Farmers Market has opened at its new location at the Old Rock School. Vendors will set up and be ready to sell at 11am and will stay open until 4pm on Fridays.

"We are excited to bring the Farmers Market to the Old Rock School front lawn, shared Morrisa Angi Community Affairs Director for the Town of Valdese. "We hope to increase visibility of the market and create a stronger number of regular shoppers with the new location."

Farmers are invited to setup their produce underneath the large tree on the front lawn beginning at 10:30am on Market Fridays. Farmers that are interested in participating can download the vendor application at valdesemarket.com.

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!

Cross United Methodist Church will have a Yard Sale on Friday and Saturday, June 1st and 2nd.

Homemade baked items will also be for sale. All proceeds will go toward St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

The church is located at 85 W. Cross Street in Marion.

First Baptist of Marion - Wondering how you can help with Vacation Bible School this summer? Well, here are a few places you might think of plugging in: • Island Crew Leaders/ Assistants: Crew Leaders and Assistants lead their assigned group of kids through the VBS classes and activities. You all form a small family for the week and talk about the theme taught each day. NO DAILY PREP NEEDED. • Floaters: A floater is someone who can help only one or a few days during VBS. These folks are so important because we always need extra sets of hands to do all sorts of jobs. Vacation Bible School is Monday, June 25 - Friday, June 29 at 9 am to 11:30 am.

Saints Alive June 23rd - Saturday Night Lights at Tryon Equestrian Center July 11th - Blowing Rock Outlets Day Trip, 9a.m. August 12th - Mamma Mia! At Flat Rock Playhouse

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 June 8th ,8:00am at DT's.

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 Special program on June 29th at the Church.

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.

Main Street 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 - Old Time Cruisin' DownTown Spruce Pine, June 2nd 5 till 9 Rain date June 9th

4th Annual Fund Raiser Baptist Men Golf Tournament---Hole in One NEW CAR--- July 7, 2018 8:30 Shotgun Start Grassy Creek Golf Course \$65 each and includes lunch. Contact the church for more info.

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - Vacation Bible School will be held at Grassy Creek Baptist Church June 25-29. This year's theme is "Shipwrecked, Rescued by Jesus!". Children will have nightly bible lessons, crafts, music and more. VBS will meet in the Family Life Center behind the church from 6:00-8:30 each evening; a light meal will be served to the kids at 5:00. If your child needs to ride the bus, please call the church office (765-4620) to get signed up. Adults will also have Bible School in the sanctuary each Monday-Thursday at

Grassy Creek Baptist Church will host a Wild Game Dinner for men on Saturday, June 9th from 6-8:00pm. Billy "Catfish" Parker of the Outdoor Channel's show, "Flesh and Blood" will be here speaking. There will be door prizes and a Big Buck showcase. You are encouraged to bring your big buck and show him off. We will also be eating a meal of hamburger, hotdogs and a variety of wild game meat. There is no admission fee, but we will take donations at the door. We invite all hunters and fishermen to come and bring your children that hunt/fish with you! For more information call Pastor Nathan at 765-4620.

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/>.

Mitchell County Baptist Association - 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.

Mitchell County Chamber - 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!

Penland School Discounts for Area Residents - Penland School of Crafts has open spaces in its first summer session available at half tuition to area residents. The discount is available to residents of the following Western North Carolina counties: Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Graham, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, and Yancey; and the following counties in East Tennessee: Carter, Cocke, Greene, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington. Regular room and board charges apply, but students are not required to stay on campus. The two-week session runs May 27 through June 8 with spaces in glassblowing, iron, metals, letterpress, print, textiles, and wood. The glassblowing workshop will focus on the basic techniques for shaping hot glass. In the iron studio, students will learn blacksmithing skills while making steel vessels. Metals students will learn to fabricate in aluminum and add color to the metal through anodizing. The letterpress workshop will cover typesetting, press operation, woodcut printing, and making posters that combine text and images. Next door in the print-making studio, students will learn a variety of intaglio techniques and then make some of their prints into kites. The textiles workshop will focus on a traditional Indian dye-painting technique known as kalamkari. And the wood workshop will be all about designing and making tables.

These workshops are open to students of any skill level: beginners welcome. Complete information is available in the workshops section of the Penland website: www.penland.org. To enroll, call the Penland registrar at 828-765-2359, ext 1306. The Penland Standby Program offers discounts to area residents who take unfilled spaces in Penland classes shortly before the classes begin.

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.

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.

Final Evensong at Trinity Episcopal Church is located at 15 Hemlock Avenue in Spruce Pine in the English Woods neighborhood. For more information about this Evensong or about the Church, please email TECSP15@ATT.net or (828)520-1151. The Choir of Trinity Church will sing its final Evensong for the season on Sunday, June 10, 2018 at 5:00PM. Entitled "In Praise of Makers", this Evensong will celebrate the many fine crafts people that are found in our area. Music for the evening will include works by Herbert Sumson, Thomas Ebdon, and the anthem will be The Road Home a setting of the Southern Harmony tune "Prospect" by Stephen Paulus. Trinity will be filled with wonderful music during the service but it will also be filled with art work from around the area. All are invited to a reception following Evensong.

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 bararah@brcnews.com. June meeting is 8th, at 8:00am.

Yancey County

Parkway Playhouse Presents The Hilarious High Flying Farce: Boeing Boeing - BURNSVILLE, NC: The non-stop comedy, Boeing Boeing, is set to open at Parkway Playhouse on June 2. Directed by Dwight Chiles (director of last season's Bonnie & Clyde), Parkway Playhouse's production features Christine Caldemeyer, Allen Law, Samantha Lebrocq, Myra McCorry, Morgan Miller, and Daniel Moore. Performances are on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sun-

days at 3pm through June 16th.

Following the performance on opening night, June 2, a complementary Opening Night Reception for the cast and audience will be held. And on Sundays, June 3 and 10, the cast will sit for post show discussions. Audience members can ask questions about everything from costumes to scenic design, acting and their individual roles in the production.

Tickets range from \$11 for children to \$22 for adults. All performances are at the historic Parkway Playhouse theatre, located at 202 Green Mountain Drive in Burnsville, NC. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the Parkway Playhouse Box Office (open 1-5pm Thursdays through Saturdays), calling 828-682-4285, or by visiting parkwayplayhouse.com. Parkway Playhouse's 2018 Mainstage Season is sponsored by WKYK/WTOE and Switzerland Inn and Chalet Restaurant.

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

Shoals Creek Baptist Church - Here are upcoming events at Shoal Creek Baptist Church

June 17, 2018 Father's Day Service

June 23, 2018--Polar Blast VBS and Family Impact Day 1-6 PM

June 24, 2018--Deacon Ordination service @ 11:00 AM

South Estatoe Baptist Church - Women's Bible Study Group, Steps, at South Estatoe Baptist Church. Sundays at 6pm beginning May 20th through August 5th. Learn the steps of how to re-align yourself with Christ. Recover redemption through a right relationship with the Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Let God meet you where you are through every struggle, every circumstance, every relationship, anything. The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. Recover what is lost or broken. Let God meet you where you are. All ladies are welcome and you can still come if you missed a class. Contact Haley Johnson - 284-8289

Annual Benefit Art Auction Saturday, July 7 - Burnsville Town Center Now Accepting Artist Donations. Please call 828.682.7215 or email Kate

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.

New Community Outreach Benefits Haywood County Families with Children B.E.A.R. Closet (Baby Equipment and Resource Closet)

Beginning Wednesday, March 21, 2018 the Haywood Parish Baby Equipment and Resource Closet (B.E.A.R.) located at Francis Cove United Methodist Church 2530 Crymes Cove Road, Waynesville, will begin a new outreach ministry in the local community. This is a shared ministry between five local United Methodist churches: Beaverdam, Elizabeth Chapel, Faith, Maple Grove, and Francis Cove that are reaching out to serve low income families and expectant parents struggling to care for their babies and children. The B.E.A.R. Closet will provide free gently used clothing (sizes preemies to 4 toddler), shoes, baby equipment such as strollers, high chairs, swings, pack n' plays, bouncy seats, bathing and hygiene products, bedding items, as well as loving encouragement to expecting moms and parents. The outreach will be open the first and third Thursdays of every month 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Please call (828) 476-8502 and leave a detailed message, and a B.E.A.R. Closet representative will return your call within 24 hours.

Mayland Community College

Allen Cook Director, Mayland Small Business Center (828) 766-1295 acook@mayland.edu

Introduction to QuickBooks: Class One (3 Hours)

Class one of this four class series will discuss the features of QuickBooks Online and compare it to QuickBooks desktop. Determine if QuickBooks is a right for you by "test driving" the software on a sample business. Computers with QuickBooks installed will be available to use at this class.

6/5, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived

Sisk-Morris; Mayland Main Campus, Spruce Pine

QuickBooks Test Drive: Class Two (3 Hours)

QuickBooks taught by a CPA! Class two will focus on setting up QuickBooks in a manner that will work best for your business. Explore feature while learning how to launch QuickBooks the right way. Class will work with a sample business downloaded on the Mayland computers.

6/7, Th, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived

Sisk-Morris; Mayland Main Campus, Spruce Pine

QuickBooks Test Drive: Class Three (3 Hours)

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Altapass Baptist Church

Trail Life

By Marcus Benfield
Mitchell County



Hello everyone. I trust you are enjoying your Summer. I know it's been a while since I last wrote. I have been very busy with a sick mother and wife. However, both are doing better, and I am thankful. I know many of you prayed as well and I thank you also.

As we enter the summer months we often think about our summer plans. We look for things to do, especially with our children as well we should. However, as Christians we believe according to Psalm 123:3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. With that in mind I hope over the next couple of months to offer some opportunities for our children as well as give us as adults a wonderful opportunity to sow into the precious young lives.

We here at Altapass sponsor to Nationally known and accredited youth organizations. They are: Trail Life USA (for the young men) and American Heritage Girls (for the young ladies). Both these groups meet here at the church (Located at 3631 Altapass Hwy. Spruce Pine NC. 28777) each Monday @ 6:45 PM. They are both worthwhile organizations.

This month I am going to focus on Trail Life USA. Next month (Lord willing) I'll focus on American Heritage Girls.

Trail Life USA is a Christ Centered young men's organization available to all boys age 5-18. I personally believe that it is our duty as Christians to properly train our young people to become respectable Godly adults. Trail Life is a great way to do that for young men.

Please understand this is not just an Altapass thing. We are simply the Charter Organization. This program is open to all boys regardless of race creed or denomination. Remember it is a Christ centered organization. Therefore, all denominations who profess Christ are welcome to participate. This is not a "Baptist Only" thing.

However, in order for this program to be successful we need boys enrolled obviously ' but we also Desperately need Christian Men who will volunteer to be faithfully to help lead these young men. Training is provided free of charge.

You may ask do I have to have a son to volunteer? No often times this creates a great opportunity for a Godly interaction between a Male Role model and a young man who desperately need good Christian guidance to manhood.

You may also ask do I have to be a member of Altapass to participate? No, the only requirement is that you have a Christian testimony and are involved in your church. All volunteers (including myself) must submit to a background check for the safety of everyone.

Below I have enclosed some basic information taken from the Trail Life USA website. Please read through it and prayerfully consider enrolling your son and Please consider volunteering.

