



# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

## God Bless America



### What Is Happening

By Doug Harrell

Where is our country headed this July 4th? Never in my life time of almost 75 years have I seen and experienced the turmoil we are currently experiencing. Elected officials openly calling for open assault and harassment of members of the other political party, sports stars and Hollywood stars urging violence against members of a political party they disagree with and so on. What is really the underlying situation that is taking place here. It appears that we are already in a civil war but in this situation, it would be community against community, liberal versus conservative and so forth. The lines blur, but what is really at stake here for the Christian Community. One side, and it did not used to be this way at all, appears to support and uphold traditional Christian values and the other side appears to want to remove all references to God and traditional moral values from society as we know it. It is a battle unlike any we have ever really experienced here in the United States.

In times past, our churches and religious meeting places were melting and mixing pots of what was a civil discourse on different ideas and government thoughts, today this is even dividing the Christian community into those that believe that abortion is wrong, homosexual behavior is a sin and same sex marriage is taboo. Some believe that God is just a loving God with no ill will toward anyone and that heaven and hell are just a figment of the imagination. The humanistic outlook on life has taken hold like few of us would ever have imagined a few years ago. Today classes are being taught in our schools that encourage premarital sex as a norm, Boy Scouts are now just Scouts and condoms are evidently being handed out at many types of gatherings where boys and girls intermingle. If you are against this type of thing or situation you are labeled a bigot, Nazi or something worse. The Bible says that wrong will become right and right will become wrong and folks I am afraid that we are fast approaching this point in our wonderful country. God's word has not changed over the years but we Christians have sat idle and let the humanist take over. We started with removing of prayer from our schools back in the early 60's, then we legalized abortion. Now we are trying to remove all references to the 10 Commandments and other references to the Judea Christian values that this country was founded on. Our Founding Fathers were well aware that our Republic could only stand if we honored those values and without them we would not survive. Now we are trying to even remove references to our Founding Fathers because of their beliefs!

As we go into this July 4th I pray that we will all get down on our knees and earnestly pray for our country and our leaders in the coming days, weeks, months and years. We must stand firm in our convictions and continue to honor and obey God's word if we want this country to continue to stand strong and be the beacon of light and hope for all the world. We can love people and still not agree with them but pray for a change and a revival that only God can provide. 2 Chronicles 7:14 *If my people, who 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.*

**WILL YOU PRAY**



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## BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

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

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

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

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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# Church Directory



## The Bridge Church of WNC

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

**Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin**

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

**"Home of Tri County Christian School"**  
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

**"A Christ-Centered,  
Bible Believing Church"**

## 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

**A Bible-believing Fellowship  
Loving God and Loving People**

## 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 -  
Meeting 6:30PM  
Adult Bible Study/Prayer 6:30PM  
Choir Practice 7:15PM  
Sat. Band Practice 4:30PM

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# Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

## Rise, Turn and Walk

By Billy Graham

The following is adapted from a message Billy Graham preached Sept. 2, 1978, during his Mid-America Crusade in Kansas City, Mo.

Jesus Christ had been going up and down the country preaching, and He spoke with authority, simplicity and urgency. The Bible says, "The common people heard him gladly." The rich and the poor alike came to hear Him. He spoke with great authority, unlike the other preachers of that day.

His fame had spread abroad because He had made the blind to see, the deaf to hear and the lame to walk. He had fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fishes. I wonder, if they had had television in those days, what they would have done with Jesus. How spectacular it would have been! How it would have been written up in the newspapers and what great headlines there would have been.

But after a while, they would have been criticizing Him for all kinds of things. Because people have always criticized Jesus. There's a hostility toward Jesus in the hearts of millions of people, for no other reason than that He was holy and righteous, and we are so unholy and so unrighteous. And when the light is penetrating the darkness, the darkness does not like the light. Men love darkness, the Bible says, because their deeds are evil. And Jesus is the Light of the world; people don't want Him to come into their hearts and tear their lives apart, as He does when He comes in. You have to change your way of living when Jesus Christ comes in.

Kansas City's Kemper Arena was the venue for eight days of the Mid-America Crusade before the final meeting at Royals Stadium.

Now Jesus had come to Jerusalem for this great feast. If you had been in Jerusalem at that time, and you heard that Jesus was there, where would you have looked for Him? Where would you think Jesus would be? Well, you'd look for Him in the temple, of course, with all the religious leaders. But that's not where He went on this occasion. He went to a sheep market, where there was a pool called Bethesda. Sick people came to this pool from all around. John 5:4 says that at a certain time an angel went down and "troubled the water," and whoever was the first to step into the water was healed.

One man had been there for 38 long years, lying there. And Jesus saw all the misery. There's misery here, too. In every city and every suburb today, there's misery. There's moral misery, there's spiritual misery, there's psychological misery and there's physical misery. And the root cause of the world's problems is sin. We'll never get to the root of our problems until we get to the heart.

The Bible tells us the kinds of people who were at the pool.

First, the impotent, or sick, were there. There is such a thing as spiritual impotency. They had the law, but they did not have the power to obey the law. They had the Ten Commandments, but they couldn't keep them. They had no power. "In every city and every suburb today, there's misery. There's moral misery, there's spiritual misery, there's psychological misery and there's physical misery. And the root cause of the world's problems is sin. We'll never get to the root of our problems until we get to the heart." —Billy Graham

The blind were there—people who couldn't see. Many people are spiritually blind. You may have 20/20 vision, but your spiritual eyes are blind. The Bible says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (2 Corinthians 2:14). The Bible says, "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Proverbs 4:19). The only person who can open your spiritual eyes is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then the Bible says the lame were there (John 5:3). We can be spiritually lame if our conscience is dead. You can go on committing the same sins over and over till after a while your heart gets harder and harder, and harder and harder, so that when your conscience speaks, you can't hear it. Your conscience becomes dead. And what a terrible thing it is to have a dead and seared conscience. If you hear the Spirit of God even whisper to you tonight, you'd better receive Christ while you can.

And then the Bible says the withered, or paralyzed, were there. Our wills can become paralyzed by sin—materialism and worldliness, lust, greed and the love of money can take the place of God in our lives and paralyze our wills so that when we really want to serve God, we don't have the power to do it. Our will has been paralyzed! That's why you need to come like a little child and say, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart."

Now this man at the pool of Bethesda had been waiting for 38 years. He'd tried everything else. I don't know why Jesus skipped all those other people and went straight to this man, but I think it's because he was in the worst condition of anyone there. For 38 years he'd lain on that pallet and tried to get into the water first. And he failed every time. He must have been a lonesome man, because probably he had no friends to help him like some of these other people had.

Jesus went to him. And Jesus looks at you tonight as He looked at that man—He looks with tenderness and understanding and kindness and love. The Scripture says that He loved this man. And that's the way He's looking at you. And then He asked an incredible question. He said, "Do you want to be made whole?" (Cf. John 5:6).

Here's what Jesus was saying, "Do you really want to get rid of the sins and the habits that are destroying you, and leading you to destruction?"

You can get to the point that you so love your sins and so love the things of this world that you don't really want to get rid of them. You don't want Christ to come in and change your life. And so, Jesus said, "Do you really want to be healed? Do you want to be whole?" The man answered and said, "Yes, I want to be whole." And that's all you have to do tonight. Just say, "Yes, I want to be whole."

Now there are three important things I want you to notice that happened.



First, you must have faith. Jesus said, "Rise" (John 5:8). The man had tried to do that thousands of times and failed. Now Jesus, the Son of the living God, is saying to him, "Get up! Rise!" And by faith in the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ, he got up! Tonight, your sins can be forgiven. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

The second thing is there must be no looking back, no provision for a relapse. Don't put your hand to the plow and look back. Jesus said, "Rise, take up your bed, take up that old dirty pallet that you've been on and take it with you" (Cf. John 5:8).

Imagine all the joy and jumping and leaping and excitement and emotion, and the bewilderment of the crowd! They had seen this man year after year, and now he's up and he's walking, and he's strong. Jesus said, Turn your back on that filthy mat! That's repentance. Rise and follow Christ.

Third, there has to be the acceptance of responsibility. Jesus said, "Walk" (John 5:8). Walk a new road, walk the narrow road with Christ, walk in discipleship. One of the greatest needs we have is discipleship. We need to study the Word of God and we need to pray, and we need to walk with Christ in discipleship. He's calling disciples.

Now I want you to listen to this very, very carefully. Jesus saw this same man later in the temple and said, "Sin no more" (John 5:14).

And then Jesus added, "Lest a worse thing come upon you" (Cf. John 5:14). In other words, there is something worse—something worse than lying for 38 years on a mat. He was talking about hell. He was talking about the judgment.

Yes, Jesus told this man to do something. He told him to rise, take up his pallet and walk.

I'm going to ask you to do the same thing. I'm going to ask you to rise and receive Christ as your Lord and Savior. You may be a good person who goes to church every Sunday, or you may not be a good person at all. I'm asking you to come.

You say, "What do I have to do?" You have to be willing to repent of your sins. That means to change your mind, to change your heart, to change your attitude. It means that instead of loving yourself first, you love God first. It means that you come to the cross and acknowledge that you have sinned and ask Christ to forgive you of your sins. It means that by simple childlike faith you turn and receive Christ into your heart. You say, "I will serve Him, I will follow Him, I will walk with Him, I will let Him have His way in my life."

And you accept Him not only as Savior, but you accept Him as Lord. He's to be Lord of your life from now on. Burn your bridges behind you. It's Christ, and Christ alone, from tonight on. ©1978 BGEA

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, King James Version. Come to Jesus today.

## Come in and Celebrate the 4th of July with us!



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Spruce Pine Shopping Center

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## The Light Shines in the Darkness

By Franklin Graham



The darkness is spreading—rapidly. Every day, it seems like yet another menacing cloud has spread its dark shadow across the land.

The relentless reporting of widespread sexual harassment has dominated the news cycle for months. Television hosts, congressmen, Hollywood elites, journalists and businessmen have all confessed to grievous acts of sexual harassment. The repercussions have been enormous, as women across the country have accused employers and co-workers of inappropriate behavior.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Online pornography use is at an all-time high. Gay and transgender characters are now a common sight on television, even in programs for small children. Atheists are hell-bent on eradicating any mention of God in town halls, schools and sporting events. Drug addiction, especially to new opioid painkillers, is an epidemic in many parts of the country, particularly in rural areas with high joblessness.

Mass shootings are no longer a rare occurrence, and they happen in once-sacred places like churches and historically safe spaces like schools and public venues. The weapons of terrorists are no longer just homemade bombs but also cars and trucks, which can run down citizens in broad daylight on busy city thoroughfares.

Abroad, the darkness is just as widespread.

Christians across the Middle East suffer intense persecution from Islamic terrorists and oppressive governments. In so many parts of the world, it's never been a more dangerous time to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some think we are on the verge of nuclear war as North Korea continues to ratchet up the very real threat of an atomic conflict that could have catastrophic consequences for the entire world. The thought of multiple nuclear weapons being launched from countries like North Korea and Iran (which the North Koreans supply with arms) and reciprocal military responses is frightening indeed.

The Bible is clear that moral and spiritual darkness has always been the case for a world that rejects and refuses to acknowledge God. Describing a godless culture that hates God, the Apostle Paul said that *"they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened"* (Romans 1:21).

Moral darkness invariably leads to unruly, disobedient living that defies God's commandments and principles, setting the stage for lifestyles and behavior that eventually reap destructive consequences.

What I believe is happening today that I certainly haven't seen in my lifetime is the incredibly swift spread of darkness across virtually every sector of our culture, here at home and in practically every region of the globe.

The Judeo-Christian worldview that once was predominant has seen serious erosion. The forces of evil are working on every front to undermine and destroy

the foundations of a morally healthy society—respect for authority, the sacredness of the marriage union between a man and a woman, the sanctity of life for the unborn, and our freedom to take a stand for values that we know are right.

The Bible is clear that such moral chaos comes because people reject the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and the people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light"* (John 3:19-20).

Jesus is the Light of the world. In fact, there is no light other than Christ. Those who walk in darkness are those who don't know the Savior of the World, the Author of Light.

For those of us who have repented of our sins and placed our faith in our Lord and Savior, *"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son"* (Colossians 1:13).

Paul put it this way as he described the Lord's commandment to him in his preaching: *"I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God"* (Acts 26:17-18).

Hell itself is not only the absence of light, but it is complete, utter, total darkness. The Scriptures call it "outer darkness," a place that is reserved exclusively for the devil, fallen angels and unrepentant man.

But the Light that is from above, the Light of the World, will be the single source of all light in the new Heaven and the new earth. *"And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light"* (Revelation 22:5).

And we know that however great and wide the spread of darkness over the world may be, it can never extinguish the True Light. *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"* (John 1:5).

While I can—for as long as I can—as God gives me strength, I will proclaim Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). In the coming year, I will be proclaiming that Gospel in 18 cities along the West Coast of the U.S., as well as in Portugal, England, Armenia and Mexico.

It's our responsibility as believers to let our light shine before men, and to honor and glorify God by our good works and godly life, regardless of how evil the culture has become. The Bible calls us to be "blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). ©2017 BGEA. Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

Is Jesus Christ the light of your life?

*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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'Reclaiming Jesus,' Deceitful and Disparaging of Patriotism

By Rev. Mark Creech

Reclaiming Jesus is a document signed by some leading progressive evangelicals which, as Jim Wallis, founder and President of Sojourners, claims are meant "to change the narrative about both politics and faith." Bishop Michael Curry, who delivered a sermon for the nuptials of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, is one of its most popular backers.

Curry told the Miami Herald. "Maybe, the Spirit is helping us to reclaim Christianity, not as ideology, not as anybody's political party - Jesus can't be bought - but to re-center Christianity and to have it named and heard as grounded in the teachings of Jesus who said, 'Blessed are the poor, blessed are the poor in spirit,' the Jesus who taught us, 'Love God and love your neighbor.'"

However, Curry, as well as his other liberal cohorts, speak, as a former chaplain to the Queen said, of "amorphous love without judgment."

After carefully reading the Reclaiming Jesus statement, I am struck with how seemingly sweet it sounds, but it's only saccharine sweet. It's appealing to the undiscerning, but it's really just a white-washed tomb full of dead men's bones. It's merely socialism with a religious veneer. Though it claims to be non-political, non-partisan, it's actually an effort to start a movement away from President Trump, away from conservative public policies, and away from theologically conservative evangelicalism. It is, in fact, the same liberal theological mush that has been stunting the growth of, splitting, and destroying mainline churches for several decades.

Dr. Robert Jeffries, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, told OneNewsNow that its signers make Karl Marx look like a conservative. "I think as you lift the veil, what this really is is one more attempt by the Never-Trump Christians to try to diminish or take away the very positive things that are going on."

Christian apologist Alex McFarland faulted the statement's implication that Scripture demands open borders.

McFarland told OneNewsNow, "I pray that people will not be misled by the religious lingo sprinkled throughout this document and by the either accidentally or intentionally crafted logical fallacies that permeate this very unsettling tome called Reclaiming Jesus."

McFarland rightly argues the statement is a "misstatement of the Gospel."

I especially take umbrage with Statement Six of the document where signers contend that the "America First" philosophy is a "theological heresy for followers of Christ." Statement Six, in my estimation, is an assault on patriotism - something that belittles and disparages it as a religious duty.

God forbid!

Benjamin Rush, one of our nation's founding fathers who attended the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence, and served as the Surgeon General of the Continental Army, said:

*"Patriotism is as much a virtue as justice and is as necessary for the support of societies as natural affection is for the support of families. The Amor Patriae [love of one's country] is both a moral and a religious duty. It comprehends not only the love of our neighbors but of millions of our fellow creatures, not only of the present but of future generations. This virtue we find constitutes a part of the first characters in history. The holy men of old, in proportion as they possessed a religion were endowed with a public spirit. What did not Moses forsake and suffer for his countrymen! What shining examples of Patriotism do we behold in Joshua, Samuel, Maccabeus, and all the illustrious princes, captains and prophets amongst the Jews! Saint Paul almost wishes himself accursed for his countrymen and kinsmen after the flesh. Even our Savior himself gives a sanction to this virtue. He confined his miracles and gospel at first to his own country."*

Many of the clergy who signed the Reclaiming Jesus statement are sincere, except they are sincerely wrong! Jude wrote of such religious leaders, referring to them as "clouds without water, carried along by the wind; fruitless trees in autumn, twice dead after being uprooted" (v. 12).

The late Dr. Lorraine Boettner, the well-known Presbyterian theologian, teacher, and author has written, "True religion and true patriotism have always gone hand in hand, while unbelief, doubt, and liberalism have invariably been accompanied by socialism, Communism, radicalism and other enemies of free government."

Boettner further describes many of these preachers as having "abandoned the Gospel of salvation for the Social Gospel and the Bible for the writings of 'Saint Karl Marx.'" They are religious leaders, he says, who "wave the red flag in times of peace and the white flag in times of war."

Reclaiming Jesus is the antithesis of the efforts to reclaim America for Christ. Without realizing it or intending it, Reclaiming Jesus actually works hand in hand with the nefarious forces determined to destroy us from within and without. Does not the Bible say, "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light"? (Luke 16:8)

We should flee from these leaders.



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

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Missed Opportunity

By Jody Griffin  
Avery and Mitchell Counties

*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23, KJV)*

It was right there in front of me. No one paying any sort of attention could have possibly missed it... But I did. I missed it and when I did, one of life's most tragic circumstances resulted from it. I failed to take advantage of the opportunity to act and the opportunity simply passed by without even so much as a care. This particular day the reality of the missed opportunity hit me squarely in the heart.

And it got me to thinking about how many other opportunities to experience the incredible blessing of serving others had come and gone without me ever knowing. Maybe it's because there were so many things seemingly demanding my constant attention or maybe I was just so self-consumed that I couldn't realize the opportunity to join in God's Work if it had hit me directly in the face! Whatever the reason for my blindness, the result was the same. And the regret was overwhelming.

That's why I continue to write about the amazing day that is coming to AMCI this month! I don't want YOU to miss the opportunity to be a part of the One Day with God Camp on July 28! It's not too late (almost, but not quite, so do this QUICKLY!) to contact

Forgiven Ministry at [forgivenministry.org](http://forgivenministry.org) or call them toll free at 1-(866) 584-7534 (and tell them that you want to be there to help little children who are cut off from their fathers due to his incarceration spend an entire day laughing, playing, singing, eating and even praying with their Daddy!

Some would argue that he doesn't deserve such a gift since he is in prison. But I submit that the inmate parent is not the only one being punished and that in many cases the absence of their Daddy is hardest on the children. The men are taught beforehand how to maximize the time they will spend with their children, primarily through listening, and through blessing their children with their focused attention.

And volunteers are trained in advance as well...so no worries if you don't know what to do! There will be many ways you can help.

So, to pass by the opportunity to help make this day possible, either through a financial contribution or through serving as a volunteer at the event itself is to rob YOURSELF of one of the greatest opportunities that you will ever have the privilege to share! Please prayerfully consider it, but more importantly PLEASE don't let the opportunity pass you by...I know personally the regret you will feel. God Bless you for giving, for volunteering, for PRAYING for these men, their children, Forgiven Ministry, and for me as I am so humbly honored to represent the Presence of Christ Jesus in this place. It's going to be AMAZING!

Trust me, you will be glad you didn't let this pass by you!

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



Kindness

By The Jeremiah Project

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." [John 3:16]*

"Chucky the Duck"

All the pretty ducklings were so excited about the big beauty pageant that was going to be held down by the lake. Oh, how they preened their feathers and tried on different flowers and new ways to waddle that they thought would give them the edge to win the contest.

They quacked nonstop each evening before the competition about which one was the prettiest duckling of them all and often times they fought and got their feelings hurt and had to go pout because each thought he was the prettiest and each one worried that he or she wasn't.

It seemed like every duck in the colony could only think of the pageant and getting ready. Every duck except for Chucky. Chucky didn't care about being beautiful or being admired. His favorite thing to do was have friends over and getting to know them and sharing Jesus with them. The other ducks just didn't understand Chucky at all. He associated with the most unacceptable types. Chucky enjoyed having the frogs, the turtles, even the field mice to his home. To the other dignified ducks, it was out of the question to associate with such unworthy beasts who were clearly not as advanced and sophisticated much less as pretty as the ducks.

"Chucky, why don't you pretty yourself up? I bet with some preening and some pretty flowers, you could be able to compete in the beauty pageant on Saturday." His friend Gracie Gander said to him.

"That's not important Gracie." He answered her. But Friday night I am having a small dinner party. Why don't you come? Roger Rodent will be here with his family as well as Terry Turtle and his girlfriend Teresa. We are going to play twister. It will be fun."

"Oh Chucky, there is no way I could socialize with THOSE species." Gracie said proudly, and she strutted out of Chucky's home proudly.

