My Testimony: Haley Johnson
By Kiesa Kay

"Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands." Deuteronomy 8:2 (NIV)

Haley Johnson has been humbled and put to the test. She feels that the Lord has led her from the wilderness of substance abuse and sorrow, through her darkest hour of sin and despair into a new beginning, and she’s pledged her life to following Him and helping others.

"I thank God I have no desire for drugs and alcohol to this day," Haley said. "A month of clothes, or television, or man, or money, or drugs could fill that hole in my heart. I needed God."

Haley does presentations for community groups now, so that others can learn from her struggles and pain strength from faith in the Lord. When she spoke at First Baptist Church in Burnsville this September, Starrif Gary Banks introduced her and praised her for her recovery. He encouraged others to transform suffering the way Haley does.

"Go forward," he said. "Be there. Be that person for someone else in need." Haley’s parents and family have been there to help her, every step of the way. "I had no excuse, to run out the way I did," she said. "Addiction is no respecter of persons. It will take hold of anyone. I got emotional when I think about the pain I put others through."

She kept her addiction hidden from her parents, and split her life into two segments. Proverbs 4:12 says, "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death," and Haley had leaped down the wrong path. She kept going to church on Sunday, and managed to keep a cheerful countenance in front of her family for a while, but as her addiction grew, she found she couldn’t keep up the pretense.

"I tried to fill the God-sized hole in my life with drinking, men, and drugs," she said. "I felt that emptiness, that loneliness."

She connected with a boyfriend who had drug abuse issues, and his addiction fed her own. As he began to swirl deeper and deeper into IV drug use, she decided to join him rather than lose him.

"I wanted her to live the way I loved more than he loved me," she said. "I became unrecognizable to myself."

When she found out she was pregnant, she panicked, because she knew that she could not take much longer. The Lord transformed her panic into the first thrust that she would find His power. As she prayed for the health of her baby, becoming pregnant became a steppingstone to reclaiming her life and identity. With significant family and counseling support she curbed her alcohol and drug use, determined to protect the little child growing inside her.

"When I was pregnant, I felt like I didn’t have any friends. Nobody wants to hang out with the pregnant girl. I managed to stay sober for my baby, but after she was born, I slid back."

She got prescribed pain pills after childbirth, due to medical troubles. She also get an appetite suppressant from a weight loss clinic. "Those two legal remedies for very real needs opened the door for her addiction to re-ignite."

"Before long, I ended up hitting rock bottom and going back to all my old habits," Haley said.

She popped pills, took IV drugs, and started fruqting out again in front of her family. No combination of drugs and alcohol seemed to make her feel any better for very long.

"Some people believe that life’s hardships lead to abusing drugs, but I believe that it’s a lack of spiritual connection to God," Haley said.

One day, she couldn’t stand it any longer. She got her knees and began the Lord to lift her up in her suffering. She felt guided to check into a detox unit for seven days, and then went into rehab for 21 days.

"I visited these painful memories to let you know I give God the glory for who I am today and I am so thankful to have escaped that living hell," she said.

It has been fifteen months since Haley, a Burnsville native, began her journey of recovery at Willow Ridge in Johnson City, Tennessee. After rehab, she attended meetings every day.

"I had tried so many times to be sober on my own power," she said. "I needed to find my faith in God.

Haley’s congregation at South Estate Baptist Church prayed for her while she went through her years of struggle. Members sent letters of encouragement to her while she was in rehab, and she felt the constant support of a community that wanted her to feel whole again. Her family kept her in prayer.

"If you stop doing drugs but you don’t know how to take that recovery journey, you’re set to fail," Haley said. "It is not your faculty’s job to get you sober. It is your job. Ezekiel 36:26 says, ‘I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.’ God fulfilled that promise in my life, and I work every day to align my will to His will for my life.

Now, Haley leads a woman’s group at the church. She still has tough times, but she has beaten the addiction and restored her faith in God.

"Today, I feel my feelings," Haley said. "I feel pain, anxiety, and fear. I’m human. Stopping drugs doesn’t mean stopping all the troubles in life. Now, though, I don’t turn to drugs. I run to Jesus Christ as fast as I can and pray myself to sleep."

Haley has found power in her faith. She began reading her Bible and studying every day. It took eight months and 23 days, for her to read the Bible from cover to cover. She had been baptized as a child, but after rehab, she got baptized again.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

"I went down in that water one person, and came up as a new creation," she said.

"My entire life I felt like I was a Christian, but knowing Jesus and feeling the power of the Holy Spirit is now I know that not to be true. Upon receiving the Holy Spirir last summer and the oncification of God Holy Word, He has set me apart. There’s nothing special about me aside from my obedience. God can use anyone who is willing to sacrifice. If I can do it, you can do it too."

Kiesa Kay, a playwright who lives in Western North Carolina can be reached at kiasleya.com. For tickets to her play about Rebecca Boone, contact the Orchard at 828-763-9331, or White Horse Black Mountain, at www.whitehorseblackmountain.com, 828-669-8616.
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The Floods Have Lifted Up Their Voice
By Dr. Mark Crouch

While the winds of Hurricane Florence howled and the torrents of rain fell, I happened upon Psalm 93:3-4 in my daily reading of Scripture.

“The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice; The floods lift up their waves; The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea.”

The aftermath of Florence is extraordinary. Thirty-three have died. Nearly 300,000 people are still without power, but that’s down from 1.4 million. The Cape Fear River is set to crest at 62 feet. There are 1,100 state roads that remain closed because of the flooding. Eighteen counties have major federal disaster declarations, and 13 are expected to follow. There are 73 states of emergency still active. Seventy-seven shelters remain open with about 10,000 people. Over 5,500 pigs and 3.4 million chickens have been lost to the flood waters. Four hog lagoons have been compromised, while 13 are overflowing and 55 are close to spilling over. Crops of peanuts, cotton, and tobacco have been lost. In some cities, thousands and thousands of pounds of wastewater have spilled into various tributaries, streams, and rivers. Damages have been estimated at around $17 billion. North Carolina’s Governor, Roy Cooper, warns that major rivers are at flood stage and that even though the storm has passed, it’s far from over.

“The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice; The floods lift up their waves.”

Indeed, the flood waters are lifted up, way up! But, adds the Psalmist, “The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea.” It was by his mighty power that the Lord, after the great universal deluge of Noah’s day, commanded the waters to go back to their places. It was the Lord who rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry land. It was the Lord who effortlessly drove back the waters of the Jordan for the Israelites to pass through, and with equal ease ca the same again.

What we have witnessed reminds us that after our many achievements, after our incredible advances in technology, medicine, transportation, communication, and other human endeavors, we are still merely mortals subject to the Heavens. Elements. We are exceedingly small and vulnerable in creation’s scheme.

Governor Cooper was right when he recently told the news media, “We’ll get through this. North Carolinians are a resilient people.” Nevertheless, let us guard against this becoming an occasion for pride. It is the Lord, and the Lord alone, who “is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea.” The monstrous whirlwind ought to teach us humility and lead us to acknowledge that not only is he sovereign over the lash of the storm, the roar of the prodigious rivers, the immense waves that roar, but that he should also be sovereign over our hearts.

In his commentary on Psalm 93 in “The Treasury of David,” Charles Spurgeon said that our sin, our rebellion, our unwillingness to submit to Christ’s Lordship is also much like a tempest. He eloquently wrote: “The tempests are all foam and fury, noise and bluster, during their little hour, and then the tide turns, and the storm is hushed, and we hear no more of them; while the Kingdom of the eternal abides in the grandeur of its power.”

Professor Browning Ware once said, “Our worst circumstances may be God’s best opportunity to bring new meaning to our lives.” God can literally and figuratively calm the storm and flood waters of life, if we will look to him in faith.

We may pass through the storm safely. The sun comes our again and eventually we may recover everything lost in the hurricane. But, if we miss the opportunity the storm gives for seeing the hand of God and experiencing his grace and mercy, failing to recognize his right to benevolently rule over us, we will suffer a loss on the Day of Judgement which cannot be recovered, even the loss of our own souls. Natural disasters are only for a season. Death beyond death, cut-off from God forever by the treacherous waters of his wrath, is disastrous beyond compare.

If you will listen carefully, you can hear “the floods have lifted up their voice.” There may be many messages in their sound. One message, however, is dominant. The voices from the wind and water instruct:

“You desperately need God. He reigns over everything. All power in heaven and earth belongs to him. Therefore, humble yourself before him. Turn away from your own arrogance and pride. Submit with your whole heart to Christ and follow him. The Lord Christ will calm the troubled waters of your spirit deliver you from the Evil One’s temptations when they come in like a flood, and command the waters of affliction not to overwhelm you in this life or the mighty winds of his justice to blow you away like chaff in the next.”

Reverend Dr. Mark Crouch is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at rev.mark.crouch@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-9000

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State of the Child Conference
By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

A very informative Conference, Mitchell County’s State Of The Child Conference 2018, will be held at Bear Creek Baptist Church, 327 Bear Creek Church Road, Bakersville on Saturday, October 27th. The purpose of this event is to allow everyone who attends to get a very explicit, in-depth picture of what the children and youth are dealing with in Mitchell County.

Presenters include the Board of Education, Health Department, Social Services, Sheriff’s Department, Mayland College, Mitchell County Recovery Ministries and the Youth and Children’s Ministry of Bear Creek Baptist Church.

Topics which will be presented include:
- Substance Abuse: How to recognize it and steps to take when suspecting it.
- Internet and Social Media Safety: How to protect your family.
- Local Gang Activity: Is it here in Mitchell? How to recognize it and what to do about it.
- Recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect of children.
- Substance abuse: the effect on the foster care population of Mitchell County.
- Sexually transmitted infections and diseases with a concentration on Hepatitis C.
- What Celebrate Recovery is. Who it is for. How can it help in the recovery process?
- Pre-college programs, high school equivalencies, and college degrees offered in Maryland.
- Tuition free college credit while in high school.
- Children’s Families and Youth Ministry in Generation “Z”.

This conference will provide valuable information to everyone who attends.

Every parent, grandparent, school teacher, Sunday school teacher, and daycare operator/worker needs to attend.

There will be three breakout sessions during the conference providing for as much information gathering as possible. Please mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend. The conference begins at 8:30am with coffee. The actual Conference begins at 9:00am and will conclude with a free lunch at noon. In addition, there will be a resource fair providing opportunities to get handouts and other free goodies.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

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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Time to Change
By Jacob Willis
Yancey County

Change is difficult for us all, maybe that is why God gives us four seasons. When fall begins we are reminded that things change. “Jo everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” —Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJV)

We are also reminded that fall is a time of harvest. The time when hard work pays off. In life we go through seasons of plenty and seasons of drought, fall reminds us not to become weary in well doing “Let us not become weary in doing well, for in the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” —Galatians 6:9. Sometimes the road seems long and hard, but fall reminds us of the truth about trouble.

Trouble is always tempered by time. If you are going through a season of trouble now, rest assured it won’t last forever. Trouble comes and goes just like the seasons of life. Trouble isn’t permanent. Trouble is passing, just as we are passing from the long hot days of summer to the cool fall mornings. God sends relief and rescues us out of our trouble, the moment his purpose is accomplished.

When a season of trouble we shouldn’t mistake the process for the purpose. Sometimes we get lost in our pain and grief. We are submerged in our feelings and we forget the character of God. We are reminded of the words of the song “How Firm a Foundation”,

“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy cross to consume, and thy gold to refine.”

God’s purpose is not to crush us completely. God doesn’t cause evil, nor trouble, but he does use it as a tool for a purpose. When that purpose is completed then he brings deliverance. He is on time every time. It may seem that the pain will never stop, but he assured God has His hand on the thermostat and His eye on the temperature. “Therefore he patiently, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.” —James 5:7. God will send what we need when we need it.

Trouble is the greatest teacher. In times of trouble we learn the most and we change the most. God demonstrates his attributes plainly during times of trouble. God’s faithfulness, loving kindness, goodness, meekness, and almighty power are on display during troubled times. God’s purpose is allowing trouble in our lives to change us, and to help us change our world. Trouble teaches us patience and the power of helplessness.

Finally, it is important to remember we are just passing through. We will not be in trouble forever. We are walking through the valley of the shadow of death. We will make it to the other side. Everything changes, except God’s presence. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me. God is with us through every season of life. He will never forsake us. People, circumstances, and things change constantly, but God never changes. His love for you hasn’t changed and His mercy is renewed morning by morning. So watch the leaves change and remember, weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

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

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High Country Prison Ministry

What time am I afraid, I will trust in thee. (Psalm 56:3)
By Jody Griffin
Mitchell and Avery Counties

“It’s one thing to be scared. But it’s another thing altogether to be scared and have no clue that God is with you.” (spoken by a staff member as Hurricane Florence was coming across the coast.)

The anxiety felt by so many of us in recent days has left it’s mark. Beforehand there were the questions... “What damage will result from a major hurricane being described as a storm of the century? How many lives will be lost, how much property destroyed, how many families facing suffering?”

The answers to these questions are becoming more evident each day. Hurricane Florence has truly been a source of concern for almost all Carolinians, from the North and the South! The news coverage regarding the storm brings a dark cloud over the incarcerated too. Many are wondering if their parents, spouses, children and grandchildren are safe. For some the wait is almost excruciating. Like a young man whose family lives is a coastal city who showed up at my door. His wife, his parents and his grandmother live in the area and he had sat on the news that the town where they live was underwater. He longed to hear that they were safe and that they knew he was also.

And like the staff member who expressed concern and asked for prayer that the rising river levels would spare their family from severe damage to their home. The counsel each of these (and several others) heard from their chaplain was in keeping with the words of this verse.

Being afraid or scared (“fear’d”) is not a sin. It’s not always a lack of faith or a sign of spiritual weakness. Being afraid is a normal part of the human process. It is given to us to keep us alert, wary of the potential for disaster. Fear is not always our enemy. There are times, like the ones referenced above, where fear is the very motivation that compels us to abandon our trust in our own devices and instead calls us to trust in God.

You may wonder how I can so boldly in the face of the obvious catastrophe of lost lives and homes as has been experienced in this storm and many others. I do not mean to be insensitive. Just as David learned to trust God’s provision and protection in the face of his own losses (both personal and corporate) so we too must learn to trust God the same. It’s the kind of thing that says the soldier, “I go into battle believing that God is with me. Knowing this, than no matter the outcome of this battle, I trust my God to ultimately bring victory in this war.”

Trust me when I tell you this is a lot easier said than done. And trust me as well when I tell you that the faith and trust that produces such powerful words as the ones above are the only true way to understand why disasters don’t have to be strong enough or brave enough or faithful enough. We simply need to trust God. Ailf?

Trust God.

Thank you so much for praying and giving to support this outreach of High Country Prison Ministry.

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

Blackpool Needs a Breakthrough
by the Power of the Holy Spirit
By Franklin Graham

Franklin Graham will preached in Blackpool last weekend, Sept 21-23. The city sits on England’s west coast, about an hour-and-a-half north of Liverpool.

Dear Friend,

This month, I am headed to Blackpool, England, one of the darkest cities in that nation. Alcoholism is everywhere, and the suicide rate is sky high. The British media have referred to it as the most nihilistic place in the nation. Drugs, gambling, crime, and violence are all epidemic.

Churches in the city and surrounding Lancashire area have been praying for their community for years, and they invited me to come in September to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. People there need to know God loves them and wants to free them from their darkness and sin. They need to know that the power of the Gospel—the “power of Christ” (2 Corinthians 12:9, NASB)—brings new life that will last for eternity.

But secular voices in the city have risen in opposition. They strongly resist God’s Word and want to undermine the evangelistic outreach, or even derail it if they can.

Pray for the power of God’s Spirit to break through in Blackpool, that many souls would be saved and delivered from darkness. Pray that we will have “boldness in our God to speak . . . the Gospel amid much opposition” (1 Thessalonians 2:2). And pray that God will engage the hearts of the people, for God is not bound by our plans. The Bible says that “with him are abundant resources” (Psalm 130:7, NKJV) — to Him be the glory!

During the Decision America tour up the West Coast, which ended on Aug. 13 in San Jose, California, more than 250,000 came out to hear the Gospel. At each stop, I told those who gathered that salvation if they would repent of their sins and accept His Son, Jesus Christ, by faith.

The Bible says, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, ESV).

I wanted everyone to hear the Good News that through Jesus, anyone can have a new beginning. We praise God that thousands of people found that new beginning in Christ, receiving lasting hope for this life and for eternity.

See photo galleries and stories from the Decision America Pacific Northwest Tour here.