After reading if you have questions you may contact me (The Charter Head) @ 828-850-3346 or Richard Crouse (The Charter Rep) @ 828-208-0951. You may also come to one of our meetings and just sit in and observe without any obligation.

Thank you for reading and may God Bless each of you.

Trail Life USA

Who We Are:

The Statements of Faith and Values are designed to affirm the need for those in leadership to follow biblical standards. Leaders are held to a higher standard than those who are not in leadership and must agree to the tenets contained in the Statements. Youth members are not required to sign these statements.

Trail Life USA is a Christ-centered outdoor adventure, leadership, and character development ministry. Within the operation of the local Troop, the primary statement/profession of Christian beliefs, faith, and/or doctrine is that belonging to the Charter Organization. As with any of its ministries, the Charter Organization should take steps to ensure the Troop appropriately reflects these beliefs. Furthermore, all Trail Life USA Charter Organizations and Registered Adult Members must concurrently adhere to the Christian principles stated in Trail Life USA's Statements of Faith and Values:

Statement of Faith:

We believe there is One Triune God – God the Father, Jesus Christ, His one and only Son; and the Holy Spirit – Creator of the universe and eternally existent. We believe the Holy Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) to be the inspired and authoritative Word of God. We believe each person is created in His image for the purpose of communing with and worshipping God. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who enables us to live godly lives. We believe each of us is called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We believe God calls us to lives of purity, service, stewardship and integrity.

Statement of Values:

Purity: God calls us to lives of holiness, being pure of heart, mind, word and deed. We are to reserve sexual activity for the sanctity of marriage, a lifelong commitment before God between a man and a woman.

Service: God calls us to become responsible members of our community and the world through selfless acts that contribute to the welfare of others.

Stewardship: God calls us to use our God-given time, talents, and money wisely.

Integrity: God calls us to live moral lives that demonstrate an inward motivation to do what is biblically right regardless of the cost.

Membership Standards

Membership in the program has both youth and adult elements. Youth membership in the program is open to all who meet the membership requirements, and is currently designed for biologically male children under the age of 18. The adult applicant must be at least 18 years of age and subscribe to and abide by the Trail Life USA Statement of Christian Faith and Values as well as the Oath and Motto of

continued on page 46



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The Dangers of Strangulation

By Beth Davis
Mitchell County

A few weeks ago, the big national news cycle was fueled by the downfall of powerful former New York Attorney General, Eric Schneiderman. The accusations were so shocking...no, horrifying.....that he resigned in disgrace within 3 hours of the revelations. In case you missed it, here's a very short recap of his despicable behavior: Four women recently disclosed that he had slapped and strangled them on numerous occasions - so severely at times that he left days-long hand prints on their faces or bruises on their necks. At least two of the women sought medical treatment.

Shortly after his vile conduct came to light, I happened upon a riveting article by Kate Manne about what strangulation means, and I shared it with a couple of my coworkers. We agreed that it was too important not to share, and Ms. Manne graciously gave her permission to submit it to the Blue Ridge Christian News.

Eric Schneiderman and the Meaning of Strangulation

By Kate Manne

It doesn't take much to cut off someone's oxygen supply, or to restrict blood flow to and from her brain. Around 10 seconds of pressure on the carotid artery, either constant or intermittent, is usually enough to render the victim unconscious, and it requires less pressure than it takes to open a can of soda. This act is often labeled "choking," as it was in an article this week in *The New Yorker*, by Jane Mayer and Ronan Farrow, in describing the multiple occasions on which Eric Schneiderman, New York's former attorney general, allegedly assaulted women in this manner. But the domestic and intimate-partner violence prevention community generally insists on calling such violence "strangulation." Choking is a term for an internal blockage of the airway from, for example, a piece of food "going down the wrong way" and getting lodged in the windpipe. When used to refer to the deliberate form of abuse that is strangulation, "choking" is very much a misnomer — and a dangerous one: It minimizes.

Nonfatal manual strangulation is a well-known precursor to intimate-partner homicide. Victims of such attacks are some seven times more likely to become the victim of an attempted homicide by the same perpetrator. The *New Yorker* article noted the irony that Mr. Schneiderman himself had written legislation that established stiffer penalties against those who strangle. "I think this will save a lot of lives," he predicted.

Given that the victims of strangulation are typically (though not exclusively) women, and the perpetrators are almost exclusively male, this has long been an issue of central concern to women's legal rights advocates. And Mr. Schneiderman's recent efforts to bring Harvey Weinstein to justice have similarly raised his credibility as an ally in fighting the good fight against misogyny. So the acts of violence he is accused of have been portrayed as not just hypocritical, but baffling.

Acts of strangulation are highly harmful in their own right, especially when recurrent, as they often are. They can cause cumulative brain damage, throat injuries, and damage to the vocal cords, among other injuries. This is so even when the violence leaves no external bruises, scratches or abrasions — as is the case in about half of strangulation cases. And less than half of these visible marks, in turn, are deep or dark or appear quickly enough to show up in police photographs. Intimate-partner violence experts who have campaigned for specific felony statutes against strangulation (rather than it being simple assault, typically a misdemeanor, as it remains in some states) emphasize both its dangers, and its frequently concealed, and hence insidious, nature.

In addition to causing great pain and fear, strangulation sends a powerful message. What strangulation effectively communicates to a victim, more clearly than words could, is that an abuser is willing to exert punitive control by preying on her most fundamental visceral needs — such as the bodily imperative to gasp for air when she cannot breathe, and the desperate urge to end the intense pain that strangulation causes.

Experts compare the sensation of being strangled to waterboarding; it is tantamount to torture. And then there is the terrifying knowledge that someone is deliberately causing your body to thus protest, which in itself may be what breaks you. The overarching message, when a man assaults a woman in this way (again, the most common gender dynamic, according to numerous studies), is deeply patriarchal and misogynistic. He has shown her what he is prepared to do to enforce his will if she defies him — this being, in effect, the most basic form of patriarchal governance.

"I am the law," Mr. Schneiderman was quoted as saying by one of his accusers, Michelle Manning Barish, as he yanked her across the street (to demonstrate he could jaywalk with impunity, ostensibly). The picture this paints is of a man who does not view himself as subject to the law, but as tasked solely with its creation and enforcement — or, as the case may be, pre-emptive over-policing to establish his authority. On both the right and the left in politics, and extending far beyond that, we find some such men who purport to be proponents of law and order. And so they are, in a way, but it is patriarchal (and also, in some cases, white supremacist) law and order, where he rules and others obey, submit and follow.

No wonder it is so difficult to persuade a victim of strangulation to testify against her abuser. Such testimony would directly challenge his social standing and moral reputation. And the very act of strangulation forbids her to oppose him, in this respect and others. She draws breath at his mercy, and thwarts his will at her peril. If she tries to bring him to justice, or end the relationship, he has shown himself willing to do what it takes to keep her quiet, and enforce her loyalty.

"I cannot fathom that someone who drafted the legislation on strangulation is unfamiliar with such concepts," Jennifer Friedman, an expert on intimate-partner



violence, said of Mr. Schneiderman in *The New Yorker*. How could he be ignorant of what strangulation does to the human body, and what it communicates to the victim?

Many will take this question as a puzzle, not a rhetorical lament. So perhaps this is an apt moment to point out a dark but important truth about intimate-partner violence: Some abusers are perfectly well aware of what they are doing, at least at a certain level. And that is why they keep doing it. They want to maintain dominance and exercise control over their female partners, among others. And that is why an abuser may resort to the cruelest and most covert of methods, such as cutting off her air supply with his bare hands, leaving no bruises.

Kate Manne is an assistant professor of philosophy at Cornell University and the author of "Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny."

As always, if you or someone you know is a victim of interpersonal/domestic violence or sexual assault, Mitchell County SafePlace welcomes your call. Our very capable, very compassionate advocates are available 24/7 to help you. 24-Hour Hotline: 828-765-4044.

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

Check out our new Website-www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

Sample Day Trip

Tour the Waldensian Museum
Lunch & Downtown Shopping
Tour the Trail of Faith
Tour Waldensian Heritage Winery

Tours also available of the
P&W Railroad Museum • Village Park Mural
Art Galleries • Old Rock School

Historic VALDESE north carolina



Upcoming Events in Valdese

Family Friday Nights

Free concerts every Friday Night May-September.
7pm at the Wells Fargo Parking Lot

Valdese Farmers Market

May 18-September 28 Fridays 11-4pm
Old Rock School Front Lawn

Independence Day Celebration

June 29, 2018 7pm
Music from Too Much Sylvia, Food Trucks, Beer Garden,
Fireworks at Dusk.

43rd Annual Waldensian Festival

August 10th: Festival kick off from The Artimus Pye Band
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August 11th: over 170 vendors, live music and performances
all day, ending with a performance from the Band of Oz at 7pm.

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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

US House of Representatives NC District 11



Congressman
Mark Meadows
202-225-6401
www.meadows.house.gov

More Information on the Department of Justice

The more we learn about the early stages of the investigation into the Trump campaign, and the beginning of the Mueller investigation, the more we learn that James Comey, Rod Rosenstein, and President Obama's Department of Justice were not honest with the American people.

To this day, the Department of Justice has still neglected to turn over documents to Congress. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), Rep. Ron DeSantis (R-FL), and I recently asked the President in a letter to instruct the DOJ to release all relevant documents on potential FISA abuse, the initial investigation of the Trump campaign prior to the appointment of Mueller, and more.

I'm all for getting to the truth about what happened. I wrote and introduced a bill to target Russian interference in our elections. But if the FBI engaged in nefarious behavior and political targeting, Americans deserve to know about it. The DOJ needs to give us the documents.

Americans deserve the truth. It's about time the Department of Justice stop hiding it from them.

Pushing for Congressional Term Limits

I'm working with a bipartisan group of lawmakers, along with President Trump, to push Congressional term limits—an issue supported by 80% of the public. Our meeting with President Trump went very well.

The founders never intended Congress to become a career—the fact it has turned into such is a significant reason why Washington is so dysfunctional. I'm 100% on board with Congressional term limits.

Let's make this policy happen and return influence back where it belongs: to Main Street American citizens.

U.S. Withdraws from Iran Deal

President Trump recently announced that the United States will officially withdraw from the Iran Nuclear Deal.

This is excellent news. From its very inception, the Iran Deal was nothing short of a foreign policy debacle—the President is absolutely right to reinstate sanctions and withdraw from the agreement.

The United States can do better—and we will. This is a victory for a safer and more secure America.

NC Senate District 47



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

When Republicans took control of the North Carolina General Assembly in 2010, one of our main priorities was working to ensure North Carolina students' success, both from a policy point and a budgetary one. Key to increasing the education budget was a shift away from the failed fiscal policies of over one hundred years of Democratic control of the legislature, which had resulted in a \$2.5 billion budget shortfall and a \$2 billion debt to the federal government for unemployment claims. The Democrats' mismanagement of the budget resulted in a lack of adequate funding for public education, leaving our state's teachers' salaries frozen for many years and our students without needed textbooks.

Under the leadership of Democrats, textbook funding was slashed nearly \$109 million during the last years they controlled the budget, FY 2010-2011. Since Republicans took control of the state budget in 2011, state spending on education is set to realize a gain of more than \$2 billion through 2018, with more than half of the entire \$23 billion state budget funding education. We have increased textbook funding and passed legislation to ensure that local school administrators actually spend state money for textbooks as intended, instead of using those funds for something else.