The day of the pageant was so exciting. Ducks scurried about in nervous excitement about the chance to win the big prize, although there really was no prize. Finally, the time came. Chucky and his guests watched from a distant hill as they sipped their tea and ate their cookies. The Ducks mixed and mingled in a group waiting for the pageant to start, sometimes pushing and biting each other in frustration and jealousy.

"FLY!" came the sudden command. Suddenly, catastrophe struck. From the tall grass, the human hunters stood up and began to shoot their guns. The duck colony was caught totally by surprise. An alert duckling spotted the hunters just before they struck and sounded the alarm. Instinct set in and the colony lifted into the air flying every direction so as not to be good targets and flew in a panic away from the lake. The rifles rang their shots out in a riot of explosions that sounded like the world was ending. But no duck was killed. The hunters were mad and took their equipment and moved on to another site to shoot ducks.

Chucky excused himself from his guests who understood his concern. Quickly he waddled to the standard retreat spot where his fellow ducks would gather after such an attack. He got there before most of the frightened colony but when he did, he found something very upsetting. Gracie was hurt badly. Chucky went to her and comforted her. "Why me Chucky?" She cried, and he plucked his own feathers to pad the places where she was hurt for warmth. Soon the whole colony arrived, and they were all worried and upset but they would not come near Gracie.

"Come help me." Chucky pleaded with them. "She is hurt. She needs all of our help."

"Oh no," the other ducks said proudly. "We could never soil ourselves with her now. What if some of the dirt and blood got on our feathers? No, no, Chucky. Just leave her. We cannot afford to be soiled like that." And slowly the colony slipped away. But Chucky didn't care about being dirty or getting her blood on him. He just knew he had to save his dear friend.

"I have to get her to my house where I can help her heal." He quacked to himself. "We will help." Came the squeaky voice from the edge of the clearing. There stood his many friends that the other ducks would not associate with. The frogs, the turtles, the field mice, the rodents, the snakes all showed up. Chucky was always there for them, now they were here for him. They gathered around Gracie and helped transport her to Chucky's home where she began to heal.

"Chucky, I feel so ashamed I was bad to your friends." Gracie said a few days later as she was getting better. "Why do you think they helped you save me?" She wondered.

"Because that is what Jesus would do." Chucky responded bringing her some more soup. "We are made in God's image and God sent his son to save us and nothing would stop him from doing that. So, the least we can do is reach out to a friend to show her the same love." he said. Gracie was so grateful and wanted to learn more about Jesus and Chucky's good friends. Never again did she worry about being beautiful or proud as she was before the pageant. Now she just wanted to be more like Jesus, just like you and I want to be.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. [Colossians 3:12]



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Doug Harrell

After spending the past six or seven months dealing with a diagnosis of leukemia and throwing a heart attack on top of the mix, I am learning anew that we have no control of most things that happen to us. God is truly in control of many events that shape our lives and we need to roll with the punches. This is especially true with health issues as we age and become enrolled in the Golden Years Bunch. Even though we have no control of the deck of cards we are dealt, we certainly do have control of the way we play the cards. We can belly ache and moan, complaining all along the way, or we can face the days with a smile on our face and the determination to do the best we possible can each and every day that we are fortunate enough to awake to the sunlight.

I recently attended the funeral of a dear friend and college roommate and it made me even more conscious of how short our lives here on this earth really are. The Bible tells us that we are a fading flower, withering grass, just a passing vapor, and those things are true. In my mid-seventies, I certainly understand that there are many more years in the past than there are in the future. This can depress us, or it can give us wisdom to move forward and share the true meaning of life more deeply with those we come in contact with on a daily basis. Hopefully we can be more genuine in our love for each other and be ever more willing to be a positive influence on our family, friends and fellow workers.

Being willing to spend time each day in quiet reflection with the Lord's word is so important to me, especially with all the turmoil that is taking place in today's political and governmental arena. The quickness of vile attacks against any and all is portrayed by the Bible as it talks about the days that we will face as Christians, but it hurts to see the age old traditions fade away. I, as many others, use social media to keep up with friends and communicate with family, but it lessens the need to actually spend face time with each other. Family reunions and decoration days that used to bring everyone together to visit and renew relationships have diminished to the point of almost non existence anymore. The old timey days of dinner on the grounds and doing those things now have changed to instant facetime communication on the smartphone. That is not a bad thing, but the human touch is just not the same as getting a real hello and genuine hug.

As we celebrate July 4th, hopefully there will be opportunity to have fun and fellowship with family and friends in a delightful way that is personal for each of us. Also take time to give thanks for this great nation and what it stands for. We have our faults, but having traveled around the world on several occasions, there is still no place in the world like the United States of America. Continue to pray for all of our leaders, pray for God's guidance in each of their lives, pray for their safety in this world of animosity, pray for civility in the lives of each of them and in our lives. God Bless the USA!!

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



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Importance of Prison Work

By Willie DuBoise  
McDowell County

We would like to share with you the importance of prison ministry work. This is a letter we received at Blue Ridge Christian News from an inmate at the Marion facility. He is high-lighting one of our writer pastors from McDowell County. It definitely points out the need for help in bringing Jesus to the prison system.



In your May 2018 Blue Ridge Christian News Edition, on page 9 you had "Inspiring Word". Prayers of the Saints, by Pastor Terry Cheek of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion, NC. Often times the local church pastor isn't recognized like some of the TV and radio evangelists or those with world- wide ministries. Yet the local pastor fights a battle against the same relentless enemy at what I call close quarters. He's not only waging war in the church congregation but in the community as well. Pastor Cheeks' war extends into the prison at Marion Correctional Inst., where he works in the electronics department and he is in contact with many prisoners daily all day who are believers and non-believers. Yet I see him treat them with respect always and I personally and others give him the utmost respect. I call him Pastor Cheeks every day and every time. I see him and that's a lot of times in the week, but I want him to know he is appreciated and recognized as a man of God. He has been a Pastor when I needed one, but he has been simply a friend as well. Also, he is a good listener; never judges me or looks down on me, but always encourages me to continue in my journey in the Lord. I said that, to say this, being sentenced to 54 years not seeing children family member loved ones who die-- it can be discouraging and bring you to despair and to give up all hope. But Pastor Cheeks keeps me encouraged and like the energizer bunny I'm still going and going and going. I asked him to have his congregation pray for my family, he did, and they did, and God answered their prayers. I wish I could share with them Gal 6:7-9 that says

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. King James Version (KJV)

Pastor Cheeks sows into my life always and he has brought his congregation into that sowing so that they may reap of the Spirit. So, I'm asking anyone who reads this to sow into the lives of prisoners everywhere.

Matt.25:36, 40 Naked and you clothed me, I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

To Pastor Cheek and his congregation, to all the local Pastors: Be encouraged and stay connected. YOU ARE APPRECIATED.\



Prisoner In Christ  
Willie DuBoise





The Commercialization of Holidays

By Lana Ellis  
Kingsport, TN

On July 4, 1776, following the Revolutionary War, the signing of the Declaration of Independence declared freedom from Great Britain for the Thirteen American Colonies. The first anniversary in 1777 was celebrated in Bristol, Rhode Island with thirteen gunshots fired once in morning and again in the evening. Philadelphia celebrated with a dinner for the Continental Congress which also included thirteen gun salutes. The Fourth of July in America is truly a great day. It's a day to celebrate with parades, back yard BBQ's, late night fireworks and by all means sales at the mall!

Looking further back in the history of our great nation, after having survived an extremely harsh winter in 1621 Governor William Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving in the Plymouth Colony. The summer and fall gardens had produced bountiful crops that gave them assurance of food for the coming winter. It was celebrated with a harvest feast. Today Thanksgiving Day is not only celebrated by eating too much and watching football it also has become a shopping day! The Friday after Thanksgiving aka Black Friday has been around for several years but lately many stores have been opening on Thanksgiving Day to get a head start on non-other than the commercialization of Christmas!

Memorial Day - a day to remember. "Remember what?" I asked. The answer was right in front of me - on the TV screen. The Memorial Day sales ad - reminding me to buy mattresses, ranges, refrigerators and more TVs! Online sales ads popped up on my computer as well. Macy's giving discounts using the code "MEMDAY." One could get 20% off using the code "MEMORIAL" at Saks. Need a mattress and two extra pillows? Enter the code "Memorial60" at EightSleep.com and get every bit of \$50 off your purchase! According to Kiplinger.com - "Memorial Day is the first of the major holiday shopping weekends to occur during the warm-weather months. Shoppers who plan to take advantage of Memorial Day sales will want to make sure they've signed up for deal alerts from their favorite retailers so they don't miss out on coveted items."

When a holiday is approaching retail sale ads have become the expected in today's consumer age. I have no problem with the United States capitalistic economy but I do have a problem with our national holidays becoming intertwined with retail sales. My fear is that the meaning of the holiday is so often overshadowed by commercialism. Memorial Day began after the Civil War with the decorating of the graves of fallen soldiers. Over the years more graves for soldiers have been dug and people who know the real meaning of Memorial Day have continued to place flags on graves not only at Arlington Cemetery but throughout American's community cemeteries. My rant began this past Memorial Day and it continues as we celebrate July 4th, America's Independence Day. Freedom to have picnics, watch fireworks, enjoy sports and yes, even go shopping BUT let us not forget those who have given their lives in order that we may do so. Freedom is Not Free.

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



Chamber Announces New President & CEO

Burke County

The Burke County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce that Tonia F. Stephenson, CCE, IOM has been selected as the Chamber's new President & CEO. On June 7, 2018, the Chamber's Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve Stephenson for the position after a search committee that reported to the Executive Committee conducted an extensive nationwide search. The Chamber partnered with Anissa Starnes of Swingbridge Consulting, LLC out of Charlotte, North Carolina to provide oversight for the executive search. The search committee received over seventy resumes from candidates across the United States that were interested in the position.

Stephenson will begin work officially on July 9, 2018. She and her husband, David Cornelison, will be relocating to Burke County from Laurinburg, N.C. "I am extremely honored to join the Burke County Chamber of Commerce," said Stephenson. "The Chamber's work is vital to the business community and I look forward to working with the Chamber's board, volunteers, staff and greater community to grow the organization and to promote the interest and ensure the livelihood of local businesses. My husband and I are thrilled to be relocating to such a beautiful area and look forward to making it our home."

In the past Stephenson served as the President/CEO of the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber and Executive Director of the Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club of High Point. She also served as Vice President for eleven years with the High Point Area Chamber. Stephenson earned her Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) designation in 2014. The designation is an internationally-recognized certification



Tonia F. Stephenson

for chamber professionals managed by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives organization. She is one of only 500 certified chamber executives that has earned the designation by passing an exam based on knowledge of the four chamber management areas - Management, Planning and Development, Membership and Communications, and Operations.

She is a 2013 graduate of the Villanova University-Institute for Organization Management program, a four-year program designed for association and chamber management professionals sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. She is also a 1996 graduate of High Point University where she earned a degree with full honors.

During her tenure as President/CEO of the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber she was responsible for a membership of 350 members, four-staff members and twenty-one board members. The Chamber experienced exponential growth under her leadership. Stephenson brings an upbeat attitude and a passion for local business and chambers of commerce to Burke County.

"We had many strong candidates from across the country and Tonia was the ideal choice because she brings a wealth of chamber experience in management and operations," said Atticus Simpson, Chair of the Chamber's Search Committee. "With her exceptional background and experience as a chamber professional, she is uniquely positioned to represent every stakeholder in our business community and under her leadership, we are confident the Chamber will continue to grow business and build community here in Burke County."

Kathy Bailey, 2018 Chair of the Chamber, echoed this confidence. "We are pleased to welcome Tonia to our community and feel that her leadership and proven track record will complement the Chamber and keep the organization on a path of success for the future," she said.



**Jamie Miller, CPA**

Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC

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# Marlene's Meditations

## Chain Reaction

By Marlene Houk  
Burke County

After hours of precise setup, dozens of students held their breath as the third-grader lifted a small cylinder, sparking a chain reaction that caused game boards to fall, balls to roll, and catapults to swing into action. The marble clicked into place, causing the bright yellow ping-pong ball to roll down the pipe, dislodging the game cards and eventually toppling thousands of dominoes as the crowd cheered.

Chain reactions mesmerize us with their precision, creativity, and pure enjoyment, and they are oddly satisfying. Elaborate actions begin by the tiniest of activities as miniscule slabs topple the next domino or swing a bucket to cause chaos in subsequent steps. We enjoy the results, totally unaware of the interplay of mathematics, force amplifications, and physics.

Chain reactions occur in the lives of Christians also. God orchestrates the paths of our lives in intricate and perfectly timed sequences which begin with a small action on our parts that may balloon into bigger scenarios that cause blessings for generations. Recently, my daughter and I sat at the kitchen table, discussing a post by one of her college pals on Facebook. She talked about how the pastor mentioned in the post had blessed and trained her in counseling. That pastor and I had attended the same Christian University. Eventually, my daughter rummaged in the closet and found the ancient yearbook from my college days. As she thumbed through the black and white glossy pages, she noticed the much younger-looking pictures of several professors that had also taught when she attended. Much like the careful placing of thousands of dominoes in preparation to enjoy the chain reaction, God had meticulously placed those professors to create a chain reaction of blessings in both our lives by their faithful focus on God's plan for them. Psalm 78:6-7 says, "That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

As we follow the Lord Jesus Christ daily, we influence those in our spheres. But, beyond that, we produce chain reactions as those people influence others toward the Lord. Recently, a neighbor told me that I had taught her how to make soap 20 years ago, and she was still making it. She now has children and can teach her skill to them.

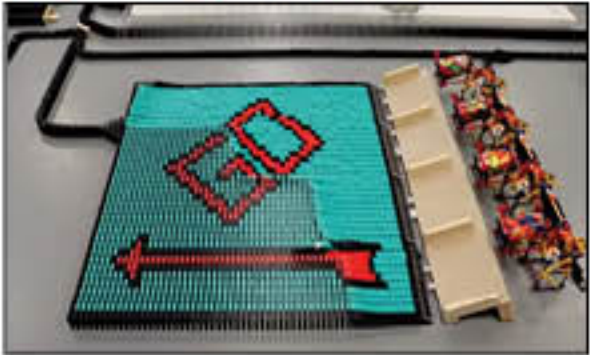
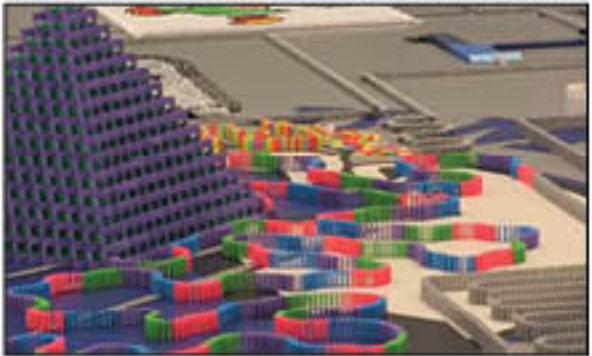
In a spiritual sense, we need to realize that God carefully creates domino chain reactions in our lives, crossing our paths with others in perfect timing to glorify him and bring pleasure to us. And then, we can pass along that training, advice, and wisdom to those in our world, creating spiritual chain reactions that bless generations and point countless others to God.

So, the next time you stare in fascination as hundreds of carefully placed objects teeter, roll, and swing in a chain reaction, remember that God is working in you and through you with exquisite timing. Numerous insignificant events accumulate to fulfill His perfect will in you (Philippians 1:6). God's desire for your life culminates in a satisfying finish that brings about glorious shouts as saints cheer you to the finish line in exquisite perfection! To God be the glory for His masterful chain reactions in our lives!

Enjoy these chain reaction videos as you think about Philippians 1:6 says, "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:"

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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](mailto:marlenehouk@bellsouth.net)



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A Meditation

Darkest Night of the Soul

By Timothy Eller  
McDowell County

Luke 7:18-22 King James Version (KJV)  
18 And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.  
19 And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?  
20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?  
21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.  
22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.  
23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

John the Baptist was identified as one of the greatest prophets there was in the Old Testament. He was moved on by the Holy Ghost even in his mother's womb. John had the privilege of having Baptized our Lord Jesus Christ. He had an awesome ministry and the people honored him as a man of God and a prophet. He came in the prophetic spirit of Elijah. No matter how great John was, he found himself locked inside the prison for preaching the truth and standing against sin. At that moment in that very hour that John sent his disciples Jesus opened blinded eyes, deaf ears, and mute tongues. This was in fulfillment of Old Testament Messianic Prophecies. Then Jesus went a step further and raised people from the dead. We know this because it says the blind see (plural), the lame walk (plural), the deaf hear (plural), The dead are raised (plural), the lepers are cleansed (plural) and people were cured of evil spirits. All this happened in a one-hour period of time in the witness of those two disciples. Jesus instructed John to have faith in God and not be offended in him. Jesus loved John so much that he not only told John who he was, but he manifested who he was in front of these witnesses. If a great prophet like John became discouraged, how much more are we able to be susceptible to discouragement. We may even at times doubt God. But when we feel this way the most important thing we can do is not run from God, but run to God. We all face setbacks and times of discouragement. The primary thing is we need to not be offended at God and start doubting his goodness, love, mercy, and compassion. God will go out of his way to show his love mercy and compassion to us.

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



Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

Enough Grace

By Cindy Mercer  
Burke County

Months of preparation had gone into the moment I was now observing. For the first time all weekend, I was taking a much-needed deep breath as I sat on the front row and basked at the enormous wooden cross that had been placed up front in the large auditorium. My eyes surveyed the foot of the cross where several hundred white-washed wooden signs with the simple word "Grace" stenciled on them had been placed. The retreat team had even gone the extra mile to slip the special treats in a clear bag and tied them with beautiful ribbon in colors of peach, cream and turquoise. There was a whole lot of grace on that floor. Grace, grace, God's grace. And it was wonderful!

My heart was overflowing as I sat in the dim lights and listened to the soft music playing. I knew that I had planned appropriately to have enough "grace" for every woman there, but we were at record attendance for the weekend and many had decided to commute for the day. I remember thinking that we might run out of grace.

The theme for the weekend was "Underserved... Gifts of Grace". The speaker was poised and ready to present a message with an appeal to accept God's free gift of grace. It would be at that time that the ladies would be invited to come forward to the foot of the cross and accept their "gift of grace", which of course was the wooden plaques that had been made especially for them. I couldn't have been happier how everything was unfolding. The moment was truly inspiring and my heart was overflowing...until my Martha moment kicked in.

In a split second, my heart began racing and my mind was reeling-- how to provide more "grace" (the gifts) to all the women. I began feverishly counting all the little bags on the floor from my seat and looking back and counting women. I was absolutely sure that there was not going to be enough grace gifts to go around. My stomach was in knots! It was then that I came up with a brilliant idea.

So, with my plan in action, I began quietly slipping around to my retreat team, musicians and anyone else who I didn't think would mind me asking to give up their "grace" gift. Had I really resorted to this insanity? I clearly thought that I had to fix this grace deficit looming upon the climax of the weekend retreat.

I returned to my seat perspiring but feeling accomplished that I had solved the problem and that now we would surely have enough grace.

And then in the quietness of the moment, I heard these words from the Lord: And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9. I was so frustrated with myself to say the least. I was rehearsing over and over in my mind how this situation could have had a different outcome if only I had prepared better. Or maybe, if I had just let Jesus handle the grace issue.

As I was watching all the ladies come forward in response to the beautiful appeal from the speaker and receive the gift of grace that was more than deserved, my eyes shifted to the foot of the cross. I couldn't believe what I was witnessing! There was more than enough grace for everyone! Yes, even for the ones that were willing to give up their "grace."

My eyes glanced at the individuals that I had so ashamedly asked to give up their gift. I could tell by the look in their eyes that they felt I had not had enough faith in Jesus to supply enough "grace" that day. And they were right. Guilty as charged. I then nodded and motioned with my hands for them to make their way the foot of the cross and receive their gift of grace.

I learned a very valuable lesson that day...Jesus is more than enough and there is always enough grace for us all!