During the Decision America tour up the West Coast, which ended on Aug. 13 in San Jose, California, more than 250,000 came out to hear the Gospel. In Medford, Oregon, one of our trained prayer volunteers noticed a woman in the crowd who was struggling with her emotions while I presented the Gospel. The woman stood at the entrance to receive Christ, and our volunteer went over to her.

The woman said she had been logging to make a new start but hadn’t known how until that moment. She wanted Jesus to come in and change her life. The volunteer was encouraged and prayed with her, gave her disciplehip materials, and made sure she knew of a Bible-centered church where she could grow in her faith.

At the last stop on the California part of the tour, in Redding earlier in the summer, a mother and son heard the Gospel. God moved in their hearts, but they were not ready to act. God kept stirring, and a few weeks later they drove up to Oregon to hear the Gospel again at another Decision America event.

There each made a decision to turn from their sins, ask for forgiveness, and surrender themselves to Jesus Christ, trusting Him as Savior and Lord. As God worked, there were people in every city who made that decision—hundreds of them. It’s a decision that changes everything!

I am so grateful for the people who made life-changing decisions for Christ. At each stop the crowd joined me in prayer for their city, state, and elected leaders, including the president and their governor—by name. I also challenged churches and believers in each place to stand boldly for the Gospel of God and let their voice be heard. Christians need to get to know who are in opposition, and to know that the power of God is at work there.

Now there is a sequel, Unbroken. Path to Redemption, that picks up where the first movie ended. In the new movie, my oldest son, Will, plays the part of a young Billy Graham. It will be in theaters beginning in mid-September.

We have BGEA evangelistic events in 15 more cities in the next 16 weeks. We could not do this work without God’s grace having given us your prayers and gifts, and we are grateful.

May God richly bless you.

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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Life Lessons

By Doug Harrell

Having grown up on the farm, October to me has always been harvest time; it is still. The farm harvest is important and critical, but the soul harvest is even more important to us. Over the years I have become aware of the importance of children. Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them. And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Wherefore therefore shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

Matthew 18:2-8 KJV

We must accept the fact that the most important task assigned a parent is to nurture our children and bring them into a relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In today’s politically correct environment many times the prevailing attitude is that there are various ways to usher in and that all religious lead to God and heaven. That is not the way the Bible reads! Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6 KJV

As our children grow and leave the environment of the home, hopefully they will be capable of handling the everyday world their thinking will not be challenged to an extent that I could not have even comprehended years ago when I was young. We MUST get our children in a Bible teaching and preaching church environment not by sending them, but by taking them. If we parents don’t lead by example the teaching will not stick!

Another area that we must take a strong stand in is in our election process. I am not going to say vote for any particular party line but we must stand up for our Christian values if we expect our children to have anything like we experienced growing up. Examine the values and platform of the people that are running for office, ask tough questions of them regarding their individual values and stands on things. Be brave enough to vote for the people that exhibit and follow Christian values.

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

Altapass Baptist Church

Thank-You

By Pastor Marcus Benfield

Mitchell County

I trust you are enjoying the somewhat cooler fall weather.

It won’t be long until the colors of God’s handy work will be all around us. As we enter this beautiful time of harvest and blessing let us not forget to Pray for the Lord and for All His Many Blessings on each of us. He has truly been gracious to us all. As I sit here at my desk writing I am amazed at how God uses Ordinary People to accomplish his will and purpose.

In August God used four Churches and five businesses to help just over six hundred children get ready to go to school or Back To School Bash. It truly was a Tremendous Success. Special thanks to Grassly Creek Baptist, Spruce Pine First Methodist, Little Rock Creek Baptist, Johnson Ridge Baptist, and Altapass Baptist Churches for their Direct involvement. Also, a special thank you to Blue Ridge Christian News, Hollifield Fire and Auto, WIXY-WTOE, Shoes for Shining Fun Tahoe Surfshoes, and the Parkview Volunteer Fire Department. These businesses were directly involved as well.

Many others worked behind the scenes and we are truly grateful. If we continue to work together as a community of Faith we can see even greater things accomplished for the betterment of our communities.

By the time you read this our Local churches and community will have already come together to help our neighbors to the east who were so devastated by Hurricane Florence.

You, as a community, helped provide relief that reached thousands in need in Elizabeth-town NC. This area was devastated by over Thirty-Five inches of rain, flooding, and extreme wind damage.

My purpose for writing this is to say as a Local Pastor, I am truly overwhelmed at all the Lord is doing in our midst as we come together as a community. I am truly Honored to be a part of what God is doing in our area and I truly believe if we continue to come together as one body, God will send Revival. If you study the New Testament model of the early Church in the book of Acts you will see God was divided into three parts and that is UNITY. May we continue to work together as a Community of One united in CHRIST that we may see REVIVAL in our generation. OH, How Desperately We Need It!

May we pastors see the need to pray for one another and pray that God will, through His Spirit, Lead us as His under-shepherds to step out and take the lead before our congregations to continue to work together for His Glory! We can always seem to come together to meet a need and for that I am thankful, but what hindered us from coming together as a body unified to see the strength and the power of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at work among us? If we truly want to see Revival this is what it will take! Will you come in Prayer and ask God to unite us as His people that we may be people of the World of God working together to truly see Revival? For the Sake of Our Children, let us Truly Seek the LORD!

My desire is to continue to help Yancey County be a great place to live, work and raise a family. Christian values, conservative principles and responsible stewardship of our county’s resources. Thank you all for your support and prayers.

Paid by Craig Howell for County Commissioner

CRAIG HOWELL
YANCEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER
Grief Motivated

By Alan Griffin

I had a pretty rough January back in 1997. My uncle passed away and 25 days later my 1
1/2 year old nephew passed. He was born with multiple heart
defects. He survived his first
surgery, but after his second
heart surgery his lungs filled up with fluid, and he died. It was
a very dramatic time for our
family. My mom would babysit him on Sundays, and I would go over there to hang
out with my nephew, Dylan. I taught him the words to the song and home run. The last
time I saw him I went to hug him right before I was leaving. He hugged my
neck and wouldn’t let go. He held on to me for 30 minutes, and my mom had to pry
him from my neck. I believe he knew his face. I believe our spirits are in tune with God when we are young. The older we get the harder it seems to stay in
close contact with our heavenly Father.

It is difficult to deal with the death of a loved one. Often times there is denial of our
misfortune, and then our mind puts us in a state of shock. It is a very
vague feeling. We replay in our mind conversations with our loved one. We often feel
 guilty for not spending more time with them. It is important that we share our pain and
not hold on to it. We should never try to escape the pain with drugs or alcohol.
It will only make things worse. Remorse is a natural feeling and we should embrace
our loss. Frustration over our loss only leads to anger. Because we feel helpless we
may lash out at others and place the blame on somebody else’s shoulders. It is more
important than ever to think before we speak, because we could do lasting damage to
relationships. We ask God, “why me?” At times making promises we can’t keep.
And then when we think we are getting back to normal we fall into depression,
loneliness, and despair. We will spend long periods of time in sad reflection. This is
completely normal. We just have to talk it out with ourselves, and God, until finally
we realize the true magnitude of our loss.

This is about the time we have an epiphany. Our mind starts functioning in the
present, and we can get back to family, friends, and work. At this time, we start to
focus on restructuring our life without our loved one. We accept the reality of the
situation and move forward. It may not mean a return to happiness, because grief
affects everyone in different ways. Some manage to move on rather quickly, while
others never recover from the loss. A good sign is when we start to plan things for
the future and anticipate good times ahead. It is best to stay busy and try to focus
on the tasks at hand. Jesus Christ suffered the greatest separation anxiety of anyone.
When He was crucified He literally separated Himself from His Father. “Surely He has
borne our grief, And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.” Isaiah 53:4 NKJV

Grief is a tool we can use to further our relationship with God. Even if we are
confident of our loved one’s final destination we need to use our experience to drive
us to winning more souls. Death is a permanent situation, so we start with friends
and family to make sure that God and His will are realized. Emotion is a powerful
force, and so is the desire we need more than ever to spend time with our heavenly Father. The Holy
Spirit can manifest our goings to God when we are unable to. We motivate our
grief into action, and we never take a chance with any one’s salvation again. We use
our struggles to help others overcome their conflicts in a positive fashion. Denying
ourselves and placing all of our focus on other peoples struggles leaves us on the
inside out. This prevents our grief from giving Satan access to our heart.

Without a struggle there is no progress for success. Grief is just another reason for
us to work harder for our family and friends. We can attempt to bear the weight of
our burdens alone, or we can release it all to Christ, focusing instead on helping
others to do the same. I have never really understood this Bible verse until now. “But
You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief. To repay Your hand. The helpless;
commits itself to You; You are the helper of the fathers.” Psalm 10:14 NKJV

This is exactly what I did when I wasn’t supposed to be alive; then all my emotions
started to follow Christ’s example. A few months into 107 I started kidschrist.

I focused on the children in my neighborhood by taking them to church. Not me,
but Jesus Christ through me, reached hundreds of kids for His sake’s take. We fed
them, clothed them, and shared with them the gospel of Jesus Christ. I had no idea
what I was doing at the time, but now that I have reread this Bible verse, it all seems
to make sense now.

If you are struggling with the loss of a loved one, won’t you pray with me?

Dear Heavenly Father,

Bless me because I mourn. Wrap Your arms around me and comfort me in
my loss. Come to my assistance Lord. Please take this consuming anguish and heal
the wounds of my heart. I need Your peace that transcends all understanding to guard
my heart and my mind. Renew my soul and guide my emotions so that sleep eludes
over the sight and concern for others race my day. Draw near to me and heal my
broken heart. Help me not to grudge like those who have yet to discover Your kind-
ness and mercy. Please make the next day better than the last and give me hope for
tomorrow.

In Jesus Christ’s name I pray, Amen.

Alan Griffin started the kidschrist ministries in November 1997. He has worked
with inner city kids for 21 years. He found a need for specialised Biblical
literature that would reach people of all ages; and has been writing since 2003. The
ministry has expanded their websites to reach around the world. Kidschrist.com,
milleniumchristian.com, teencrunch.com, seniorschrist.com, picture-verses.
com, and soulworth-salvagegroups.com. We have an outreach of over 18,000 people
last year with 36,000,000 impressions. If you have any questions for Alan you can
reach him at alan@kidschrist.com
Dear Dave,

My wife and I are not on the same page when it comes to money and our two teenage daughters. I think they should be learning the value of work and money, but she doesn’t want them to work. She regularly hands them spending money and buys them expensive gifts. I want our girls to have some nice things, but this is starting to cause problems in our relationship. Do you have any advice?

Stan

Dear Stan,

Kids should learn to work and make money at an early age. We’ve given nice gifts to our kids, but the difference is they also worked and made money for themselves. The gifts we gave them were for special occasions. Showering our kids with money and expensive toys all the time was not our way of life.

In this situation, your wife is allowing them to be nothing but consumers. I know she loves them, but they’re not learning how to work, and they’re not learning how to save or give. This is setting them up for a lifetime of unrealistic expectations. If something doesn’t happen to change things, you’re going to end up with two spoiled little brats, who think they should be given everything their entire lives.

Still, I think the biggest problem is you and your wife are experiencing a communication and marital breakdown. If the kids weren’t in the picture, I’ve got a feeling the same problems would exist. The difference is they would manifest themselves in other ways.

Obviously, your wife needs to stop being so intuitive where the kids are concerned. Try setting down with her, and gently explaining your feelings. Let your wife know you love her and how generous she is, but you’re worried this is having a negative impact on your children. Maybe you could try to establish some guidelines as to when really nice gifts are appropriate, too. There’s a middle ground you can reach, but it’s going to take some time and effort. Most of all, it means the two of you are going to have to communicate and work together for the good of your kids.

—Dave

Dear Dave,

I just graduated from college recently. Is it a waste of time to apply for a job if you have a degree in the proper field, but no real work experience?

Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Absolutely not! The only sure-fire way to ensure you’ll miss out on a job is by not applying for the position.

Send a copy of your resume to every job opportunity for which you have a reasonable chance of being hired. Then, when you get an interview, go in there with your head high. Be articulate, enthusiastic, and carry yourself with purpose. Use your style, intelligence, education, and confidence to sell yourself and your ability to jump in, learn quickly, and get the job done.

I’ve met lots of people who say they have 20 years of experience. But in a lot of cases it’s more like one year of experience 20 times. That kind of “experience” is useless. I’ve also met many sharp, educated people without experience, but you can tell they’re the kind who will put their minds to work, think outside the box, and figure out a way to get the job done with excellence.

As an employer, if I’ve got a choice between the two, that’s the one I want on my team.

—Dave

Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.
A Rock is a Rock…Or is it?

By Lisa Ellis
Kingsport, Tennessee

A rock is a rock…or is it? A rock may be a stone, a pebble, a gum or even a boulder. A mass of rocks compressed together forms a mountain. The Rocky Mountains, west of Denver, Colorado, and the Sierra Nevada in California, are examples of mountains formed from compressed rock. Rocks like granite, limestone, and sandstone are formed from the remains of living organisms. Under heat and pressure, the remains become solid rock. Rocks and minerals are formed from the remains of living organisms. Under heat and pressure, the remains become solid rock.

Matthew also wrote on the subject of rocks in chapter 16 verse 18 and quoted Jesus as saying, “Simon, You are Peter and upon this rock I will build My church.” Our English word “rock” came from Old French and our word “stone” originated from Anglo-Saxon (Old English). Matthew wrote in Old French or Old English. His original words were written in Aramaic, a form of the Hebrew language. In Aramaic, Jesus said, “Simon, You are Kephos.” According to John 1:42 Jesus changed Simon’s name to “Cephas.” “Cephas” is simply a Latin transliteration of the Aramaic name “Kephos.” In the Greek language Peter’s name is “Petro.” So, whether it is the Aramaic name “Kephos,” the Latin transliteration name “Cephas,” the Greek name “Petro” or the English name “Peter,” they all have one thing in common. They all have the same meaning. “Rock.” Therefore, in English Jesus would say “Simon, You are Rock…”

The “rock” in Matthew’s account is often a controversial subject. The Roman Catholic Church’s interpretation of Matthew 16:18 is “Your name is Peter and upon you, Peter, I will build my church.” The Greek translation in Matthew 16:18 is “You are the Messiah and upon you, Peter, I will build my church.” Instead it’s “You are Peter and upon this Petros I will build my church.” Greek words are used on gender. Male words and in “o” and female words and in “a”. “Petro,” the name given to Peter, is a masculine word. “Petros” on the other hand is a feminine word meaning “a mass of rock.” Just as the Greek word “Petros” is feminine, Christ’s church is often referred to with a feminine pronoun as in Ephesians 5:22-27.

In Matthew 16:19 Jesus said He will “build” His church. In order to build one needs building materials. A wise place to start building a building project is by correctly placing a cornerstone. All other rocks forming the foundation will be set in reference to that stone. Jonah 1:9 says “I put in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.” It is noteworthy that Peter, himself, applies this verse to Jesus in 1 Peter 2:4-6. In ancient times an animal or human sacrifice became part of the cornerstone of a building. How fitting, since there’s no greater sacrifice on our behalf than Jesus. Since Jesus is the Cornerstone of His church who are the “Petros” that will be set in reference to Him?

In Matthew 16:15 Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” A similar response by the other disciples is found in Matthew 14:33. After Jesus had walked on water Matthew wrote, “Then they (the disciples) were filled with fear and fell down on their knees, saying, ‘Of a truth thou art the Son of God.’” The “Petros” that are set in reference to the Cornerstone is Peter and the apostles who confessed that “Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God.”

The remaining Petros that lie on the foundation of Jesus and the apostles are those who make the same confession with their mouths and believe in their hearts that Jesus died for their sins and rose from the dead. These are past, present and future believers. Peter shed more light on this when he referred to Gentile believers as “living stones being built up as a spiritual house.” (1 Peter 2:5-6)

Paul describes this Jesus “building project” in Ephesians 2:20-22. Speaking to Gentile believers he said, “You are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” (NASB)

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said to Simon, “You are Peter and upon this Petros I will build My church.” My loose translation is, “Simon, you are rock, and I will build My church with a mass of rocks the likes of you.” Now back to the subject at hand, “A rock is a rock…or is it?” Matthew 16:18 rock is Petros not Peter!

The statement recorded in Matthew 16:17-18 is repeated in Mark 8:29-30 in the other three Gospels. Mark writes in chapter 8 verses 27-30 that Jesus asked the same question and Peter responded in verse 29, “Thou art the Christ.” No further comments by Jesus followed. The same is true in Luke 9:20.