As promised by Republicans five years ago, North Carolina teacher salaries have risen dramatically through five consecutive pay raises. Starting teacher pay increased to \$35,000 and average teacher pay for the 2018-19 school year will be roughly \$53,600. Specifically, teachers with five years of experience will earn \$9,200 more in 2018-19 than they did in 2013-14 – from \$30,800 to \$40,000, a 29.9 percent increase. Teachers with twelve years of experience will earn \$15,330 more in 2018-19 than they did in 2013-14 – from \$31,670 to \$47,000, a 48 percent increase. Teachers with sixteen years of experience will earn \$11,840 more in 2018-19 than they did in 2013-14 – from \$38,160 to \$50,000, a 31 percent increase. Teacher with twenty-five years of experience will earn \$9,040 more in 2018-19 than they did in 2013-14 – from \$42,260 to \$51,300, a 21.4 percent increase. Likewise, a teacher would earn \$233,000 more, not including state or local supplements or bonuses, over a 30-year career on the 2018-19 salary schedule put in place by Republicans, than on the old Democrat pay plan. I encourage all teachers and anyone who is interested to check www.ncteacherraise.com to learn more on teacher pay facts.

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.

NC House District 86



Rep. Hugh Blackwell
919-733-5805

Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net

NCSSM Morganton Update

As some of you may know, Morganton will be the new home for the second North Carolina School of Science and Math campus. Although located in western North Carolina, and perhaps having heightened appeal to students and families from the region, it will serve the entire state. Once the school opens in fall of 2021, each student applying can specify his or her first and second preference as to either the Morganton or Durham campuses. In addition, there is an online, non-residential, virtual "campus" that affords a third option.

Spring brings a new phase in planning for the new Morganton campus. This new planning segment involves creation of two steering committees whose primary focus is to actively engage communities and individuals from across the greater western part of the state. These committees will include representatives from UNC, community colleges and K-12 education as well as from state and local governments and business and industry.

The first committee is the External Engagement Steering Team. It will focus on advising NCSSM- Morganton on the creation of a firm, robust pool of benefactors. The team will be tasked with raising \$5 million to add to \$15 million in additional capital funding that is needed from the state now that a fuller picture of actual construction needs is available from project architects and planners. The additional money will go towards building the full campus in Morganton as laid out in the approved master plan. With funding needs met, the project should be completed in 2021.

The second team created is The Campus Operations Steering Team. This team currently has sixteen members. It has two main charges. The first is to advise on more "nuts and bolts" issues- such as schematic designs, business procedures and school infrastructure. The second focus is another form of community outreach and engagement. Thus, Campus Operations Steering will work to build partnerships with businesses and industries that may provide actual internships or lab experiences for students. The team will also work to connect the new Morganton campus to other educational institutions to promote collaboration and campus recognition.

With the addition of these two teams, plans for the North Carolina School of Science and Math in Morganton are moving forward. Currently, things are ahead of the original timeline. When the campus is completed and operational, I am confident it will be a great asset to our state and region. It will allow substantially more of our best students to access the rigorous education that can prepare them for the careers of the future and without having to move to Durham. With the school's innovative science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum, and given the success of the current NCSSM campus in Durham, there is real reason for high expectations for our students once the school is up and running.

YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC House District 118



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

Legislative leaders announce economic development, job recruitment budget provisions

Senate Leader Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore announced the forthcoming state budget will include key changes to economic development programs that are expected to help secure a major jobs announcement in North Carolina in the coming months.

The legislation will modify the state's existing economic development and jobs recruitment program based on feedback obtained during prior efforts to recruit large private sector employers as well as recent conversations between lawmakers and prospective companies across many sectors of the economy looking to move to North Carolina.

Among other changes, it will:

- Enable a company that commits to investing at least \$1 billion and creating at least 3,000 new jobs in North Carolina to be eligible for a transformative project award under the state's Job Development Investment Grants (JDIG) program. These thresholds are based on research conducted by the General Assembly's economic team regarding the level at which a major corporate relocation will have an immediate positive impact on state revenues.
- Allow transformative projects to receive credit for "expansion positions" above the 3,000-job minimum that are created during the term of a JDIG agreement. This will encourage companies to grow in North Carolina beyond an initial jobs commitment.
- Lengthen the base period for transformative projects to 10 years and also extend the maximum JDIG term for transformative projects to the base period plus an additional 30 years. This will provide more long-term certainty to companies considering North Carolina.
- Eliminate the \$6,500 cap per job for JDIG awards for transformative projects. This will help attract higher-paying jobs.
- Modify the award that is available to high-yield and transformative projects so that 10 percent of that benefit is directed to the state Utility Account – the fund designed to support economic development projects in rural North Carolina. Previously, the company received 100 percent of the award. This will help make certain that the positive impact of major job recruitments is felt by the entire state. This change will give companies certainty as they make their relocation decisions in the coming months.

Since 2011, legislative Republicans have undertaken major pro-growth reforms to fix North Carolina's business climate and spur economic growth. Based on our direct conversations with companies, we know those reforms have made us more competitive than ever before – and we believe this change to our business incentives is the final piece of the puzzle that is needed to put us over the top when it comes to recruiting thousands of new jobs and billions in new investment to our state.

The pro-growth reforms include an overhaul of the state's regulatory environment and tax reforms such as reducing the corporate income tax rate to 2.5 percent in 2019, adopting single sales factor apportionment, reducing the personal income tax rate from a high of 7.75 percent in 2013 to 5.25 percent in 2019, and increasing the amount of tax free income that North Carolinians can claim. Those changes resulted in North Carolina climbing from 44th worst to 11th best tax climate in the nation, according to the Tax Foundation.

Teachers march

Wednesday was the Legislature's first day back for the short session.

I met with several teachers and education advocates. Most were professional and courteous. The few who were not ruined the day for the rest. Shouting and disruption in the halls and in the gallery only took away from the otherwise productive debate of critical issues.

Many teachers were surprised to see the progress we've made in the past few years. Sometimes it is good to stop and take a critical look at the progress GOP leadership has produced. I welcome anyone who is interested in viewing where you were under Democrat control and where you are now.

I admire teachers who can move children ahead in growth. We're now paying large bonuses to these teachers. They deserve every penny of it.

Keep up the good work. Here are a few education funding quick facts:

- \$53,600: Average teacher salary in 2018-19.
- \$8,600: Average teacher raise since 2013.
- 19%: Average percentage pay increase since 2013.
- \$233,000: Increase in lifetime earning potential of a N.C. teacher since 2013.
- 5: Number of consecutive teacher pay raises under GOP leadership.
- 9.5%: Percentage increase in teacher salary vetoed by Gov. Roy Cooper.
- 44,647: Number of teachers who received a pay increase of at least \$10,000 since 2013.
- \$2 billion+: Increase in recurring yearly funding for education since 2013.

A great resource for teacher pay information can be found at ncteacherraise.com.

School safety bill passes House

With today's school shooting in Texas, school safety is front-of-mind for members of the General Assembly.

The Select Committee on School Safety met over the legislative interim to produce 14 recommendations to improve school safety in North Carolina. On Thursday, the House acted on the committee's first recommendation by passing House Bill 933 — Reciprocity/School Psychologist Licensure.

The General Assembly appropriated funds for school psychologists as part of last year's budget, but positions remain unfilled due to licensure restrictions currently in place. House Bill 933 addresses that problem by granting "a license to practice as a school psychologist to any individuals who hold the nationally certified school psychologist credential," according to the bill.

The bill now heads to the Senate for their consideration.

You can expect to see the House consider several of the House Select Committee on School Safety's recommendations over the next few weeks. We will be moving quickly to implement improvements to school safety.

N.C. port development benefits economy statewide

Economic activity at our state's ports has been constrained for decades.

Large ships could neither enter nor navigate waters around our coast due to improper dredging — the water was too shallow. Even if ships could navigate the waters, our ports did not have the proper equipment to unload and load large ships — our cranes weren't big enough.

Today, our waters are navigable. Today, new, larger cranes are being installed at the Port of Wilmington.

Two Neo-Panamax cranes at the Port of Wilmington will be fully operational in about 30 days. I took the opportunity to tour the port a couple of months ago as part of my work on transportation committees in the House of Representatives. You would not believe the size and scale of these cranes in person.

Increased operations at our ports will boost economic activity across North Carolina. The new cranes at the Port of Wilmington will be able to remove more containers from larger ships, and load those containers onto trains and trucks more quickly.

Truck drivers who live in Western North Carolina will benefit from the increased commercial activity at our ports. Any businesses that import products from around the world, or that export products, will benefit as well.

If you or someone you know owns a business that produces physical goods, you may want to take a look at export opportunities provided by our ports.

God Bless America



This week, the Senate Intelligence Committee released the first installment in our Russia Report, this one regarding our updated recommendations and findings on election security. Tuesday's primaries are the next step toward the 2018 midterms and another reminder of the urgency of securing our election systems. Our investigation has been a bipartisan effort from day one, and I look forward to completing the Committee's work and releasing as much of it as possible. We are working tirelessly to give Americans a complete accounting of what happened in 2016 and to prevent any future interference with our democratic process.

I also led the Intelligence Committee's confirmation for Gina Haspel to be the next director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Ms. Haspel has been a leader in the field and at HQ. She has the courage to speak truth to power. She is intimately familiar with the threats facing our nation - because she's faced them throughout her career. And she has the support of her peers, predecessors, and former Directors. It's important to note the historic nature of Ms. Haspel's nomination as the first woman to lead the Central Intelligence Agency, and the first in decades to come from the ranks of CIA. Others have cracked the glass ceiling - she is poised to break it. While many want to make Ms. Haspel's nomination about a small piece of the agency's past, most of us are looking towards the agency's future. I support her nomination and look forward to her confirmation.

Finally, North Carolinians are poised to get some much-needed relief as President Trump announced on Tuesday a disaster declaration for two hard-hit counties in the state, Rockingham and Guilford. I, along with the rest of the North Carolina Congressional delegation, requested and received this declaration to allow families to begin to recover from the recent tornadoes that destroyed homes, businesses, and roads. This assistance will help families get back on their feet and make their communities whole again. If you are a resident of these areas, please register with FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or call 1-800-621-3362.

Bits 'n Pieces

continued from page 29

This class will focus on recording income and expenses in QuickBooks as well as balancing transactions. We will also look at various scenarios that your business may face when keying transactions into QuickBooks. This a great class to get answers to QuickBooks questions.

6/12, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived
Sisk-Morris; Mayland Main Campus, Spruce Pine

QuickBooks Test Drive: Class Four (3 Hours)

The final class of this series will explore the use of QuickBooks for payroll. Learn how to set up payroll and cut checks using QuickBooks payroll features. Cut checks and make deposits on a sample business in this test drive of the most popular small business accounting platform in use.

6/14, Th, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived
Sisk-Morris; Mayland Main Campus, Spruce Pine

How to Sell on Etsy (2 Hours)

Sell your art work, jewelry, crafts, and vintage items via Etsy. Learn how to register and start selling on Etsy. Taught by top rated online seller Nick Hawks, this class will provide an in-depth look at Etsy's tools and provide insider tips that will help you succeed in Etsy's online market place.

6/6, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Fee Waived
Hawks; TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine

How to Sell on Amazon (2 Hours)

Amazon is the leading e-commerce website in the United States with more than 350 million active users.