And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 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 cjmrcer@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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# Evergreen Church

## How Firm a Foundation

By Rev John McCoury  
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

An important question is asked in Psalm 11. Go with me for just a glance. David wrote Psalm 11, probably while he was being hunted and haunted by King Saul. With borderline insane paranoia, Saul began seeking the life of David, believing the young man was out to get him and take his position as king. David is on the run. As he writes in the first part of this psalm, he has flown as a bird to the mountain. And in that hiding place, momentarily removed from danger, he asks this question: "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (v. 3). Great question! Webster tells us that a "foundation" is "the basis upon which something stands or is supported." Every house has a foundation. Every significant structure, every building has a foundation. The taller the building, the deeper and more important the foundation. Destroy the building's foundation, and you've toppled the building. As we were watching a national prayer service in which Dr. Billy Graham, referred to the structures the terrorists destroyed on September 11, 2001. He stated that the twin towers may have been destroyed, but their foundations, amazingly, were still in place. He then spoke with great relief for our nation, saying, "It's the same with us. If our foundations are in place, then nothing else really matters. That is precisely David's point. David is not referring to structures. No house or building is in his mind, and there is no reference to such in this psalm. This psalm is about life. The righteous stand on a firm foundation. Now, should the foundation of a life be destroyed, that life crumbles. But if the foundation remains secure, no amount of stress—in David's case, no ugly attack on his life by Saul or any of his troops—would cause his life to fracture or crumble. You see, David is viewing the treacherous, threatening words of Saul as arrows coming from warriors. He uses a vivid word picture in the second verse: "Behold, the wicked bend the bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string..." In those days the warrior was known for his keen ability with bow and arrow. One of the most effective weapons in David's day was a sharp, slender arrow as it slipped from the bow guided by the marksman's eye to the target. David's point is that the wicked are bending bows, and they are making ready their deadly arrows on the string. I don't think David had a literal bow and arrow in mind. He was thinking in terms of words shot at him or statements made against him, as part of the plot planned to bring him down. But that won't happen to him if the foundations of his life are strong and secure. However, if those foundations are destroyed, his life collapses, drops like a sack of salt. How do we know that his foundations were solid and secure? Hint: Look at the first verse. If our foundation remains secure, no amount of stress will cause our life to fracture or crumble. We've been talking about David's significant question in Psalm 11:

"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (v. 3). So, how can I say that David's foundations were solid and secure? Look at the first verse. Look at his opening statement. Occasionally, in the biblical psalms, as in newspaper columns, the gist of the whole message

is in the first sentence, and everything that follows is an amplification of the initial sentence. This psalm is like that. David's main message is in the first verse of this psalm: "In the LORD I take refuge; how can you say to my soul, 'Flee as a bird to your mountain. My soul is not on the run. My spirit has not capsized, because in the Lord I take refuge. A refuge is a place of hiding. It is a place of protection. A protective place that provides safety from that which would otherwise hit and hurt. It's a protection from danger and from distress. David makes it clear that Yahweh is his refuge. Since that is true, David says" The old country preacher was right when he said, "I may tremble on the rock, but the rock doesn't tremble under me." It is my solid foundation. It stands firm no matter what may occur. That word "refuge" reminded me of yet another psalm—the forty-sixth. Who wouldn't find comfort in the solidarity of this ancient promise? This is the very psalm in which Martin Luther found refuge and relief over five hundred years ago. He hid in its truths and found strength. Psalm 46 gave him fresh courage to go on, even though misunderstood, maligned, and mistreated. How comforting were those words, "God is our refuge God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (v. 1). It was from the opening lines of this forty-sixth psalm that Luther later was inspired to write, "A high tower is the Lord our God." We sing those words today: "A mighty fortress is our God, a stronghold who never failing." And why is such a foundation sure? Because it is God, Himself! Our foundation is the God of creation. The God who made us is the God who shelters us. He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." —Psalm 91:1-2. On that solid foundation, we are secure, no matter how insecure and chaotic our times may be! When your refuge is the Lord, your soul is not on the run and your spirit has not capsized. You're in a place of protection.

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



# Bear Creek Baptist Church

## Stand in the Gap

By Bruce Cannon  
Mitchell County

And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. (Ezekiel 22:30)

The above verse, indeed, is one of the saddest in the Bible! The date for this would be around 587-585 B.C. God had just allowed the nation of Babylon to attack the kingdom of Judah, take the people into captivity, tear down the temple built by Solomon and tear down much of the walls of the city. For the third time Babylon came, over the course of approximately twenty years, to take the strong, wise and able-bodied people of Judah back to their land and make them slaves. What precipitated this? The Jewish nation had turned its back on God. Other gods were being worshipped by the Jewish people and God will never allow that. He is a jealous God (Exodus 34:14) and will never share reverence and worship due only unto Him with any other deity, person or object.

Today, the United States has many gods worshipped within her borders. The major ones include our God, the god of Islam, Buddha, Hinduism (which by itself has an estimated 33 million gods) Unitarian Universalism (which states that truth is unique to each individual and that truth is found deep within one's soul) and others.

In his book, *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville states: "I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers—and it was not there. . . in her fertile fields and boundless forests—and it was not there. . . in her rich mines and her vast world commerce—and it was not there. . . in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution—and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power." It has always been the hand of God that made America great. He is the One who planted into the mind of man the many marvels of medicine, mechanization and so forth. It was Him who blessed the crops, aided our government and protected our borders. And yet, how little He is sought today.

I am genuinely concerned about the future of America should she not turn back to her Creator. As we celebrate another birthday of our nation, let us pray that our leaders—national, state and local—can and will turn their hearts back to God. Pray that they will seek His face as decisions are made, lead our nation as Lincoln to a time of repentance for the many sins so prevalent in our society today. Let us claim 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, by putting into practice the prescription contained therein for God's blessings.*

Would our borders be more secure if we practiced this verse of Scripture? Our children be safer? Our Churches be revived and see many come to a saving knowledge of Christ? Would crime be much less? The answer to these and many more questions just like them is a resounding, YES.

Pray with me as we celebrate the 4th that America will turn back to the God of her fathers and that we will see "God Bless America" again. Have a blessed 4th!



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.



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

## Sudoku Solution

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

## MY COUNTRY, 'TIS OF THEE

written by Samuel Francis Smith

*My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
From ev'ry mountainside  
Let freedom ring!*

*My native country, thee,  
Land of the noble free,  
Thy name I love;  
I love thy rocks and rills,  
Thy woods and templed hills;  
My heart with rapture thrills,  
Like that above.*

*Let music swell the breeze,  
And ring from all the trees  
Sweet freedom's song;  
Let mortal tongues awake;  
Let all that breathe partake;  
Let rocks their silence break,  
The sound prolong.*

*Our fathers' God to Thee,  
Author of liberty,  
To Thee we sing.  
Long may our land be bright,  
With freedom's holy light,  
Protect us by Thy might,  
Great God our King.*

source:

<https://www.lyricsondemand.com/miscellaneouslyrics/patriotic-songslyrics/mycountrytisoftheelyrics.html>





# Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

## The Rest of the Story

By Doug Harrell

Watching Clint on the farm was always very interesting and many times comical with his enthusiastic approach to life and the things around him. This story actually happened pretty much as he tells it and of the months that he spent on the farm with us this was the most frightening of all the events that took place, and there were lots of events. This one had the potential to be the most life threatening of any. Neither man nor beast stands a chance against a backhoe bucket that is swinging!

Dear friends,

One morning I set out to gather a few heads of slightly rotting cabbage for my friend Boris the Hog. Picking my way through the cabbage patch, searching for the ones not fit for human consumption, was relaxing for me. The cool mountain air, punctuated with the FOUL odor of cabbage, invigorated my body and spirit for the challenging day ahead. And I loved delivering the vegetables to my piggy friends as they squealed and grunted in delight upon my arrival. This was the ONE CHORE I knew how to do and rarely screwed up ☺. Having fulfilled my role as "Caterer to the Pigs" I returned to the farmhouse to learn my fate for the balance of the day.

Sanford & Son...

Farmer Doug has a large workshop where he repairs, jury-rigs and invents farm implements. As many of you know, there are literally thousands of doo-dads and moving parts that go into keeping a farm productive. And, call me crazy, but I never imagined the plethora of things that can break during a day's work.

When I first perused the parts, pieces and tools in this shed, I surmised that it must be a scrap-metal/junk yard...somewhat akin to Fred and Lamont Sanford's place. Auto engines, pointy sharp shards of metal, large chains, oil cans, gas cans, a huge compressor, big tall tanks of heaven knows what, carburetor de-gunk junk, a little filing/sharpening wheel, fan belts of every make and length...you name a gizmo or piece of junk and you'll find it there. Every now and then an old American Motors Rambler would show up, Doug would disassemble and rebuild it only to replace it with another.

Farmer Clint "The Welder"...nahhh

Hardly a day passed that Doug would not remark, "Well, we have another opportunity for repair." Rest assured, my friends, the "we" in his statement refers to him and Jesus because I can't repair anything. Left to me, a "fix" would be to call Mr. John Deere himself to come and correct equipment malfunctions!

Many times Doug would draft his brother, Farmer Larry, to jury-rig broken stuff. They

like to walk in circles around the fractured hicky-dooos, scratch their chins, and talk gobbledy gook about what is broken and how to correct the malfunction. They call it "Harrell Hill Engineering"; I call it gibberish. You may recall when they hovered around a broken down old jeep,

then suddenly they lifted the hood and inserted a piece of mulch to make it run. And purr it did...that's nuts, I don't care who you are! Nevertheless, I now walk around with a scrap or two of mulch in my pocket for emergencies ☺.

Doug was preparing to perform some herculean task, like moving a mountain, with his GIANT backhoe. But first we needed to grease all the ball joints - AND I HELPED - and then there was a broken something-or-other that needed welding. Now I loved watching Doug weld things. Secretly I always hoped he would teach me that skill...but so far to no avail. I guess he figures my spiritual gifts do not include handling a torch? Whatever his reasons for making me sit on the sideline I still enjoy watching the sparks fly and hot metal drool. And it would be ever so cool to wear that welder's mask, but alas it won't happen ☺.

As my buddy fired up that welding torch I wondered to myself, "Hmmm, that weld is mighty close to the fuel tank... 'flame-thrower meet diesel fuel' ...not a great combo." I mentioned the concern to Farmer Doug who peered over his safety glasses and gave me that smile that says, "Pollard, it's best if you don't say anything at the moment." So I stood aside and watched in awe.

We finished the welding job - Yes I said "we" even though I was but a casual observer - and it was time to loosen up the joints on the backhoe.

Now the bucket on this monstrosity has a kind of herky-jerky motion; rather than a smooth move from side to side or up and down it's more like a sudden lurch. This abnormality isn't a problem, of course, if a man is working in the field

alone. On the other hand, it could be hazardous to an onlooker standing a wee bit too close.

He Flies Through The Air With The Greatest Of Ease...

Doug was focused on his weld and making sure everything was mechanically sound as I moved in for a closer look. Unaware of my proximity to the bucket, he manipulated the lever to one side when...BAM...that 4,000,001 lb bucket literally leapt to the side to catch Farmer Clint in the middle of my chest.

Now it's one thing to imagine being slapped by a backhoe but, as you might expect, I was startled and terrified to find myself performing these aerial antics only to have an abrupt STOP as I was smashed against the shed wall. I think I exhaled rather noisily as every gram of air departed my lungs.

And you think I was surprised? Farmer Doug appeared as though he'd seen a ghost! I need you to know that he is very safety conscious and always took extraordinary measures to avoid putting me in harm's way. Yet, it seemed, despite his best efforts I could be seriously injured.

Hit Me With Your Best Shot!...

Having recovered from the initial shock of being a human cannon ball, I quickly wriggled and wiggled all my parts and decided God had protected me from injury. And seeing the terror on the face of my friend, I remarked..."Is that all you've got?"

Farmer Doug, ashen and pale-faced, looked down at me from high atop the backhoe and said, "You could have been REALLY hurt. You scared me to death!" I thought perhaps a little comic relief was in order as I replied, "You hit me but I SCARED YOU? Well, let me tell ya something, pal - Farmer Clint took your best shot and I'm still standing...strong like bull!"

As I recall we walked across the road to the farmhouse and had our regular morning cup of cappuccino with Barbara. Not much was said about my mishap with the backhoe, it was a too-near-miss with disaster. We just relaxed and enjoyed another gorgeous day at Harrell Hill Farms.

Surely God was watching over me and Farmer Doug that day as once again I cheated death on the Funny Farm ☺.

Humbled in the Hills,

Farmer Clint



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## North Carolina Community Health Center Association

Dr. James Carroll,  
Recognized by NCCHCA as 2018's Outstanding Provider

The North Carolina Community Health Center Association has awarded Dr. James Carroll of Mountain Community Health Partnership (MCHP) the Outstanding Provider Award for 2018.

"Health isn't what we dole out, it's what we create" said Dr. Carroll. "There are so many factors involved: physical environment we live in, family ties, and the support that is given to make sure that everyone has as many opportunities as they can to succeed. I believe from as far back as I can remember that everybody has a right to have a fair shake in life, and over time, working in the medical field, it seems pretty clear that having equal access to medical care is incredibly important, but also equal access to clean water and healthy communities and a safe space to walk in, and having a system that helps to build ties among people... is so important."

Dr. Carroll obtained his undergraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University, his medical degree from SUNY Upstate Medical Center and completed his residency at MAHEC in Asheville, NC. It was important to him to stay in the community, and he joined Bakersville Community Health Clinic (now Mountain Community Health Partnership) in 1990. He has served there as Medical Director since 1999.

Dr. Carroll has taken a lead role in developing policies, procedures and guidelines to improve operations at what has evolved and grown into the Mountain Community Health Partnership. Dr. Carroll enjoys teaching and acts as a mentor and preceptor whenever possible. He is a true generalist, doing both inpatient and outpatient family medicine, obstetrics, and most recently, substance abuse treatment.

Dr. Carroll looks at medical practice as a public service to the patients and community. He often stays late and comes in after hours to treat patients who would otherwise have to choose between an expensive ER visit and taking the risk of an illness getting out of control. "If we're not active in trying to improve our communities, we're letting them go," he said.



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Forgotten Gospel: The Subjects

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 Subjects

Nobody likes Ephesians 2:6-10, not all of it anyway. Some list verses eight and nine among their favorites, a beautiful, comforting reminder of God's grace. "For by grace you have been saved, through faith, not by works." Right standing with God is God's gift to us, entirely divorced from anything we could ever possibly do to earn it. But then there's verse 10. Other people list this verse among their favorites, but almost never the same people. Verse ten is a stark reminder of the purpose for which we have been saved, to follow Jesus in the good works he has prepared in advance for us.

And the battle lines are drawn. One side shouts, "saved by grace through faith, plus nothing." The other side counters, "saved to follow Christ into the good work of the Kingdom." In fact, if you're like most people, you probably feel much more comfortable with one half of the preceding paragraph over the other - I wrote it and I feel more comfortable with one half over the other. The Apostle Paul, however, includes both concepts. We're saved by grace through faith, not by your works, however, that doesn't mean works don't play a part of God's work of salvation. Paul is saying that good work contributes nothing to your standing with God which is built entirely upon the good work of Jesus. However, as part of the gift God gives to us, we now have the ability and responsibility to follow Christ in His good work. To love our enemies, to pray for those who mistreat us, to do good to all and stand up for the least, the lowest, and the oppressed. To give generously to those who are in need and much more. These aren't the things we give to God in exchange for right standing with Him, they are another aspect of His gift to us. When you put it all together, we are saved by grace, through faith, to do good works, and this - all of this - is God's gift to you.

Which brings out another area in which our gospel preaching is sometimes lacking. Why does God save people? So, we won't die and go to hell? Because He loves us too much to let us suffer? Because heaven just wouldn't be the same without you? Sorry to burst anyone's bubble but heaven will be just fine with or without me. Now it's true that God loves you, and it's true that He doesn't want you to suffer, but the primary reason for which you have been saved is to become a citizen of His Kingdom. And when we miss out on this important point, we miss out on an important part of the work of Salvation in us. God doesn't just hand out "get-out-of-hell-free" cards, he transforms His enemies into His beloved subjects, and with that comes certain rights and responsibilities. The right to live eternally with Him, but the responsibility to learn His ways and live according to His truth. The right to know He is listening to everything we pray, but the responsibility to love like Jesus loved, and to hear the cry of the oppressed. And the good news is that God doesn't command us to be good citizens of the Kingdom in order to repay Him for His love. He offers us this Kingdom citizenship as part of His gift to us.

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



No Regrets "The Dogs Eat The Crumbs"

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt  
Mitchell County

One of the most moving stories of compassion is the story of the Canaanite woman whose daughter was vexed with a devil. This gentile woman asks Jesus to heal her daughter, but Jesus responds by saying my ministry is for the Jews.

Matthew 15:21-28 (KJV 1900)

21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

How disappointing for this woman to hear, and unlike Jesus this is. Jesus tells this woman that his miraculous work is like bread to the Jews, and it is not right or deserving to take the "children's bread" and feed it to the "dogs" or gentiles. When my wife cooks a fabulous meal, it is nourishment to my family, and we eat the food and enjoy it. We take the leftovers or the scraps and give them to the dogs. Why? because the dogs are less deserving than my family. I am going to feed my family first, and then the dogs may get the scraps. This is what Jesus is saying to this woman, I am going to take care of my family first.

At first this seems uncompassionate, but we need to understand something about Jesus and his public ministry to his own people. The miracles Jesus performed were signs to the Jews that Jesus was who He said He was, the only Son of God. The Bible tells us the Jews require a sign. When John the Baptist was in prison he sent his disciples to ask Jesus are you the messiah? or should we look for another. And Jesus sent this word back to John. Matthew 11:4-5 (KJV 1900)

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

So, Jesus was doing exactly what the Father wanted Him to do. But by and large the Jews rejected the ministry of Jesus Christ. John 1:11 (KJV 1900) 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Jesus desiring to demonstrate grace and mercy gave this woman an opportunity to trust Jesus and exhibit great faith far beyond the blindness and unfaithfulness of God's own people. This mother falls at Jesus feet, worships Him and "like a dog" begs for the "crumbs that fall from the Master's table." And Jesus says to this mother "great is your faith" and heals her daughter.

Every time I study this passage I tear up because it reminds me of God's grace in my life. I do not deserve God's grace, but He gives it to me any way. Like a poor wretched dog, the crumbs are sufficient for life. But they are not the leftovers; they simply fell from the master's table. My dog waits at our door at dinner time because he knows that something good is coming his way. By faith we trust God and He knows what we need; I simply wait at the table that is good and sufficient for me because something good is coming my way. Praise the Lord. God bless you as you trust Him today.

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



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# Mine Creek Baptist Church

## Remember When?

By Preacher Chris Rathbone  
Mitchell County

One of the things that my family loves to do when we have the opportunity to get together is reminisce about days gone by. Too often we let the memories go that played a major part in shaping us into the adults we are today. Hopefully there were experiences that helped to teach us lessons along life's way. And sometimes there are memories that just make us smile and laugh about mishaps or funny experiences we lived through. I realize that there are many that may not have too many good memories from years gone by, but one thing's for sure, we can make good use of the years ahead that the good Lord gives us to make some good ones! Too many times we won't let go of bad experiences from the past, so we can move on to good experiences in our future.

The little community I grew up in is called Estatoe. Years ago, most everyone knew everyone else. Even if you didn't know someone personally, you pretty much knew who lived in each house up every creek and "holler". We lived so close to Crabtree community we knew most everyone there too. As a kid, summers seemed to last longer, and the heat didn't seem to bother us so bad. It was nothing for us to stay outside all day long except to come in for a quick bite to eat and we were off and running again. We played in creeks, explored the laurel thickets, climbed up rock cliffs, rode bicycles everywhere we could, built forts, ran on gravel barefoot, scurried up every tree we could climb, fished, hunted squirrels and rabbits, tied June bugs on a string (bet you hadn't heard of that one), caught "lightning" bugs, searched for night crawlers with a flashlight, made slingshots from a forked stick, shot basketball through an old bicycle rim, picked blackberries and put them in a milk jug, swung on wild grapevines, watched cartoons just on Saturday mornings, drank from the same creeks we played in, got into a few fistfights and no one called the law, threw rocks at each other for fun, listened to music on 1470 WTOE am station, played in the dirt till we had what Mama called a "rusty necklace" around our neck, walked up to Crabtree Chapel Baptist Church to play softball on the field above the church, flirted with the girls we thought were "purty", etc, etc, etc. Whew, I'm bout wore out just writing about it. But you know, there was nothing to do back in those days to hear kids talk today!

My family attended the Estatoe Church of God. My cousin Charles was the pastor. Frank led the choir and played the guitar. Jerry played the bass and you could hear it all the way out to Mammie's house. We opened the windows in the church during hot weather. The folks would get happy in Jesus, sing with all their heart, shout and praise the Lord with everything in them. Bible school was such an exciting time that all us kids looked forward to. Our teachers taught us lessons using flannel grafts (remember those?). We worked on a craft every night to show to our



parents at the end of the week. We all looked forward to the snack time when the ladies would serve us cookies and Kool-Aid. On the last night we had a little commencement service where we sang a few songs and usually had some hamburgers and hotdogs for supper. I was always proud when I got to attend every night and received the gold star on my Bible School Certificate.

Daddy worked for the Great Lakes Carbon Corporation in Morganton and got home from work around 5 each evening. He would sometimes tell us he was going to take us all swimming up Crabtree Creek. The day seemed to drag on forever as we waited for him to get home. We would stand beside him as he ate with towels around our necks, dressed in our cutoff jeans, telling him to hurry and eat so we could leave. Mama would take soap and washcloths, so we could bathe in the creek. The water seemed so cold but always refreshed us. After we bathed in the creek we were literally sparkling clean from all the mica that stuck to our skin. But hey, we smelled like an Irish Spring! We would be so tired from swimming. Mama would make homemade hamburgers in a cast iron skillet. We would so hungry and those were the best burgers I ever ate. These burger joints had nothing on Mama's burgers!