Lana Ellis resides in Kingsport TN, next door to grand children. Church is West Colonial Hill Baptist Church.
A Christ-Centered Home
By Billy Graham

In the absence of sound moral teaching in our schools, it is more important now than ever for parents to teach their children by word and example how to live for Christ in today’s world. This message by Billy Graham offers some basic principles for a godly home.

—The Editors

The family used to be a close-knit group, and the home was self-centered. It was shelter, it was security; it was a kind of school where life’s basic lessons were taught; it was a kind of church where God was worshiped. It was a place where the basics of life were made. It was a place where wholesome recreation and simple pleasures were enjoyed.

A concerned national leader said, “The home is the citadel of American life. If the home is lost, all is lost.” Thoughtful people the world over agree that society’s health is the world to be maintained, the home must be preserved.

When will we learn that homes are not homes, money is not security, padlocks cannot bring happiness and there are no substitutes in our home life for faith, hope and love?

If the foundations of our homes are to be repaired, there are certain God-ordained principles that must be restored. The Bible teaches that God performed the first marriage in the garden of Eden. The children of Abraham were magnified. If the marriage is based on physical attractiveness only, “love” dissolves away.

However, true love does not fail. It lives even as Christ loved the church, despite personality defects, physical blemishes and mental quirks. Love is deep, abiding and eternal. It lives its man, not for what he or she or she is but for what the man really is—his own, her beloved, his chosen—even as Christ loved the church.

Nothing can bring a sense of security into the home as true love can. When there is not love, when harsh words are spoken, when quarrels rage, when discord reigns, the child perishes with fear.

Discord in the home says to the child, “There’s something wrong here. Home should not be like this.” So, let love flow through your house like a fragrant vapor, saturating the home with deep affection and understanding.

This is the home of love.

The second essential of a happy home is that there be order and discipline. The home can be a sanctuary of peace or it can be a bedlam of confusion. Isaiah the prophet realized this when he went to Ezechiel and the king said, “Set your house in order” (Isaiah 38:1).

Slipshod homes are bound to produce slapshod character, for the basic lessons of life are learned at home.

The word discipline means “to teach.” The job of teaching has been too long left to the schoolteacher and the scoutmaster.

A parent can teach his children by example and by being a good member of the household, good citizens of the community; good member of the church and followers of Jesus Christ. It takes time, patience, resourcefulness and skill to set your house in order, but God has said that it is an essential we cannot shun.

Good, “You shall teach [my words] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

In other words, the Bible says that we are to teach our children all day long by precept and example.

If a child is to mature, he or she must learn to observe rules. Whether we like it or not, life is filled with rules and laws. If children are to survive, they must know the rules of safety. If they are to be healthy, they must know the rules of health. If they are to get along with people, they must learn the rules of etiquette and decorum. If they are to drive a car, they must learn the rules of the road. If he or she becomes an athlete, they must learn to observe the rules of the game. You do your children a great injustice when you do not discipline them and when you fail to teach them to discipline themselves.

Of course, in disciplinary action, whatever sort it may be, you must always let the child know that you love him or her, that you are interested in their welfare and that you long for their full development.

By discipline, I certainly do not mean constant scolding. I do not mean constant nagging, lecturing or brutal speaking. Our disciplinary action should be firm,
New Community Outreach Opening
- The B.E.A.R. Closet

By Cheryl Wilten

(Baby Equipment and Resource Closet) at St. Paul’s UMC, beginning Wednesday, August 29th, 2018, the Baby Equipment and Resource Closet (B.E.A.R.) located at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church’s Mt. Carmel Church Street in Asheville will open its doors for families with children. Faith community and pre-school volunteers at St. Paul’s are reaching out to serve low-income families who expect parents, single parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and any family struggling to provide basic necessities for their infants and children. The B.E.A.R. closet will offer free baby furniture and clothing (preemies to 5 toddlers), shoes, baby equipment such as strollers, high chairs, swings, pack n plays, bouncy seats, bottles, diapers, wipes, blankets, and hygiene products, bedding items, as well as offering encouragement to expecting mothers and parents. The outreach will be open on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Asheville neighbors and local community agencies can visit the outreach and drop off donations of baby clothes, diapers, and items mentioned above. Umbrella donation is also welcome. For more information or to inquire about volunteer opportunities, please call (828) 252-6532.

Cheryl Wilten is the Director of Life Ministries Outreach.

Crossword Solution

Sudoku Solution

Neuropathy

Do You Suffer From:
- Numbness or burning in fingers or hands
- Sharp electric-like pain
- Pain on walking
- Difficult sleeping due to pain
- Pinching or tingling in feet or hands
- Balance problems

You may have Neuropathy. Pharmacological treatment for neuropathy has not proven to be effective in the long term. Our office has had excellent results in the reduction and elimination of symptoms by using a multi-therapeutic approach including low level laser therapy, spine care, and nutrition.

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October 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 14
The Rest of the Story

By Doug Harrell

These of you that grew up around farm tractors and trailers will get a big kick out of this story and the pictures that go with it. As you would well know, when you turn a tractor with a trailer attached, if you turn too sharply, the hogs on the rear wheel will catch on the fender, or trailer. This is exactly what happened with Farmer Clint in this episode of following the trailer for hayrides at this extravaganza. Always the community supporter and overall nice fellow, he consented to loan his farm tractor and trailer for the event.

When Farmer Doug first told me about the "OPPORTUNITY," I believe it was a positive note for Blue Ridge Christian News. After all, it is important for our company to support the community. "Just think about it, Poldur," he exclaimed. "Hayrides with Farmer Clint will be a huge success!" I'm still trying to remember how Doug came up with the idea of contracting Farmer Clint to provide hayrides for the event.

To be honest, I was astonished that my pal would subject our towns to the antics of Farmer Clint's tractor. Nevertheless, I began to mentally prepare for the coming out party, "Farmer Clint's Debutante Ball" if you will.

Festival Fun

God protected Farmer Clint on Heritage Festival Day, at least while he was driving local kiddos around on the hay wagon. There were no "near misses," no scary mishaps (at least not one that I would admit), and everyone enjoyed the hayride. Clint impressed me with his support of the annual Central Park project on Lower Street. I am happy to report that I gave him the exact $4.00 I received making trips up and down Oak Street. How embarrassing.

I saw a friend of mine, then Executive Director of Blue Ridge Civic Park Main Street, stop for a visit. Actually I think he was hoping to collect the vast wads of cash he had amassed by supporting the project. I am sure he placed me in the category of "guilty." I was happy to report that I gave him the exact $4.00 I received making trips up and down Oak Street. How embarrassing.

Farmer Clint "Sent Packing"

Every day and then, as last resort the Kiot tractor, I come to know and love. Staf McDowell, then Executive Director of Blue Ridge Civic Park Main Street, was to stop for a visit. Actually, I think he was hoping to collect the vast wads of cash he had amassed by supporting the project. I am sure he placed me in the category of "guilty." I was happy to report that I gave him the exact $4.00 I received making trips up and down Oak Street. How embarrassing.

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Rejection Turn to Fanfare

Oh how I doodled the LONG drive from Lower Street to my home in Minno!...It was a nerve-wracking drive. What would my beau-bride Kay say? Rejected and despondent, my Farmer Clint overalllys exceeded the sway I have over my tractor and trailer into the flowing traffic. My thoughts were of unfilled dreams, dashed hopes, and public humiliation. And then, I missed a turn and "Don't run over anyone with this tractor!" Then I hope there are no traffic when I try to cross Hvy 227.

As I meandered down Upper Street people began to call out to me. "Hi, Farmer Clint!" Cuts and trucks hooked and waved. I returned the gesture. As I motored past the Market on Oak, Shirley Rose and other women exclaimed at me. "You make a beautiful name!" I was told of "Marcy Medina/ Regional Coordinator, called out to me...Sylvia Monroe, Doug's then-fiancé, smiled and waved happily. And I thought to myself. "What a day for Farmer Clint!" I was banaocks!

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

Arriving home safely, I decided to position the tractor and trailer in a way that would make it easy for Farmer Doug to rejoin it to his truck.

Now earlier that day, recall that I had been warned "Farmer Clint, DO NOT MAKE TOO SHARP A TURN or it will jack-knife. I don't know how Doug was here for her, but I had to go out and check the equipment. "Well, I made a circle as planned\WHAM! The tractor turned and the trailer jack-knifed, the wheels skidded and I hit my face. I was tuck! Battered... on a scale of 1 to 10... this was a perfect 10 jack-knife.

Deja vu to that earlier rebuke. "Farmer Clint, DO NOT MAKE TOO SHARP A TURN or it will jack-knife. I was tuck! Battered... on a scale of 1 to 10... this was a perfect 10 jack-knife.

"I was tuck! Battered... on a scale of 1 to 10... this was a perfect 10 jack-knife."

and continued on page 30
Sizzlin' Summer Series
Thanks for a Fun Summer!
By Schell McCall, Executive Director
Yancey County

Burnsville, NC (9/20/18) – This summer was one for the books! The Sizzlin’ Summer Series had an outstanding turnout of over 810 participants. The Sizzlin’ Summer series, co-sponsored by Healthy Yancey, the Town of Burnsville, and Yancey County Government was a chance for people of all ages and abilities to try new things, be active, and connect to neighbors and our larger community.

This year’s series was filled with fun, free activities to engage families across Yancey and neighboring counties. Activities included a zip line on the Town Square, ballroom dancing, soccer, and the ever popular turtleable slip and slide.

In addition to the many fun-filled activities, the series also hosted a car seat safety checking station, as well as several AMY Bookmobile appearances.

Through this initiative, Partners Aligned Toward Health and Healthy Yancey are creating a wonderful legacy for the youth that will continue well into the future with programs encouraging lifelong physical activity. On our end-of-summer survey, 90% of participants agreed that the Sizzlin’ Summer Series encouraged them to be physically active this summer.

The Sizzlin’ Summer Series is also an economic development initiative that leads to additional downtown business traffic during each event. Nearly 70% of participants visited the Farmer’s Market and 83% of participants also visited neighboring businesses or restaurants while downtown for the series.

A special thank you goes out to our Title Sponsor, Blue Ridge Regional Health, and our corporate sponsors, Resourceful Communities, Smoker & Folkner Family Practice, and the Town of Burnsville and Yancey County.

For more information on our Sizzlin’ Summer Series and future activities, see our Facebook page, contact 828-788-9898 or email bccpa@barnwnc.org.

Schell McCall is Program Associate for Yancey County 4-H.
**Gardner-Webb University**

**Headline: Putting Faith into Practice**
By Dr. Tracy Jesup

"But he doeth of the word, and not merely heareth who deceiver themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, going away, immediately forget what they saw. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing." — James 1:22-24

Most people know what the Heimlich Maneuver is, even if they do not know how to perform it. The anti-choking first-aid technique is designed to dislodge an obstruction from a person's windpipe. One does this by applying sudden strong pressure on the abdomen, between the navel and the rib cage. While I have never witnessed this maneuver in person or had the technique used on me, I have seen it in movies and have known people who credit the technique with saving their lives.

The Heimlich Maneuver was developed by Dr. Henry J. Heimlich, a thoracic surgeon who crusaded for the anti-choking technique. Reports vary as to the number of lives saved since the Heimlich maneuver was invented in 1974, but in a December 2016 article that reported the death of Dr. Heimlich at the age of 90, the New York Times estimated the number at 100,000.

That same article recalled how earlier that year, "Dr. Heimlich used it himself on May 13 to save the life of an 87-year-old woman choking on a morsel of meat at Deep House, her senior residence in Cincinnati. He said it was the first time he had ever used the maneuver in an emergency, although he had made a similar claim in 2003" (Robert McFadden, "Dr. Henry J. Heimlich, Famous for Anti-Choking Technique, Dies at 90," 12/17/16).

In James 1:19-27, James takes the broad appeal to obey the Word of God and applies it to areas of Christian living, specifically the integrity of our thought and speech and the integrity of our actions. It is of utmost importance that our speech and actions be informed by faith. As followers of Christ, we not only are to listen to God's Word and take it, but we also must express it and carry it out. We must be hearers and doers of God's Word.

James says those who hear the gospel and do not put it into practice "are like those who look at themselves in a mirror" and "immediately forget what they were like." Commenting on this passage, New Testament scholar Beverly Gaventa writes, "What is seen in a mirror must be viewed again and again, because the impression is gone as soon as one looks away. By contrast, the 'perfect law, the law of liberty' enables people to live with what they see and to live out what they believe." (Genesis 4:10).

Prayer: Lord, help us to act on your truth as we hear it, rather than letting it go in one ear and out the other.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Visit gardner-webb.edu for more information.

Dr. Tracy Jesup serves as vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University. He is a graduate of Gardner-Webb with a B.A. in Music and earned his M.Div. degree at Sanford University's Beacon Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also looks towards the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorates, pulpit supply, and preaching revival services. He end married. Teresa has two children, Christian and Anna.

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**Walnut Grove Church**

**Stumbling Block or Stepping Stone**
By Pastor Kurt Bomar

Avery County

Lev. 19:14 "Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear Your God. I am the LORD.

Besides the obvious instruction not to be cruel to those who have physical impairments, I think there is a picture that the Lord is trying to paint for us in these matters.

Physical impairments can be a picture of a spiritual impairment that causes the world to not see or not want to hear about Jesus.

Let's consider how Jesus himself dealt with a deaf man:

Mark 7:32 There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him. 33 After he took him aside away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Epiphelma!" (which means "Be opened!"). 35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

Notice the things that Jesus does. First he removes the man from the crowd and gives him individual attention. This alone would mean a lot to a man who had been ignored his whole life. Next he touches the man's ears and tongue. If he had merely spoken healing to the man, the man would never have heard it and would have missed the connection Jesus was making with him. Thus, Jesus is relating to the man where he was.

By touching him prior to the healing the man got to be part of the process and to know that something profound was about to happen.

And it did. When Jesus then spoke, the man's ears were opened. Likewise, when you and I speak the Word of God, spiritually dead ears are opened as well.

Next our verse tells us to try to trip the blind. One day in Bethesda Jesus healed a blind man in a similar way. This time, though, after touching the man's eyes he asked him if he could see. The response was "I see man as trees walking." Jesus then touched him a second time and his total sight was restored. (Mark 8:22-25).

The lesson here for us to learn is that when we minister to the spiritually blind, it may not be the way we think of, but we are not to give up. We may help someone go from total darkness to seeing shadows of the truth even if they don't fully comprehend God's grace at once. As we continue to show the love of God we may have the privilege of watching the scales drop off their eyes. Regardless, the point is to keep on touching the spiritually blind and deaf. We can then sit back and watch God do his part.

Selah, (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. Proverbs 10:5

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October 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 17
Josh Dobson
NC House

“Standing up for rural conservative values.”

It is my honor to serve the 85th district.

Thank you for your past support and I am asking for your vote November 6th.

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CREATOR GOD

God’s voice rumbled in the darkness
As the sound broke thru the air.
Never had there been such strength
Or demonstration of His power.

The light of noon and stars above
Green trees and rolling mountains
Reeks, grass and flowers so lovely
Rivers, lakes and flowing fountains.

Living creature great and small
Birds of every kind and feather
Ocean waters filled with life
Clouds forming in changing weather.

Creator God looked down that day
And smiled for it was good
He’d planned it all so perfectly
As only our Father could.

Joyce (Joy) Harwood Ballard

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 “Joan’s Voice” out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song “Homecom-
ing” will soon be heard by many.
Integrity: The Way Forward
By Jason Koen
Burke County

Sometimes I worry that I'm always pointing out problems and never offering solutions. One reason is that, to some extent, it's probably true. I am an old punk rocker from the nineties, I grew up on rebellion and discontent, always seeing problems, but never seeking solutions. There is something spiritual about being discontent in this present age, but there is nothing holy about rebellion and sputch. So how do we move forward?

First, the Church needs to know what it is. The average Southern Baptist Church has 340 members, but only 130 regular attenders, and most Evangelical denominations are in similar shape. The fact is that most Churches have a lot of ist people on their rolls, or at least Christians who don’t even take their faith seriously enough to show up on Sunday.

In Acts 1, Jesus instructs the Disciples to do nothing until the coming of the Holy Spirit because He knew it wouldn’t work without the Spirit's power. We are in a similar situation today, the only way to regain power and vitality in the Church is to make sure we have a membership that is filled with the Spirit.

Churches must exercise Church Discipline, update rolls, and be discerning in the membership process. Members must take ownership, not of their Church, but of their place in God's Church. I'm not talking about the color of the carpet or the volume of the music, I'm talking about each member taking seriously their place in God's Mission to the world through the Church.