In this fast paced class top rated seller Nick Hawks will teach you how to sell in the Amazon online marketplace. Gain knowledge on how to register online, choose the account that fits your goals, and list an item on Amazon for free to maximize your profitability. You'll also learn how to ship your items or let Amazon ship them for you with "Fulfillment by Amazon" (FBA) shipping services. Learn how to make the most money with every sale. Seats are limited so sign up today!

6/13, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Fee Waived
Hawks; TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine

-Register for FREE seminars & events here
-Free Confidential Counseling

More Services Needed

By David Burleson
Burke County



I want to personally thank everyone in Burke County who supported the food ministries in our county during the recent Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. A huge thank you is extended to all our letter carriers, all postal employees, Mr. Dale Barrier, Ms. Elizabeth Norris, Mr. Glen Reep, Mr. Stanley Lester, Mr. Stephen Kincaid, Bryan and Joye Goss, the FHS Anchor Club, the PHS Anchor and Interact clubs, the Mt. Home Baptist Youth and all the other volunteers. Without all the volunteers giving 133 hours of time it would have been impossible to collect over 14,600 pounds of food. This additional food will assist the Burke United Christian Ministries in meeting the ever increasing needs of those we serve.

Just a look back at a comparison of the last four months this year to the same period last year reveals a large increase in services needed:

Type of Assist	January 2017	January 2018
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	5,059	5,042
Families Served in the Pantry	463	775
Individuals Served in the Pantry	1,325	1,780
Food Distributed in the Pantry	48,502 pounds	58,649 pounds
Total Families Served	792	1,333

Type of Assist	February 2017	February 2018
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	4,431	4,886
Families Served in the Pantry	446	688
Individuals Served in the Pantry	921	1,502
Food Distributed in the Pantry	33,454	51,063
Total Families Served	672	1,249

Type of Assist	March 2017	March 2018
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	5,204	5,415
Families Served in the Pantry	550	691
Individuals Served in the Pantry	1,229	1,493
Food Distributed in the Pantry	46,084.75	52,930
Total Families Served	790	1,303

Type of Assist	April 2017	April 2018
Meals Served in the Soup Kitchen	4,608	5,543
Families Served in the Pantry	487	1,151
Individuals Served in the Pantry	1,067	1,679
Food Distributed in the Pantry	47,158	60,187
Total Families Served	719	1,319

As these numbers reveal, the need is great and continues to increase. The assistance through the Postal Carriers Food Drive, other food drives, and donations are essential to our ministry in meeting the needs of others.

I also want to commend our staff for their hard work, their dedication, and their willingness to understand the seriousness of the work they do every day. The individuals who walk into BUCM are very blessed to have caring staff and volunteers working to meet their needs. Thanks to each of you for caring enough to make a difference in the lives of others.

In the next few weeks there are several opportunities to support our ministry. Beginning on June 1, 2018, BUCM will be participating in the Community Giveback Program at di'lishi Frozen Yogurt. When you purchase a treat at di'lishi through September 30, 2018 and vote for BUCM, we will receive points that will translate to funding. The Burke United Christian Ministries will also be doing a fundraiser on Thursday June 21, 2018 at Sagebrush Steakhouse and Catering from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Please help out by registering and sharing this link with others to invite them to eat for Burke United Christian Ministries! <https://www.grouppraise.com/events/61187>. Also, mark your calendars for our golf tournament on Saturday, June 30 at Silver Creek Plantation with lunch at noon and tee off time at 1:30 p.m. It will be a captain's choice, 4-person team format with the opportunity to purchase mulligans. Just call (828-433-8075) or email (bucmdirector@gmail.com) for details and to register.

Please remember that 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 Saturday, August 18. Donations and sponsorships for this event are greatly appreciated. Back to school needs for families are a huge expense and every little bit helps.

As we approach summer, I ask that you please continue to lift our ministry in your prayers and come by for a visit any time. As a community we have a wonderful opportunity to recognize the impact we make in the lives of others and the contribution we make to their well-being. Thanks again for making the Burke United Christian Ministries a special place for those who need a hand up.

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



Enjoying Everyday Life

How Bright Is Your Light?

By Joyce Meyer

A few years ago, I reached a point where I was feeling weary...tired of the world around me...tired of doing the same thing all the time. I've been doing this a long time, and my passion and zeal for the call of God on my life was gone.

So, I prayed, "God, give me passion and zeal again for the ministry You've called me to do. I refuse to let myself get tired of living for You, doing what You're leading me to do on this earth!"

I had to stir myself up and resist the temptation to give in to weariness and an apathetic attitude.

Isaiah 60:1-2 (NIV) says, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you...."

The Amplified Bible, Classic Edition, says to "arise [from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept you – rise to a new life]!"

Prostration means you're lying down. When I was weary, I was lying down on the inside, in my heart. I had to "get up" and rekindle my desire for God to use me and shine His light through me in this dark world.

This was a decision I had to make for myself...and you have to do the same thing.

We can't afford to waste our time waiting for our circumstances to change or for someone else to make us happy. As believers in Christ, we have the power of the Holy Spirit in us, and we can decide to stir ourselves up on the inside and "arise, shine" in the way we live.

I want to make this practical for you and show you two ways you can do this. Matthew 5:16 (AMP) says, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good deeds and moral excellence...."

The first way is by doing good deeds. This basically means we should help someone or just be good to somebody. If you pay attention to people around you, it won't take long for you to see something you can do to make someone else's life better.

It could be simple, like holding the door open for someone, allowing them to go before you. Or maybe you can give an encouraging note to a friend who is going through a hard time. You could mow the neighbor's yard, pay for someone's groceries, babysit for free, give something you have to a person who needs it...the list of possibilities is endless.

The second way is to live with moral excellence. Excellence is not common in our world today, but as sons and daughters of the Most High God, we should be excellent in everything we do.

I'm not talking about being perfect; being excellent means you do the best you can at everything you do. You strive to always do what is right in God's eyes – even when no one is looking.

For example, when you're at work, don't take company time to do personal business on your computer, and then when your boss comes in, make it look like you're working. Your boss may not be watching every minute of the day, but God is.

We need to get to the point where it's more important to us to please God in everything we do, whether others see us or not. Because God is always with us and He always sees everything we do.

The older I get, the more I realize how important it is to live for God all the time because we don't have time to waste! Before I got really serious about my relationship with God, I wasted so many days being upset because I didn't get my way all the time. I was so focused on trying to get what I wanted that I wasn't thinking about how God could use me to make a difference in this world.

It was a miserable way to live. But I discovered that helping others—walking in love to glorify God—is the key to being truly satisfied, content and happy.

So, I want to ask you: Are you weary, apathetic and struggling to shine the light of God's love? Are you tired of wasting your days being discouraged that you aren't making progress in your relationship with God or changing in areas of your life that need to improve?

If you are, I want to provoke you to get up on the inside! Make a decision that you refuse to live this way any longer – no matter what your circumstances are, what you've been through, how others have hurt you or how long you've been struggling.

Stop waiting for God to do something and wake up to the truth that in Christ, you already have everything you need in your spirit to make a major difference in your part of the world. There is a greater purpose for your life than just getting what you want or settling for a frustrating, unfruitful existence.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you!"

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

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

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.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Proverbs 13:24



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One Soweth, and Another Reapeth

By Timothy W. Tron
Burke County

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours." – John 4:35-38

It had been a long day at school, so it was not by choice that I sat waiting for the salesperson to work on our order at the wireless store. I tried to remain positive and tell myself that God had put me there for a purpose. At that present time, it wasn't obvious; at least not yet.

We had put off switching to a new wireless carrier for some time, but it had finally gotten to the point if we wanted to communicate as needed, we were going to have to use the service that provided the best coverage for the area in which we lived and worked. The young man that waited on me was very kind and extremely courteous. As he began the process of transferring data from one device to the other, we started talking about where I worked and found that we had mutual connections. It wasn't long before it became apparent, he was a believer too. In fact, after we shared some personal testimony, he told me that he had given his two weeks' notice just moments before I stepped foot in the door to answer his calling to become a youth pastor at a nearby church.

It was then I began to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit ripple across my forearms.

Suddenly, his phone rang, and he had to excuse himself from our conversation.

About that time, a message appeared on my old phone which we had not yet ported over to the new service. The news was from a distant relative, one that I've never met in person. A few years back, I had shared with him part of our Waldensian ancestry and how we came to be. He seemed interested, but not beyond just wanting to hear about those ancient names. The story beyond, from whence we came didn't seem to intrigue him; at least not from my vantage point. Once I provided him the information, we only remained in contact through shared "likes" on social media. However, from what I saw from his posts, his life once was devoured by pleasures of the flesh. He found his comfort at the end of a bottle, so the pictures said. But the message at that moment that came to me as I sat in the cell phone store in Boone was that God had found a way to reach him.

As I read with eyes of joy, he told a friend who had inquired about his post, "I haven't touched a drop in over a year." He then went on to say how he was regularly attending a church in his community. My heart leaped for joy, and I stood up, rejoicing out loud. The questions raced through my mind, "Had I somehow planted a seed?" "Did God use that seemingly insignificant contact years ago to begin working on my distant cousin?" Those and many more rushed through my mind as my new friend got off the phone smiling at my exuberant demeanor.

"I guess that was good news," he said pointing at my phone.

"Oh, yes, more than I can explain," pausing to gain an understanding of what had all just transpired.

Then the words of Jesus came rushing in, "And herein is that saying true, One



soweth, and another reapeth."

In all things, no matter how small, nor how insignificant, God has a purpose. As I stood there in that small store, I had found another soul that had recently taken another leap of faith. As we talked, the thought of another time and place when my just being somewhere was God using me, and again, it felt the same. Yet, now as I stood there, another soul had found something greater than that which is in the world.

With each tiny seed we plant, we may not reap the harvest, but it is God that will bring the crop to fruition. It is not us that will change that being. It is not our doing that will cause another to turn to Christ; it is God, and God alone. In all that we do, there is a purpose.

Last Saturday, as we sat watching the Western Piedmont Community College graduates ascend the short stairway to the stage, the feeling of a proud parent swelled our chests. In what seemed like yesterday, I was holding him in my arms for the first time, watching the helpless lifeform, totally dependent upon his mother and father to survive. Our son now stood in his graduation regalia receiving his diploma, then leaving the stage, returned to his seat. His independence is a culmination of 18 years of love, care, and patience. What God hath given life unto us, we have taken that responsibility and nurtured him into adulthood. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," reads Luke 12:48 And so with eyes brimming with moisture, we know that soon he will leave us. It is only natural.

We had planted the seed. It is up to him to continue to allow it to grow. But the seed had begun to ripen much earlier.

For those many years of his life, we have taught him how to live in faith. At the tender age of 10 years, he found Christ. His salvation came in a little model Church at the Denton Bluegrass Festival.

Every year, Doyle Lawson would offer those who wanted to attend, a church service at the close of his festival. One of his good friends, brother Dale Tilley, would most often be the preacher. And so, it was this Mother's Day weekend when we sat in the row just behind Doyle's band, that we heard brother Tilley bring another spirit-filled sermon to a weary group of bluegrass campers. After brother Dale Tilley had nearly finished his altar call, my weekend was just about to get even better. Without any idea what was about to happen, my boy leaned over to me and whispered the words into my ear that I will never forget, "I want to be saved."