Garden work was a necessary "evil" during the summer. We loved the vegetables from the garden but hated the work involved. Mammie put out a garden every year she could. We would sit on the porch for hours stringing and breaking beans. She would "look" those beans and make sure to cut off every speck with that one certain knife she always used. Sometimes we could hear the train from Penland and it seemed so close. She always said that was a sign of rain to come when the train was so loud. Sometimes she would send me and my brother Mike over to Gordon Huskins's pasture to pick some apples he had given her permission to get. Gordon had a bull in the pasture that didn't like trespassers in his territory. We would "sic" our dog on the cows to distract the bull, so we could make it to the apple trees. Don't worry, the dog only chased them a little to get the bull's attention. We would fill our buckets with apples and then make a run for the gate. Sometimes the bull saw us, and we had to drop our buckets and run for our lives!

You see, our past is filled with memories made with family and friends. Those things that seemed so insignificant then are often the things that we miss the most now. I have found the more I talk about those memories the more memories I remember! Funny how that works. Now some may read these things I've wrote about and think "How silly! What's the big deal?" Well to me, it makes me realize just how much God has blessed me. In all those memories are people. Family and friends that Jesus placed there to share life with. The time God gives us here is not just about us but also about all those people we get to love along the way. We sometimes fail to realize that as we are living this life we are making memories that will be with us always. The laughter we share, the tears we shed together, the help we give each other along the way, these all matter. Why don't you slow down a little and make some time to get together with those you love....and remember when?

I've got to go.... Michelle is making hamburgers!

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



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The Heart of God, the Father

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Before Jesus, God was commonly referred to in impersonal ways. He was largely understood by expressions such as the Creator, the Almighty, the King, the Judge, the Lord, and the Most High. Except for a few times in the Old Testament, where there are vague and halting references for God as Father, it is to Jesus whom we owe so much for bringing out this aspect of God's person.

Jesus showed us that God is personal, like a wise, loving, tender, and watchful father. Jesus always used this form of address when praying. Furthermore, he taught us to pray the same way in the model prayer, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven...." (Matthew 6:9).

Interestingly, the word that Jesus used for "Father" was the very intimate Aramaic word, "Abba," which means Daddy.

J. Wallace Hamilton writes, "There is no sermon [from Jesus] in which it [the word Father] does not appear. There is no prayer of his in which it is missed. The first record of his speaking is this: 'Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'" (Luke 2:49). The last word on the Cross was, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' (Luke 23:46).

Hamilton adds that when Jesus wanted to explain what God is like when men sin and hurt themselves, he took this word "Father" and wove it into an incomparable, unforgettable story about a Prodigal Son – a story found in Luke 15:11-32 that is as much about an ever-loving benevolent Daddy as it is about a wayward son.

That story of the Prodigal Son is very meaningful for me because, in some ways, I lived it.

It was several years ago when I got angry with my father over perceived slights that we separated from each other and didn't speak for a few years.

Then I found myself in unexpected circumstances. I became estranged from my older teenage daughter – sorely estranged – so strained was our relationship that she left home to live somewhere else.

Brokenhearted, I fell to my knees one day in prayer and begged God to bring my daughter home. God's response to my prayer was immediate and the impression on my heart almost audible. God said, "Why should I bring your daughter home to you when you haven't spoken to your father in years?"

Deeply under conviction for my awful wrong, that same day I got into my car and made the forty-five-minute drive to my old hometown. When I reached the house where I grew up, I could see Daddy working in the backyard. He spied me from afar standing in his driveway and started running towards me. I picked up the pace toward him and we both embraced and just stayed there together for a while weeping.

I asked for his forgiveness and there was a full and blessed reconciliation.

My Dad and I had many good remaining years together before his death in 2012. Nevertheless, what still pains me is the sorrow I caused him with my willful disaffection and disrespect. I had to be a parent first to comprehend such grief. There is no mourning quite so deep. So many parents have gone through it, and the children rarely know the hope their parents have for them. They rarely understand the way a parent earnestly waits – pining away – constantly wishing for the time when their child might come to their senses, and, figuratively speaking, finds the path home again.

There is a sense in which God, the Heavenly Father, in his tender mercies, longs for us in the same manner. God is indeed the Omnipotent Creator, King, and Judge of all the earth. He could simply rule as a Dictator and crush us and be justified in doing so because of our sin and intentional estrangement. But instead, He is like a patient Father, limiting himself, not imposing his will, allowing us to choose for ourselves this way or that way. He knows all about our self-inflicted defilements and impoverishments. Yet he yearns for our cleansing, healing, happiness, and prosperity. And all could be made right, if only we would come home.

Perhaps the most reassuring passage in the entire Bible – the one that shows clearly the heart of God, the Father – is that verse in the story of the Prodigal Son which reads, "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." (Luke 15:20).

Read it again, if you must. Make certain you don't miss the incredible import of that text. It says that when the father saw the son coming, he ran to him.... That's the heart of God, the Father.

Perhaps you need to come home to God by trusting Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Our nation certainly needs to come home to the Father – the One in whom all our liberties stand or fall.

Maybe, even as I did, you also need to make something right with a family member.

Surely, it's been too long. Come home.

May you and your family have a Happy Father's Day!



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

BLESSED  
By Melanie Wood

Rags to riches some  
may achieve  
Not me, as you  
Can see  
You look at my  
Clothes and some have holes  
With my hair all a mess  
I am still blessed  
What you can not see  
Is that I'm clothed in  
His mercy, and adorned  
by His grace  
He said to me, My child  
Lift up your face.

Melanie Wood lives in Marion North Carolina. She is involved with Celebrate Recovery and loves to share her faith with others.

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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](mailto:acook@mayland.edu)

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](mailto: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](mailto:barbarah@brcnews.com).

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## THE DEEP

By Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin

*Cold and darkness stood in silence  
No not a sound was everywhere  
Time and change stood in the balance  
The voice of God then filled the air.*

*Oh what power in that moment  
His mighty Word came rushing in  
The unfolding of His glory  
First gave bright light that'd never been.*

*The waters moved as graceful dancers  
It's borders end invisible to see  
Until this day they won't go from them  
For He commanded them to be.*

*The angels stood in still amazement  
When deserts formed and mountains steep  
He broke the silence in His thunder  
And changed the great face of The Deep*



## Jesus Loves the Little Children!!

By Darrell Cable  
Mountain Chapter

The NC Child Evangelism Fellowship – Mountain Chapter has high hopes for the future of Avery, McDowell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties. After a wonderful school year with 16 clubs across these 4 counties, we are looking to expand even more for the 2018-2019 school year. Not only are we looking for support from our local churches, we ask you to pray about helping us in God's ministry. Each club needs at least 6 volunteers to help out in this wonderful opportunity to evangelize and disciple children in God's word during this after school bible club.

Several from the NC CEF Mountain Chapter attended training last week in Fairview at Camp Good News. There were 110 attended this training, and this included adults already involved as well as teens who will be helping out in the near future. Praise the Lord!!

There was also an event last weekend in Asheville called the Spectacular. At this event we shared Jesus with 1,183 souls with 28 decisions for Christ!

For more information on this opportunity please contact NCCEF – Mountain Chapter Missionary Darrell Cable at 828-925-9122. We look forward to the upcoming year and ask that everyone please be in prayer for God's ministry.



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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## Summer Busy

By David Burleson  
Burke County



Summer is a busy time at the Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM) since there is an increased need for food and clothing due to children being home and not attending school. BUCM has already seen an increase in the number eating in our soup kitchen, picking up food in the pantry, and receiving clothes in our clothing closet. There are several opportunities for members of our community to be involved at BUCM and provide assistance during the summer months.

One of our greatest needs is food to be distributed in our food pantry. Doing a food drive for BUCM during the summer months would be greatly appreciated. BUCM also needs gently used clothes to be distributed in the clothing closet, especially as we prepare to provide clothes and shoes for students getting ready to go back to school.

Shop in the BUCM Saved for you Clothing, Thrift and Craft Store. The store will be having a special Christmas in July from July 16 to July 28. This provides those who love decorating for Christmas a head start on decorations for Christmas 2018. Be sure to come by and see all the beautiful crafts our elves have crafted.

Enjoy a delicious treat 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.

Your help is definitely needed as a volunteer! As we all know, volunteers are an essential piece to every organization in our country and this is especially true for BUCM. Year after year, volunteers contribute time and energy to assist our ministry in meeting the needs of others. During the last fiscal year, volunteers at BUCM gave 36,354 hours of their time to help and encourage others. People volunteer for many different reasons, but one of the major reasons is to make a difference in the lives of others. There are many such opportunities at BUCM to assist those who need a hand up.

The Burke United Christian Ministries would like to invite you to partner with our ministry and serve with us. Here are some volunteer opportunities for you to consider:

**Food Harvesting** – Going to local grocery stores and restaurants to pick up donated food.

**Clothing Closet** – New opportunity – Assist clients in our clothing closet as they shop with a clothing voucher. The social workers write up a clothing voucher that allows the client to shop. Volunteers assist clients and then tally up their selection. No money is exchanged.

**Sorting, Inspecting, and Hanging** – Interested in being behind the scenes of the clothing closet or Saved for You Clothing Store? Volunteer to prepare items for the sales floor or clothing closet.

**Warehouse** – Unload, sort and organize perishable and non-perishable food items. Assist in stocking the Food Pantry. Help keep the warehouse, freezers, and refrigerators organized.

**Clerical Support** – Assist with production of newsletters, bulk mailings, flyers and more.

**Front Window** – Check clients into the ministry and greet those who need assistance.

**Life Enrichment Center Volunteer** – Assist students as they work on their GED, take ESL Lessons, navigate the WEB, work on their financial budget or develop their financial budget.

Willing to do whatever or being on-call – Is your volunteer time flexible? Are you interested in just being called on in a time of need? Volunteer to be called on when the donations are plenty or support is needed in the food pantry, clothing closet, dining room, front office, or anywhere in the ministry. We are especially in need of an on-call soup kitchen team for times when something comes up for the scheduled team or in times of bad weather.

Wanting to volunteer or find out more about BUCM, just give me a call at (828) 433-8075 or email me at [bucmdirector@gmail.com](mailto:bucmdirector@gmail.com) or come by for a visit and let's talk about how you can make a difference with BUCM.

As we have stated many times, our ministry is stronger because of the support and participation of our volunteers, board and staff. A special thank you to the following retiring board members:

- Rev. Dr. Kevin Frederick
- Mr. Nick Roberto
- Mr. Andy Thompson
- Mr. Jeff Toner
- Mrs. Mary Ellen Weise

Your continued support and encouragement has been greatly appreciated.

Remember that our ministry is here to assist those in Burke County who need a hand up and we ask that you consider being part of what we do for others.

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



# Allen's Offerings

## Family Reunion

By Allen Buchanan  
Mitchell County

When John Murdock was 21, he married Florence Hoyle and together they built their house in 1923 on Murdock Road, in the Snow Creek township of Mitchell County, NC. By 1941, the last one of sixteen children was born.

Later in 1943 Florence Murdock had a stroke. Dr. Gouge in Bakersville had said that she was going to die and to call her family in. Homer Murdock, Sr., one of sixteen children, was in the Navy and he was on a ship in New York Harbor getting ready to go to Europe. He was a Navy Seal, which at that time was called Underwater Demolition Team (UDT). Homer was contacted through the Red Cross to come home because his mother was dying. At first, the Captain of the ship said, "No, we are pulling out and I cannot let him off the boat." Once again, the Red Cross issued the request and the Captain allowed him to return home.

When Homer arrived home, all the rest of the family was there, and his mother was unconscious. Someone stated that when Homer stepped upon the porch, Florence kind of regained consciousness, but not fully. When he went into her room, she was aware of his presence. After she got better, she lived until 1976. It seems only fitting to mention that Webster's Dictionary gives an example of a reunion as "an emotional reunion between a mother and son".

Homer returned to the Navy and went on to Europe. The earlier ship that he was scheduled to take first was struck by a torpedo and there were no survivors. This was a sign that God had much more in store for Homer's future. Later he answered the call to preach.

While the family was together during their mother's sickness, they decided that every year on Mother's Day they would have a reunion, thus 1943 was the first one. After the first two or three reunions, they decided it was rather cold on Mother's Day and decided to move it to Father's Day. That also allowed the families to spend time together outside in the warmer temperatures since the home place was small and could not easily accommodate everyone. June 17, 2018, marked their 75th reunion with 140 relatives in attendance.

Nowhere in the Bible is the word reunion. Many songs have been sung referring to families reuniting for the greatest reunion of all. I remember when I got saved I wanted to tell everybody I met, especially my family and relatives. As I grew older, I learned a sad thing, not everyone wants to become a Christian. They don't want to give up a lifestyle or habit. Some don't think they are good enough. It's so amazing how easy it is to join in the family of God. Just Believe!

As a believer, I get excited reading Revelation 19:6-16 which tells us all about the marriage supper of the Lamb. It will be the most amazing celebration and reunion ever! I hope to see you there.

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this, we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

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



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## The Inspiring Word

### Daily Faith

Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.  
McDowell County



The Inspiring Word has been published in the Blue Ridge Christian News for around five years, and I want to thank the staff and readers for allowing me the privilege of being associated with them as we work together to encourage, edify and evangelize the Mountains and foothills. The men, women and youth who read this publication come from many walks of life. For example, the church member, the seeker, those behind prison and jail house walls and those who enjoy the liberty of freedom daily. Regardless of where we live we should realize there is no understanding God or His word without faith. Don't be misled; I'm not talking about putting together a wish list, expecting God to grant it. Faith has nothing to do with wishing. For those reading this I would like to help you find, develop or even to some degree better understand faith. Maybe you already know the content of this month's article, if so pass it along for those who don't. Hebrews 11:1 tells us *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Many of us have heard and even read this verse of scripture but how much of it do we really understand? There are three key words we should understand, they are faith, substance and evidence. Let's briefly look at these as we unpack faith to better understand the role it plays in our life.

There is one scripture many understand as the definition and meaning of faith: Romans 1:17 (definition) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, (meaning) The just shall live by faith. Parenthesis added. The expression "faith to faith" speaks of a progression of faith. There is found in scripture six kinds or expressions of faith. Let's look at them briefly. Doctrinal faith, a.k.a. "the faith," speaks of Christian belief (Jude 3 *"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."* Ibid). Saving faith is knowing Christ and Him alone for salvation (Acts 16:31 *"And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."* Ibid). Justifying faith is the believer's confidence of the fact that God has declared him righteous only through Jesus Christ (Gen. 15:6 *"And he (Abram) believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."* Ibid). Indwelling faith is trusting that Christ lives in and through us (Gal. 2:20 *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* Ibid). Daily faith is the saint's day-by-day dependence on God which is part of our sanctification (2 Cor. 5:7 *"For we walk by faith, not by sight."* Ibid). The gift of faith is an ability of faith, providing a vision of what God can do, it is faith that is how we achieve that vision, and the power with God to receive answers to prayer (Heb. 11:1-3 *"1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2. For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* Ibid). We find ourselves at the same verse of scripture that we began with. What about substance? The definition of the word can be easily found in any dictionary, but we must remember our Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. English translations are wonderfully accurate, but there are times we must go the original language to understand the author's intent. "The substance" is used to translate the Greek word *hupostasis* which is a feminine noun identifying the saint's assurance. From Hebrews 11:2 above, we have assurance by faith those before us obtained a good report or lived the life our Bible testifies of. Then from Hebrews 11:3 we have assurance by faith that everything in our Bible is true and accurate, it is inspired and inerrant.

Having looked at faith and substance let's give evidence some attention. Again, we will go to the Greek for our beginning. "The evidence" is used to translate the Greek word *élegchos* which is a noun identifying the power of faith to convict or persuade. This word doesn't imply a charge or accusation, but the manifestation of the truth of that charge and the consequences of it; also, the acknowledgement, if not outwardly, yet inwardly, of its truth on the part of the accused.

So, Faith is the principles which guide and grow the saints of God, substance is the assurance provided to the saints of God and evidence is the conviction and consequences of Faith's work in the life of the saints of God.

Now, what does this brief study of faith reveal to you about these verses? *"Hebrews 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

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



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Abundance  
By Brent Price  
Mitchell County

Too often it isn't until the end of life that people realize what truly matters. Living to work is not the same as working to live. And we're not taking a single thing with us when it's time to leave this earth.

So what really matters? What genuinely makes this life worthwhile? When it all comes down to it, it's not too complicated.

Neighbors who visit when you're sick and care when you're gone. Friends who show up at two in the morning simply because you called and asked them to come.

Tears of joy when words aren't enough. The answer to a prayer spoken only in our hearts. A casserole that mimics the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

It's easy for us to ignore the abundance of love and caring relationships in our life. Difficulty and urgent situations weigh on our mind and spirit. As a result we're often blinded to the ways that God is blessing us.

God promises to provide for us and to sustain us. Perhaps there is only one thing we can cling to that affirms that promise. Hold on to it. Guard it and fight for it with all that is within you.



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

"I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." A promise meant to be received and shared. A promise meant to be received and shared for all time.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:25*

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

~ Anne Richardson

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# Morganton Baptist Church

## Free Indeed

By Pastor Dan Qurollo  
Burke County

This month, we celebrate our nation's 242nd year of independence. Throughout this time, we have experienced times of prosperity and times of adversity. We have experienced times of peace and times of war. We have witnessed our society make significant advancements in technology. We are a nation governed by a Constitution designed to protect our civil and religious freedom.

Tragically, many people have a mistaken idea of the essence of freedom. To many, freedom is equivalent to the absence of restraint. They regard freedom as the ability to do whatever one pleases, say whatever one pleases, and act in whatever way one pleases with nobody telling him what to do. This concept of freedom will destroy our civilization if it is not corrected. A society that advocates this definition of freedom will soon become an anarchy in which no law and order exists.

A proper understanding of freedom recognizes the reality of responsibility. In order for both civil and religious freedom to continue to exist, individuals must exercise responsibility. While he may believe that he can say or do as he pleases, the reality is that he will be accountable for his words and actions. As responsibility increases, freedom will continue to thrive in proportion.

The Word of God describes a freedom that far surpasses what we enjoy as American citizens. Those who have placed their trust in Christ as Savior are free from the condemnation of sin. Their sin was judged at the foot of the cross, never to haunt him again. Romans 5:1 teaches, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Tragically, many believers fail to experience the spiritual freedom that belongs to them as believers. Just as many have a mistaken idea of civil and religious freedom, many likewise view their spiritual freedom as a license to do whatever they desire. As believers, we too are responsible for our actions. We must strive to "do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website [www.morgantonbaptist.net](http://www.morgantonbaptist.net) or find us on Facebook and YouTube.



# Burnsville Seventh-Day Adventist Church

## Exodus

By Pastor Ed Couser  
Yancey County

Happy Fourth of July! Like you, I am a patriotic person. I still get goose bumps when they play the national anthem. I still get a lump in my throat when I see the American flag flying high. I still straighten up with a feeling of respect when I see a man or woman in uniform, and it is hard to keep tears from coming to my eyes when I say the pledge of allegiance. This year, we as a nation celebrate 242 years of independence and freedom. As Americans we have much to be thankful and much to celebrate. No doubt God's hand and blessings are on our great nation.

God's people after 400 years of bondage in Egypt had much to be thankful for too! Because of our Lord's intervention, they were able to pass through the Red Sea on dry land. They had much to celebrate too. God's presence was seen in His directions - in His display. In Exodus 13: 21, 22, the Bible says: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people." Do we know what the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire did? Not only did they give them direction, (the original GPS: God's Pillar System), they gave them assurance too. Assurance of what? Assurance of God's presence. During the day the pillar of cloud was God's way of saying, "I am with you." And during the night the pillar of fire was God's way of saying, "I am with you." Have you ever thought about this; that for 40 years they never experienced darkness. As soon as the sun went down the pillar of fire illuminated the whole camp. To me, this fire had to be big enough to provide light for a guesstimated 2 million people. And then when the sun came up, the pillar of cloud had to provide shade all day long for the same number of people. They had fire by night to light their way and a cloud by day to screen the sun. How do you think Moses knew the route to take when they left Egypt on their way to the promised land? He didn't have to. All he had to do was follow the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. As long as he followed God, he could know that he was headed in the right direction.

As Christians, wouldn't we agree that if we could have a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night it would be easier to follow God every day and every night? But as believers we have something better. What is better? The presence of the Holy Spirit. What the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night was to them, the Holy Spirit is to us. Just as those pillars were with them, the Holy Spirit is with us as believers today.