Second, we must address the fact that many Christians don’t understand many of the basic tenants of the faith. Why is this?

If your Church is like most American Churches, you probably don’t have a discipleship plan, so this is how discipleship usually happens. In Sunday School, you study the faithfulness of God in Obadiah and then in worship, the pastor teaches about Christian unity from Nehemiah. Next week it’s four aspects of the Holy Spirit from Acts, and the next it’s three methods for overcoming temptation from Matthew.

You may not see when I’m going with this, because it probably sounds normal, but there’s a big problem with what I call “the popcorn approach.” If discipleship happens like this, it’s probably going to be accidental because there is no systematic pipeline for learning biblical truth and applying it to life. There is no pathway to maturity because a new believer can’t learn the truth in a way that it builds and leads into practical application for daily life.

You may be wondering how we can fit all this into a Sunday Morning. We can’t. It is going to take intentional life-on-life discipleship, the kind of Discipleship the Apostle Paul describes in Titus 2 when he instructs older men and women to model righteousness and holiness to the next generation. It has to be bigger than Sundays and Wednesdays.

Third, the Church must learn to take itself seriously. We are not a social club, and because we have seen ourselves this way for too long, our Churches are one of the biggest factors driving Americans away from Jesus. We must learn to live out the truth we profess, not to earn salvation, but out of gratitude for what God has done for us, and a desire to see the world come to know Jesus through us.

Again, we are not a social club, we are an army. We have not come to conquer the American political process with rhetoric, we have come to conquer God's world with His love and forgiveness. Let's be people who live with passion and purpose, who recognize the mission God has called us to.

Jason Koen is Pastor of Bridge42 Church in Morganton, NC.
Only Believe?
By Jim Huskins
McDowell

On June 30, 1859, a French horn acrobat using the stage name Charley Blondin stretched a 300-foot rope across Niagara Falls and walked from the U.S. to Canada. After a brief rest, he walked back. “Thousand of thousands reportedly watched him.

On August 17, 1859, Blondin made the same walk. At least ten thousand awaited him on the Canadian side. The crowd cheered in unison: “Blondin, Blondin, Blondin...” He raised his hands for silence and shouted, “I am Blondin, do you believe in me?”

Then, round and round, “We believe, we believe!”

“I’m going to walk back across, but this time I will carry someone on my back. Do you believe I can do it?” shouted Blondin.

“We believe,” came the thunderous response.

“Who here,” queried Blondin, “will be that person?” The response was a deafening silence. Ten thousand shouted “We believe.” One volunteered.

Western Christians are divorced from the fact that the Bible is a Hebrew story, written by Hebrews, and impossible to understand without a Hebrew perspective. Hebrew thinking is concrete. It views the world through the senses. Greek thinking is abstract. It views the world through the mind.

This difference is critical in the matter of faith. A Greek thinker—any of us—reads the words: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved” and assumes that “believing” is mere mental assent to the “fact” that Jesus is the Son of God. Thousands “believed” that Blondin could cross Niagara Falls on a tight rope carrying someone on his back.

That kind of “faith” is not even thinkable in Hebrew. The language has no such word. In Hebrew thought, “belief” requires “obedience.” A Hebrew could never say to Blondin, “I believe that you can walk that tightrope while carrying someone on your back” without immediately climbing on to be the one carried. Anything less is not “faith” in Hebrew thinking. Jesus’ brother, who wrote the book of James, nails his concept when he says that faith without works is dead. He was a Hebrew. He understood that God’s people cannot “believe” without “obeying.”

How strange it is that so many “modern Christians” have come to the conclusion that “faith in Christ” requires no actions whatsoever. We are: “Saved by grace through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Not of works, lest any man should boast, “but we stop reading at that point and ignore the hundred implications of verse 10 of Ephesians 2.” “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Of course, works of obedience have nothing to do with our salvation, but at the same time, salvation by grace is pointless—James says it is impossible—unless it leads to obedience. 1 John 2:3–4 spells it out: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Obedient Heart Fellowship is a small group with a simple goal: to know and obey the Word of God. We believe the entire Bible is both true and applicable to our lives. We believe that the instructions for living which God revealed through Moses or Mt. Sinai were—as He stated many times—a permanent covenant between God and His people. We believe that Jesus was telling the truth when He said: “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” We believe that all who claim to follow Christ must walk as He walked, and He walked in obedience to The Father’s instructions. We do not believe that a few, out-of-context verses from Paul and the Book of Acts somehow invalidate everything God taught through Moses, the prophets, Jesus and the Apostles.

We meet each week on the Sabbath—the seventh day of the week—to worship the One who is “The same yesterday, today, and forever,” and to learn together how we can do a better job of following Him in obedience. Our meeting place is Abba’s House at 77 South Main in Marion, NC. Our meeting time is 10:00 A.M., and we always set together as part of our worship.

Our door is open to all who desire to cultivate Obedient Hearts.

Jim is the Pastor of Obedient Heart Fellowship Church in Marion, NC.
Evergreen Church

Need for Standard
By Rev John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore, be holy, because I am holy. Lev 11:45 In this section we face the need for a standard, a measuring stick by which we can distinguish between good and evil. That is not easy to do. Modern philosophies tell us that there is really nothing harmful, that it is only our perverted thinking which makes things wrong, and that if we would but change our thinking then anything and everything is right. But you don't find anything like that in Scripture. The Bible tells us that we are living in a world where truth and error are inseparably mixed and that you cannot easily tell one from the other. How do you tell the difference before it is too late, before you have to learn through sorrows and sadness? With these Israelites, His concern was expressed on the physical level — He actually regulated their diet. In this chapter, you have dietary laws distinguishing clean animals from unclean, and various sanitary practices are included as well. Many of these practices have a common sense basis in staying healthy. God kept His people physically whole through many of these regulations. There was nothing wrong with many of the animals which were prohibited to the Israelites as food. Their prohibition was simply to teach a symbolic lesson, even though they may have been perfectly healthy as food. In this case it is the symbolism that we must take into account. There was nothing wrong with many of the animals which were prohibited to the Israelites as food. They were prohibited only because the prohibition taught a symbolic lesson. Many of these animals, therefore, were perfectly alright for food, but were prohibited solely because they taught a symbolic lesson. It is this symbolism that we are interested in. We have seen in this book that this word holy essentially means whole. To be holy is to be a complete person, to fulfill your humanity. A whole person is one who performs the function for which he was originally designed. In the case of man, that is for us to belong to God, to be his image. It is to be the vehicle for the expression of his life. That is what he wants for us. He wants us to be whole and to fulfill our humanity. That is what God is after. It is not the religious activities you go through, nor how much time you spend in Bible study that God is really interested in. He is after the expression of his character in the midst of where you work, and in your home, and among your family and your neighbors and your friends. He desires that the character which comes through to others from you is that of love and joy and peace, and of tenderness and willingness to forgive and forbearance and understanding and of the absence of grudge-holding and bitterness and hatred and enmity. That is the character of a whole person. So, God says to us, therefore be holy... and avoid these things that I have warned you against, for they will but defile you. Lord, help me to take these guidelines seriously. Help me to be obedient to you and to offer my body as a living sacrifice. I long to be a whole person though I live in the midst of a broken world. Life Application: Secular thinking is largely adrift in the turbulent waters of relativism, in stark contrast to the teaching of the Bible, which aims at our wholeness. Are we being nurtured in body, soul and spirit by feeding on God's Word?

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

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No Regrets Family

Discovering My Child's Interest
By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

It is hard living a life of “no regrets.” It seems like the harder I try the harder life becomes. I am so thankful God is a gracious God. If the three-strike rule applied to me I would have been out a long time ago. It is not so much the things that I do that I regret, but the things I am not doing that bother me the most.

For example, this time “flying” by is getting way out of hand. The older I get the less I go and the faster time goes. I still have a practice at home and I realize I need to spend more time with him. This is one thing I am not doing that I regret. I need to spend more time with my son.

At times it is hard to find that one thing that you really enjoy doing with your child. If it is sports, then that can be easily accomplished. You go out and play ball with them. If it is hunting or fishing you go to the river or into the woods.

But what about the child whose hobbies or interest are different than your own? Or the child whose interest you have not discovered. It is amazing at the number of parents who push their child into sports, but the child is just not interested in catching a ball.

Just in the last few years Pam and I were introduced to the 4-H club. It is amazing how many different interest groups they have for children. They have sewing, archery, shooting sports, livestock, poultry, robotics, and many other interest hobbies kids love to do. Sometimes you just have to discover the interest with your child to see where their interest lies. It took me a while to figure this out. I just assumed since I loved sports my child would grow up and play in the super bowl. Lol...

I found that when I want to a livestock show with “Runaround” my son’s livestock from a high school’s steer. We had a great time. (Note me and Buttercup, but me and my family Lol) I was not much of a farmer growing up, but my son loves goats, cows, and chickens. His interest became our interest. When I went to a shooting course with my son’s shooting club, we had a great time. The 4-H shooting club led my son giving a speech and being selected as officer which brought him much joy. I am telling you as much joy as my daughter scoring a soccer goal. It is all the same. Would I be as excited for them if their interest were sewing or cooking? I guess I will find out soon, because we are starting a sewing ministry at Snow Hill that I am very excited about.

Our women’s Bible study group are making baby blankets for the county’s women’s shelter, and some of our young ladies will be introduced to sewing for the very first time. Wasn’t it? We might find a wonderful young seamstress, and a talent that a person never knew they had.

The point is to not be afraid to try new things with your child even if they are not your interest they may very well be your child’s. You will receive joy out of seeing your child do something like this. When you do things together you both will have a great time. Imagine how our fathers feels when they use their talents for His glory. When we discover what we are good at and use it for God’s glory we have a sense of purpose and meaning. How wonderful it is to help our child discover their interest and then teach them to use those ideas for God’s greater glory.

Parenting is not easy, but it is so rewarding. Watching your children grow into responsible, loving, and Christ following adults is joy that we can not describe. Pam and I are so proud of our children, and we thank God that he loaned them to us and trust us with their care.

God bless you and we love you.

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-585-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

Crossnore School & Children's Home

Crossnore CCO Named to North Carolina Child Well-Being Transformation Council
By Holly Solomon
Haywood County

Crossnore School & Children's Home is pleased to announce the appointment of Chief Executive Officer, Brent A. Lofsd, JD to the North Carolina Child Well-Being Transformation Council. Lofsd was nominated by Senator Philip E. Berger, President Pro Tempore of the North Carolina Senate. His term begins on September 1, 2018 and runs through June 30, 2023.

North Carolina House Bill 630 was enacted in 2017 to establish a regional system of oversight and collaboration within the Department of Social Services. The bill created a workgroup, now known as the North Carolina Child Well-Being Transformation Council, which will develop a plan for establishing regional offices for the administration of social services at the local level.

The Council will divide its work into two phases. The first phase of the Council’s work will address the regionalization of the current county system. “There are so many state agencies dealing with the needs of children,” said Karen McLeod, President and CEO of Benchmark NC. “The problem is that these siloed approaches do not address the needs of the whole child.” The Council will provide the coordination, collaboration, and communication among agencies and organizations providing public services to these children.

The second stage of the Council’s work will become the establishment of a community-based system for children’s services. McLeod continued, “We believe that Crossnore School & Children’s Home gives us incredible insight into how work is being done and the disconnects between the systems that are not serving our children as well as they are in other places.” Throughout his tenure with the Council, Lofsd will be a voice for the people on the ground serving North Carolina’s children. His goal for the Council is that the members will work together to provide a research-based continuum of services for these children which give them the best opportunity to heal.

About Crossnore School & Children’s Home. For more than 100 years, Crossnore School & Children’s Home has served children and families through group residential services, community-based foster care and adoption services, and outpatient and school-based clinical services. For more information about Crossnore School & Children’s Home, please visit www.crossnore.org.

About Brent A. Lofsd, JD. As Crossnore’s CEO, Lofsd leads an organization dedicated to growing healthy futures for children and families. Under his leadership, Crossnore completed a capital campaign to increase their endowment in 2017, built new cottages on their Avery County campus in 2014, successfully merged with The Children’s Home in Warrenton-Salem in 2017, and opened a satellite office in early 2018 to serve the Hendersonville area. Lofsd also serves on numerous boards and speaks nationally regarding child welfare. He is currently Chair of the Board of Trustees for Benchmark NC.

Holly Solomon is Director of Communications for The Crossnore School. She blogs several times a week at www.hollybarrow.com, and is host and producer of “Living a Redeemed Life,” a bi-weekly podcast.

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CHRISTian Prayer Meeting

Joys of Prayer
By Mrs. Monica Henley-Kritz
Mitchell County

"O GOD, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh languisheth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."—Psalm 63:1

In 2015, a group of CHRISTians gathered every Saturday morning to pray for our area. This was also in preparation for the Test Crusade, held by Preacher Ralph Sexton. The location is outdoors on top of the hill above the Chevrolet dealership. The LORD wanted us to go to that time of prayer. "There was only one problem. It started at 7:30 a.m. Really? 7:30 a.m.? And on Saturday? So, my husband, Jason, and I began getting up. Honestly, it was a struggle...and it seemed that Friday's nights were the most difficult to get in bed earlier. But anyway, we kept going, and I found myself looking forward to going...even though my head was arguing constantly! But something started happening...slowly. I started to hear a journal entry from that time, and I read this..."...a new beginning for me...meeting with THE LORD and all of those other CHRISTians early in the morning! Wow! There's nothing like it! What a joy!"

We began meeting new people...people we normally wouldn't see, because some travel from other counties. And what a blessing...a time of slumber, hearts joined together by CHRIST, and a moving of THE HOLY SPIRIT. One morning was especially special to me. It was a cloudy and dark morning, and Jason and I were the only ones there.

I wrote about it in my journal: "Jason and I prayed. THE LORD held back the rain. THE HOLY SPIRIT filled!!! We cried and prayed. Got back in the car, and it was as if I could not leave! Then, there came a flock of geese, flying in formation, circling the area. They landed and were even swimming somewhat in the large puddles. It was just as real as YOU. LORD, saying, "Please don't leave!" That absolutely broke and melted my heart! That THE LORD wants to meet with 'little, evil, wicked me...now...how inspiring!!!!! Much tears! Good and cleansing. Redwading. I had been focusing on when the geese leave, I can leave. How sad and pretty of me! Once I got my eyes onto JESUS and HIS Word, I nearly forgot about the geese. How beautiful!!!" (THE LORD reminded me that I need to read out of HIS Presence too often! LORD, forgive me!!!)

Now, three years later, we are still meeting on the hill...praying...the first Saturday of every month. We never know what the weather will be...but it’s not important. We have met with a beautiful sunrise...sometimes, with rain and mist...and sometimes, a few snow flurries and wind and very cold temperatures. But every time, THE LORD has come. HE has never failed to be there. And we never know what beautiful thing will happen next. So, if you want something new and fresh in your walk with GOD, come the first Saturday of every month. Meet with us. Pray. Watch what GOD will do...for our county, for our state, for our nation, and yes...for you!

"I pray that they may be united in mind and in understanding, so that they may live one life in harmony with each other."

Proverbs 1:17

Mrs. Monica Henley-Kritz, Prayer Coordinator for the Association. "I am a member of Crabtree Chapel Baptist Church, now, where Jason is the pastor.

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

~ Anne Richardson

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The Value of a Lunch Box

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

Psalm 23:5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Rushing down the short hill of steps, the seven-year-old scampered into the kitchen where his mom was packing lunch. "Mom," he asked, "can I take dad's lunch box today?" Glancing down, his mom noticed the battered and dented box hanging from his thumb. "Sure," she said. "Dad liked that box and used it often." My niece wasted patiently in the pick-up line at school that afternoon and watched her son emerge, swaggering the box. A teacher approached. "Hi. He loved opening his Star Wars lunch box and talking about it to his friends today. Did you know that's a valuable antique? You could sell it for as much as $3,000.00. You might want to keep it in a safe place."

Sometimes, we realize the value of common objects such as my niece did years ago when her young son wanted to play with his dad's favorite lunch box. A recent lunch with my friend reminded me of this story. As we warmed asked if we needed a to-go box, the Holy Spirit nudged me. Our delicious meal and satisfying visit with a few tasty morsels packed in our to-go box reminded me of a spiritual message. When we feast on God's Word and enjoy the soul-satisfying pleasure of His presence, we have the privilege of taking those blessings into the day with us. The Holy Spirit ranks them lovingly in to the priceless and extremely valuable lunch box of our heart for soul-satisfying throughout the day. As we share with others throughout the day from the abundance of God's table, the rich nutrients from our time with the Lord is multiplied much like John's story of the lad with five loaves and two fishes (John 6:9-14). Finally, we can eat the dessert of His promises fulfilling our palette for the sweetness of His love toward us. The Bible relates our spiritual feasting on His Word to food in the Bible, and the analogy comes to life as we enjoy an incredible array of physical foods today.