My heart leaped for joy.

Upon his request to wait until everyone had left, I motioned to brother Tilley that we needed to talk, and as everyone ushered themselves out, the door closed, and we were alone. Brother Tilley directed us through the process as we knelt in prayer and supplication. There on that ancient wooden floor of the little white clapboard country church, my son spoke the words and prayed the prayer to ask Christ to come into his life. With tears in my eyes, we stood up to leave. It was just brother Tilley, my son and me. As we reached the back doors of the church, we opened them to find that we were not alone. There under a clear, blue Carolina sky stood Doyle Lawson and his entire band. The entire entourage was still standing in a row on the steps of the church; they had paused from their busy schedule, waiting to celebrate my son's decision.

The tears ran down my cheeks as I watched entertainers turned Christians welcome another one into their fold.

It is a day I will never forget.

The seed had been planted, but another reaped the harvest, but we rejoiced together.

God has a purpose in everything we do. What will become of the young man at the cell phone store? I may never know, but it really doesn't matter; God knows.

One day, when we reach that far distant shore, there will be a welcoming into the fold. We'll find the angels of the Lord standing in a row, pausing for each of us, ushering us into those heavenly gates. On that day, the answers to the questions we never knew will become obvious.

What a day it will be.
Thanks be to God.



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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



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by Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,

My husband has an old car that has become a real sticking point between us. He bought it for \$2,400, and it needs about \$4,000 in repairs and restoration. Together, we bring home \$50,000 a year, and I feel like this car is interfering with our ability to save money and pay off \$35,000 in debt. We already have two decent cars we drive to work, so what should I do about this?

Stacy

Dear Stacy,

There are lots of guys out there who like shiny toys — especially cars. I get it, because I'm one of them. But these kinds of things are luxuries, and stuff like this should wait until the household and finances are in order. The family should always come first.

Dumping money into this while you two are struggling financially doesn't make sense. On top of that, it's causing problems between you two on a deeper level. I'm sure your husband isn't a bad guy, so try sitting down with him and explaining how it makes you feel. Let him know what it's doing to your finances and your marriage. You might even write the financial side down, so he can see exactly what kind of shape you two are in and where the money is going.

Once you do this in a kind, but concerned, manner, it may be a real eye-opener for him. On top of that, you might consider giving him a little incentive to get on board with the idea of getting your finances in order. Suggest that once the debt is gone, and you've got some savings in place, there might be a little extra cash on hand to help get that car up and running.

Good luck, Stacy!

—Dave

Dear Dave,

My fiancé and I are planning to be married in less than a year. We've both been through your class at church, and the other night we started wondering if we should wait to have the wedding until we're both completely debt-free. Would you give us your opinion?

Michelle

Dear Michelle,

Congratulations! I hope you two will have long and happy lives together.

To answer your question, I don't think there's a reason to wait. When two people know they really love each other, they should get married whenever they feel in their hearts the time is right.

At this point, you shouldn't be thinking about money as anything except an indicator of where you're going. It doesn't matter who got into debt or how, because everyone makes mistakes. But if you're both serious about getting out of debt, living on less than you make, and are in agreement about how the dollars are going to be handled, then — where money is concerned — you're ready to be married.

Many relationship experts say if a

couple can agree on four important things — kids, money, religion, and how to handle the in-laws — they have a great statistical chance of a happy marriage. I believe this, too. And make sure you meet with your pastor for some good, premarital counseling before the big day. With all this going for you, I think you two will be okay.

God bless you both!

—Dave

Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 585 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.

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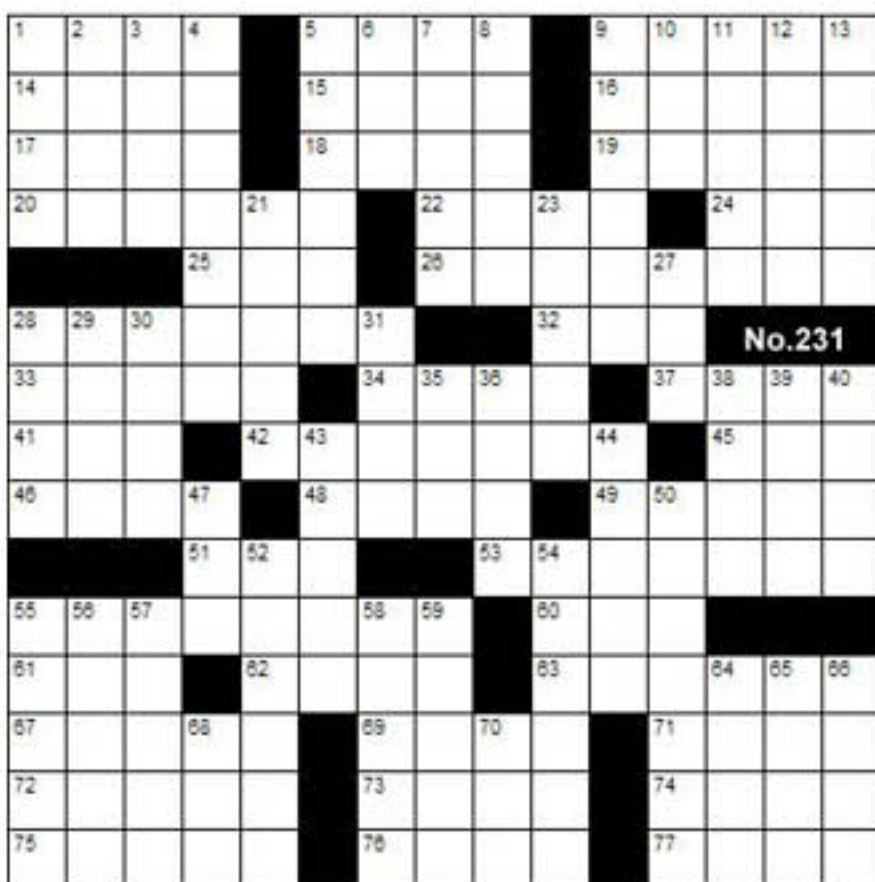
ACROSS

1 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in ____, sin is lawlessness (1 Jn 3:4)
 5 John to the seven churches which are in ____ (Rev 1:4)
 9 and keep some ____ between the herds (Gen 32:16)
 14 like the merchant ships, bringing her food from ____ (Prov 31:14)
 15 but envy ____ the bones (Prov 14:30)
 16 a certain ____ named Martha received (Luke 10:38)
 17 Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of ____ (Jude 11) KJV
 18 twenty he goats, two hundred ____, and twenty rams (Gen 32:14)
 19 take thee ____, and lay it before thee (1,4) (Ezek 4:1) (KJV)
 20 King Asa issued an order to all Judah no one was ____ (1 Kings 15:22)
 22 pursued them all the way to Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth ____ (Josh 11:8)
 24 abbr. for the ninth book of the Old Testament
 25 that at the name of Jesus every knee should ____ (Phil 2:10)
 26 David sent a delegation to express his ____ to Hanun (1 Chron 19:2)
 28 was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on ____ (1,6) (Mark 4:38) KJV
 32 whether it be ox, or ____, or sheep; he shall restore double. (Exod 22:4)
 33 so you became a ____ to all the believers in Macedonia (1 Thess 1:7)
 34 with dishonest scales, with ____ of false weights (1,3) (Mic 6:11)
 37 THIS IS JESUS, THE ____ OF THE JEWS (Matt 27:37)
 41 laying aside ____ malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies (1 Pet 2:1)
 42 Some of the Levites were secretaries, ____ and doorkeepers (2 Chron 34:13)
 45 Praise him, ____ and moon, praise him, all you shining stars (Ps 148:3)
 46 Then will the lame leap like a ____ (Isa 35:6)
 48 ____, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel (Luke 2:36)
 49 we found out that the island was called ____ (Acts 28:1)
 51 all that handle the ____, the mariners (Ezek 27:29) KJV
 53 whether in the ____ depths or in the highest heights (Isa 7:11)
 55 The LORD is my ____ and my song (Ps 118:14)
 60 The trees of the LORD are full of ____ (Ps 104:16)
 61 Jesus came from Galilee to ____ Jordan to be baptized by John (Matt 3:13)
 62 the horns of a wild ox. With

them he will ____ the nations (Deut 33:17)
 63 ____ and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues (Acts 2:11) KJV
 67 the angels hastened Lot, saying, ____, take thy wife (Gen 19:15) (KJV)
 69 to loose the bands of wickedness, to ____ the heavy burdens (Isa 58:6) (KJV)
 71 Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' ____ (Num 11:28)
 72 Is it ____ for you to flog a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25)
 73 it is only a ____ from the boil (Lev 13:23)
 74 The LORD is ____ to anger, abounding in love (Num 14:18)
 75 who ____ his money without usury (Ps 15:5)
 76 temporary dwelling (Ex 33:7)
 77 burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and ____ (Hos 4:13) KJV

DOWN

1 his ____ was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars (Rev 10:1)
 2 if ____ go up, he shall even break down their (1,3) (Neh 4:3) KJV
 3 brought him to an inn, and took ____ of him (Luke 10:34)
 4 Your walls will ____ at the noise of the war horses (Ezek 26:10)
 5 Also there ____ olive trees by it (3,3) (Zech 4:3)
 6 Consider the ravens: They do not ____ or reap (Luke 12:24)
 7 units, parts, points
 8 If we ____ to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? (Job 4:2) KJV
 9 the ____ and marshes will not become fresh (Ezek 47:11)
 10 the ____ is to be scourged and rinsed with water (Lev 6:28)
 11 You are ____ that appears for a little while (1,4) (James 4:14)
 12 he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, ____ (Gen 10:11)
 13 I will be an ____ unto thine enemies (Exodus 23:22)
 21 they were counted by number of names by their ____ (1 Chron 23:24) KJV
 23 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven ____ (Exodus 20:4)
 27 ____, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find (Matt 7:7)
 28 As ____ man who casteth firebrands (1,3) (Prov 26:18) KJV
 29 Do not set up any wooden Asherah ____ beside the altar you (Deut 16:21)
 30 keep away from every brother who is ____ and does not (2 Thess 3:6)
 31 ____ them before God against quarreling (2 Tim 2:14)
 35 The ____ of flour was not used up (1 King 17:16) (NKJ)
 36 Like ____ tooth or a lame



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(1,3) (Prov 25:19)
 38 was in the ____ that is called Patmos (Rev 1:9)
 39 a little honey, spices, and myrrh, ____, and almonds (Gen 43:11)
 40 You strain out a ____ but swallow a camel (Matt 23:24)
 43 they began to throw the ____ overboard (Acts 27:18)
 44 You, however, ____ me with lies (Job 13:4)
 47 the deer, the gazelle, the ____ deer, the wild goat (Deut 14:5)
 50 wrath is a messenger of death, but a wise man will ____ it (Prov 16:14)
 52 The two ____ arrived at Sodom in the evening (Gen 19:1)
 54 together with her royal ____ and her father (Dan 11:6)
 55 you will go out and leap like calves released from the ____ (Mal 4:2)
 56 "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in ____ days." (John 2:19)
 57 a King who will ____ wisely and do what is just (Jer 23:5)

58 ____ in the LORD and do good (Ps 37:3)
 59 say unto this mountain, Remove ____ to yonder place (Matt 17:20) KJV
 64 From morning ____ evening he explained and declared to them (Acts 28:23)
 65 So Esau (that is, ____) settled in the hill country of Seir (Gen 36:8)
 66 patch from a new garment and ____ it on an old one (Luke 5:36)
 68 "Why does your face look so ____ when you are not ill? (Neh 2:2)
 70 throughout all Israel from Beersheba even to ____ (2 Chr 30:5) KJV

Solution on page 14



Freedom Teacher Amy Howell
Named Burke's Teacher of the Year

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

Amy Howell, a health science/nursing fundamentals teacher at Freedom High School, has been named the Burke County Public Schools 2018 teacher of the year. Howell is in her 12th year of teaching and her 10th year at Freedom High School.