The Bible tells us in John 14:16, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another 'Helper,' that He may abide with you forever." In John 14:17, the Bible says, "the Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit), whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him or knows Him." Jesus tells us that He (Holy Spirit) dwells with you and will be in you." (John 14: 17). In John 16, The Holy Spirit is called our guide. Verse 13 says, "He (Holy Spirit) will guide you into all truth." According to Acts 2, the Holy Spirit gives us "power." I believe my greatest need today is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, what about you? Thank God for His presence! Thank God for His power! Praise God for the personal relationship we can experience with Him grounded in His Word!!

What I find interesting, is that even though they had the assurance of God's presence with them they often murmured and complained. Unfortunately, they had their eyes on their circumstances rather than on God. So, they did not cry out in prayer, instead they cried out in complaint. What can we learn from their experience? I suggest four lessons learned from their experience. They are:

1. What the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night was to them, the Holy Spirit is to us as believers.
2. Life's difficulties provide us the greatest opportunity to show others the difference that Jesus makes in our lives.
3. When our focus is on our circumstances rather than on Jesus, murmuring and complaining abounds. When our focus is on Jesus rather than our circumstances, peace is always present.
4. Greater than the Red Sea miracle is the miracle of salvation. Jesus Christ changes us from the inside, out.

I close with this thought from Hebrews 11:29: "By 'faith' they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land."

God Bless You.



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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.





*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:  
Deuteronomy 28:1-68*



*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Galatians 5:13*

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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:

July 20-22 July Fine Art & Master Crafts Festival, Downtown Banner Elk  
August 10-12 Fine Art and Master Crafts Festival, Downtown Banner Elk

## Burke County

### Burke County Chamber

Dementia Resource Summit—September 21, 2018 at 9am-10am Registration 10am-3pm Presentations Grace Ridge Retirement Community in Ervin Community Room. For more info call Caron Tucker at 828-466-1466 or Charity Elliott at 828-580-8327

**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](http://www.sherrisschoolofdance.com/summercamps) or in person at Sherri's School of Dance.

Please contact Kesha Nichols at [keshanicholsnyc@gmail.com](mailto:keshanicholsnyc@gmail.com) or 646.789.9227 for additional questions and information.

**Catawba River Baptist Association** - We have an exciting mission opportunity for folks in our Association. There are many people in the eastern part of our state who are still recovering from the devastation of hurricane Matthew. We are taking a group of workers August 6-10, 2018 to do clean-up and some construction in Lumberton, NC. This trip will not cost you anything as all supplies, lodging, and food will be provided free of charge.

If interested please call our CRBA office for more information and to register.

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.

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If your church is doing VBS this year and you are looking for a great place to send the offerings collected, we may have the place for you. We are happy to be partnering with Pastor Pandu Maddala of Victory Baptist Association as he works with pastors in India to reach communities for Jesus. Most pastors in India pastor more than one church and they walk wherever they go. They are in need of 100 bicycles to help 100 pastors take the Word of God from village to village. The Catawba River Association is working to meet this need through the gifts of churches and individuals. If you, your Church, or Sunday School class would like to donate a bike (pedals for pastors) please send a check for \$80 to CRBA and put on the memo line "Pedals for Pastors". Every dollar collected will be sent to India and will be used to purchase bicycles. Please send all donations to 1812 US 70 E., Morganton, NC.

We have an exciting mission opportunity for folks in our Association. There are many people in the eastern part of our state who are still recovering from the devastation of hurricane Matthew. We are taking a group of workers August 6-10, 2018 to do clean-up and some construction in Lumberton, NC. This trip will not cost you anything as all supplies, lodging, and food will be provided free of charge.

If interested please call our CRBA office for more information and to register.

**Antioch Baptist Church**-July 15-19, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. There will be classes for all ages through adult.

**Burkemont Baptist Church**-July 8-12, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. There will be an adult class each night from 6:45 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary

**East Valdese Baptist Church**-July 29-August 1, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Family night with free dinner August 1.

**Gilead Baptist Church**-August 12-15, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Family cookout on Wednesday night.

**Oakridge Baptist Church**-July 22-27, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Meal provided each night at 5:00 p.m.

**Pleasant Hill Baptist Church**-August 5-10, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Classes for

Pre K through 6th grade.

Walker Road Baptist Church-August 12-16, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Dinner to be served nightly. Classes for all ages through adult.

**Zion Baptist Church**-August 4, 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. @ Burke United Christian Ministries This will be a joint Bible School and volunteers are needed please contact Lori Matthews @ [zionbc.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:zionbc.secretary@gmail.com) or call 828-437-3080 for more information. School supplies will be collected to hand out to the children in attendance. Please bring donations to the CRBA office.

### Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County

July 20-22, 2018 - Looking for a fresh, inspiring boost to your prayer life? Come and be revived with us at the Summer Prayer Retreat at Ridgecrest Convention Center with speaker/concert pianist Kelly Mowrer from Live at the Well Ministries.

Register at [www.carolinasda.org](http://www.carolinasda.org) or call Cindy at 870-510-8048 for more information.

Looking for a place to volunteer and make a difference in your community? God's Closet-Morganton needs volunteers to help set up for our next FREE shopping event. If you can help with set up and clothes sorting on Sunday, July 29th, for at least 2 hours between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., please call Janet Hardin at 828-244-3876 or you can show up to volunteer that day at 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C.

The next God's Closet-Morganton FREE children's clothes shopping event will be held at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church located at 2187 Jamestown Rd, Morganton, N.C. on August 3rd-Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon. Entry fee is only \$1, and we provide the shopping bags for you! FREE childcare while you shop. Each family will receive a pair of free brand new pajamas and brand new uniform polo shirt while supplies last. Please visit, Like and Share our Facebook page: God's Closet-Morganton

### Town of Valdese Community Affairs & Tourism

July 13-August 11, 2018: "From This Day Forward" Historic Outdoor Drama of the Waldenses- tickets available for purchase at Fred B. Amphitheatre box office or at the Old Rock School.

July 6- The Shakedown Band- Dance  
July 13- Jason Lee McKinney- Country/Classic Rock  
July 20- Shelby Rae Moore- Variety  
July 27- Angela Easterling- Americana  
August 3- Carson Hill- Country/Rock/Folk

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](http://valdesemarket.com).

## McDowell County

**Calvary Missionary Baptist Church** - will be doing a very different VBS this year. We are taking VBS to the Kids! Saturday July 14 from 8-12 we will set up at the Marion Flea Market on Business 221. I have spoken with the owner and he is more than willing for us to do this. VBS will be a walk in event, using video lessons, coloring pages, worksheets and personal one on one attention we will present Christ to everyone who comes, young and old. I plan on offering a commencement for Sunday the 15th during the morning service with a pizza lunch in the fellowship hall for everyone. I hope this will encourage families to consider our church for their spiritual needs. Pray for us, please. We must have the moving of God preparing the hearts of those who will be there on the 14th, God knows who they will be and what they will need. Thank you!

**CarePartners:** Want to make a difference, touch lives, and impact your community? If so, several Volunteer opportunities are available in the following positions! Administrative Office Volunteer, Patient/Family Support Volunteer, Bereavement Support Volunteer, We Honor Veterans Volunteer, Special Events Volunteer, and a newly added position, Pastoral Care Volunteer! For more information about these positions, please contact CarePartners Hospice and Palliative Care McDowell Volunteer Services Department at 828-652-1318 ext.303. You can make an everlasting impact with just a few hours of your time a week! Call today to learn more!

**Clinchfield Baptist Church** 1150 East Court Street will be having it vacation bible school July 22-26.

**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 Memorial Baptist Church** VBS Rolling River Rampage July 29th- August 1st 6pm - 8:30pm. For more information or to register please contact the church office at 828-652-6315

## Mitchell County

**Bear Creek Baptist Church** - Bear Creek will be hosting the Edwards Family for a singing on July 29th at 10:45 am

Women's Prayer Breakfast July 13th, 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.

**Berry Chapel Baptist Church** - VBS July 14-18 6:00-8:00 pm Family Night and Picnic Thursday July 19 6:00 pm.

**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** - 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:** 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.

VBS July 29th thru August 2nd.

**Historical Society** --July 16th at the Historic Courthouse The topic will be the Cloudland Hotel, atop Roan mountain on the NC/TN line, built in 1885 by General John T Wilder. The Cloudland is the subject of the Historical Society's 2018 Commemorative Christmas Ornament, seventh in the series. Ornaments will be available for sale.

**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

2018 Grassy Creek Gem Show!

The 34th Annual Grassy Creek Mineral and Gem Show is put on by the Parkway Fire and Rescue to raise money for new equipment.

Over 60 US and International dealers with almost any kind of jewelry, gemstone and mineral specimens, fossil, lapidary equipment and more you might want.

Each booth is 20 feet by 40 feet so there are LOTS of items for sale.

Parking and admission are free.

Food is available.

Dates: July 28th to August 5th.

Hours: 10 to 6 daily with many vendors open earlier and later because they are staying with their booth.

Address: 136 Majestic View, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. This location is on the hill above the previous location on Hwy 226 South.

Contact: Donna Collis collisdonna@yahoo.com

828-765-5519. <http://www.grassycreekgemshow.org>

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](http://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.

**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](mailto:bararah@brcnews.com). July meeting is 13th, at 8:00am.

## Yancey County

**Parkway Playhouse** is pleased to present Oliver! from June 30 - July 14.

CUTLINE FOR OLIVER! The streets of Victorian England come to life as Oliver (Faith Creech), a malnourished orphan, escapes to London and finds acceptance amongst a group of petty thieves and pickpockets. The musical, Oliver! will run June 30 through July 14 at Parkway Playhouse. Tickets are available at [parkwayplayhouse.com](http://parkwayplayhouse.com) or by calling 828-682-4285.

**Partners Aligned Toward Health**---Mitchell Tennis Camp Sign Up Form

We are happy to announce our Mitchell Tennis Camp schedule!

Tennis Camp will be held Monday, July 16 through Wednesday, July 18. Join us at the Brad Raegan Courts for camp!

Ages 5-8: 9-10 AM

Ages 9-15: 10:15-11:45 AM

You may also register by emailing [brianna@pathwnc.org](mailto:brianna@pathwnc.org).

**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

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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.

*continued on page 20*





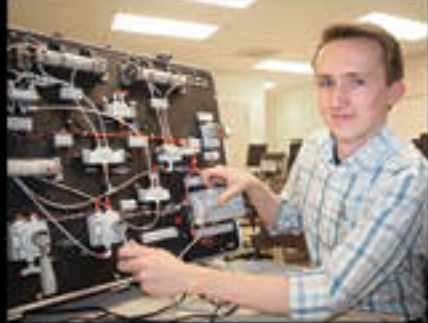
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# DAVE SAYS

Financial Straight-Talk

www.davesays.org

by Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,

My parents have always been bad with money, and recently they lost their home to foreclosure. They found another place to live, and they both work, but since the foreclosure my dad has been asking me for money on a regular basis. He tries to make me feel guilty, and he calls or asks me to come over to talk about it when my mom isn't home. He even asked for half of the bonus I received at work the other day. I know they need help, but I'm not sure what to do.

Dear Eli,

I can tell you love your parents, because you're looking for the best way to help them. I think your brain knows what to do, but your heart is having a hard time doing it.

The first thing you're going to have to accept is your father is being very manipulative right now. Put an end to these private meetings and phone calls once and for all. If he wants to talk, make sure he understands it will only happen with your mom in the room.

Second, understand there's nothing wrong with helping your folks get back on their feet. However, any financial help you give them should be temporary in nature, and it should be a gift. Don't get involved in giving them money every month just because they raised you. That's not how this works. When you permanently subsidize someone, you take away their dignity. You also change their status, and compromise their ability to stand on their own two feet.

In return, you should let them know you expect them to work toward changing their financial behaviors with the help of a quality financial counselor — one with the heart of a teacher. It's often difficult for parents to accept advice and suggestions from their own children, but it's for their own good. Sit down with them, and gently let them know how much you care, and how much you want better, happier lives for them.

God bless you all, Eli.  
—Dave

Dear Dave,

I'll be receiving my income tax refund soon. It will be enough to completely pay off my two smallest debts or get my starter emergency fund of \$1,000 for Baby Step 1 in place. What should I do?

Dear Brandy,

I love that you're excited about using your refund to start the Baby Steps, and begin gaining control of your finances. But we call the beginner's emergency fund Baby Step 1 for a reason.

Bad things can happen while you're working to get out of debt. That's why I want people to get a little money set aside before they start Baby Step 2, which is the debt snowball. What if the alternator on your car goes out, or your refrigerator dies? Life happens, and things go wrong. When this kind of stuff pops up, and you don't have any money set aside, you're likely to quit the plan and wind up going even deeper into debt.

I know you want to get out of debt. I want you to get out of debt, too. But I want you to stick with the plan, and actually get out of debt, instead of falling off the wagon the first time you hit a bump in the road!

—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 13 million listeners each week on 585 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at [daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com) and on Twitter at [@DaveRamsey](https://twitter.com/DaveRamsey).





# Enjoying Everyday Life

## The #1 Key to Having Peace

By Joyce Meyer

Peace is an amazing gift God offers us. I know what it's like to live without peace – upset most of the time, anxious, fearful and worried. It's miserable! Since I've discovered how to live with God's peace, I will do anything I need to do to have it.

We have to understand the value of peace if we're going to have it. Because if you think it's really no big deal to lose your temper, worry, be stressed-out or upset all the time, you won't do what you need to do to live with peace.

I think it's interesting that one of the last things Jesus told His disciples before His crucifixion was about peace. John 14:27 (AMP) says, "Peace I leave with you; My [perfect] peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. [Let My perfect peace calm you in every circumstance and give you courage and strength for every challenge.]"

In John 20:19, "Peace to you!" is the first thing Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection. Verse 21 says, "Then Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you....'" Notice the word "again." He must have wanted them to realize how important it was to maintain their peace.

Take a moment to think about how much peace you have. Do you worry, get upset or feel stressed-out often? Many people do...but that's not the way God wants us to live.

A lot of Christians pray for God to give them peace, but they need to realize that as believers in Christ, they already have His peace. We need to pray for God to help us learn how to walk in peace.

Philippians 4:6-7 (AMP) says: "Do not be anxious or worried about anything, but in everything [every circumstance and situation] by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, continue to make your [specific] requests known to God. And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours]."

We can learn a lot about how to pray powerful, effective prayers by studying Scripture. Instead of praying for peace, notice that in Philippians the apostle Paul is encouraging believers to trust God in every circumstance so they can have His peace as they go through challenges.

If we don't have peace and we want it, we have to be ready to make some changes. The world around us probably isn't going to change, so we need to change our approach to life. We need to make a conscious decision to trust God in every area of our lives, every day.

We're called believers, and that's what we're supposed to do: Believe God! When we trust Him, we enter His rest and can enjoy our lives.

Years ago, I remember when God helped me to learn this lesson as I studied James 4. In verses 1-4, we see what causes quarrels, strife and discontentment. Verse 2 (NLT) says, "You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it."

Wow! This is basically saying, "You want something, so you strive to get it your way or make it happen on your own, but it doesn't work. If you would just ask Me, I would help you." It's important to point out here that God won't just give us anything we ask for. He loves us and wants what's best for us, and when we ask for things that are in His plan and purpose for us, He will give them to us.

I used to think I wanted a lot of things that ended up making me miserable after I managed to get them. But once I started giving up my will and asking God to do what He wants to do in my life, I experienced peace and contentment that I'd never known before.

It was so freeing for me to give up trying to run my own life and instead focus on seeking God and trusting Him to give me what He wants me to have. Psalm 37:4 (AMP) says, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires and petitions of your heart."

I want to strongly encourage you today to purposely choose to seek God and delight yourself in Him before anyone or anything else in your life. He is the Source of love, joy and peace. And you'll live in peace as you live in Him!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-teaching CD series How to Attack Anxiety. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND and LIVING A LIFE YOU LOVE (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](http://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](http://www.joycemeyer.org).



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



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## 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  
Honoring the Music of Ronnie Van Zant's Lynyrd Skynyrd  
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](http://www.meadows.house.gov)

### My Amendment to Audit the Special Counsel

Recently, the House passed my amendment to require financial oversight of special counsels, including the Mueller investigation. The amendment would re-establish a law that was repealed in 2010, requiring a semiannual Government Accountability Office (GAO) review of Independent Counsels—or specifically, a financial audit of the expenditures special counsels use from the funds they receive from Congress. When the audit is complete, the GAO would be required to submit its findings to Congress. Special Counsels, including Robert Mueller, would be considered as Independent Counsel for the purposes of the audit. This is a big win for taxpayers. A special counsel should not be able to spend millions of taxpayer funds without being transparent about where that money goes. Americans need to know where their money is being spent.

### Amendment to Repair Infrastructure

I've heard from many of you over the last several months about making sure we fix our infrastructure system. So last week, in response to your concerns, I offered an amendment to address it—and the amendment was included in the Water Resources and Development Act of 2018. The amendment passed the House.

It directs the federal government to prioritize the maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure in America to make sure we improve its reliability and safety.

New investments and projects are worthwhile, but it doesn't do us much good if crumbling roads, bridges, and waterways aren't repaired first. We should focus on the needs of the existing infrastructure system up front so that taxpayers are best served with their money.

### Demanding a Second Special Counsel

It is time for Americans to hear the truth about what happened at the Department of Justice on their taxpayer dime, both before and after the 2016 presidential election. It is time for an independent investigator to review the case—one who will not be pressured or swayed by partisan politics.

Led by Congressman Lee Zeldin (R-NY), several of my colleagues and I renewed our call for a second special counsel. We introduced a resolution and are calling on Congress to put it to a vote. Enough with the stonewalling and obstruction from the DOJ.

## NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise  
[Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net](mailto:Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net)  
919-733-3460

For the second straight year, Gov. Cooper vetoed the budget sent to him for approval by the General Assembly. Senate and House Republicans overrode the governor's veto of a sound, fiscally responsible \$23.9 billion updated budget. The governor, along with most Senate Democrats, favored his own proposed budget which would have wiped out our current half-billion dollar surplus and imposed a \$470 million deficit for the next year. His proposed budget actually included a tax increase that would have negatively impacted hardworking families and 40,000 small businesses in our state.

Senate Bill 99 - Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2018 makes adjustments to the budget that was fully discussed, debated, and passed during the six-month period of last year's long session. The adjusted budget controls the growth of government spending with a nearly four percent overall increase. A few of the highlights include:

- Funding more than \$200 million for raises for state employees, including a 2 percent permanent raise for most state employees; an average 8 percent pay increase for State Highway Patrol troopers; a 4 percent increase and shift differential pay for correctional officers; and \$15 million for safety and security upgrades in state prisons.
- Providing close to an additional \$700 million for public education, including an average 6.5 percent raise for teachers.
- Establishing the GREAT (Growing Rural Economic with Access to Technology) program to address broadband needs in rural areas of our state.
- Adding \$161 million to our state's rainy day fund, which we've built to an all-time high of \$2 billion, ensuring we're well prepared for the next natural disaster or economic downturn.
- Cutting \$1.5 billion in taxes – 99 percent of taxpayers will either pay less or pay no state personal income tax at all.

Some highlights for Health and Human Services appropriations, of which I am Senate chair, include:

- Setting aside \$5 million for the new Broughton Hospital, adding 85 beds and creating up to 169 staff positions.
- Increasing the Child Care Subsidy amount for children age birth through 5 years of age in child care centers and homes rated 3, 4, and 5 stars in Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties.
- Reducing the Child Care Subsidy Waitlist through provision of nearly \$20 million in federal block grants to serve an estimated 3,700 additional children.
- Funding over \$18 million for 3,525 new pre-K slots – including a plan to eliminate 100 percent of the state's waitlist for at-risk children by 2021.
- Allocating an extra \$8.5 million from the Low-Income Energy Assistance block grant to assist with heating bills for the elderly and disabled citizens.

One budget update that should please teacher assistants employed in McDowell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties who are interested in achieving teacher licensure is the Teacher Assistant Tuition Reimbursement Program. This "TA to Teacher" program provides up to 5 teacher assistants, in each of the designated counties, tuition assistance awards for part-time or full-time coursework toward teacher licensure at an institution of higher education.

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





# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## General Assembly expands early voting

The House passed Senate Bill 325 on Friday, which would expand early voting in our state.

If signed by Gov. Roy Cooper, The Uniform & Expanded Early Voting Act would increase the number of days and number of hours available for early voting. The bill landed on the governor's desk on Friday, so we will see if he decides to agree or disagree with expanded early voting.

If the bill becomes law, it will increase the total number of early voting days from sixteen-and-a-half to seventeen. It will also increase the total number of early voting hours.

Under current law, early voting across North Carolina is not uniform. There may be an early voting location that opens at 8:30 a.m. in one precinct and one in another precinct that opens at 9:00 a.m. Those same locations may close at different times as well.

Also under current law, early voting locations tend to only be open during hours when most North Carolinians are at work — except on Saturdays.