Back into the lunch box of your heart today the meaty doctrines of the Bible, the nutrient-laced vegetables of the stories that are full of the messages to make our spiritual bones and muscles strong for His glory. Drink the Living Water and discover His refreshing sweetness. And, don't forget to satisfy your sweet tooth with the passages that are filled with His love and promises.

Warman's Lunch Box Field Guide is a 514-page book that lists the value of lunch boxes. The 2008 edition lists this Star Trek lunch box with theme in mint condition at $3,000. Sometimes, we don't know the value of something so common that we don't see it anymore. While you're searching for those old lunch boxes at the back of the toy bin from 50 years ago, search your heart. And follow the command of Proverbs 4:23 to "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Protect the lunch box of your heart so that it can be passed along to your children from His Word to nourish and strengthen you forever. Share the Good News in your spiritual lunch box with others so they can pass the goodwill along. Enjoy the lunch that the Holy Spirit has provided for you today packed into the priceless lunchbox of your heart!

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. And she and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@belcouth.net
Avery County
Avery County Events: October 20-21, 2018 — 41st Annual Wooly Worm Festival in downtown Banner Elk.

Barco County
Bethlehem Baptist Church in Morganton NC - off of Watershed Rd. We are having a BBQ and gospel singing for community outreach. There is no charge. First Saturday in October 2018 is the date 10/6/18 Brown Mountain.

Baptist Church in Morganton NC — Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct 20th starting at 4:00pm. We will have games, crafts, food, singing, trunk or treat and a hayride. For more info call 828-487-2524 or 828-234-2677.

Burc County Chamber
Southern Expo & Marketplace Thursday, November 15, 2018 - 3:30-5:30 member networking then 5:30-7:30 Open to the Public: the Waldenium Mill, Valdese, NC
NCSD Foundation — Bears Classic Golf Tournament Oct 5th, Captain Choice Scramble Check in at 11:00 - 12:30 shotgun Start Silver Creek River. $75.00 per person includes lunch, dinner, green fees, gifts, range balls and cart. For more info contact Heath Huggins at 828-475-6711.

Catawba River Baptist Association - We are happy to be partnering with pastor Penda Maddal 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 with what they do. They are in need of 100 bicycles to help 100 pastors take the Word of God from village to village. The Catawba River Baptist 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 $50 to CRBA and put on the memo line “Pedals for Pastors” and we will be happy to send the bikes to India and will be used to purchase bicycles. Please send all donations to 1812 US 70 E., Morganton, NC.
We will be collecting coats this year to be distributed to those in need in New York City. Please bring new or gently used coats (no holes, tears or stains) to our CPA office in Morganton. We will collect coats during the months of September and October and will deliver them to a drop off location in North Carolina (Fruitland Baptist Bible College) who will then deliver (and distribute) them in New York. Again, if you bring used coats please make sure they are in great shape.

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church - For health and joy in 4 basic classes for whole food plant based cooking on Mondays, October 1-22, 6:00 pm. Food demonstrations, food samples, handouts, door prizes and fun with Shawn Mahoney and others! $20 covers all 4 classes. Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2007 US Hwy 70 in Burnsville from Football Thrift Store. Pre-registration by calling 828-334-0084.
The APPEARING. Are you ready? A FREE event about what Bible prophecies coming October 11-14 with Shawn Boozier. Since the beginning of recorded time, cultures across the globe have predicted the end of our world. As global temperatures rise and the earth’s natural order changes, do we have the right to believe in what the planet builds in intensity and frequency? Why are many left wondering if the time is near? Join Shawn Boozier from the Voice of Prophecy as he explores the myths and facts that surround the Appearance - an event mentioned over 2,500 times in the Bible. Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2007 US Hwy 70 in Burnsville from Football Thrift Store. Free admission, Free study guide, Free book!

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Barco County
Mom’s Car and Truck Show - October 7-8 from Saturday from 1-4 p.m.
Show Location: Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 3187 Jasenoska Road, Morganton, NC. 28655 Hosted by ARC -- www.adventistindotrishclub.com
John Earhardt’s personal mini midget will be on display, built in 1956 and worked on by Ralph Earhardt. Awards for “who drove the fastest”, Six Trophy Classes - You Choose - Old Style Car & Truck, Unique Style Car & Truck, Participant Voting Only, Free Door Prizes
Fun for the whole family! All are welcome! For more information, please call John Zoot at 904-654-2885 - It hits roll...it shows!

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Community Service Thrift Store, located at 402 East Main Street in Glen Alpine, NC, is temporarily closed. We are re-opening the thrift store and turning it into a boutique! When we re-open we will be offering gently used brand new clothes of all sizes and for all ages! As always, furniture and small goods! More information on the grand re-opening will be announced at a later date.

God’s Closet - Morganton FREE Shop Day will take place on Sunday, November 4th, from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. There will be FREE children’s clothing, shoes and bedding. No documentation required. We do ask that all shoppers pay a $1.00 entry fee.

Tipton Hill High School Students - All Students and their families are invited to attend the 2018 Reunion on Saturday, October 27th at 1:30 p.m. in Joshua Creek. $75 at the door located at 620 North State of Franklin Rd in the new Food City Store. Please RSVP before Oct 10th, $20.00 per person to: Paul Bennett at 226 Ridgeview Lane, Baltimore, NC 28715. Call 984-385-0490

McDowell County
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, Breast Feasit Support Volunteer, Wellness 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 828-652-1118 ext.301. You can make an everlasting impact with just a few hours of your time a week! Call today to learn more.

Cross United Methodist Church - New Community Outreach Benefits McDowell Families with Children - Teens for Christ B.E.A.R. Closet (Baby Equipment and Resource Closet)
Beginning Wednesday, August 1st, 2018 the youth group at Cross United Methodist Church located at 45 West Cross Street in Marion will launch a new outreach ministry benefiting families with children. The outreach will be open the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities call 828-653-8790 or email TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com.

First Baptist of Marion - Belize Mission Trip February 12-19, 2019 BFC’s relationship with the Baptists of Belize will continue this winter by sending a mission team to work in the western region of the country. Our construction crew will continue work on the Santa Elena Baptist Primary School, helping complete a second story addition. The medical team will provide free medical clinics to underserved communities near the Guatemalan Border, where there is a large indigenous population. Our team will stay in Santa Elena at the Aguada Hotel. The week will end with two nights at San Pedro on the coast. Funds to cover our ministry costs are already raised. However, each team member provides their own travel costs, which is estimated at $1,100 per person, covering airfare, ground transportation, lodging, international travel insurance, T-shirt, and most meals.
For more detailed information, promotional flyers are available near the Chapel or see Scott Hagmann. A minimum of 10 persons are needed to launch this mission trip with a maximum number of 25. A valid passport is required, which should not expire within 6 months of travel. Registration Form and $100 deposit.

Mitchell County
Bear Creek Baptist Church - Women’s Prayer Breakfast October 12th, 7:30am at DT’s.
Celebrate Recovery
This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving hope and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Joie Wise at 365-0601.

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

Main Street Spruce Pine - Downtown Spruce Pine Greenes Mapping Day, Oct. 19, Downtown Spruce Pine Antique Festival, Oct 13, Downtown Spruce Pine Potter’s Market, Oct 13-14, Cross Street Building Merchant Trick or Treat, Oct 1, Downtown Spruce Pine Small Business Saturday, Nov 24, Downtown Spruce Pine Christmas Parade, which is estimated at 2,100 people, covering airfare, ground transportation, lodging, international travel insurance, T-shirt, and most meals.
For more detailed information, promotional flyers are available near the Chapel or see Scott Hagmann. A minimum of 10 persons are needed to launch this mission trip with a maximum number of 25. A valid passport is required, which should not expire within 6 months of travel. Registration Form and $100 deposit.

Mitchell County Baptist Association - From Liberty Hill Baptist Church: A Day To Remember - Marriage Retreat featuring Stan and Tammy Baud building the Art of Marriage by Family Life. Saturday Oct 6, 2018 8:30am-4:30pm Catered breakfast and lunch provided. At the Cross Street Commerce Center at 31 Cross St. Spruce Pine, NC Registration is $35.00 per couple. Contact Meg Deise at 828-476-0027.

Mitchell County Chamber - We are also adding local and regional events to the Airbnb site so that visitors seeking a place to stay here in our area can also see the great events that are happening that they can take part in! If you are an Airbnb host, you can also add events!
Bits 'n Pieces

Saturday October 6, 2018 in Central Park on Locust St Spruce Pine, NC. For more info contact Beth Davis at 828-765-4015.

Yancey County

Paracay Playhouse - The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) [Revision] is a delightful romp featuring all 37 of Shakespeare’s plays, meant to be performed in 97 minutes, by three actors. Fast-paced, witty, and physical, it’s full of laughter for Shakespeare lovers and haters alike. Tickets are available now at parkawayplayhouse.com, or by calling 828-687-4235. Ending on Oct. 6th.

Higgins Memorial Karos Training Training for the Karos Walk at Mountain View Correctional facility starts August 16th. There are three training Saturdays and participants must do two of the three. This is a desperate plan to have more people from our church sign up to participate. Without more help we will have to severely limit the number of inmates that we can bring the love of Jesus Christ to. The walk will be October 15-21. For more information contact Jim Swain at 284-0500 or Peirre Bingham at 208-0290.

Shoals Creec Baptist Church - Oct 4, 2018 AIM True Men’s Conference 8am to 3pm (I will send you a flyer in another email) Saturday Oct 21, 2018 Prayer Shawl Ministry Soup and Salad Fundraiser immediately following the morning worship service (more info on our FB page), Fall Festival Oct 27, 2018 828-284-0500. WMU meeting with guest Patrick Ballard of Mountain Minsteries- he will play, sing, and share about his assisted living facilities ministry in Western NC- love offering to be received.

Mayland Community College - Allen Cook Director, Mayland Small Business Center (282) 765-1395 acook@mayland.edu
Class One: Business Building Tips from a Local Master Potter (2 Hours)
Established local artists, Jon Elenbogen and Rebecca Plummer have been successfully operating “The Baking Spider Pottery” in Penland for over 40 years. In this class, explore topics such as establishing credibility, record keeping, tax considerations, insurance strategies, business practices, operating a co-operative gallery, creating your own craft show and much more! 9/26, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Fee Waived Elenbogen
TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine 828.766.1295

Class Two: Marketing Your Art (2 Hours)
From the Ashevile River Arts District, successful studio owner and professional artist, Matt Romney is well known for creating beautiful handmade baskets. In this seminar, Matt will share marketing techniques that will create new customers and build sales.
10/3, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Fee Waived Romney
TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine 828.766.1295

Class Three: How to Find Your Customers (2 Hours)
Who are your customers and how do you find them? This class will cover local and national market needs and trends related to your business. Class will analyze tourists, seasonal residents, and local buying habits and trends. This data will enable you to determine your buying customer and build a customer profile from which to effectively operate and market your business.
10/16, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Fee Waived Cook
TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine 828.766.1295

Class Four: Artist Bookkeeping Basics (2 Hours)
Gain insight into the best bookkeeping methods to manage your studio business. CPA, Kenneth Beall will discuss best practices for financial management and various accounting options to fit your style of business.
10/17, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Fee Waived Beall
TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine 828.766.1295

Class Five: Art Business Tax Guide (2 Hours)
Understanding taxes can be a challenge for many business owners. This seminar will focus on common tax requirements for artists. CPA Alicia Sisk-Morris will help you make sense of it all.
10/24, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Fee Waived Sisk-Morris
TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine 828.766.1295

DIGITAL MARKETING AND SALES CLASSES:
#HELP! Social Media Marketing for Beginners Lunch & Learn (2 Hours)
Explore the ever-changing landscape of social media marketing while enjoying a light lunch. The basics of Facebook for business will be covered with step-by-step instructions for set-up. Instagram, YouTube, and other social media platforms will also be analyzed from a small business owner perspective. Find out when to post, proper use of hashtags, and how to boost content in this information packed class!
9/23, T, 12:00-2:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Robinson
Burnsville Town Center, 828.766.1295

The Baby Equipment and Resource Closet (B.E.A.R.) at East Asheville United Methodist Church reaches out to families that are struggling to provide basic necessities for their babies and small children. Items such as clothing, shoes, baby equipment, bedding, diapers, and hygiene products are provided for free to expectant parents, single parents, foster families, grandparents raising grandchildren, and any family in need.
If you have 2-4 hours of free time a month, a love for children and a desire to improve the quality of life for struggling families, the East Asheville B.E.A.R. Closet invites you to join our outreach ministry and mission. B.E.A.R. Closet is open the 3rd and 4th Mondays of each month 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. East Asheville United Methodist Church 48 Brownsville Road Asheville (off Hay, 70 yard the VA Hospital)
Volunteer opportunities consist of greeting clients, assisting with paperwork, sorting and organizing clothing, completing client orders, and cleaning donated equipment. For more information please call Cheryl at 980-1071. We also welcome you to visit the website at bearcloset.org or stop by and visit the B.E.A.R. Closet during business hours.

NOTES

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Funny Farm
continued from page 13

BEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
Welcomes You to
Celebrate Recovery
Thursday’s at 7:00 pm
Hope & Help from Addiction Through Christ

said, matter of factly, “Not a problem. I’ll just put it in 4-wheel drive, lock down the wheels and move it out.”

I was immediately insulted. “What, do you think I don’t have it in 4-wheel drive?” She really believe I am that stupid?”
Always the teacher, she again smiled that crooked grin, looked at me over his glasses, and remarked, “Well, we know you’ve had challenges with 4-wheel drive in the past.” Oh sure, now he’s remembering the time I nearly burned up “Slackie the Jeep” on some dang mountain, thinking I had it in 4-wheel drive and didn’t.

I was greatly relieved that my friend didn’t down me; delighted that his renowned sense of optimism remained intact. Somehow he always gives me hope when I am overwhelmed by dark clouds. But, truth be told I didn’t care how he did it, I just wanted this nightmare to end.

All’s Well that Ends: Well
Yeah, yeah, yeah… we arrived home to find I had failed to engage the 4-wheel drive AGAIN!

It took Farmer Doug approximately 3 ½ minutes to dislodge his tractor and trailer from the quicksand that WAS our lower lot. But, always the gentleman and friend, he remarked, “Pollard, every bit of advice I give to you comes from having made lots of mistakes. So don’t feel bad, I’ve done exactly the same things and then some!”

What a friend… what an encourager… what a farmer. But, I am still Farmer Clint… and he’s not @!

Humbled in the Hills,
Farmer Clint

David Wheeler
NC Senate
wheelernc.com

Do you want this man to have more power?

- Supports cutting $50 million from kids lunch program (SNAP)
- Voted to eliminate scholarships for fallen veteran's kids
- Refused to help our people get access to health care.
- Refused to properly fund our schools.

OR

Someone who cares about our families.

- Wants to get teacher pay to top 20 in U.S. by 2020
- Restore and expand scholarships for our fallen veterans' children.
- Expand early childhood education.
- Properly fund rural health care and hospitals.

Paid for By Wheeler for NC

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The Fitter-Patter of Raindrops

By Timothy W. Tom

Burke County

The fitter-patter of raindrops on the deck outside the porch called to me. Donning my camouflage rubber boots, rain vest and all-weather wide-brimmed hat, I grabbed my walking stick and headed for the woods. The skies were dark even in the middle of the day. All around us the radar indicated dark green, the sign of heavy rain. The remnants of Hurricane Florence were finally upon us.

The worst was yet to come.

Many of us folks had already dealt with this storm for over two days. Massive flooding and torrential rains were continuing. Here in the mountains, we were just getting started.

As my footsteps carried me deeper into the forest, overhead the canopy gave me shelter. Large drops would occasionally splatter on my head bringing a refreshing benefit to the hot hillysoil.

The creek was already swollen but remarkably so. The trees swayed as winds gusting sporadically, which would yield another gentle shower.

My footsteps carried me on, like the water flowing past. My mind became still.

Those early memnons began to flood my mind.