Howell started her career as a nurse and then found teaching to be her passion. Watching her mom die of cancer when she was 15 led Howell into the nursing field, so she could care for others. As a junior in high school, Howell was interested in health science classes, but had a teacher tell her she would never achieve her educational goals. She did not let that discourage her. Before she graduated from high school, Howell became a CNA, EMT and paramedic and then went on to become a registered nurse. She said, "Innately, I knew I would obtain an education somehow, and I would not allow that teacher to dictate my failure to do so."

As a Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher, Howell's students can follow her path and become Certified Nursing Assistants while in high school and then go on to work in the healthcare field or continue in a community college or university nursing program. Howell said, "I feel this opportunity is invaluable to the needs of the students and their family members."

Howell and her four siblings were raised by a single mom before her mom's death. She said she knows what it is like to be hungry and suffer abuse and empathizes with her students who are going through similar situations. She said, "I chose teaching after nine years of perfecting my nursing skills of direct patient care so that I could extend that knowledge to my students in both the classroom and clinical setting. I know I can inspire and empower students, just from my personal experience. I want to challenge my students to make positive life and educational choices no matter the situation they may be faced with."

Howell said her teaching philosophy is to lead by positive example. She said, "I truly believe that this is key to gaining the respect of my students that I strive for on a daily basis while interacting with them. I instill the value of respect and moral decision making and use every possible moment as a teaching moment. Each student is an individual to me; I see the good, the bad and all that is between. I give each student the same opportunity regardless of situation, involvement, cognitive ability, background or history. I feel as an educator I must recognize the strengths and weakness and build upon each of those."

MORE

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam, Debbie Jennings, the director of Secondary Education and CTE for Burke County Public Schools, and Freedom High School Principal Felicia Simmons, who is this year's BCPS Principal of the Year, surprised Howell with the announcement on Monday. Simmons then informed the school over the intercom of the honor and had Howell walk through the cafeteria, where students and staff cheered for her and doled out congratulatory hugs.

Jennings said of Howell, "Her passion for her students is very evident. She is a great role model and loved by students, parents and the community."

Larry Putnam said, "Congratulations to Ms. Howell on being named BCPS Teacher of the Year. She was nominated by her peers at Freedom High School who see her excitement for teaching and her love for her students as well as how her students respond to her instruction. She is well-deserving of this honor."

Howell has a Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of North Carolina - Greensboro and, in addition to teaching at Freedom, works as a nursing adjunct instructor for Western Piedmont Community College and serves as a PRN staff nurse for Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge. She is a member of Health Occupations Students of America and Sigma Theta Tau. Howell's previous work experience includes patient and staff education development at Broughton Hospital and as an RN supervisor at Western Piedmont Heart Center.

Howell is a teacher leader through her involvement as a nursing advisor; participates in the Burke County Public Schools Teacher Leaders Forum; is a CPR instructor through the American Heart Association; is the Burke County Liaison for Health Science Education; is a member of the Freedom High School Leadership Team; and is a presenter at annual CTE Summer Conferences.

Howell was Freedom High School's teacher of the year in 2013 and received recognition for outstanding first year teacher in 2008. She also helped Freedom



obtain in-facility test site recognition for the state CNA exam.

Each school in the district selected a teacher of the year. The school-level recipients completed a written portfolio and submitted videos in which they talked about teacher leadership, student-centered classrooms, accountability and their platform as teacher of the year. A committee reviewed the portfolios and videos and selected finalists for an interview.

Putnam said, "The selection committee had a tough job in choosing our teacher of the year. We have passionate and creative teachers throughout our district and that was evident in their essays and their videos. Congratulations to all of our school-level teachers of the year. You are the best of the best."

And From the Chamber:

The Board of Education will recognize Howell and all school-level teachers of the year at the May 7 Board of Education meeting. Howell is now eligible for the regional teacher of the year.

The Burke County Board of Education recently recognized 2018 Teacher of the Year Amy Howell and surprised her with the keys to a new vehicle. The 2018 Compass Sport is Howell's to drive during her reign as teacher of the year, a surprise made possible through Burke County Public School's partnership with John Greene Chrysler Dodge Jeep, a Chamber member.

Board Chair Randy Burns said, "The Board County Board of Education appreciates the support of the Greene family and John Greene Chrysler Dodge Jeep that has been a part of this community for 77 years."

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



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Bee Log Mural

By Kate Groff
Yancey County

Students from Bee Log Elementary remember their school with a mural. Bee Log students hold a paper sky with colored sun rays beaming memories of field days, talent shows, puppet shows, quilt making with Wendy Calkins, yoga with Cheri Lee, passport photos with Preeti Happer, science museum and the trip to Washington DC, the Wilmington trip, to Pigeon Forge Aquarium and the Great Smokies National Park.

The school below was made by printmaking stones with student-stamped letters, doors, and windows. Artist Cassie Floan photographed the students on the playground, then drew in the background before creating the packing tape photo transfers.

"I wanted the student to process their thoughts and feelings about their school closing. By looking back and sifting through their memories they learned about the brain and how we store memories, the importance of building them, and how we can put those memories into a visual representation making them last." The mural will be up at Bee Log Elementary School until June 8. Plans are being made to find it a permanent location where everyone can share the remembrances.



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

A Caring Partner at Home

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Pause...and Consider

A Stunning Gasp!

Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County



She danced...swirling and twirling as though no one was watching.

But I was watching.

I was mesmerized. I gasped at her freedom in the dance as the musicians played a worship song to the Lord. Her beautiful red hair blew around her face. She couldn't have been more than three or four years old. I wondered if she would become shy and stop if she saw me watching. However, when she spotted me, she smiled and returned to the wonder of her dance of worship.

This was abandon pure and simple...transported to another realm where she responded with her free-spirited dance.

Prior to this experience, I had been introduced to the word Zoe...a Greek word that means life...abundant life as described in the Scriptures. This life is infused by God's eternal life, an overflowing reality beyond our making.

2 Peter 1: 3 & 4, NKJV says, "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature..."

Partakers of the divine nature. Let that sink in. Then don't be surprised if your hands fly to your face, cover your mouth and release a stunned gasp of incredulity.

Imagine. This Zoe life is in me as a gift of God when he saved me. I can partake of his holy nature. What should my response to him be?

The following verses show what that should look like. Supplement our faith with virtue (or moral excellence) and continue with knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. To our Lord, this response will be a beautiful fragrance and dance before him.

By knowing Him more fully through abiding in His word and keeping company with Him in prayer, our lives will be an expression of His life in us...abandon...whether anyone is looking or not, because we always have an audience of One.

And so, back to our little dancer. She continued to flow from one side of the church to the other as the music played. Later, I shared with her Dad how much her worship had meant to me...how it kept me rooted to my spot so I wouldn't miss a moment.

And then I learned her name. Zoe.

God had shown me a beautiful illustration of a truth newly discovered in the innocent abandon of a child. A stunning gasp left my lips. Selah

DANCING AZALEAS

The slightest breeze lifts the petals...

inviting them into a delicate dance.

I'm captivated by nature's elegance,

hues, gracefulness, and charm.

Nature is infused with our Creator's essence.

And when we know Him, we, too,
share in the beauty of His divine nature.

"...you may be partakers of the divine nature..."

2 Peter 1: 4, NKJV



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
www.brcnews.com
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Lees-McRae College

Historic Gold in Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine's Top Adventure

By Nina Mastandrea
Avery County

In a historic finish, Lees-McRae College becomes Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine's Top Adventure College

BANNER ELK, N.C. — On Friday, May 4, Lees-McRae took historic gold in Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine's Top Adventure College competition becoming the first "small school" to win the overall title.

Week by week, Lees-McRae beat out school after school ultimately proving the College, and its surroundings, are some of the best in the region.

The annual contest, presented by Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine, posed colleges across the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions in a weekly bracket head-to-head competition. One-half of the bracket featured "large schools" or schools with more than 5,000 enrolled students with the other half including "small schools" or schools with less than 5,000 enrolled students.

Before taking the ultimate title of Top Adventure College, Lees-McRae took the title of best "small school."

Boasting miles of trails, campgrounds and picturesque locations to set up a hammock, Lees-McRae offers endless ways to explore and enjoy the outdoors.

Many of the academic offerings at Lees-McRae center around the outdoors and the lessons it can teach. Some of those programs include Outdoor Recreation Management, Cycling Studies and Wildlife Biology.

Outdoor Recreation Management professor Katie Wall said that the competition, though fierce, brought the Lees-McRae and High Country communities together in a way she did not expect.

"Students, faculty, staff, alumni, families, friends from other colleges and more came together to support Lees-McRae. This was truly a group effort and we owe a huge thanks to everyone that supported us through this competition," Wall said. "Though Lees-McRae may be small, we are mighty, and we have shown that today."

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



Toe River Arts

Information Hubs Arrive

By Kate Groff
Mitchell and Yancey County

A few years ago, 18 representatives from local arts organizations, schools, government agencies, and interested individuals got together and determined that the time was right to multilaterally recognize the arts as an economic driver in our two-county area. Subsequently, business owners, community members, government officials, and hundreds of artists were interviewed, their comments evaluated, and strategies formed. Toe River Arts, who spearheaded the initiative, wrote and received several grants, and during the past two years, our community has begun to see their efforts come to fruition.

Last summer, our new logo and strap line were unveiled just before the June Studio Tour. Following that, dozens of artist signs began to pop up around Mitchell and Yancey counties. To date, 65 permanent signs have been installed, and 10 more are on the way. Town signage that will bookend the entrance to the Toe River Arts region are in the works for Bakersville, Burnsville, and Spruce Pine and will complement their already existing town markers.

And a few weeks ago, the last of the six information hubs came alive, and now all are offering visitors an interactive view of the artists in our area with access to their contact information and google map location. Also, the map indicates local eateries and lodging. Located at each of the Toe River Arts Galleries (Burnsville and Spruce Pine), Mica Gallery in Bakersville, OOAK Gallery in Micaville, Penland Gallery, and the Mineral and Gem Museum on 226S, just north of the

Blue Ridge Parkway in Spruce Pine, hub implementation utilized as much local talent as possible. The aluminum for the hub base was donated by a local manufacturer, and powdered coating was done in Bakersville. Penland furniture maker, John Clark, designed, built, and installed the hubs. iPad interface was made possible through the research and assistance of Steve Buettner in Burnsville.

And none of this would have been possible without funding from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, John and Robyn Horn Foundation, Blumenthal Foundation, and from a generous donation from an anonymous local organization.