Senate Bill 325 would require all early voting locations in our state to be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The bill would also remove the last Saturday of early voting so elections administrators may prepare for the rush of voters on Election Day. Local boards of elections would still have the option to offer Saturday voting on earlier Saturdays.

As predictably as the sun will rise tomorrow morning, opponents of the bill claim it is meant to suppress and disenfranchise minority voters. I hope they continue to make such baseless claims against Republican elections bills (and they will) — their claims only further devalue their credibility.

It is important to note here that a U.S. District Court judge ruled our 2013 voter law constitutional only to have a U.S. Appeals Court claim the law targeted African Americans "with surgical precision." The disagreement between courts was heading to the U.S. Supreme Court for adjudication before Gov. Roy Cooper and Attorney General Josh Stein asked the Supreme Court to not hear the matter.

Cooper and Stein got a decision they wanted, and they stopped the judicial process in its tracks. You can't make this stuff up.

I, for one, believe more early voting time delivered more consistently is good for North Carolina. It will be interesting to see how the far-Left and the media (is there a difference?) spin such a common-sense bill for political gain.

## 4-H student visits office

I enjoyed sitting down and talking with a wonderful young man this week from Yancey County, Kyler Glover.

Kyler was participating in a 4-H program that brings students from across our state to Raleigh to get a first-hand look at how state government functions. If you get a chance to talk with Kyler, I think you'll see what I saw: a young man with a good head on his shoulders who has a great future ahead of him.



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



## 100 Days Until Crucial Conservation Fund Expires

Just a few days from now will mark 100 days until one of the most successful conservation programs in our nation's history expires. For the last 54 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped preserve, maintain and protect our country's beautiful outdoors for the next generation. Countless parks, critical watersheds and wildlife refuges spanning all 50 states benefit from this great program.

Perhaps the best news is that the Land and Water Conservation Fund does all of this at no extra burden to you because it relies solely on royalties from offshore oil and gas leasing revenues. Not a cent comes from your taxes.

In North Carolina, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped protect treasures like the Great Smokey Mountains, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Cape Lookout National Seashore. And that list keeps growing! Just this week, the Secretary of the Interior announced that \$1.5 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund would be distributed to North Carolina's stateside program to go toward building and maintaining local and state recreational areas. From the Appalachian Mountains to the Outer Banks, North Carolina is home to a vast array of wildlife and wilderness that adds to the richness of our state, and we need this program now more than ever.

This week, I was also honored to be recognized by the National Audubon Society for their Conservation Hero Award. I'm proud to work with them on critical conservation issues, including ensuring the LWCF is around for another 50 years. We all have a responsibility to protect and preserve our beautiful country and its wilderness so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy it for generations to come.

## NC Senate District 46

The legislative short session began on Wednesday, May 16, and things got off to a busy start, with many updates related to the state budget, plans for a fifth consecutive teacher pay raise and new tools to recruit jobs and capital investment to our state.

### 2018 State Budget Becomes Law

After the Senate affirmed its support of the 2018 budget last week, the House followed suit on Tuesday, overriding Gov. Cooper's veto of a budget that delivers a fifth consecutive teacher pay raise while providing major tax relief to hardworking families and job-creating businesses.

For the second straight year, the budget became law without the signature of Gov. Cooper who continued to push elements of his budget proposal while refusing to acknowledge the almost \$470 million budget deficit his proposal would create. It is deeply concerning to me to see how out of touch Gov. Cooper is with the needs of the citizens of North Carolina.

### Senate Passes Bill to Reduce Testing, Ensure Low-Income Students Have Access to Advanced Courses

Both the Senate and the House passed legislation this week that takes steps to reduce the testing burden on students in North Carolina and helps provide additional learning opportunities to thousands of children from low-income families across the state.

House Bill 986 directs the state Superintendent of Public Instruction to study and make recommendations on ways to reduce local testing for students from Kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The General Assembly is dedicated to improving outcomes for students in North Carolina, and after listening to teachers from around the state who are concerned that too much time is spent on testing, we hope that this bill is a first step towards reducing that testing burden.

The bill also makes changes to how students are enrolled in advanced math courses by directing that any student in grade 3 or above who achieves a "superior" score on their end-of-grade math test will automatically be enrolled in an advanced math course the following year.

These changes come after an investigation by the [Raleigh] News and Observer and Charlotte Observer last year found thousands of low-income children who achieve "superior" marks on end-of-grade tests are more likely to be excluded from advanced classes than their peers from families with higher incomes.

### General Assembly Passes Senate Bill 335, Study Fair Treatment of Student Athletes

I am pleased that we were able finally send this good bill to the Governor's desk for his signature. Over the past year since initial approval of S335 by the Senate, many stories have been brought to my attention that reinforces the need for this commission to be convened. The Commission will be charged to take a look at a myriad of issues related to health care, academics, representation, compensation, and quality of academic instruction. The Commission will be chaired by Lt. Governor Dan Forest. S335 is also the bill that contains budget technical corrections.

As always, if I may be of assistance to you, please contact my Raleigh office via phone or email. It is a pleasure to serve you in the state Senate.



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



## BCPS Class of 2018 Secures More Than \$8 Million in Scholarships

By Cheryl Shuffler  
Burke County

Burke County Public Schools graduated nearly 900 students this year. What's next for the class of 2018 varies from a four-year college or university, a two-year community college, a certificate program, entering military service or going straight into the workforce. For those going on to continue their education, the class of 2018 in BCPS secured nearly \$8.23 million in scholarship money before high school graduation.

Patton High School seniors received more than \$2.1 million.  
Draughn High School seniors received \$2.04 million.  
East Burke High School seniors received \$1.97 million.  
Freedom High School seniors received \$1.59 million.  
Burke Middle College seniors received \$526,000.  
Hallyburton Academy seniors received \$2,500.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "This total blows me away. I am so proud of all of our graduates for taking that important walk across the stage and securing that precious high school diploma. I challenge all of our graduates to not stop there and to keep pursuing an education and their dreams. For those going on to higher education, and for those who received scholarships to help pay for it, that is a total of \$8.23 million less debt for those incoming freshman and their parents. This dollar amount is actually higher if you factor in training and benefits our graduates entering the military will receive for continuing education. I look forward to following all the greatness the class of 2018 will accomplish, and I wish them the very best as they begin their careers and embark on this next new journey."

Parents learn about dual immersion language program

Five-year-old David Stockham speaks one language at home, is learning American Sign Language at preschool and has the opportunity, along with 49 other rising kindergarten students, to learn another language at Mountain View Elementary School. David, his mom, dad and younger brother were at the Olive Hill Resource Center on Wednesday, June 6 to learn more about the dual language immersion program Burke County Public Schools will start in August.

David's mom, Jessica Stockham, said, "We have worked a lot with him on kindergarten readiness, and we don't believe in restricting him. We would rather him be challenged when he starts kindergarten and continue to grow at the pace he is."

The Stockhams have ties to McDowell County, which has a year-round dual language immersion program that David would be eligible for, but now that Jessica teaches in Burke County, they are interested in enrolling David in the Global Immersion Academy at Mountain View Elementary School. Kindergarten students at the Global Immersion Academy will learn 50 percent of the time in English and 50 percent of the time in Spanish.

Burke County Public Schools Director of Elementary Education Karen Auton and Coordinator of English Language Learners Lannie Simpson shared the vision for the Global Immersion Academy with parents during the information session.

Simpson said 19 percent of Burke County Public Schools students speak a language other than English at home, which is two percentage points higher than the state average. In Burke County schools, there are 26 other native languages spoken in students' homes besides English. In Burke County, 80.5 percent of students speak English at home, 13.2 percent of speak Spanish at home and 4.7 percent speak Hmong at home. Other common languages include Aguacateco, Mayan and Lao.

Simpson said for multilingual students, the process of learning a native language at home is natural, unlike the process for adults who took a foreign language in high school or college where the focus was on grammar rules and verb conjugations. She quoted Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier, experts on dual language schooling, who say, "The key to natural language acquisition is to use the languages for meaningful and interesting tasks." The Global Immersion Academy intends to do just that by having students learn language through content and content through language.

Students in the dual language program will learn the standard course of study continuously in both languages. For example, a teacher may start a math lesson in the morning in English and finish it in Spanish in the afternoon. The teacher will not repeat the same instruction in both languages. The goals are biliteracy, bilingualism, grade level academic achievement and cross-cultural competence.

Simpson said in choosing textbooks, the Global Immersion Academy will look for books written in the native language and not books that have been translated from English to Spanish or vice-versa. Simpson gave nursery rhymes as an example. Nursery rhymes written in authentic text help students learn language, culture and history, but they do not translate well into other languages.

The dual language immersion classes also will use student modeling as a learn-



ing technique. Native English speakers will model and help the non-native English speakers in the class when the students are learning in English. On the flip, when the students are learning in Spanish, the native Spanish speakers will model for the non-native Spanish speakers. Simpson said it is empowering for students to be able to teach their peers this way.

Burke County Public Schools is working in partnership with Participate on the dual language immersion program. The information night allowed the Stockhams and other parents to talk with a Participate representative, ask questions about the program, visit different stations to see sample textbooks and curriculum and to meet Mountain View Elementary School Principal Charles Williams and Assistant Principal Leanna McKinney.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "We are excited to offer this opportunity to students entering elementary school and to be able to give parents a choice. After our board visited the dual language program in McDowell County and researched the options, they saw that in opening a new elementary school it would be the perfect timing for our own Global Immersion Academy. We also are excited about our partnership with Participate and look forward to working with them on this endeavor. It is one more way we are helping students find their niche and get them excited about learning."

If you have a rising kindergarten student and are interested in the dual language immersion program at Mountain View Elementary School, applications are due by Monday, June 25. Students will be selected through a lottery process. If you live outside of the Mountain View district and get accepted, the school system will waive the transfer fee for your kindergarten student and siblings. The kindergarten students will stay in the program through the fifth grade and each year a new cohort will be added in kindergarten. Visit [www.burke.k12.nc.us](http://www.burke.k12.nc.us) for an application.

### Young archer places second in world competition

Ten-year-old Natalie Bell has taken the archery world by storm. The rising Ray Childers Elementary School fifth grader placed second in a world archery tournament on June 9. Natalie competed in the 2018 National Archery in Schools Program World Tournament in Louisville, Kentucky, and with a score of 285, she came in second in the female elementary division. While she was second out of 616 elementary girls, she was first out of 262 fourth-grade girls and 88th overall out of 2,362 elementary, middle and high school girls. Heading into the world tournament, Natalie was ranked No. 1 in the nation in her bracket for scoring 293 out of 300 points at the national championships in May.

Natalie is the daughter of Clint and Allison Bell. Clint is a game warden and Allison is the Burke County Program Coordinator for Health-e-Schools, a program of the Center for Rural Health Innovation. Clint is a bow hunter and knew about the school archery program through work. He had gotten Natalie a kid's bow and arrow set when she was younger, but she didn't get serious about the sport until her PE teacher, Mike Steele, introduced her and fellow students to archery in PE class. The young archer surprised everyone with her archery skills, including Steele, and she made the Ray Childers archery team as a third grader.

Natalie said of archery, "It is a lot of fun. I like the spirit of competition. Mr. Steele is a great coach and is good at motivating us and encouraging us."

To keep her skills sharp, Natalie said she practices five times a week for about 30 minutes each time. Allison said her daughter seems to shoot better in competition.

She said, "She was shooting really well at nationals and shot her personal best. She did fantastic. When we came home, and she would practice, she was not shooting as high as she shot for nationals. She works better under pressure."

Natalie agrees. She said, "I do better when I'm challenged." Going into the fifth grade, Natalie said she is open to helping out new archery teammates next year. Her advice to them is to stay focused and try hard.

Clint said the sport has been good for the Bell family and his daughter. He said, "Archery is a really good program. It's been good for our family watching Natalie compete. To see her dedication and hard work as a 10-year-old and to see her practice and keep up with homework, she's dedicated."

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "Congratulations to Natalie. We are proud of her and honored that she has represented Burke County Public Schools well on both the national and international level. The archery program has been a fantastic addition to our elementary schools, and I continue to give Mike Steele credit for bringing it to Burke County Public Schools. It teaches not only the skill of shooting a bow and arrow, but also, like other sports, sportsmanship, teamwork, respect, self-discipline and goal setting. Students also get a little bit of geometry in there, too. I am pleased we are able to offer a variety of programs in our schools. Our students, like Natalie, have undiscovered talents that may not surface until they are exposed to something new."

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





# Mitchell County Animal Rescue

**Overcrowding**  
By Patricia Beam  
Mitchell County

MCAR Operating Far Above Maximum Capacity – In Dire Need of Community Foster Homes For Kittens

Mitchell County Animal Rescue is reaching out to the community asking for assistance during a population explosion of abandoned and unwanted puppies and kittens. “We are above maximum shelter capacity, currently caring for 75 cats and kittens and 31 dogs and puppies,” says MCAR Executive Director Patricia Beam. An overflow of 5 puppies and 16 kittens are being housed in five different area foster homes. Plus, there is a two-week waiting list for more kittens to be surrendered. “We just don’t have the room or the resources to handle this deluge of unwanted animals. We need help in order to humanly and lovingly serve these pets,” adds Ms. Beam.

Spaying and neutering pets, especially free roaming cats, is critical to controlling the unwanted pet population. Just one unaltered female cat and her offspring can produce 400,000 cats in their lifetime! Twice a week, MCAR holds low cost spay and neuter clinics, making the service affordable for everyone. The cost is \$60 for dogs and female cats and \$43 for male cats. Rabies and distemper shots just \$10 each. MCAR invites everyone to participate in these low cost programs, and will even waive their carrier fees to encourage people to sign up. This is so important for all animals but especially free roaming cats. A cat that has been fixed is a much healthier cat. It is also a common myth that a spayed or neutered cat will not hunt as well as an unaltered cat, but in fact, the opposite is true! It actually improves their hunting abilities, as cats are not distracted with finding a mate and having kittens, but rather hunting mice. This is great news for those people who keep free roaming cats as mousers.

This overload of pets in the shelter is really taking a toll, and MCAR is asking the public for help. “More than anything, we need new foster families who would be willing to take a litter of kittens into their home until older ones can be fixed and adopted,” says Patricia Beam. MCAR will pay for all the food, litter and veterinary care of the animals, the foster families will provide the love and snuggles these kittens so desperately need. MCAR is also completely depleted of everyday care supplies and are currently accepting donations of: non-clumping clay cat litter, clumping cat litter for foster homes, short cardboard box bottoms as used under cans of soda, bleach, Dawn dish soap, sanitizing wipes, pet food, Hills Science Diet food for shelter dogs & cats, and laundry detergent. Monetary donations are also very much needed to fix a public or shelter cat, and can be made on the shelters website at [www.mitchellcountyanimalrescue.org](http://www.mitchellcountyanimalrescue.org), by phone or by check to their mailing address of P.O. Box 308, Spruce Pine, NC, 28777.

Interested in adopting a kitten? We have many, so many, bundles of love to choose from, available for just a \$10 adoption fee that includes spay/neuter, vaccinations, microchip, deworming, and starter bag of food! For more information about spay and neuter clinics, our current overcrowding situation, or our need and how you can help, please contact Mitchell County Animal Rescue at 828-765-6952, view our Facebook page, or visit our website at [www.mitchellcountyanimalrescue.org](http://www.mitchellcountyanimalrescue.org).

## About Mitchell County Animal Rescue

Mitchell County Animal Rescue, Inc. (MCAR), located in Spruce Pine, is a not-for-profit humane organization devoted to the rescue and care of abandoned, neglected, abused and otherwise unwanted animals in Mitchell County, NC. Although we are a small shelter with limited resources, we are highly dedicated to our community and we strive to offer as many programs as our budget will allow including: adoptions, intake of stray and surrendered pets, lost and found, cruelty investigations and prosecution assistance, low-cost spay/neuter programs, low-cost rabies clinics, pet food banks and community education. We are a vibrant part of our community and are proud of the fact that we have won the Non-Profit of the Year Award from the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce for the last four consecutive years. We currently operate with 6 staff members, 60 regular shelter volunteers, a 9 member Board of Directors, and 2 veterinarians who work closely with our staff at a reduced cost. Our Executive Director, Patricia Beam, has been with MCAR since 1996, where she started as a volunteer. She also serves as the County Commissioner appointed Cruelty Investigator for Mitchell County, NC working closely with local law enforcement. We have 22 dog kennels, 4 of which can hold multiple dogs in cases of mothers with litters or bonded dogs who should remain together. We also have a special cat area with 39 cages, many of which can also hold multiple cats who enjoy company. In addition to the space at our facility, we have an active foster program with 5 homes participating. Visit [www.mitchellcountyanimalrescue.org](http://www.mitchellcountyanimalrescue.org) to find out how you can join us in our work.



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The University Campaign For Lees-McRae Surpasses Fundraising Goal Of \$30 Million

By Nina Mastandrea  
Avery County

BANNER ELK, N.C. — Announced during a recent celebration in Evans Auditorium within the Cannon Student Center, the University Campaign exceeded its goal of \$30 million in funds with a final balance of more than \$32 million.

The campaign was created to raise funds to enhance academic programs with the addition of new faculty and graduate programs, strengthen scholarship assistance, modernize campus with improvements to classrooms, laboratories and athletic complexes as well as bolster essential endowment and operating funds.

The celebration brought together the campus and High Country communities to mark the end of the campaign.

Campaign co-chair and trustee Dianne May presented the final total on behalf of herself and fellow co-chair and trustee Barbara Miller Whitton who was not in attendance.

"We are most grateful to all of you, our donors and constituents, for your participation and support of this transformative initiative that will make a difference in the learning and teaching experience for our students, staff and faculty here at Lees-McRae," said May. "I am pleased to share with you that to date we have secured \$32,177,477 in cash and documented pledges."

Before the campaign was publicly announced in 2017, many projects were completed as part of a silent phase. This included building of the May School of Nursing and Health Sciences, renovations to the Dotti M. Shelton Learning Commons as well as the establishment of the BB&T Leadership Institute within the School of Business and Management.

With the closing of the campaign, improvements will begin on projects such as renovations to the Arthur Student Recreation Complex and the development of an arts village—a renovated home for the communication arts and design program. The celebration not only marked the end of the campaign, but also the final days of Dr. Barry M. Buxton's tenure as president of Lees-McRae.

W. McNair Tornow, Board of Trustees Chairman, shared his thoughts on the completion of the campaign as well as his sentiments towards Buxton's leadership through the years.

"We wouldn't have tonight, a Board of Trustees or Lees-McRae if we didn't have Barry," Tornow said.

He continued his remarks with a lighthearted comparison between Buxton's passion for cycling, and Lees-McRae's climb "onward and upward."

"Just like in cycling, [Lees-McRae] continued to move forward," he said. "Regardless of the obstacle, a flat tire, getting a little lost or otherwise, we never lost sight of our goal—the finish line."

Learn more about the University Campaign for Lees-McRae at [lmc.edu/campaign](http://lmc.edu/campaign). 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](http://www.lmc.edu) or call 828.898.5241.

Nina Mastandrea is the content manager of Lees-McRae College



What Has Happened to America

By Pastor Steve Williams  
Mitchell County



Well, I'm not the smartest man in the world or even the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I believe what has happened to America is Distorted Priorities and Distorted Values. We are living in a mixed up America today. Everyone has a view on why they are right and a point to back it up and are very quick to let you know. What has happened in the world we are living in today is that they have tried to Replace the Pure unadulterated Word of God with a lot of man-made philosophies, and worldly things, and it just keeps getting worse and worse. I blame a lot of what has happened on the preachers who stand behind the pulpits of America and around the world. There are many preachers today who are not willing to stand on the Word of God because they are afraid they will offend the listener. Folks, the Word of God will offend you if you are out of God's will— it always has, and it always will. If you listen long enough and look hard enough you will eventually find a group that you will go along with what you want to believe. That's why we have Distorted Values. You don't mix God's word with anything because God's word stands alone. You don't need to add anything or take anything away from God because He is Everything you need. You don't need to mix The Word of God and Personal Opinions. Because it doesn't matter what your personal opinion is or even what your personal preference is. It only matters what the Word of God says. All the way through the Bible it shows us and tells us not to mix God with other things:



The Bible says John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Don't Mix Light & Darkness

The Bible Says Rev. 3:15-16 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. [16] So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* Not to Mix Hot and Cold because you get lukewarm

The Bible says in John 15:19 *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* Not to Mix Christianity and the World because it not about being liked but loving God.

The Bible tells us clearly in Exodus 20:3 *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* That there is Only One God of this world.

The Bible says here in Luke 16:13 *No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.* Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

So, my answer to What Has Happened to America is very simple. The Word of God has been mixed with so much worldliness and ungodly viewpoints, and then the personal opinions and personal preference of people that people fail to have a clue of what, Real Truth and Morals really are in the day we are living. Because people have failed to stand and to live by the Word of God.