The rain had been falling for days. The weather was up again, and for some reason, our family had decided to go exploring the ever-tinged “Battleground”, as we had always known it. As kids, we never knew the truth of its name. The stories that had been handed down over the centuries were stories created by animals found when grandpa had plowed the field for planting. It was when the bottom blew up broken down by pottery and gear points, the sounds of those ancient tribesmen footsteps could be heard once more. It was a low land piece of pasture that bordered the banks of the Watauga River in Watauga County on the edge of the farm where we called home. The swollen river had claimed much of the lower reaches along its estuaries, so the family simply wanted to see if it too would mercifully pass.

When we arrived, the water was a raucous brown. It swirled about the trees like ancient warriors seeking a hiding spot from which to shoot their arrows. My father had me safely perched upon his shoulders. From my vantage point, I could see the rest of the family. They waded about in the murky water as if searching something they had lost yet, perhaps found was the ground. They had found known was now engulfed by flood waters, taking with anything which was exposed. My little squirrel in my legs burned to crack that spinning finches.

“Let me walk,” my mind can recall me saying to my father.

“No, it’s too deep,” he would answer.

The tension upon my weary shoulders must have caused him to give in, because the next thing I remember, I was walking in the coldness. The water must shiver up my spine. His hand firmly grasping my own. The few steps taken had been enough to quench my desire for not long after, I was back up on top of my father’s shoulders.

A sick, cold, ill, or partly配置 at that point, all I could think about was being back inside Grandma’s kitchen by the warm wood stove.

Not many days after that walk, my little body would succumb to pneumonia. It was then I learned about solitude. Alone in the plastic oxygen tent in the children’s ward of Decatur General Hospital in my trail, child body would slowly sink that internal illness.

There alone for what seemed like days, I would yearn for anyone to come speak to me. The tears of loneliness often were what cried me to sleep. Early one morning or evening, I know not which, only that the light of day was fading, heard someone step on to the floor of my bed. I never made out his or her form through the unclear plastic, only that someone was with me. In his presence, the emptiness that had been before seemed to evaporate. A warmth of love washed over my soul as if another spirit had enveloped my little being. From that point forward, I never felt alone again.

Since that time, back when I was barely two years old, I was comforted me in my darkest hours again, and again. Even when I tried my best to run from him, he never left my side.

The feeling of the holy spirit had wrapped his arms around me, and once more, this evening on my walk, I was reminded of that special time in my life.

Many people walk through life without ever finding the Peace of God. They seek what they cannot find in places which cannot fill their void of emptiness. It is as if they continue to flounder in a darkness from whence they cannot escape. Like water, we can either choose to sink or swim. It is our choice. Our spiritual life is no different; we have a choice.

Jesus told his disciples, “And I am with you, and shall be with you always, even to the end of the age.” He then taught them, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

One is a member of a new Christian series, “Children of the Light”, with the first book being “Brucke 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 WCU, and is a Lay Speaker. He can be reached at twtom@live.com

KATHY WOODY YOUNG
Mitchell County School Board

Kathy Woody Young is a candidate for Mitchell County School Board. She is a graduate of Bowman High School. Young has 38 years of experience working for Mitchell County Administration. She is the current County Manager for Mitchell County. She has extensive knowledge and experience with grant writing for Mitchell County, as well as budget and finance operations.

She is a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church where she has attended her entire life. She is married to Mike Young and they have two children, Christopher Young, owner and operator of Pioneer Cabinets; Amber Young; Physical Education teacher at Grove Elementary School. Both are college graduates and products of Mitchell County Schools.

Youngs passion for children and love of Mitchell County are her reasons for running. Her goals as a Board of Education Member are; Academics are the number one priority, all students should have the tools they need to learn and be successful, accountability for everyone and ensuring that money is spent where it is supposed to be, schools that are award winning like neighboring counties and teachers who have the resources to do their jobs effectively.

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With flooded homes, mudslides, casualties, thousands without power, and over one million people ordered to evacuate their homes indeterminately, Hurricane Florence has devastated the state we all call home. While we were blessed in Western North Carolina to experience less rain and damage than expected, every loss is painful and as we are called in scripture, we can mourn alongside those mourning other losses of possessions—and for more importantly, the loss of loved ones. I am praying for each and every person affected by this hurricane, and I will continue to pray for the beautiful state of North Carolina.

In the wake of disaster, it can be difficult to determine how to help and where to intercede. In recent days I’ve had the opportunity to visit Eastern North Carolina and visit with first responders and families from the surrounding area. They are doing incredible work, all putting their own lives on the line to help our state and communities recover. In this time of need, it is essential that everyone pitch in and help and so many have stepped up to the plate. I am grateful for them.

As Christians, we are called to serve and care for those in need, loving one another as we wish to be loved. As we recover from Hurricane Florence, let us all be quick to serve—lending a helping hand, a warm meal, or even an encouraging word. 1 Peter 4:10 says “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

Please continue praying for the wonderful people of North Carolina and South Carolina as they recover from the storm’s damage. Now, more than ever, we can be proud of the great state we call home. With God’s grace, we will recover.

As the November election approaches, in addition to looking carefully at the candidates who will be on the ballot, there are six proposed Constitutional amendments to consider. I have explained, in prior updates, four of the proposed amendments (below) and why I believe they are good for our state and why I intend to vote for them:

1. Constitutional amendment protecting the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife.
2. Constitutional amendment to strengthen protection for victims of crime; to establish certain absolute basic rights for victims; and to ensure the enforcement of these rights.
3. Constitutional amendment to reduce the income tax rate in North Carolina to a maximum allowable rate of seven percent (7%).
4. Constitutional amendment to require voters to provide photo identification before voting in person.

I also support and will vote for two additional amendments:

5. Constitutional amendment to change the process for filling judicial vacancies that occur between judicial elections from a process in which the Governor has sole appointment power to a process in which the people of the State nominate individuals to fill vacancies by way of a commission comprised of appointees made by the judicial, executive, and legislative branches charged with making recommendations to the legislature as to which nominees are deemed qualified; and the legislature will recommend at least two nominees to the Governor via legislation not subject to gubernatorial veto; and the Governor will appoint judges from among these nominees.

6. Constitutional amendment to establish an eight-member bipartisan board of elections enforcement in the constitutional to administer ethics and elections law.

The Judicial Appointments Amendment would empower voters to nominate candidates to fill judicial vacancies and end patronage judicial appointments. Governor Pat McCrory, on her last day in office in 2017, appointed four individuals to the state’s highest court as special Superior Court judges. These four people worked for him and had no judicial experience.

Additionally, the Judicial Appointments amendment would authorize a non-partisan merit commission, appointed by the Chief Justice, the governor and the General Assembly, to evaluate those nominees and rate them based on their professional qualifications and merit, would direct the General Assembly to review the qualified nominees submitted by the non-partisan commission and forward at least two nominees to the governor for consideration, would provide that the governor will appoint the qualified one of the two nominees; and would require the appointed judge to stand for election following the governor’s appointment in order to continue holding the judicial office.

The Ethics and Elections amendment would establish an eight-member, bipartisan board to administer North Carolina’s ethics and elections laws, free from the interference from the legislative, executive, or judicial branches of state government. Members of the bipartisan board would be appointed by the governor based on recommendations from legislative leaders of both parties. No more than four members of the board could be registered with the same political party, ensuring that ethics and elections enforcement is not encumbered by partisan politics.

I hope you will join me in voting “For” all six proposed constitutional amendments on Election Day. As always, please share your thoughts with me on issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.

Record Number of Judges; Nominees: Confirmed

Although August is usually a slow time in Washington, the Senate has been hard at work this year to carry out the work the American people sent us here to do—despite an obstruction from our friends across the aisle. Just this month, the Senate confirmed fifteen lifetime appointments to the Judiciary and several dozen other appointments. Some of these positions include appointments to the Federal Reserve, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the U.S. Treasury’s Intelligence department. Not bad for a month when the Senate is usually not in session.

To date, the Senate has confirmed sixty-six judicial nominees—forty-two district court judges and twenty-six circuit court judges—in addition to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. And next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will begin hearings for the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to serve on the Supreme Court. Although I do not sit on the Judiciary Committee, I look forward to following the hearings closely and hearing Judge Kavanaugh’s rationale and points of view.

Even though obstructionists have fought tooth and nail to slow down and stall consideration of many of these highly qualified nominees, the Senate has carried on the work of making sure our courts and critical executive branch positions are filled with the best possible individuals. The work we’ve done this August will impact the U.S. judiciary for decades to come, which is why it was so crucial to stay in Washington until it was finished. Under the Constitution, part of the Senate’s duties are to provide “advice and consent” for such nominees, and we will continue doing our job.
Legislators receive Florence briefing

The Governor’s Office has activated the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund for donations to support North Carolina’s response to Hurricane Florence. Visit rebuildnc.gov or text FLORENCE to 29222 to donate to the NC Disaster Relief Fund.

NC House District 118

Over the last month, Democratic activists, including Governor Cooper, filed a flurry of lawsuits to try to stop you from ever weighing in on popular constitutional amendments like Voter ID and lowering the maximum income tax rate.

I’m happy to report that this week, the North Carolina Supreme Court rejected these absurd legal attacks, ending the Democrats’ attempts to get an activist judge to prevent the amendments from appearing on the ballot.

It’s now up to you to decide if you want to join 34 other states in requiring ID when voting. To me, the policy just makes sense: you have to show ID for a whole host of minor transactions, and you should have to do the same when deciding on who will govern the country. And last month, federal authorities charged 19 foreign nationals with voting illegally.

You’ll also be able to weigh in on lowering the maximum income tax rate in our state constitution. This year’s income tax rate is 5.49%, and it’s dropping to 5.25% next year, but the Constitution permits the rate to be as high as 10%. The General Assembly proposed lowering that maximum rate to 7%. I think it’s a good idea to prevent a return to the days of spendthrift politicians, high taxes, and multi-billion dollar deficits by lowering the maximum tax rate.

Voter ID and the income tax cap are just two of the six proposed constitutional amendments that you will have a chance to vote on this fall. The six amendments are as follows:
1. To require voters to provide photo identification before voting in person.
2. To reduce the income tax rate in North Carolina to a maximum allowable rate of seven percent (7%).
3. To protect the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife.
4. To strengthen protections for victims of crime; to establish certain absolute basic rights for victims; and to ensure the enforcement of these rights.
5. To establish an eight-member bipartisan Board of Ethics and Elections Enforcement in the Constitution to administer ethics and elections law.
6. To change the process for filling judicial vacancies that occur between judicial elections from a process in which the Governor has sole appointment power to a process in which the people of the State nominate individuals to fill vacancies by way of a commission comprised of appointees made by the judicial, executive, and legislative branches charged with making recommendations to the legislature as to which nominees are deemed qualified; then the legislature will recommend at least two nominees to the Governor via legislative action not subject to gubernatorial veto, and the Governor will appoint judges from among these nominees.

These policies are very popular which is why the Democrats did everything in their power to prevent them from ever appearing on the ballot. Now that their ridiculous legal challenge has finally come to an end, it’s time for the people to vote on how they want their state to be run.

I believe that every one of these amendments is of vital importance to North Carolina and I’m confident that the voters will agree.

Below my signature is a helpful chart that explains how the amendments will appear on the ballot along with a description of what the amendment would change.

As always, if my office can be helpful to you in dealing with state government, please don’t hesitate to contact me or my staff.

NC Senate District 46

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www.brcnews.com October 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 33
We LOVE helping clients with Medicare plans and Individual plans including with the Marketplace. There will be several NEW PLANS this Open Enrollment and we are here to help you! Please give us a call 765-3499.

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**Spooky Meadows**

Sponsored by City of Morganton Parks & Recreation

Rediscover the thrills and chills of a good old-fashioned HALLOWEEN HAYRIDE!

**FOR ALL AGES**

When: October 26th - 27th
Location: Catawba Meadows Park
Time: 7:00pm – 10:00pm

For More Info Contact: 828-438-5350
Hayrides Provided By Valley Hills Antique Power Club

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**NEWS RELEASE**

August 23, 2018

**New Medicare cards being mailed out**

RALEIGH – North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey reminds people who have Medicare health insurance (check their mail boxes. Their new Medicare card will be in there.

"Your new Medicare card may look a little different," Commissioner Causey said. "It will no longer have your Social Security number on it. That's to help protect against fraud and identity theft, and to protect your medical information."

Instead, the new card will use a combination of numbers and letters.

"Your new card will automatically come to you. You don't need to do anything to receive your new card as long as your address is up to date. If you need to update your address, visit your My Social Security account page [https://www.ssa.gov/mysamcess](https://www.ssa.gov/mysamcess)."

"Once you get your new Medicare card, remember to destroy your old card. You can start using your new card right away."

"At this month, Medicare has been mailing the new cards to beneficiaries in many Southeast states including North Carolina. It will likely take 3-4 days, perhaps longer, for the mailings to be complete."

Commissioner Causey also warns Medicare recipients that unsupervised people may use the new card aloud as an opportunity to scam you. Don't fall for it.

Here are some ways people may try to steal from you:

- Is someone calling, claiming to be from Medicare, asking for your Social Security number or bank information? Hang up. First, Medicare won't call you. Second, Medicare will never ask for your Social Security number or banking information.

- Is someone asking you to pay for your new card? That's a scam. Your new Medicare card is free.

- Is someone threatening to cancel your benefits if you don't give up information or money? This is also a scam. New Medicare cards will be mailed out to you automatically. There won't be any changes to your benefits.

For more information on Medicare fraud, contact the Senior Medicare Patrol within the Department of Insurance's Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIP) at 1-855-408-1212.

-- RCNC --
Tee River Studio Tour
The Journey Continues

By Kate Groff
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

The mountains of Yancey and Mitchell Counties of Western North Carolina are home to some of the top artists in America. And twice a year, Tee River Arts honors their talent and the area in which they choose to live and work with a premier studio tour showcasing their work.

For a quarter of a century, local artists have opened their studios, demonstrated their talent, and offered up their hospitality. The first weekend in December is a fitting way to mark the holiday season, to get out in the crisp late fall air and enjoy what residents already know about the Blue Ridge mountains—the clear Tee River curves in the roads, the likelihood of finding something different, something that speaks to you out of the way place. Artists in the two counties will welcome visitors to their studios for an entire weekend of browsing and buying.

Each year the tour has grown—from the original 13 artists back in the early 90’s, to now over 100. This year’s tour boasts 103 participating artists, 67 open studios, and 5 galleries.

Glass studios sparkle with ornaments, sculptures, vases and bowls, goblets and glasses—blown, fused and flame worked.

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Tee River Arts Council.
Peace: A Settled Assurance

By Pastor Dan Qrallo
Burlington

As I sit down to pen this article, many have just endured a very difficult time with hurricane Florence. Those who live in the eastern part of our state and in South Carolina have battled significant loss and destruction, some even losing the loss of loved ones. Floodwaters are still on the rise, causing the restoration efforts to be hindered as crews are unable to get into the devastated areas. Officials are uncertain regarding how long power will be out. Tragically, homes are taking advantage of those who have lost much or have been forced to evacuate. Without a doubt, this storm has had a devastating effect on the lives of many people.

Regardless of the challenges that individuals have faced, are facing, and will continue to face, the Bible teaches that believers can have a settled calmness of spirit, even when circumstances around them would seem to dictate otherwise. In fact, this sense of peace is not only possible, it is expected. The Bible teaches three types of peace, all of which are vital for individuals today.

1. Spiritual peace – Romans 5:1

Until a person is first settled in his eternal relationship with God, he will never experience peace. Romans 5:1 teaches, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the peace that comes when a person places his complete confidence in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. God judiciously declares that person righteous (justified), thus granting the believer spiritual peace. No longer an enemy of God (Romans 5:10) and no longer on whose God’s wrath presently abide (John 3:36), the believer experiences a changed relationship and is at peace with God the Father. Nothing can ever change this standing for his believer, it is eternal in its nature.

2. Internal peace – John 14:16

As John 13 concludes, Jesus told His disciples some troubling news. He was about to depart from them and go to a place where they could not immediately follow Him. Speaking on behalf of the other disciples, Peter expressed his confusion over this statement and even began to question and argue with Him. Jesus addressed the disciples with the familiar words, “Let not your heart be troubled.” In other words, stop allowing your mind to be filled with such turmoil and confusion. It speaks of a heart that is full of anxiety. The solution for such a mind is trust in God. Jesus stated, “I believe in God, believe also in Me.” Such peace is unaffected by circumstances, regardless of how troubling they may be because it recognizes God is at work (John 14:1-3). It is unwavering in loneliness, for it relies upon God the Holy Spirit’s abiding presence (John 14:16), and it is achieved in prayer (Philippians 4:6-7).