"This has been and continues as a community-wide effort to recognize the arts as a catalyst in our thriving area," offered Kate Groff, Toe River Arts Marketing/Programs Manager. "The strap line for Toe River Arts—Journey of the Arts, Art of the Journey—describes what makes our region a destination." Whether one is looking to hike, bike, take a ride up or down the Toe River, have a bite to eat at a local eatery that has been serving up Southern fare for decades, or meander down tree flanked blue highways and gravel roads to find that perfect piece of art, Mitchell and Yancey counties is a journey worth taking. The information hubs are just one more part of the branding plan for our region. For more information about Toe River Arts, the information hubs or any of their other activities and programs, please call 828-682-7215, or visit the website, toeriverarts.org. To discover what's happening in our area in the arts, visit toeriverarts.com.

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





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-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder

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June 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 41

What a Turnaround

Return America Religious Freedom

By Ron Baity

Under the Obama Administration religious freedoms were being curtailed. Only God in Heaven knows where we would be today if we had continued down the same path of religious destruction. Under his administration, Islam was actually elevated in some areas more than Christianity. The National Day of Prayer was on life support unless it was used to honor Islam. Thankfully, things are turning around!

Last week our president signed an executive order with the stroke of his pen ensuring faith will be at home in every United States agency. The order states that "Faith-based and community organizations have tremendous ability to serve individuals, families, and communities through means that are different from those of government and with capacity that often exceeds that of government. These organizations lift people up, keep families strong, and solve problems at the local level. The executive branch wants faith-based and community organizations, to the fullest opportunity permitted by law, to compete on a level playing field for grants, contracts, programs, and other Federal funding opportunities. The efforts of faith-based and community organizations are essential to revitalizing communities, and the Federal Government welcomes opportunities to partner with such organizations through innovative, measurable, and outcome-driven initiatives." As our president signed his order, he stated, "We must cherish our spiritual foundation."

America is a country founded upon deep religious beliefs. This nation started out on its knees, beseeching the mercy of God for its continuance. Many special days of prayer and fasting were called to seek the Face of God. Those days were followed by days of prayer and thanksgiving because of the Divine intervention of God to bless and prosper this nation. Like Israel of old in the wilderness of wandering and murmuring, much of America's leadership has been void of seeking the Presence of God. Time after time we have excommunicated God from our schools, churches, and government. Our nation has suffered greatly as a result. Hopefully, we have turned the corner and are looking for the light of day.

Dr. Ron Baity is President of the Return America Foundations, an organization dedicated to building a network of churches and individuals to educate, motivate and mobilize citizens in a united effort in promoting Judeo-Christian values; to educate and influence government in these principles upon which our state and nation were founded.

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. Proverbs 4:1-9



Burnsville Seventh-Day Adventists Church

Miracle at the Red Sea

By Pastor Ed Couser
Yancey County



Greetings Friends,

Before retiring from the United States Air Force Reserves, I served as the Wing Reserve Chaplain at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. One of my responsibilities was to ensure that all the Reserve Chaplains were up to date on their required yearly training. So, once a year three days of training were scheduled to ensure that all were in compliance. Following this training, we would meet together as a team and go through a "lessons learned exercise." Here we would identify what went well, and areas to improve for next time. Then we would send a written report to our superiors. In this article, I plan to take a similar approach to the miracle at the Red Sea. Why? Because I have a tendency to repeat Israel's history in their experience with God, in my own heart.

After 400 years of bondage in Egypt the children of Israel were finally leaving and on their way to the promised land. The Passover was behind them, but soon they would be looking for an overpass. From their experience we learn that they did not need an overpass, because God was with them. Because of God's intervention on their behalf, they were able to pass through the Red Sea on dry land. Please read in your Bibles Exodus 13: 17, 18. To me, as the Red Sea miracle unfolds, there are four important points that emerge. They are: (1). God's presence with Israel. (2). The pursuit of Israel. (3). The panic of Israel. (4). The provision for Israel. In this article, the focus will be on "the presence of God with Israel." God's presence is seen in His directions for them.

Read Exodus 13: 17, 18. Now we would think God might direct them in the shortest route from Egypt to the Promised Land. But Exodus 13:18 says, "God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." What could have been a rather short and easy trip became a long and difficult one. So why would God direct them the long and difficult way? Is it because they needed the exercise? They would appreciate their freedom more? Was it God being difficult with them? To me, there is one answer why God directed them the long and difficult way rather than the short and easy way. The answer is found in Deuteronomy 8:2: "And thou shall remember all the way which the Lord thy God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove to you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." God directed them the long and difficult way rather than the short and easy way for the same reason He sometimes leads us the long and difficult way: to humble us and to see what's in our hearts and whether we'll obey His commandments.

To me, it seems the easier life is, the more self-sufficient we become. The more difficult life is, the more God-sufficient we become. Question: Do we seek God more when life is smooth sailing or when we find ourselves in a storm? That's why I need to learn to praise Him in all things. Praise Him during the smooth times, and praise Him during the stormy times. We will never have a better opportunity to show those around us the difference Jesus makes in our lives, than during the hard times in life we face. When life is smooth sailing and we talk about how good God is and how wonderful it is to experience His blessings - those who do not know Jesus may think - "well if I had your life, your job, your money, I'd be praising God too!" But let the bottom drop out and hardship comes and then those around us hear us praising God and talking about how wonderful and trustworthy He is, some may be influenced to think "hey, there really is something to knowing Jesus."

We will never have a better opportunity to influence others for Jesus than during the tests and trials of life. Because it is during these times, we learn what it really means to trust in God and lean on Him. Hebrews 13:5b says, "I (Jesus) will never leave you or forsake you." It seems that God uses the difficult times to test us, try us, toughen us up, to get ready for something wonderful to come - His second coming!



Ed Couser is the pastor for the Burnsville and Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Previously he served churches in Ontario (Canada), New York, Kentucky and North Carolina. He also is a retired Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, having spent 29 years in the US Air Force. Pastor Couser, and his wife of 25 years, Carol have four adult children: Melissa, Kaylee, Meagn and Drew. He enjoys sharing the love of Jesus and encouraging others to prepare for His soon return.

The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him. Proverbs 20:7

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Have You Noticed?

By Rick and Cindy Mercer
Burke County

"If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" This was the sobering statement that a highly respected colleague said to me one day while we were engaged in a serious conversation about spiritual matters. He wasn't talking to me directly, (although the statement forever burned in my mind) he was simply making a general statement. It was a well taken point. I have pondered over this statement more times than you can even imagine.

So, what exactly was my friend saying? Was he being critical or judgmental? Or was he just making small talk? I simply think he was making a very serious statement that definitely caused me to analyze whether or not my Christian witness was effective or for that matter even noticeable? Yes, noticeable. I remember thinking "Does my family notice that I claim to be a Christian?" What about my co-workers, or even church members. Oh, and what about the clerk at the grocery store or my children's teachers and the list started reeling in my mind! How were people reconciling the fact that with my lips I professed that I was a follower of Christ versus my actions (that aren't always Christlike) or even my silence in certain situations?

I know we all make mistakes. And that is why I am so thankful for the beautiful gift of forgiveness that Jesus so freely offers when we aren't reflecting Him or we are not being a "noticeable Christian."

The fact is there should be no mistaking a life transformed by God! The disciples had been vain and fearful when Jesus enlisted them. James and John sought to outmaneuver their fellow disciples in order to gain the places of greatest honor next to Jesus (Mark 10:37). Over and over the disciples' actions showed that they did not truly understand who Jesus was (John 6:7-9; Mark 6:49). Even after three years with Jesus, Peter was afraid to confess Christ before a young servant girl (Matt. 26:69-75). Anyone who knew these men would realize they were not the kind of people on which you build a worldwide kingdom. Yet something happened to them as they were with Jesus. The Holy Spirit transformed them, giving them new boldness and wisdom. Now they could perform miracles and preach fearlessly and persuasively to multitudes. Even their enemies noticed in their changed lives the same power they had witnessed in Jesus. It is a wonderful thing when the Holy Spirit works in our lives too!

Sometimes, we desperately want others to believe that we have changed, that we are closer to God, more devoted and more Spirit-controlled. But we shouldn't have to convince others of the difference. When we have truly been transformed by Christ the change will be obvious. Most likely, if we have to prove to someone that God has changed us, then He probably has not. The people around you like your family, friends, co-workers and such will surely notice when your life has been transformed by a powerful relationship with Jesus! As a matter of fact, they generally are the first ones to notice.

The truth is, when we make the commitment to spend more time in His word, be intentional about prayer and make the sacrifice to witness and spread the good news...the automatic fruit will be a transformed life for Jesus! And your life will never be the same. It will be a noticeable difference!

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."—Acts 4:13 NKJV

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.



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For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.
Genesis 18:19

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force

Youth to Youth Leadership Summit

Contact: Jeff Spargo
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

Appalachian Youth to Youth Attends Youth Leadership Summit

Burnsville, NC (5/1/18) - On Saturday April 21st, staff and kids from Appalachian Youth to Youth along with Peirce Bingham of 4H Mountain Kids headed to Hickory, NC to attend a Youth Leadership Summit hosted by the NC Attorney General, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. Youth coalitions from all over the state were present to address and help solve the issue of drug misuse.

The summit was upbeat and engaging for youth, but also had a serious message. A captivating video about four teens who have battled addiction and why they decided to begin using was shown during the summit. The reasons why they began ranged from "just curious" to "I saw my parents do it." In addition to the video, Youth to Youth members took part in activities and discussions. Hunter Hall, a student at East Yancey Middle School said, "This (the summit) is amazing! It's just so cool that there are so many kids that know this situation is going on."

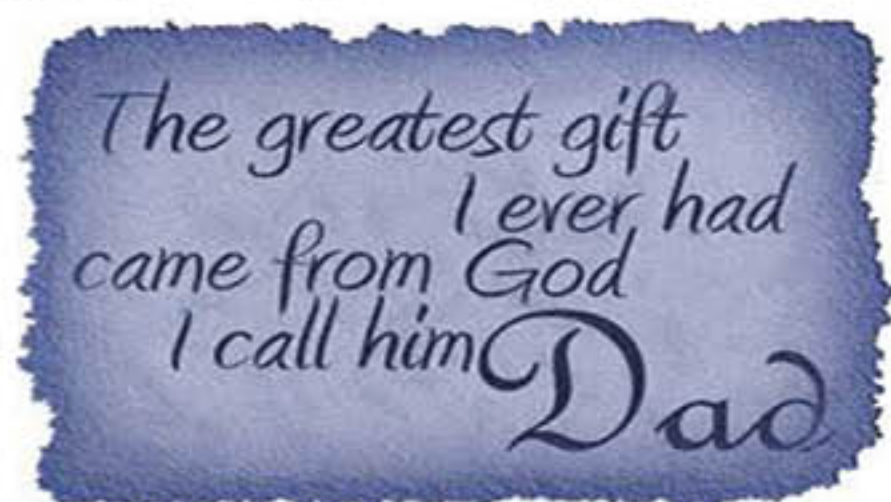
At the end of the summit, each youth coalition worked on an action plan to take back to their communities which addresses the issues of opioid misuse. Local youth developed a plan to use multiple social media outlets to get the message out about the dangers of opioid misuse. They plan to "share" this message at least 1,000 times with the hashtag #ileadnc and #appalachianyouthtoyouth.