Words of Wisdom:

- Stay in the Word of God and you'll know the Truth. Steve Williams
- Facts are many, but the truth is one. N/A
- Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts. N/A
- A nation is blessed when it has godly leaders. Max Lucado
- The secret to happiness is freedom... And the secret to freedom is God.

Something to think about.

- If life were a do-it-yourself project, God would not have left us His instructions. His Precious Word.

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

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HELLLLL!!!

By Beth Davis  
Mitchell County

The bridge is falling down. The ceiling is falling in. The roof is leaking. Plus, a tree is dangerously close to falling on the dilapidated bridge. That's right, folks, our little world is crumbling all around us here at Mitchell County SafePlace, and we need a miracle..... or money.....or both.

Yes, I know.... you're used to reading stories about victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and what we do to help them. And it's important that you know these stories! Unfortunately, our story is this: the ox is in the ditch.



shelling out thousands upon thousands of dollars.....which could better be spent helping our clients.

Truthfully, I'd much rather be telling you about our terrified client who showed up with nothing but the clothes on her back after escaping years of abuse and sexual assault from her boyfriend. I'd rather be telling you about how timid and shy she was because he'd beaten the self-worth and self-esteem out of her. How, thanks to folks like you, we got her a home and furnished it through your donations to the SafePlace Thrift Store. How she slowly built up enough nerve and self-confidence to get her CNA from Mayland Community College. You made a direct impact on her life.

But this story is a bit awkward. This time, we need your help. No, the bridge isn't a heartbreaking-to-heartwarming story, but it has been deemed unsafe by structural engineers. When that thing falls we (and our neighbors) will be trapped, as will our clients. If we have an emergency, Law enforcement can't get to us.... neither can EMT's or the Fire Department. And when that tree falls (and it will), you'll hear it. Or at least you'll hear all of us yelling when it does.

As for the roof and ceiling? We need more buckets. The living room area, where clients and visitors wait, the ceiling is literally falling on their heads; plus there's mold. In our offices printers have been damaged and documents and paperwork are many times ruined.... not to mention the water running down some walls, sometimes on or beside electric outlets. Who knows what the contractor will find when he takes the roof off! At our shelter, the skylights drip, drip, drip, drip even during the briefest shower.

It's not a pretty story. It's the sad truth. And some of you may be thinking, "Well, there are lots of offices around here with leaky roofs or dubious bridges," but SafePlace money needs to be going to help victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. We own our office and our shelter, and until someone builds or donates us a bright, shiny new place, we're here for the long haul.

If you or your company would like to help fund our bridge and/or roof, we'd be more than grateful!

Mitchell County SafePlace  
PO Box 544  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

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



Student Awards

By Elaine Percival  
Mitchell County

Mitchell High School students, Jacob Carroll, Elizabeth Honeycutt and Lauren Helms were recognized as Seniors of the Month by the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine at their meeting on May 17, 2018. They received certificates from Rotarian Arch Woodard who disclosed that he was the attending physician at the birth of Jacob Carroll.

Layton Fox is the recipient of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine 2018 Scholarship. He will attend Mayland Community College. At the club's meeting on June 14, 2018, he received a check from Rotarian Tina White.



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



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# Crossword

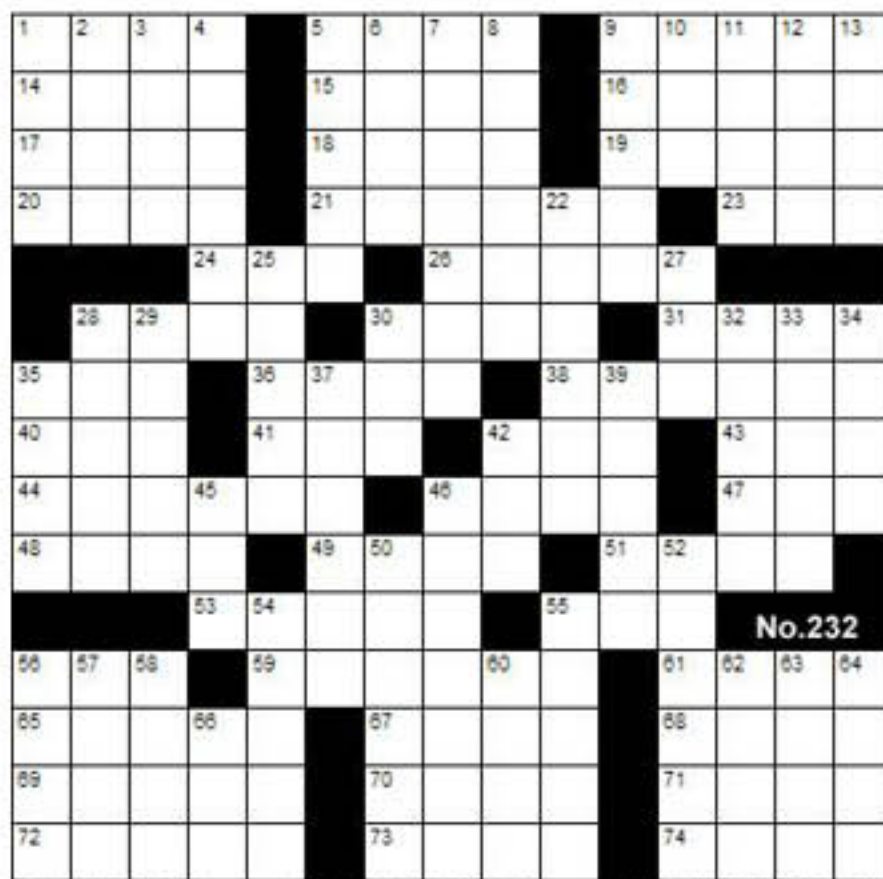
## ACROSS

1. For the commandment is a \_\_\_\_; and the law is light (Prov 6:23)
5. As \_\_\_\_ man who casteth firebrands (1,3) (Prov 26:18) KJV
9. he continued, You are from \_\_\_\_ I am from above (John 8:23)
14. John to the seven churches which are in \_\_\_\_ (Rev 1:4)
15. son of man, take thee a \_\_\_\_, and lay it before thee (Ezek 4:1) KJV
16. God provided \_\_\_\_ and made it grow up over Jonah (1,4) (Jonah 4:6)
17. made the hearts of the people \_\_\_\_ with fear (Josh 14:8)
18. for your little \_\_\_\_, and for your wives (Gen 45:19)
19. and the most important \_\_\_\_ in the synagogues (Matt 23:6)
20. Healing compound (2 Chron 28:15)
21. how is it that each of us hears them in his own \_\_\_\_ language? (Acts 2:8-9)
23. I turn rivers into a desert; their fish \_\_\_\_ for lack of water (Isa 50:2)
24. \_\_\_\_ no man any thing, but to love one another (Romans 13:8)
26. But I \_\_\_\_ in your unfailing love (Ps 13:5)
28. thrust him into a net and he wanders into its \_\_\_\_ (Job 18:8)
30. And these also stagger from wine and \_\_\_\_ from beer (Isa 28:7)
31. now therefore \_\_\_\_ thou somewhat the grievous servitude (2 Chr 10:4) KJV
35. having an alabaster \_\_\_\_ of very precious ointment (Matt 26:7) KJV
36. by this time there is a bad \_\_\_\_ (John 11:39)
38. No \_\_\_\_ with oars will ride them (Isa 33:21)
40. Therefore come \_\_\_\_ from them and be separate (2 Cor 6:17)
41. Woe to the women who \_\_\_\_ magic charms on all their wrists (Ezek 13:18)
42. a papyrus basket for him and coated it with \_\_\_\_ and pitch (Exod 2:3)
43. we sailed to the \_\_\_\_ of Crete, opposite Salmone (Acts 27:7)
44. Philistines were gathered together into \_\_\_\_ (1,5) (2 Sam 23:11) KJV
46. Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of \_\_\_\_ (Jude 11) KJV
47. wherewith the \_\_\_\_ number of them (Num 3:48)
48. thy works; and the last to be more \_\_\_\_ the first (Rev 2:19)
49. Let their table be made a snare, and a \_\_\_\_ (Romans 11:9)

51. fishermen's equipment (Luke 5:4)
53. Neither is there salvation in any \_\_\_\_; for there is (Acts 4:12)
55. A curse on him who is \_\_\_\_ in doing the LORD's work (Jer 48:10)
56. I press on toward the goal to \_\_\_\_ the prize for which God (Phil 3:14)
59. You have \_\_\_\_ gods as you have towns, O Judah (2,4) (Jer 11:13)
61. Paul gathered a \_\_\_\_ of brushwood (Acts 28:2)
65. You are bringing some strange \_\_\_\_ to our ears (Acts 17:20)
67. them that had gotten the victory \_\_\_\_ the beast (Rev 15:2)
68. the first home of Adam and Eve (Gen 2:15)
69. He \_\_\_\_ treacherously with our people and oppressed (Acts 7:19)
70. the devil threw him down, and \_\_\_\_ him (Luke 9:42) KJV
71. the warriors are \_\_\_\_ in scarlet (Nah 2:3)
72. a landowner who went out \_\_\_\_ in the morning to hire men (Matt 20:1)
73. son of Seth (Gen 4:26) KJV
74. Our sheep will increase by thousands, by \_\_\_\_ of thousands (Ps 144:13)

## DOWN

1. the precious blood of Christ, a \_\_\_\_ without blemish or defect (1 Peter 1:19)
2. was what looked like \_\_\_\_ of glass, clear as crystal (1,3) (Rev 4:6)
3. two women will be grinding with a hand \_\_\_\_ (Matt 24:41)
4. was in the isle that is called \_\_\_\_, for the word of God (Rev 1:9)
5. put an end to sin, to \_\_\_\_ for wickedness (Dan 9:24)
6. Sir, your \_\_\_\_ has earned ten more (Luke 19:16)
7. Jehoram received \_\_\_\_ from Elijah the prophet (1,6) (2 Chron 21:12)
8. Brethren, my heart's \_\_\_\_ and prayer to God for Israel is (Romans 10:1)
9. His legs are pillars of marble set on \_\_\_\_ of pure gold (Song 5:15)
10. just as \_\_\_\_ was deceived by the serpent's cunning (2 Cor 11:3)
11. let God be true, but every man a \_\_\_\_ (Romans 3:4)
12. and it vomited Jonah \_\_\_\_ dry land (Jonah 2:10)
13. compass direction (Ps 103:12)
22. sight of the slave girls of his servants as any \_\_\_\_ fellow would (2 Sam 6:20)
25. \_\_\_\_ loveth instruction loveth knowledge (Prov 12:1) (KJV)
27. the exiles who lived at \_\_\_\_ Abib near the Kebar River (Ezek 3:15)
28. My \_\_\_\_ will speak words of wisdom (Ps 49:3)
29. take no bag for the journey, or \_\_\_\_ tunic, or sandals (Matt 10:10)



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30. the pure gold lampstand with its \_\_\_\_ of lamps and all (Exod 39:37)
32. You are to \_\_\_\_ it as an inheritance for yourselves (Ezek 47:22)
33. remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many \_\_\_\_ (John 12:24)
34. one official is \_\_\_\_ by a higher one, and over them both are (Eccl 5:8)
35. used in Peter's occupation (Matt 14:29)
37. out of the \_\_\_\_ I cry to you, O LORD (Ps 130:1)
39. Like men condemned to die in the \_\_\_\_ (1 Cor 4:9)
42. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from \_\_\_\_ to bottom (Mark 15:38)
45. Eber, Misham, Shemed who built \_\_\_\_ and Lod (1 Chron 8:12)
46. they looked up and saw a \_\_\_\_ of Ishmaelites (Gen 37:25)
50. from Bethlehem in Judah to a \_\_\_\_ area in the hill country (Judg 19:18)
52. you did awesome things that we did not \_\_\_\_ (Isa 64:3)

54. I can prepare some \_\_\_\_ food for your father (Gen 27:9)
55. dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and \_\_\_\_ (2 Chron 5:12)
56. for \_\_\_\_ is the gate, and broad is the way (Matt 7:13)
57. The man who was healed had no \_\_\_\_ who it was (John 5:13)
58. Nebuchadnezzar came \_\_\_\_ to the mouth of the burning fiery (Daniel 3:26)
60. Roman Emperor at the time of the early church
62. keep away from every brother who is \_\_\_\_ and does not (2 Thess 3:6)
63. whether it be fat or \_\_\_\_, whether there be wood therein (Num 13:20)
64. He makes clouds rise from the \_\_\_\_ of the earth (Ps 135:7)
66. God saw \_\_\_\_ that he had made, and it was very good (Gen 1:31)

Solution on page 14





One Stone Upon the Next

By Timothy W. Tron  
Burke County

*"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."* — Matthew 7:24

Block upon block, stone upon stone, the process can be extremely laborious when working with masonry. It would be all the more easy to throw up a building built with any other foundation, like a pole barn for example. But for a long-lasting, secure underpinning, one must work with the bedrock of building materials. It can be very taxing upon the body, especially when you don't lay block or stone for a living. Slowly, one block, one brick at a time, the wall begins to take shape. As I step back and wonder if it will ever get done, a message from the past floods into my mind. It's the voice of my father speaking in my ear, "Once you get it down, you're done, and you'll never have to do it again. It may take a while, but you'll get there."

Walking in faith is likewise never easy. One step at a time, another scripture memorized, another theological lesson learned and soon, like a stone wall, your pathway begins to take shape. We are continually and will forever be tempted in our earthly bodies by the world in which we live. Yet, we can stand firm, like that rock wall, withstanding the floods and winds of storms that crash against us. Many years ago, there was another time when I worked with masonry. Then, as now, the feel of the mud, the right consistency, the flow of buttering the stone, then finding it in place, all come back like something ingrained in who I am. The more I worked with it, the more it felt natural. Eventually, I would learn that it was more than just a feeling, it was part of my heritage.

It was no wonder that our ancestors from the Waldensian Valleys were renowned masons. The word Waldensian simply meant, "People of the Valleys." The valleys consisted of a 25 square mile area of the northwest corner of Italy, known today as the Cottian Alps. Living at an altitude where there was always more stone than timber, the natural selection for building material became stone. The ancient villages with the slate rooftops and stone walls speak to a life of living in hardships but being prepared for them as well. The harsh winters required a dwelling place that could withstand the rigors of months of snow and freezing cold temperatures.

For centuries, they continued to build their homes, barns, and landscaping using the stone that God had provided. Likewise, their faith was based upon the granite bedrock from which they drew strength. They had received the word of God from the Apostles, and as such, held it dear to their hearts. They had become known as the "People of the Bible," because of their memorization of scripture. Families would commit entire books to memory so that when a community came together, they could recite the entire Bible by heart. For nearly a thousand years, they had been persecuted by the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Their crime was sharing the gospels outside the church walls and possessing the Word of God. For to know the Word to the point it is within you, there is nothing else you can do but to do as the Bible says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Yet, they never wavered. The people of the valleys kept the light of Christ alive until the day would come that they could build the bridge that would carry it beyond the valleys into the rest of the world. Their evangelism would spread to all of Europe. From there, and over many centuries, until the Reformers would pick up the mantle and carry forward from that point.

When these Waldensians came to America, where they founded what would become known as Valdese, North Carolina, they brought with them their inherent talents, one of which was being natural masons. At first, they seemed turned away from who they were in more ways than one. Having no longer been persecuted, it was easy for many of them to eventually join a denomination that didn't demand the same attention to faith as their ancestors that had died by the sword. So too were they eager to leave behind the toil of working with stone, and instead, tried to build homes made only of wood. Before long, when they finally had time to regroup and reflect more on who and what they were, many went back to working with stone. From there, many churches and WPA projects in and around Burke County were either built or enhanced by these ancient stone smiths from the valleys. But even more dramatic was that some would return to that ancient faith and find more compatible churches to attend. Like myself finding an inherent talent that I didn't know existed, these Christians of old would return to what felt natural, as they had always done, worshipping God based on the spirit and truth, the Word of God.

It was this worshipping God as Christ had asked that determined their course in destiny. "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock."

The Waldensians place in the history of Christianity was that of an Ark, of sorts, for the Word of God, a place where God prepared a people in a place that would allow them to protect this word and preserve it until a time when the rest of the



world was ready to receive it.

When Andrew took his brother Simon to see Jesus, the first thing Jesus said to him was, "Thou art Simon, son of Jonah, that shall be called Cephas." The Greek word for Cephas meant stone, or even more precise, a little stone. It was this little stone that Christ would build his church upon, which he himself was the corner-stone; one stone upon the next.

It would seem a bitter irony that a man from Lyon France, a wealthy merchant, would sell everything he had to turn to an Apostolic way of life after hearing a traveling troubadour sing about a people from the valleys who lived out their faith as in Apostolic times. Once he heard this tale, he was determined to live and preach the word of God from that point forward. Yet, if he had used his real name, his family would have been persecuted and killed, again because it was against the law of the church-state to do so. So, to hide his identity, he became "Peter Waldo." The name simply meant a little stone from the valleys. This "Peter of the valleys," would go on to lead many in Lyon to Christ and would eventually have to flee to safety to the same valleys from which he took his name. Some historians would tell you that this was the beginning of the Waldensians, but it couldn't be further from the truth. Knowing that they could not destroy the people of the valleys by force, for they had tried and failed so many times, eventually, the Catholic Church would use the Peter Waldo tale to sway people away from the truth. When Satan gets a foot in the door, he not only takes an inch but will always take a mile.

Sadly, the story is perpetuated even unto today; some by people who are ignorant of the truth while others purposely continue the lie to diminish the true connection of those ancient people of the valleys to the disciples. Without a doubt, the ancient Waldensians can be traced back to the time of the Apostles, even though their persecutors tried to eliminate or destroy any proof thereof. A good starting point for anyone wanting to research the truth can be found in Ted Alexander's book, "The Waldenses, of Whom the World Was Not Worthy." Even with the persecutor's attempts to hide and slander the truth, one can still search into ancient documents today and find clear evidence of Apostolic ties.

It is no wonder that with the ancient Waldenses connection to the Apostles, many denominations seek them out as their forefathers of faith. The Peter Waldo story was and is still today created to perpetuate a false story which is to diminish this fact, that the ancient Waldensians were the link to the original word of God having received it from the Apostles. If it were not so, the Catholic Church could, and does claim to be the sole inheritor of these rights.

Ironically, what the Catholic Church tried to kill never died. Their persecutions of these simple valley people became the voice of martyrs, whose blood planted the seeds of the Reformation.

As we have seen, and hopefully now you too can understand, how those ancient people of the valleys persevered for centuries when they held their faith close to their heart. When the flames of persecution lessened, so did their vigilance. Today, we face the same lessons. When we give in to the world around us, we weaken our diligence to fight the devil. We must not fall away from our focus on the word, for as it is written in Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

We can never forget the past, should we be tempted to repeat it. To diminish the truth is to void Christ of all that he did to be the salvation for all mankind. It is up to us to carry on the truth, for it is written, "The father seeketh those who worship him in spirit and in truth."

Do not let the light of Christ go out. Carry on the work of those distant forefathers and speak boldly to others.

Remember, one stone upon the next is all it takes.

Their salvation is in your hands.

Lux Lucet in Tenebris. The light shines in the darkness.

Thanks be to God.

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](mailto:twtron@live.com)



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## Pause...and Consider

### Believing Is Seeing With Transformed Eyes

By Ken and Jan Merop  
Avery County



Our eyesight is one of the most precious gifts we have.

With our eyesight, we behold the faces of those we love. Every look is like a snapshot placed into our memory banks. But, though we can call up images at any time, there is nothing that beats being able to look directly into the eyes of those beloved.

Through our eyes we are awed by creation ~ the intricate delicateness of each flower, the smallest insect; tiny birds and magnificently large ones; beautiful seascapes and majestic mountains.

With our eyes, we can pick up a book and travel to new places, meet new characters and learn delightful lessons. It is said that looking into someone's eyes is like looking into their soul.

And yet, many are born blind or through some accident or disease have lost their ability to see. However, the other senses become extremely sensitive and heightened; so much so that the sighted person cannot fully understand the depth of expression found in one who may not see; but, yet, perhaps, sees more profoundly.

The world says that seeing is believing. And, to some extent, that is true. If someone tells you they own a unique gem worth thousands of dollars, but they never show it to you, you may doubt. Even if they show it to you, you might wonder if it is valuable.

But, if it is put into the hands of a jeweler wearing a jeweler's 'eye' to examine it and he declares it of superior value, seeing is definitely believing. Our spiritual sight differs, however.

People still question God's existence. They want this sign or that vision; they bargain with God to perform for them and when he doesn't acquiesce to their demands, they declare he doesn't exist after all.

Yet Scripture declares in Acts 14: 17 NKJV, "He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Creation shouts out that he exists. Our bodies in the intricacies of design (consider the eye!) declare the glory of God.

Yet, in the spiritual realm, believing is seeing.