3. Religious peace – Romans 14:19

Throughout our lifetimes, we will encounter those with whom we disagree. Such disagreements must be handled biblically and resolved in a manner that brings glory to God (see Matthew 18:15-20). But we must strive to be at peace with one another. Such peace can only be obtained when both individuals are seeking it (Romans 12:18).

Is your life filled with uncertainty? Perhaps you have been given an unexpected diagnosis or lost a loved one. God desires that you experience His peace. It begins with salvation and is capable of enduring through the most difficult of times. Because peace is part of the trust produced by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:2-22, 23), the degree to which we experience His peace is in direct proportion to our submission to Him. Therefore, the limits to peace are self-imposed because we do not trust Him and pray as we should.

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

Being Christ Like

By Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County

Every Christian has a conviction to be Christ like. Pastors, Evangelist’s and Missionaries preach about it. Bible teachers teach about it. However, how do we apply it in our daily lives? Like anything else, Christ likeness can be subjective. The subjective application is solely based on our opinion, our passion or the things and events, which we hold dear. I don’t mean to imply that subjectivity has no place in being Christ like, but it cannot be an exclusive application either. When subjectivity is defined as God’s calling for our life and our purpose in His will then it becomes more than opinion, it is a Holy calling, gifted, and commissioned. Then there is objectivity. The objective application may also be called principles, which guide our heart and life. We should never try to read our subjective opinion into a matter which God’s word speaks clearly too. Being objective is much more difficult and disciplined than being subjective. Understanding this is what I want to offer a few points that I believe will help all Christians be more Christ like.

Let’s begin with the Christian’s source of authority, our Bible. The Christian can respect many sources, however the Christian can have only one source of that is authoritative, and this must be the Bible. We are told from our Bible that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Therefore I see that in speaking on the Greek meaning of being Christ like, God has spoken through His writers and their work stands as our authority today. To be Christ like is to allow God’s authoritative Word to speak to our lives and effectively change our lives. For this to happen, we must read it as study it and do this often.

To be Christ like is to be motivated to action. This is where our subjectivity becomes tested by godly conviction. Where is God leading you? Is it time for action, time to trust God? If God is truly behind your convictions and our motivations comes from His will, man cannot stop it. In addition, neither can you ignore it. An indicator of godly action will be humility. Humility often opens an incomplete or very wrong definition.

Humility is not being a foot for others. Humility is putting aside selfish ambition and focusing on the needs of others. Sometimes that will mean we are treated badly. When it happens, remember what Jesus said, pray for love and for those who despise you use Humility is something, which can never be fully achieved in our lives, something the Christian works on prayerfully every day.

The Christian cannot stop with understanding what to do and merely repeating that understanding. We are to practice Christ-likeness from our heart. We cannot be Christ without having a changed heart. A heart changed through a relationship with Jesus Christ, being born again. Our will then guides our behavior and leads us to continuing repentance as our walk with Christ grows day by day.

Why do I mention repentance? Because no one can be, Christ like, all day, every day of his or her lives. The flesh will eventually affect our behavior and the Holy Spirit will convict us to repeat. Christ likeness is a daily growth in our relationship with Jesus; this relationship is displayed through our behavior. I learn daily how to be more Christ like. I trust you do too!

I’m going to combine two points in this paragraph, thankfulness and kindness. Both are not only important but also necessary for us to be Christ like. Christ was always thankful to God the Father. The good, bad, ugly, peaceful and even contentious times Christ always met them with the same heart of thanksgiving daily. Doing so will make the path easier for kindness. Being truly thankful prepares us to be genuinely kind, not only is our material giving but also in our treatment of others. We will begin by moving away from treating others the way they treat us and start treating them the way we want to be treated.

How does it end? From godly wisdom, we not only know God’s word, will, purpose and conviction for our life but we understand where our life needs to be at the vessel He chose to use through it. We always live our life from the two greatest commandments. We truly love God with our body, mind and soul and we love others as we love ourselves.

Being Christ like is an awesome challenge presented to us once we are born into the family of God. How we handle it is very important to the Great Commission. Others see Christ through our life, our behavior, our attitude, our decisions and words and manners. Being Christ like is something every Christian should take very seriously and approach it daily in prayer seeking God’s work through our life for the day.

I hope you find blessing, hope and encouragement in this column—my prayer is for it to strengthen your relationship with God through His son Jesus Christ.

Terry Cheek is pastor of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Marion NC. You can contact Terry by email at terrycheek85@gmail.com or by phone at (328) 466-6120.

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Support Your Pastor!
By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Read with an open heart and show your pastor and his family how much you appreciate them for all they do for your church family.

Support your Pastor!

Several years ago, I approached my former pastor and issued an apology. This man was my pastor when I received Christ as Savior and baptized me. He faithfully preached the Bible, pastored the church, attended night classes at Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute, worked on a job during the day, and remained a faithful husband and Dad. The reason for the apology I gave was the fact that after being in ministry for a few years, I realized that I had not been much of a church member! In fact, I realized that this pastor had, balancing his church, family, and career, I still found things to whine and complain about. Personally, I failed to realize how much was on him. Instead of looking for things to whine and complain about, I should have been praying, helping, and supporting him more. In other words, when God calls a pastor and He begins to understand through experience what a pastor faces every day in the ministry. Unless you are a pastor, you cannot understand the day to day challenges one faces.

The most important thing to do for your pastor is to pray for him. A faithful pastor who has been called of God, faces constant assault from the devil. Being the one who is responsible for breaking the Bread of Life to the disciples of Christ brings him in the crosshairs of the evil one. Any pastor who states the ministry has no battles may not be doing what he needs to be doing. There is a constant everyday spiritual battle that faithful pastors go through to minister to the congregations and communities in which God has placed them. When a man answers the call to preach the Gospel he instantly steps onto the spiritual battlefield. To carry such an important responsibility places him as a target for the forces of Satan. This constant spiritual battle can take its toll on the man of God. What I'm saying is your pastor needs your help!! Pray for him every single day and if possible several times a day! As he is praying himself he needs your prayers and support of those he is trying to minister. Pray for God's strength to sustain him. Pray for God's wisdom to guide him. Pray that the Holy Spirit will announce to him the studies and preaches the Scriptures. Pray for protection from the assaults of the Devil. Your pastor, if he is doing what he should be doing, is constantly praying and reading of the Bible that will help the people to whom he will be preaching. He needs the prayers of God's people to help him as he preaches. If you believe his preaching needs to be deeper and improve start praying and stop complaining. It will help much more for you to pray for him than to complain to him.

Next, be understanding. Don't just assume that your pastor only works on Sundays and Wednesdays. A pastor is never off duty. Even when he is at home with his family, he is on call. A pastor can expect phone calls any time. There is no time card which he will punch to say the work day is over. For the most part many people will go to work and leave that job at a certain time. This is not so for the faithful pastor. At all times and in all places he will be called upon to fulfill his calling as a pastor. He can be called away from his family during supper or in the middle of the night. In the grocery store, at the ballgame, walking down the street, eating in the restaurant, wherever he is at, he is still on duty as a pastor. The responsibility he has is not a career but a calling of God. Whenever he is called upon, whenever he is at, he cannot say, "I'm not on duty", but must faithfully answer the call when it comes. Don't expect a pastor to be there for everything. If you genuinely need him, let him know, but don't expect him to have to come every time you want something too! Understand that he sometimes will have to place priority on certain things and cannot be in more than one place at a time. He must take time to study God's Word and bring a message, for that is his most important responsibility as a Pastor. He understands that he is a husband and father and must have time and opportunity, just like you, to fulfill those responsibilities also. He must first pastor his family before he can be a pastor to you. My wife knows me as Chris first, not Preacher Chris. My boys know me simply as "Daddy". If your pastor also works on a public job, think of how much more pressure is placed on him to try and balance his responsibilities to his family and church. If he is understanding and allows him to be a family man. He will be a better pastor to your family if he has time to be with his family.

A blessing and not a burden. Be an encourager and not a discourager. Often, the only time some church members speak to their pastor or want a visit, is to bring a complaint to
October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

By Beth Davis
Mitchell County

Yet another year has past, and yet the number of domestic violence victims in North Carolina who have been murdered at the hands of the one who claims to love them is staggering. Most of you are aware (or participated in) in our Walk A Mile In Her Shoes fundraiser this year and in years past. It’s always fun, family-friendly, full of sole feet and lots of laughter! That said, the underlying purpose to raise funds and awareness is deadly serious, and a plague on our community.

"Domestic violence exacts a high price on families. This type of particular violence goes beyond bruises and broken bones and includes physical and emotional devastation, financial impropriety or ruinance, troubléd and damaged children, as well as family pets. Our pets are our family members. Abusers are highly manipulative, and this is but one method of power and control abusers use to threaten those they claim to love. Our purpose is to give victims of abuse a safe haven to reclaim their power and control, as well as their independence. We provide a safe and secure home for victims, their children, and of course, their pets," says Connie Sadberry, Executive Director of Mitchell County SafePlace.

According to Associate Director Tracy Black, "Mitchell County SafePlace is extremely grateful for the support of our community. The Walk A Mile In Her Shoes event this month affords us the opportunity to make everyone aware of the services SafePlace provides in breaking the bonds of interpersonal violence. Whether we provide emergency shelter and clothing for a domestic victim or pay for last-minute lessons for a 10-year-old rape victim so she can regain her personal power, these funds will allow SafePlace to continue the lifesaving work we’ve been doing for over 20 years."

County Commissioner Vern Grindstaff explains, "Since becoming involved in the Walk A Mile In Her Shoes for SafePlace campaign, I’ve learned that domestic abuse isn’t just black eyes and bruises. Abusers also threaten to hurt or even kill family members and pets. Sometimes the scars from verbal, emotional, and mental abuse are even worse than the physical ones. And then there’s the financial abuse, where victims don’t have money to escape, or the batteries cause them to lose their jobs. My involvement with Mitchell County SafePlace has been such an eye-opening experience for me. No one wants to admit that this is happening in our community, but it is... and it’s happening way too much."

Mitchell County Sheriff Donald Street adds, "I’m proud to take part in this fundraiser. I have zero tolerance for abusers in NC, and I support the strongest penalty for all abusers."

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior used to exert power and control over another person, typically a spouse or partner, through fear, intimidation, and often the threat or act of physical harm. Other terms used to describe domestic violence are intimate partner violence, spouse abuse, family violence, or battering. Domestic violence does not discriminate; it knows no age, economic, social, religious, sexual orientation, geographic, ethnic, or racial bounds.

Abuse of domestic violence is increasing in Mitchell County and the US.

In 2017, Mitchell County SafePlace provided free, life-saving services to nearly 900 women, children, and their pets. In fact, SafePlace is one of only four domestic violence shelters in North Carolina, and the first in Western North Carolina to accept pets.

One in 4 women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime in the United States; 1 in 3 female homicide victims are murdered by their current or former partner every year, more than 60% of domestic violence incidents happen at home. Additionally, 1 in 7 women kill victims of domestic violence.

Additionally, more than 3 million children will witness domestic violence in their homes every year; they are more likely to intervene when they witness severe violence. Children exposed to domestic violence at home are more likely to develop relationship st in which they are abused or become abusers.

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness among families.

Thanks to your donations to our thrift stores and your monetary support, Mitchell County SafePlace is able to quietly, determinedly continue our mission to provide safe shelter, as well as numerous other services to those escaping the horrors of domestic violence. We couldn’t do it without you!

Beth Davis is the Resource Development Coordinator at Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-755-0101 or bethbdavis60@gmail.com
Pause...and Consider

Am I a Complainer?

By Ken and Jan Merop

Avery County

I do not thrive in the stifling summer heat. I melt.

Neither do I like being in air conditioning constantly. To keep things cooler when we lived in Florida, the shades in our family room were down most of the day—meaning I missed seeing the flowers, trees, and green grass.

I always loved it when I could invite the outside in...windows and doors open so the cross ventilation blew through...as I do here in the mountains as much as is possible. But, summer time in Florida for me, though pretty and bright, proved that.

Though autumn in Florida was not the colorful display of trees found here in North Carolina, we still look forward to those cooler breezes that blew in saying goodbye to the summer heat.

Much as I like to see my ideas of the seasons as simply preference, there are times I must admit that I am complaining. Instead, I should be thankful. Let’s face it, if I hadn’t had air conditioning to keep out the humidity, I’d have been far more uncomfortable. If I couldn’t pull shades down, the summer sun would have scorched the room.

I recall winters in New Jersey that seemed never ending, with ice storms, treacherous driving conditions, and piles of snow. It was hard to appreciate the beauty of the crystallized trees if my husband was out on icy roads.

If we aren’t careful, we’ll easily become complainers. Complaining leads to a depressed spirit and will render us unproductive. It will cause others to shy away from us because complaining is wearying to the complainer and maybe even more so to the listener.

Rather, I think a bumper sticker I once read should be our motto. Whenever our mouths are ready to spout a complaint, let’s say instead, “I’m too blessed to complain.” And isn’t that really true? We have so much to be thankful for that complaining is simply a waste of breath and time.

The Bible warns against complaining. The children of Israel murmured. It seemed no matter how many miracles God did for them, they complained. He parted the Red Sea to free them from their enemies. He gave them water from a rock, manna from heaven, and clothing and shoes that never wore out. And still they complained.

In Philippians 2:14, NKJV it says, “Do all things without complaining and disputing.”

We all have preferences. But, let’s be careful not to be complainers. Selah

Mountainside splendor

I love color!

And autumn foliage is a non-stop show that fills my senses.

How can we miss the fingertips of our Creator dipped in gold, crimson, and amber hues. Fall pushes out the emerald beauty of spring and sumer as it prepares as to welcome the snows yet to come.

“For everything there is a season...God has made Everything beautiful for its own time.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 & 11, NLT

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Kim and Jan live residing in the mountains of Avery county. Visit Jan's new blog @ papecomrades.blogspot.com. Journaing with Jan, and Jan's photos at kennexphotography.com

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Matthew 13:23
“Worshiping God Anyway”

By Shaws Thomas  
Barkus City

On November 5th of last year, a killer shot 66 people who had gathered to worship at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, just southeast of San Antonio. The pastor, Frank Gragg, said his wife was out of town that Sunday, but their daughter Annabelle was in the service and was killed by the shooter. At a news conference the next day, Pastor Paul Pantzer said, “Church is the one we’re going to lift up. That’s what I’m willing everybody. You look into what you don’t understand. When you look into things, you turn to your faith, you turn to the Lord, you turn to your own understanding, I don’t understand, but I know my God does. And that’s where I’ll leave that.” And a few days later the church was having services, with their minister of music leading worship from a wheelchair, still recuperating from his injuries.

That pastor, and that church, exemplify the true Christian spirit. Having endured some of the worst that life can throw at you, they didn’t give up on their faith. Instead they decided they were going to worship God anyway.

That’s the kind of spirit we see in Habakkuk this morning. He’d gotten about as low as you can get in the Lord. He’d been sailing, he’d been discouraged, he’d been trusting God, he’d been trusting God, and he’d seen God turn his gaze from him. He saw how he was committed to worship God anyway.

I. An Unavoidable Calamity

1:1 I heard, and my inward parts trembled, at the sound my lips quivered. Dacy Gabe. God’s judgment is coming; I am constrained by the word of God. I am trembling within, for the calamity is coming; for the people to whom calamity will come.

Sometimes we wish we could change the future, but Habakkuk shows us here why God doesn’t usually allow us to do so. As a prophet, he knew what was going to happen to his country.

In a previous study 70 years before the time of Christ, and it was one of the most difficult times in Bible history. The chosen people of God in Israel & Judah had turned away from God’s word, and had been practicing idolatry and all kinds of other sins for generations, and despite God’s warnings through his prophets, His people had continued to worship other gods, and God had had no choice but to turn back. God is a very patient God, but as Psalm 103:8 says, “I will not always strive with you; I will not keep your anger forever.”

And after several hundred years, God’s patience had run out. He had told His people through several of His prophets, including Habakkuk, that judgment was coming on their land, and that their cities would be destroyed, many of them killed, and others carried away into captivity into Babylon, the nation God was going to use to punish them.

So, Habakkuk the prophet knew what was coming; he knew that Babylon was going to invade; he knew that many of his people were going to perish in the judgment that was coming; he knew they had gone astray, and thousands, perhaps himself included, were going to be carried off as slaves into a foreign country. He knew that an “unavoidable calamity” was coming upon him and his people.

If we could look into the future, many of us here today might see similar things.

— We might see God’s judgment come upon our land in the too-distant future, just like it did upon Judah. We’ve allowed literally millions of babies to be slaughtered in the womb of their mothers through abortion. We’ve turned away from the scriptures foundations of our country for generations, just like Israel did. And there are many other things.