To learn more, support our work, or get involved as a volunteer, contact PATH staff at (828) 682-7899, info@pathwnc.org, or www.pathwnc.org. For questions specific to Appalachian Youth to Youth, contact Terri Leiser at terri@pathwnc.org.

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



Youth to Youth members pictured at the Youth Leadership Summit in Hickory, NC.



Bridge42 Church

Forgotten Gospel

By Jason Koon
Burke County

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



The King

Well-known evangelist, Paul Washer tells the story of a time he was uninvited from speaking at a Church after asking the Pastor what he should speak on. He was told that it was up to him, and when he asked a second time, he was told, "just preach on God." Washer wasn't satisfied with this answer and replied by saying, "you don't want me to do that, because if I preach the God Scripture describes, most American Christians will get up, walk out, and say that's not the God I believe in."

Washer tends to overstate things to make a point, but the basic idea is true. The average American Church-goer's view of God is probably not as biblical as they think it is. Add to this the fact that

our contemporary gospel preaching seems increasingly devoid of truth about Who God is, and I think we may have a problem. Think about where we usually start, "God has a wonderful plan for your life," or if we're really old school, we might even start off with, "did you know that all of us are sinners?" But how often do we hear gospel presentations start off with the person and work of Jesus? How often do we start off with the cross or the empty tomb? Once in a while we might hear that, but the Bible goes back even further. The message of Scripture, at its core, is a message of who God is. This means that this question, "who is God?" Is the most critical question that any Gospel presentation must address.

God is Holy - Imagine starting with, "did you know our universe is ruled by an all-powerful, Holy God, whom you fought against your entire life and who will one day return and judge the earth, destroying everyone and everything who persists in rebellion against Him?" I don't know how well that would fly in our world today, and maybe I'm overstating my case a little bit, but God is Holy. He is not like us, and He is not a warm-fuzzy, grandfatherly, teddy bear in the sky. The Bible says He is a warrior, a consuming fire, a conquering King, and a perfect judge. God is not someone to play games with.

God is a Judge - God has a perfect standard of right and wrong, and He doesn't grade on a sliding scale. There is God-like righteousness, and then there is un-righteousness worthy of his wrath. There's no in-between. And unlike us, God is perfectly right and qualified to judge because this is His world and we are His creatures. Which means He has the right to tell us how to live.

God is Merciful - And yes, just when we get to the point where most of us are saying, "I don't think I want to read this anymore - honestly, I'm about to the point where I don't want to write this anymore - God is merciful, and He is kind. All this makes the kindness of God, as revealed through the sacrifice of Jesus so much more powerful. This is where the idea that God has a plan for my life should be shockingly good news. God has a plan for my life...me, the sinner, rebellious, hateful, deserving of death, and yet Jesus is willing to give up His life for me. This is good news. This is the God we serve; kind and just to those of us who deserve nothing from Him.

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



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NOT Like the World

By Shawn Thomas
Burke County

"You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; shall not walk in their statutes." (Leviticus 18:3)

This is SO applicable to Christians today. People are always saying things like: "we need to be like the world; we need to entertain like the world, be businesslike like the world;" and so on. But God says NO!! "You shall NOT do what is done in the land ...". He says His goal for His people is NOT to be like the world! They are to follow HIS word instead. He says in :4, "You are to perform MY judgments and keep MY statutes, to live in accord with them; I am YHWH your God."

Sadly, too many in the church are doing the opposite, using the world's standards as their model and guide, for worship, for business, finances, relationships, ministry, morals, etc. But this is a tragic mistake. God says we are NOT to be like them. "You shall NOT do what is done" by them!

Lest we think this is an "Old Testament" concept only, Jesus echoed this same warning in the New Testament. In Matthew 20, He told His disciples: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant ...". Just like His Father in Leviticus, Jesus points His disciples to "the way of the world" and then says: "it is NOT this way among you."

Again, Jesus is declaring that His followers are to be different. They are not to do things the way the rest of the world does. The question for those of us who consider ourselves to be His followers is: ARE we indeed different? Or are we just "doing what is done" in the land around us?

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



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Traditions

the program. While the program is undergirded by Biblical values and unapologetically reflects a Christian worldview, there is also a clearly defined inclusion policy for youth.

Accordingly, all boys are welcome irrespective of religion, race, national origin or socio-economic status. Our goal is for parents and families of every faith to be able to place their boys in a youth program that endeavors to provide moral consistency and ethical integrity in its adult leaders. Charter partners own and operate local groups, selecting leaders and admitting members as they deem beneficial to their group and within the parameters of the national policy. The basis for the program's ethical and moral standards is found in the Bible. In terms of sexual identification and behavior, we affirm that any sexual activity outside the context of the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman is sinful before God and therefore inconsistent with the values and principles of the program. Within these limits, we grant membership to adults and youth who do not engage in or promote sexual immorality of any kind, or engage in behavior that would become a distraction to the mission of the program. We welcome boys whose parents are seeking a faith-based outdoor adventure program that places an emphasis on character development, leadership, and moral purity, and who aspire to live in accordance with the values expressed in the program's Oath and Creed.

Core Values:

CHRIST-CENTERED

Trail Life USA (TLUSA) is a Christian outdoor adventure program that emphasizes and teaches biblical moral values and requires all adult members to agree with, sign, and abide by the Trail Life USA Trinitarian Statement of Faith and the Statement of Values. The program is unapologetically Christian. However, the program is designed and intended to be presented without being "churchy" or "religious," focusing on outdoor adventure, character, and leadership development. The analogy for this principle has been referred to as "carrot cake." The carrots in the cake are not in big and obvious chunks, but are still present throughout the entire cake, as are the assumptions of a Christian worldview throughout the entire program. At the same time, the TLUSA program is not intended to replace or compete with other youth groups, Bible studies, or church programs, but rather to complement them and give youth an opportunity to exemplify and demonstrate Christian values in their relationships with others.

CHURCH-OWNED AND OPERATED

The Charter Organizations (most commonly churches) in the TLUSA program do not merely allow the organization to use space to meet in their building. The Charter Organization is expected to own and operate the Troop by selecting its adult leaders, integrating the Troop into the life of the church, and involving the boys in mission trips, service projects, and/or other ministry or ceremonial purposes. Each Charter Organization influences its Troop differently, and is encouraged to take ownership of the Troop as an active part of its ministry offerings to the members of the church and/or the community at large.

OUTDOOR-FOCUSED

We believe there is something special about being in the outdoors. This enables our program to instill "Adventure, Character, and Leadership" traits in boys and young men. Camping, hiking, and other outdoor activities help build deep relationships and provide a special context for leadership, problem solving, conflict resolution, and character building. We also value the outdoor focus of our program as a unique means of helping a boy see and appreciate the wonder, majesty, and grandness of God as reflected in His creation.

SAFETY

Trail Life USA is committed to the health, welfare, and safety of our youth, volunteers, staff, and employees. Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health are integrated into everything we do to ensure as safe a program as possible. The goal should always be to provide challenging, adventurous, and fun activities in a manner that no injuries occur beyond those that are readily treatable by simple first aid.

COURAGE

The morals and values of our country are deteriorating at an exponential rate and are becoming increasingly opposed to true Christian values. As our organization grows and matures, future challenges will require increased character and courage by both adult and youth members as they stand for the timeless values articulated in the TLUSA Statement of Faith and Statement of Values which originate from the Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church. With this cultural pressure in mind, we will continually commit ourselves to the truths found in the scriptures, that we are to fear God and not man, and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and understanding.

MALE-CENTERED ADULT LEADERSHIP

TLUSA is a program focused on turning boys into godly men. Our firm conviction is that this can only be done by allowing a boy the opportunity to interact, work with, and be mentored by and with other Christian men. All direct contact positions, other than in the Woodlands Trail program for younger boys 5-10 years old, must be filled by men.

Women can serve in a number of roles in the organization including the National Board of Directors, National Advisory Board, Regional Leadership, Area Leadership, Troop Committee members, the Charter Organization Representative (COR), and in the Woodlands Trail program.

VOLUNTEER-DRIVEN

Trail Life USA will be operated and supported by volunteers at every level. Troops connect with one another locally, and leaders are strongly encouraged to solve each other's problems at roundtable discussions, online forums, and the like. Area Teams of experienced volunteers, possessing expertise in Advancement, Camping, Activities, Community Service, Marketing, and much more, stand ready to help. Direct Service Advisors are appointed by the Area Team to coach and mentor Troop leaders.

Areas report to Regional volunteer committees, and Regions to the professional staff. As a result — and by design — Home Office staff will be kept to a minimum. This is not only good stewardship but allows the members of the organization to



take full ownership of and investment in the program.

PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY

The flexibility principle behind our program elements allows local Troops to adapt the program to fit the needs of their unit. A good example would be running only a Woodlands Trail and Adventurers program but not a Navigators program because of a lack of boys in a Troop or a lack of adult leaders. There will be some elements of the program which are unyielding and mandatory, but many parts of the way the program is delivered can be customized to fit the immediate needs of the local Troop and Charter Organization.

SHARED LEADERSHIP

Since the founding of the organization by a wide coalition of leaders in Louisville, Kentucky in June of 2013, TLUSA has operated under the principle of shared leadership. Shared leadership seeks to involve others in the process and not "hog" or "lord over" the authority and public nature of leadership. While we recognize the need for strong leadership at every level, we also encourage the sharing of leadership by all those holding positions. Examples of this principle might look like occasionally allowing other adult leaders to share in doing the Troopmaster's minute, delegating responsibilities, instituting term limits for Committee Chairmen, or having adult and youth Chaplains recruiting others to pray every now and then.

YOUTH-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

The youth should be leading other youth. Our firm conviction is that the only way a young man is going to learn the art of true Christian leadership is to allow him to initiate, to lead, and even to make mistakes. There is a constant temptation by adult leaders to step in and instruct the boys in weekly meetings, at campouts, and at other events to show the boys how things should be done "right," "better," or "smarter." While adults can and should advise, counsel, make suggestions to youth leaders, and provide oversight to those young men designated as leaders, youth should be allowed to plan, organize, make decisions, and be the primary leaders.

CHARACTER-FOCUSED, NOT AWARDS-FOCUSED

Some boys' programs are very focused on helping the boy achieve as many awards as he can in the shortest period of time to achieve the highest rankings and awards the program has to offer. In contrast, TLUSA is more concerned with building character than with earning badges and ranks. While TLUSA has a robust and prominent ranking and awards structure, this will not be the focus of the program. The focus should always be on building character over merely earning awards. This value is reflected by the fact that a young man cannot simply earn the Freedom Award quickly in a couple of years; he must stay in the program over an extended period of time — demonstrating maturity and leadership — to earn the highest award in the program.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Leadership with a servant's attitude by both adults and youth is a core value of TLUSA. Servant leadership is characterized by humility and the willingness to work alongside others and not just "boss" people around. Leading by example and sacrifice are also qualities of servant leadership.

FAMILY-ORIENTED

While this will not be the case in every location, ideally the goal would be to create a "family-centered" youth-enrichment experience where on one night, in one location, boys and their dads can participate in Trail Life USA, and girls and their moms can be involved with American Heritage Girls. There are many obvious strengths to this model, and those who are able to experience it will discover lasting impact and accelerated spiritual growth for every member of the family.

Dr. Benfield is the Senior Pastor of Altapass Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. He formerly pastored in Alexander County, NC for 20 years before coming to Altapass in October 2011.





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