The vision of the naked eye cannot compare with the sight given when a person comes to faith and beholds his Creator. His eyes are profoundly opened because the truth is revealed in his heart, unveiling the heart of God.

Believing is seeing with transformed eyes. Selah

### INTRIGUE

*Reflective imagery in a pool of water  
captured a sundial's replica.*

*Softly touched by delicate water lilies,  
colorful stones, and mysterious shadows,  
it invites one to wonder with sheer intrigue.*

*As the mystery of God's love, mercy, and grace  
are revealed to us in His perfect time,  
we are filled with wonder and intrigue...*

*seeing with transformed eyes. "The mystery...has been revealed..."*

*Christ in you, the hope of glory."*

*Colossians 1: 26 & 27*



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan's new blog @ [pauseandconsider.net](http://pauseandconsider.net), Journeying with Jan; and Ken's photos at [kenmeropphoto.com](http://kenmeropphoto.com).

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True Faith in God Leads to Good Works  
Love for Others Motivates Us to Serve Them

By Dr. Tracy Jessup  
Boiling Springs, NC

*"We always thank God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." -- 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3*

Perhaps you have heard the story of President John F. Kennedy's visit to NASA as part of his ongoing efforts to inspire the nation to rally behind the Apollo missions. He happened to see a janitor either mopping the floor or cleaning his mop. Legend has it that JFK asked him what his job was at NASA, to which the man replied, "I'm helping send a man to the moon!"

Whether or not this story is true, it does help us with perspective and seeing the big picture. Perspective was something Paul praised in the Thessalonian believers, because what he remembered about them was their embodiment of the three most celebrated Christian virtues – faith, love, and hope. These are characteristics on which Paul elaborates in varying degrees and in numerous letters (cf. Ephesians 4:2-5; Colossians 1:4-5; Romans 5:1-5; 1 Peter 1:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 13).

Faith is directed towards God. Love is focused on others. Hope is fixated on the future, particularly the second coming of Jesus Christ. Paul seems to emphasize the fruit of these characteristics exemplified by the Thessalonians. He commends their "work of faith." True faith in God leads to good works, after all, "faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17).

The Thessalonians' labor of love also is praised. A genuine love for others motivates us to serve them. Furthermore, a firm hope that looks with anticipation to Christ's return produces endurance in spite of persecution – something with which the Thessalonians were quite familiar. Their example of faith, love, and hope caused the word of the Lord to sound forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place their faith in God became known (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8). Recently, I was reminded of another legend about a man who visited a stone quarry and asked three workers what they were doing.

"Can't you see?" said the first one irritably. "I'm cutting a stone."

The second replied, "I'm earning a hundred pounds a week."

But the third put down his pick and proudly said, "I'm building a cathedral." Prayer: Lord, help us to remember the importance of our work of faith, our labor of love, and our steadfastness of hope as we seek to live lives of purpose, vision and passion.

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*Dr. Tracy Jessup is the Vice President for Christian Life and Service and Senior Minister to the University.*



Life Changer

By Jim Jacumin  
Burke County

Reverend Shawn Thomas brought Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church for picnics and tours of the Waldensian Trail of Faith in Valdese, where they experienced the true 'Cost of Courage'.

Comments heard coming out of the Church of the Cave- "I'll never miss church again!"

Other comments along the Trail-

"My heart has been touched in many ways, my faith renewed, and my gratefulness of freedom to worship God", upon learning how the Waldensian people had to memorize the bible because if they were caught with just a part of scripture they were burned at the stake. - "The importance of knowing the word of God, for you never know when it might be taken away", "It has truly been a blessing to learn more about the Waldensians, we're so glad we came", "One of the most eye opening experiences I have ever been through", "Enjoyed my tour as I thought of the lives lost for the truth found in God's Word", "Touring made me realize how fortunate we are to be able to worship freely. Very touching and heart wrenching to see what the people endured in order to worship the one true God", "I have lived in Morganton all my life, heard of the Waldensians, but not the hardships they had to endure, what an eye opening tour", "I can see why Pope Francis visited the Waldensian capitol in Italy to ask for forgiveness of the Waldensian people for all the imprisonment, torture and slaughter by the Roman Catholic Church"

The Waldensian Trail of Faith has 16 exhibits depicting the history that many believe started when the Apostles traveled through their valleys. They are a survival of primitive Christianity. When exiled to Switzerland they were welcomed as The Heroes of the Reformation, the 500-year anniversary just celebrated around the world.

The Trail welcomes all churches to take advantage of our facilities to leave your church after Sunday School with a picnic lunch, travel to the Trail of Faith in Valdese, have your worship service in the oldest Protestant church, enjoy your family picnic and tour the 16 actual size exhibits to experience The True Cost of Courage. Please call: 828-874-1893 or email us at: trailoffaith1893@gmail.com for your life changing tour.

*Jim is the President of Trail of Faith. He is a former senator in NC, a licensed contractor and has worked in the nuclear engineering field.*





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*-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder*



## Kick off-- Home Repair Program with Disabled American Veterans on Memorial Day Weekend

By Alyse Sferlazza  
Yancey County



During this past year Mitchell-Yancey Habitat has developed a new initiative - Neighborhood Revitalization. Neighborhood Revitalization is a Habitat for Humanity International program which uses residents and community partners working together to improve local quality of life with better accessibility and safety.

The Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity Board spent much of the last year developing this initiative. Jonathan Ward, Habitat Board member explained, "We wanted to expand our efforts and we found that the pressing need was assisting the aging and disabled population stay in their homes."

The Neighborhood Revitalization Home Repair program will assist people in need who wish to stay in their homes. We believe that everyone should be able to grow old safely and comfortably in their own community. As we kick off this program, Habitat will address small but necessary projects such as building ramps, repairing steps and porches, replacing gutters or windows, painting, improving walkways, and landscaping.



On Memorial Day Weekend, Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity in collaboration with Disabled American Veterans, built an access ramp for a 73-year-old disabled veteran, Don Morrison. Disabled American Veterans provided materials and workers to help Habitat volunteers. In just two days, five volunteers built a new ramp for Mr. Morrison.

Don said, "the ramp increases my ability to get in and out of my house safely and with ease". He expressed his gratitude for the volunteers who built the ramp. Jim Erlandson, Habitat Board member, who worked on the ramp said, "There was incredible camaraderie between Habitat and DAV volunteers building this much-needed ramp. A neighbor of Don's even baked a cake for us, making this truly a neighborhood project".

The Mitchell-Yancey Habitat, incorporated in 1992, is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry that builds and rehabilitates houses for families in need. Over the last 16 years Mitchell-Yancey Habitat has built 20 houses. The Board decided to increase home production to two houses per year (one in each county, each year) in addition to the Neighborhood Revitalization Project. By increasing home building and addressing community needs through the Home Repair/Neighborhood Revitalization project, "We are reaching a new level of support for our communities" said Jonathan Ward.

Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity is always seeking new community partners and donors. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the Board, working on house repairs, developing a partnership, donating money or needing help with home repairs, please contact Misty Evans, Operations Manager (828) 766-9000 or stop by the ReStore, 563 Oak Ave., Spruce Pine.

Alyse lives in Green Mountain with her Fiancé and two rescued dogs. Avid reader, quilter, gardener, maker and shaker. She moved to Yancey County from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 2015. Passionate about nature, the move to the mountains was a natural fit. Spends her free time gardening and quilting. In 2017 received a North Carolina Real Estate License. She studied philosophy and biochemistry at De Paul University in Chicago, IL and has participated in many diverse social, and environmental initiatives across the country. Her passion is serving others and her community.

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Toe River Arts

41<sup>st</sup> Annual Benefit Auction July 7

By Kate Groff  
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

The Toe River Arts Council hosts its 41st Annual Benefit Auction on Saturday, July 7. What's different this year is that an auction preview is in Spruce Pine where folks can silent bid or buy-it-now or just look over what is going on the block in July. The preview runs through July 3 when it will be boxed up and moved to the Burnsville Town Center at 6 South Main Street for Auction day on the 7th.

The Silent Auction will open at 10 am on Saturday, July 7. Tables will be filled with donated art work from regional artists. Folks will be able to view and bid, take a peek at the Live Auction pieces and enjoy a glass of wine at the public reception from 4 to 6 pm. Tables begin closing at 5. At 6 pm, the doors to the main room open and the excitement begins with a catered Latin fusion dinner by the Yummi America Burnsville Cafe. Homeplace Beer Company will bring a keg or two of their home brew and wine will flow. At 7 pm, everyone's favorite auctioneer Jeff Goodman will begin auctioning off work from some of the most renowned artists in the country—all in support of Toe River Arts. Although partially funded by matching grants from the North Carolina Arts Council, Toe River Arts depends upon the generosity of their supporters in order for them to keep providing arts experiences, interactions, and education to those who call the Toe River Valley home. Tickets are \$40 per person in advance (\$50 the day of the Auction), and there is limited seating.

Each year, one signature piece is featured. This year, Cynthia Bringle's spectacular 22" vase is in the spotlight. Cynthia has been a resident artist in the area since the late 60's. Although she is most well known for her ceramics, she is also a painter and printmaker. She earned a BFA from Memphis Academy of Art and a MFA from Alfred University. She has taught workshops nationwide and at Penland School of Crafts for several years. She is a fellow of the American Craft Council and a recipient of the North Carolina Award for Fine Art.

This year's special fund-a-need hits close to home and to our children. By request, Toe River Arts is partnering with local school systems, artists, and health care professionals to bring students the tools necessary to face today's stressing challenges. The hope is to bring Black Box Dance Theatre's "Dance That Moves" into the elementary schools in Yancey County this coming school year, Mitchell schools the following.

The Annual Benefit Art Auction should prove to be another winner for those who donate and those who bid and win. Artists have come and gone; a lot have stayed to raise their families and awareness of the arts. Some nationally recognized artists, like Jim Waters (encaustics) and Kenny Pieper (glass) continue to lend their support by donating "best pieces" to the Auction. Now over four decades since the first Auction, Toe River Arts continues to thrive and now under new leadership.

The Spruce Pine Gallery at 269 Oak Avenue is open from 10:30 am to 5:00 pm, Tuesday-Saturday. Call 828.682.7215 to make your reservation for Toe River Arts 41st Annual Benefit Auction now. Then plan to visit the Spruce Pine Gallery until July 3 and place your silent bid. For more information and to see a preview of select pieces, please visit the website, <http://www.toeriverarts.org/events/annual-benefit-auction/auction-preview>.

Toe River Arts is a non-profit organization founded in 1976 to promote the arts in Mitchell and Yancey Counties and partially funded by grants from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Natural and Cultural Resources Department, a state agency, and from people around the community and the county who understand the benefits the arts play in developing an individual and a thriving region.

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



Cynthia Bringle  
Signature ceramic vase

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Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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

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Celebrates Fifth Year with Fort Caswell's Senior Adult Retreat

By Carol Layton

This summer, North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) marked its fifth year of participation with Fort Caswell's senior adult retreat—Summerfest. The event is a 5-day, 4-night retreat for retired and semi-retired adults. Originally held only in August, the premier event now occurs in May and August at the NC Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell on Oak Island.

Seniors from around the state attend as individuals or with groups. The event includes class options, chapel services, entertainment, games, excursions and more. The class options provide a wide variety of opportunities for attendees. From jewelry making to fishing to in-depth Bible studies, there is something for everyone. In addition to the sessions offered by Summerfest planners, NCBAM sponsored eight classes during the May session and will repeat them in August.

One of the most-attended sessions was the Fancy Finds Roadshow held each morning. Fancy Finds resale store is a ministry of Baptist Children's Homes. Director Renee Gregory and team member Kim Lesage taught refinishing techniques to attendees who restored worn items into showpieces. The items were either sold at the retreat or brought back to sell at the Thomasville store where all proceeds benefit the ministries of Baptist Children's Homes. Vicky Arroba from Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte attended all three sessions. "At church we have lots of prayer groups and learning opportunities, but I loved the chance to do hands-on stuff and learn something new at this retreat."

Central west regional director for NCBAM, Debra Kuykendall, presented Happy New You! In this session, attendees took an optimism survey and then learned to develop action plans, as well as tips for healthy eating, exercise and fall prevention. Eighty-one year old Carol Taylor from Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church attended the session and encouraged everyone with her attitude. When Kuykendall asked the group, "Why be happy?" Taylor responded, "Why be sad? I tell my grandkids—you might as well be happy. You have to take yourself with you everywhere you go!"

Integrative Health Coach Whitney Brooks provided A Leader's Legacy. Attendees explored how their core values and leadership values intertwined. Jackie Lewis from First Baptist Church Jonesville said the session encouraged him. "Sometimes I think I need to drop back. Whitney asked excellent questions that got me fired up to go back home and do more for my community—to continue on."

Pat Harris from Lincolnton Baptist Church was also inspired by the session. "It was delightful. The Lord wants to use me even in the smallest ways. I might not be able to build a ramp, but I can make chicken soup. I can call someone and send a card. I can bring people just a minute of joy."

NCBAM's north central regional director, Samantha Allred, worked with BCH's IT Manager, Thomas Tetter, to develop Yearning for Better TV? This session explored the complicated world of TV providers. Galen Bolin, an IT consultant from Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church, gave the session two thumbs up. "I came because I know how complicated the issue is and wondered how the issues would be handled. Samantha provided a very good outline of the basics. It's



Vicky Arroba (l) from Pritchard Memorial Baptist and Jean Spence (r) from Lincolnton Baptist Church participated in the Fancy Finds Roadshow at Fort Caswell's Summerfest in May. They refinished this piece which will be for sale at Fancy Finds resale store in Thomasville

a constant learning process even for people who work in the field."

Kathy Yancey from Independence Hill Baptist Church in Huntersville also attended the session and reaped rewards within 24 hours. "My husband and I had been doing some research and talking about it. He said, 'Go to this class. We'll make sure we're on the right track and then I'll make the calls. The day after the class, he called and reduced our \$250 monthly bill in half. We got rid of things we didn't really use and negotiated a better internet connection. It was a win-win for us!"

In The Spiritual Practice of Simplicity, NCBAM's south central regional director, Robert Leonard explored Scriptural truths that challenge our desires and can help us begin practicing a life of simplicity. Jan Francks from First Baptist Church Southern Pines appreciated the focus on biblical simplicity. "I always feel tempted to take on too many things. The scriptures helped me to refocus on things I've known all my life."

In A Taste of Tai Chi, NCBAM's director of communications, Carol Layton, shared an evidence-based Tai Chi program that reduces fall risk. Attendees learned six basic movements and explored how a Tai Chi practice improves balance, coordination, and pain management. An attendee reported that the movements revealed to her how much her balance was off. "I enjoyed every minute of the class. I'm going to work on getting my balance back."

Mark Smith, Senior Consultant for Family Evangelism and Discipleship at the Baptist State Convention, presented Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. He explored this cultural phenomenon and encouraged all grandparents, whether raising grandchildren or not, in the tremendous influence they have in the lives of grandchildren.

Dr. Sandy Gregory, director of NCBAM, joined with central regional directors Robert Leonard and Samantha Allred to debut NCBAM's newest outreach: Disaster Preparedness for Aging Adults: How Churches Can Help. Sharing startling statistics about the disproportional vulnerability of older adults during disasters or other emergencies, the trio explained that NCBAM can help churches plan, implement, and maintain a disaster preparedness ministry for their members and community.

It's not too late to register for the August 13-17 Summerfest session and plan to enjoy these and many other exciting and informative sessions. Call Fort Caswell at (910)278-9501 to reserve your space today!

Carol Layton is the Director of Communications and Administration for NCBAM at Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina



Participants in A Leader's Legacy began their exploration of values with an art journaling exercise—choosing from scrapbook papers, colorful pens . . . and chocolates!



With the beautiful Cape Fear River within sight through the shuttered windows, participants experienced A Taste of Tai Chi while practicing balance, coordination and mindful breathing.

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# Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

## Are You Shifting the Blame?

By Shawn Thomas  
Burke County

*"The people spoke against God and Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.'"*  
(Numbers 21:5)

Numbers 21:4 says the people of Israel "became impatient because of the journey" in the wilderness. But as people often do, they vented their anger in the wrong direction. Verse 5 says that *"The people spoke against God and Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die ...?'"* Why were they blaming "God and Moses"? The reason they were dying in the wilderness was entirely their own fault. Numbers 14 tells us that the people refused to enter the Canaan at the direction of the Lord through Moses, so God sentenced them to die in the wilderness instead of inheriting the Promised Land (14:35). It was not God's fault they were floundering and dying in the wilderness. It was their own.

But like many of us today, the people of Israel were looking for someone else to blame. It can be hard to own up to our mistakes, so we often look to "shift the blame" to someone else: our spouse, child, a supervisor, co-worker, classmate — or even, like Israel here, to God Himself.

Are you doing this? Are you suffering the consequences of your own disobedience to God in some area of your life, but you have not been willing to admit it? Is there someone you have been angry with — maybe even God? — instead of admitting that you have brought this upon yourself? If so, you never will make any progress before God or man, until you first stop trying to shift the blame.

Shawn Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at [www.shawnethomas.com](http://www.shawnethomas.com)

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*  
Galatians 5:1



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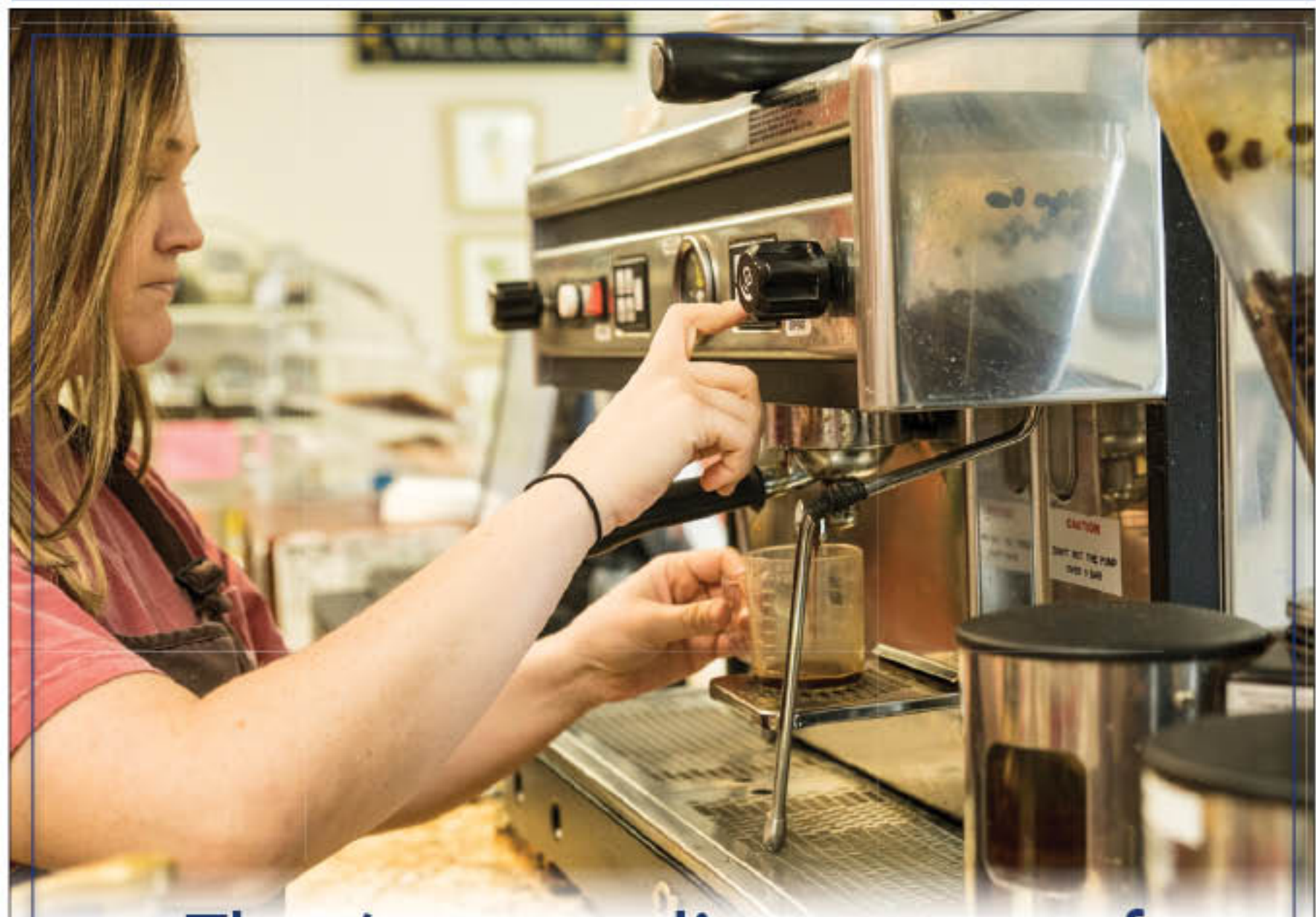
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