— “Whatever the end of life really means for us, it is for them,” No, I promise you, just like Jesus said, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” If our country doesn’t turn back, WE will face a judgment just like Israel did. It will be an unavoidable calamity.

— But then there are other calamities that happen to us that are NOT a direct result of our sin. It is just a consequence of the general effect of sin in our world. We read few years ago a story about a young man who confessed to problems with alcohol, but he said, “I can’t just stop drinking because of the fear that I have taken on myself.”

— There is suffering in this world. People get hurt, people will get sick; people suffer; people die; there is unavoidable calamity in this world. Even for Christian people, there is suffering and calamity.

— If you are not a Christian, you may have heard someone say otherwise. There is “avoidable calamity” that comes, even on God’s people.

As Unwaving Commitment

But the remarkable thing here is, that in the face of this unavoidable calamity, Habakkuk had an unwavering commitment. He said, though all this was going to happen, though they might see the calamity and all the disasters and all the problems, “I will not turn away from the Lord.”

— “Though the fig tree should blossom, and there be no fruit on the vine; Though the yield of the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food; Though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls; Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.”

That is an unwavering commitment to God by Habakkuk. He said, “I know these hard times are coming where we are going to lose all of our material blessings, God, and cattle, and so on (and notice he did not say, “I am fasting and so on.”) but I’m just going to continue to walk with God. I’m just going to continue to worship Him in the midst of this calamity. I’m just going to continue to trust Him and follow Him, no matter what.”

This is what God wants to see from us as His people. Do you ever wonder what God is really looking for, when He looks down on earth? What does He like to see? Psalm 147:10 says “The Lord does not delight in the strength of the horse, nor does He take pleasure in the legs of a man.” That tells us that God does not delight in our strength.

See, we humans being taking pleasure in things like animals and sports, don’t we? And there is nothing wrong with that, I don’t think. And I know that we also have a lot of football fans, who are SO glad that Labor Day Weekend is here and that it is here. But what are they actually doing? They’re actually just taking pleasure in a sport. They’re actually just taking pleasure in the strength and the abilities of the animals.

But Psalm 147:10 says God does not delight in the strength of the horse. He doesn’t take pleasure in the legs of a man. God does not get His delight from watching horses or football games like we do. So, what does God delight in? Psalm 147:11 says “The Lord delights in His people; He takes pleasure in all who fear Him.”

— God delights in what is pleasing to Him, or what is pleasing to God. God delights in what is pleasing to God. God delights in what is pleasing to God. God delights in what is pleasing to God.

— God loves to see the kind of response that David had in Psalm 22, when he was suffering so much that he would call out, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” He was finding no deliverance, but he would still say in 3: “Yet You are holy, O Lord, who are exalted in power. And Your judgments are right and true.”

As Overcoming Strength

But listen: God does not just sit up there in heaven as a spectator and let us do the best we can on our own to try to get through our trials.

The story of the Gospel is that He came down from heaven in Jesus Christ, to die for our sins when we were still sinners. And even though we were sinners, and will have a lot of troubles in this world, that we can know that one day we will escape all of them, and that God will be with us in glory forever.

He’s saying, I will be with you in your trials. He’ll be with us in the fiery furnace. He’ll be with us in the lion’s den. He’ll be with us in the storm.

Please hear me. God DOES NOT promise that you will not have troubles and difficulty here on earth. In fact, He pretty much promises that you WILL! But He says, if you will commit your life to Me, I will be with you, and I will strengthen you, and He will help you through those times — and when they’re finished I’ll bring you to My glory. And He’ll strengthen us as we trust Him until that time.

CONCLUSION

— “No matter what you are going through today, let the Lord be your strength.” Habakkuk 3:18:21 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will rejoice in my God. My soul shall remember these things; also my heart shall be glad in the Lord, I will exult in my God.

— Some of you know that Mrs. Peggy lives in great pain, virtually every single day of her life. She has pain in her neck and shoulders that despite several operations, makes it difficult to sleep, or do anything. She can’t even take most pain medications, so she just has to put up with it. She is here for worship on Sunday mornings. He’ll be with us in the lion’s den, He’ll be with us in the storm.

— Peggy knows what Habakkuk is talking about, when she says: “Let the Lord be your strength.” (Yes even during her daily pain) I will rejoice in the Lord. Virtually every single day, you see Peggy put up a Facebook on her daily Bible reading. see, is seeking God every morning. She has to — when you’re in pain like that, you have to seek God, you have to seek His help. And God does help her: “the sovereign LORD is my strength.” God does help her. God helps her on a daily basis. She has may have seen pictures on Facebook of the crafts the makes, or you might have seen them in the shop — s she tells them at The Tree in Glen Alpine, where all the proceeds go to local missions.

—the thing is, Christianity is all about right there. Despite what the televangelists will try to sell you, Christianity is not about always getting healed from every illness. That doesn’t always happen in this life, and anyone who tries to tell you that, no matter how well intentioned they are, is a deceiver. Christianity is not all about unending prosperity and health; there never was. Habakkuk shows us that even when we are in pain, even when we are in calamity, even when we are in trouble, there is still a reason to rejoice because the Lord is still with us. When he was in the deepest trouble, there was a commitment of God in God through Jesus Christ, that says, “YET I WILL exult in the Lord” even when the fig tree doesn’t blossom, and there is not a fruit on the vine. And it’s about knowing that He will be with you, and will be with you, and will be with you through the toughest of times you can face, until He brings you to glory.

Shaws Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church; messages and devotions are available at www.shawstomashome.com

Check out our new Website- www.brcnews.com

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We are also extremely blessed by having the greatest group of volunteers possible. Without our volunteers, BUCM would be unable to function. Our volunteers are the life blood of the ministry. We are always needing additional volunteers to serve in a variety of areas. If anyone is interested in volunteering, just give me or Elizabeth Norris a call at (828) 403-2075 or email me at bucmdirector@gmail.com.

The stores and restaurants that support BUCM are also a tremendous blessing to our ministry. A big thank you goes out to the following for providing food for our soup kitchen and for providing us with clothing:

Food Lion at Fiddler’s Run, Food Lion on 181, Food Lion on Bunkerwood Road, Food Lion on the Bypass, Food Lion in Valdese, Food Matters Ingle, Wal-Mart Superstore, Neighborhood Wal-Mart, Little Caesar Pizza, Tim-ho-waters Restaurant, Friday’s Friends Restaurant, Abela Family Restaurant, The Pie Hole, Moon Doggies Pizza, Cao’s, Toasted and Rolled

Without these stores and restaurants, BUCM would not be able to meet the needs of those we serve. We continue to search for additional food partners and ask any group interested in providing support with food or clothing to reach out to us.

BUCM has been blessed this summer with the opportunity to partner with the Burke County Schools, Burke United Way, the Outreach Center and the Burke Youth Opportunity Philanthropists at the Community Foundation of Burke County to support our students with back to school supplies and clothes. BUCM had the opportunity to assist almost 600 children with much needed back to school clothes, shoes and other items.

BUCM is very thankful of the progress we have made and appreciative of the support we receive daily from our partners - sustaining churches, donors and volunteers. Our ministry could not occur without these wonderful groups.

With these new opportunities at BUCM, we need the support of our community even more. Please consider being part of our BUCM ministry in one or more of the many things that need to be done. Call to find your fit.

The BUCM Christmas Elves have been hard at work crafting a multitude of decorations to meet your every need. Crimples Christmas Corner will open to the public on Monday, October 8 at 9 a.m. in the BUCM Clothing and Craft Store. Be sure to come out and purchase some of the best Christmas decorations that you can find east of Pigeon Forge. Also in preparation for the Christmas Holidays, Santa will be at the BUCM Clothing and Craft store on Saturday, December 1 from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for pictures. Santa will then move to the BUCM soup kitchen for a breakfast with all those who would like to attend.

The second annual BUCM 5K Rivalry Run to Fight Hunger will be held on Saturday, November 17 at Freedom Park beginning at 9 a.m. This year’s Rivalry Run concludes Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and one goal of the event is to raise awareness of how hunger and homelessness impacts Burke County. Burke United Christian Ministries will collect greatly needed food and clothes and provide a quality running experience off the asphalt. The needs of those in our community who can use a land-up continues to grow. This event includes a 5K Run on the Freedom High School Cross Country Trail and a one mile fun run for children under the age of 14 on the track at Freedom Park. Adults and children will enjoy the safety and the healthy competition this race will provide.

Our hope is that this race will capture the attention of our high school students and we can use this good natured competition to help our community. Supporters of the high schools and the “party Crashers” (those who bring no affiliation to a Burke County High School) can earn points for the school of their choice by running, bringing non-perishable food, donating gently used clothes or making a monetary donation. The school with the most points will receive the traveling trophy to display for one year. We are very fortunate to have a community that cares about others and is willing to demonstrate that care through service. Anyone interested in running please go to our website, bucm.net for more information.

We want to invite a representative from any church to come to our Desert and Tour event on Thursday, October 11 at 12:30 p.m. in the BUCM soup kitchen. This will provide an opportunity for a time of fellowship, discussions about our ministry and a time to review recent recollections.

Please remember to keep BUCM in your thoughts and prayers. There are many difficult decisions we are called on to make and through prayer we can continue to make the appropriate decisions for our ministry. Please know that we are very willing to come and tell the BUCM story at any church or organization. Just let us know a good time to do this.

Thank you again for making BUCM a wonderful, caring place for others.

David Burleson & Director of Burke United Christian Ministries
Gardner-Webb University - Office of Communications & Media Relations

Freedom Life Ministries

Awards Janine Sudden and Urgent Needs Grant
By Danny Hampton
McDowell County

Marion, NC - Freedom Life Ministries was recently awarded a grant from the Janine Sudden and Urgent Needs (SUN) Grant Program to replace a failed HVAC unit. The old unit failed during a sustained heat wave and allowed the use of the Freedom Life Community Room to its full functional capability. The room is a vital tool for operations for things such as ongoing support group meetings, community collaboration meetings, staff meetings and one-on-one client meetings.

Freedom Life is a local ministry that helps justice-involved individuals - people who were incarcerated and may have trouble finding employment. Freedom Life services include prison ministry, addiction counseling, job training, support groups. After clients complete the program, they receive assistance to find permanent employment. New clients then enter the program and continue the training-employment cycle.

“We are so thankful for the financial support from the Janine Sudden and Urgent Needs (SUN) Grant Program,” said Danny Hampton, Executive Director of Freedom Life Ministries. “This will allow us to continue our work within the local community.”

Reverend Danny Hampton is the Chaplain at Marion Minimum Center (Prison) and the Executive Director of Freedom Life Ministries.

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

7 9 8
9 8 2
1 6 9

8 1 6
3 8 4
2 1 3

7 4 2
9 7 8
4 2 3

Kevin Hines is a public speaker who advocates for no suicide. He manages the Kevin Hines Story and Mental Health Marvels.

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RE-ELECT SHERIFF GARY BANKS

I want to thank all my supporters for their past support and ask your support in re-electing Gary Banks as Sheriff of Yancey County.

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Burke County Schools

14th Best School District
By Cheryl Shuffer
Burke County

A national platform for researching schools, neighborhoods and companies has ranked Burke County Public Schools 14th on its list of best school districts in North Carolina. Nickelodeon released its new 2019 Best Schools ranking last month.

In its fifth year, Nickelodeon's Best School Districts rankings analyzed U.S. Department of Education data, supplemental data collected directly from more than 4,000 schools, and millions of student and parent reviews across factors such as academic performance, teacher feedback, student safety, and student and parent reviews.

Nickelodeon gave Burke County Public Schools an A in diversity and an A for academics, art and music programs, athletics, food, college prep, health, safety, sports and resources and facilities. Individual schools in the district received either an A or B from the website.

Reviewers on Nickelodeon praised Burke County Public Schools' teachers and administrators, saying they are trustworthy, easy to talk to, and helpful and students feel prepared for the next level of their education.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Pumpna said, "We are proud of our top 15 ranking on Nickelodeon, and we are in good company with great school districts around the state such as Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Wake and Asheville City. We will not rest on those laurels, as we are now in our second year of a brand new school year, and our principals have set high expectations for 2018-19. We have only good things ahead of us in year two of our district strategic plan, which centers on students. Our goal is to provide our students with a safe and supportive learning environment, where a world-class level of service and technology will allow us to remain a leader in our region, and competitive in our state and nation."

MORE

The No. 14th state ranking for Burke County Public Schools is out of 116 school districts. The website also gives Burke County Public Schools and the Burke County School Board an A in the safest school districts category. Burke County is the best in the teachers category.

Just a few highlights for the new school year include:

• Opening of Mountain View Elementary School and the Global Immersion Academy
• The Burke County Public Schools' Pathway program, which connects students with internships at local businesses and industry
• Breakfast on the Go in all elementary schools and Second Chance Breakfast at most of the secondary schools, plus Universal Breakfast at all schools, which means breakfast is free for all students
• Children committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students, staff and visitors on our school campuses and on our buses to and from school
• Zero tolerance for bullying. Anyone can report an incident of bullying at http://www.burke12.ac to parents parents.bullying

Supper program transitions to Mountain View

Mountain View Elementary School's cafeteria will soon ring the bell for three meals a day. Burke County Public Schools and Chartwells has moved its East Will After the Bell supper program to Mountain View Elementary School, 805 Bouchelle St., Morganton, adding a late- after-school early evening meal to its breakfast and lunch programs. The supper program is open to anyone in the community and is free to all children ages 3 to 18. The supper price is $3 for adults. The hot meal is served from 3 to 6 p.m. each school day starting Wednesday, Sept. 12. The program also includes a homework club and enrichment activities from 3:45 to 4:30 p.m. each day.

East Will After the Bell menu items include barbecue chicken, baked spaghetti, and a pancake breakfast for supper, just to name a few. The program is federally funded through the USDA, and averaged 80 meals served at its previous locations.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Pumpna said, "We are pleased to offer this additional meal to students and their families at our newest school. We are excited that the community has access to a good, healthy, hot supper. Parents don't have to worry about cooking, and they can fee their children for free. It really is a relief on their pocketbooks and their time. We are grateful for our partnership with Chartwells to be able to take advantage of our opportunity through the USDA. Chartwells does a fantastic job serving students twice a day and now three times a day at our supper program location.

Pumpna added that the free supper is a great opportunity for faith-based organizations in the area who hold services on Wednesday evenings to take advantage of the program and visit Mountain View as a group for a meal. Starting Monday, Sept. 17, the supper program will also be available at Walter Johnson Middle School.

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

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Forgiveness
By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County

The Unpacking Forgiveness sermon series is bringing up all kinds of questions. I'm so glad. Feel free to email me (jerry@gracezoo.org) with your questions. I'll try to answer them here or on our radio show.

Can you forgive an unrepentant person? What if someone has hurt you deeply, or is still hurting you, but is unrepentant? They know what they have done (you've told them, or it's obvious), but they refuse to accept responsibility. Can you forgive such a person?

First of all, let's define forgiveness. I'll give you the short and the long definition. My favorite (short) definition of forgiveness is this: the refusal to punish someone for something they've done to you. We punish usually by our words. When someone hurts us, we hurt them—by the things we say to them or about them. My favorite (long) definition of forgiveness is as follows: when we see a person as God does and we walk in love with them; we pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and allow ourselves to be used to relieve them. (Thomas Watson, Body of Divinity)

Romans 12:18 says, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with all.”

So, what does this mean for the unrepentant person? In short, you can't give someone what they cannot receive. John Piper says, “When a person who wronged you does not repent or confess and confess and convert, he has cut off the full work of forgiveness.” As such, you cannot forgive an unrepentant person. Now I know what some of you are thinking, Where? I didn't want to. Now I'm off the hook.

Not so quick! Notice Watson's definition and Romans 12:18. The phrases “strive against all revenge” and “so far as it depends on you” show up. While you cannot forgive an unrepentant person, you must release them. Peter again says, “We can still lay down our ill will, we can hand over our anger to God, we can seek to do it good, but we cannot carry through reconciliation or intimacy.”

While you cannot give someone what he is unwilling to receive, the question is: are you really willing to give it? Piper breaks down Watson's definition like this:

Here is forgiveness: when you feel that someone is your enemy or when you simply feel that you or someone you care about has been wronged, forgiveness means:
1. resisting revenge,
2. not returning evil for evil,
3. wishing them well,
4. grieving at their calamities
5. praying for their welfare,
6. seeking reconciliation so far as it depends on you,
7. and coming to their aid in distress.

Ouch. This requires a real heart check.

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

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