

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



Young Writers Corner Supper Table

By Hannah Hensley

Every evening, my family sits around our big kitchen table for our dinners. Most often our dinners aren't served until 7 or 8 and sometimes even 9 or 10, because we work around everyone's work and school schedules. All of us sitting together for dinner is more important to us than each of us eating individually at a more convenient time. Every evening (or night) Dad sits at the head of the table with Mama to his right and the rest of the flock fills in the empty spaces. We bow our heads and pray to our heavenly Father and ask for His blessings and thank Him for what we have already been blessed with. We also sing a blessing, which ironically comes from an old Disney classic based on Johnny Appleseed.

"The Lord is good to me and so I thank the Lord, for giving me the things I need, the sun, the rain and the appleseed. The Lord is good to me."

Too often our supper menu gets in a rut, each week our tired selves default to simple meals of burrito bowls, egg sandwiches, my own pasta concoctions or soups. Sometimes we make soup beans and the next night we make chili with the leftovers for the sake of ease and stretching the budget. Believe me, creating inexpensive, wholesome, healthy, delicious meals for 9 people, for a minimum 5 nights a week, is no easy task. I must say we love our food and we enjoy taking pride in the food we provide, but when 8 o'clock rolls around no one really cares that much. We're just ready to come to the table and feast on what is set before us.

The dinner table is a place of refuge and reconnection for us. Sometimes the dinner table is full of chaos. In a home filled with different people, that means different schedules. Sometimes dinner time is the only time we get to see each other. Dad is up early every morning, goes to work, gets off work, goes to work with his business, Hensley and Sons electric and he usually doesn't get home until 8 or 9 in the evenings. On the evenings he happens to be home, he's busy fixing leaking pipes, busting wood, taking care of our small herd of cows and taking care of little ones. Mom is busy from the time she wakes up and mostly through the night due to a baby who won't sleep. Every day she has the mundane task of running this home, keeping laundry going all day, training, caring and schooling the younger 5 children, while keeping up with the older 2 kids, paying bills, and book keeping for Hensley & Sons Electric. Haven goes to work every day from 7 to 5:30 and goes to night school 3 times a week. On Tuesday evenings or Saturdays, he spends his time studying, helping Dad with the business, working at his house, or visiting his girlfriend. Heidi has her school, piano lessons, and helping with the household chores and taking care of the little ones. I run my own housekeeping business about every day, work as an assistant 2 days a week, serve on our Church's events council, currently starting another business and website, and of course have responsibilities at home, including cooking suppers. With our schedules the dinner table is a place for us to reconnect and recharge. We put our phones away, we gather, we sit, we sup and we converse. Most often we have to listen to two little boys talk non-stop, but when we can, we talk about upcoming events, weather, what's going on in our lives, we share a song we've heard, we tell a story we know, we make plans with our businesses, we make plans for Bellflower Farm, we talk news and politics and really anything that connects us to each other. Then we hush and we have our Bible study and we are reminded of why we do and what we do.



Majority of the time our table is loud and chaotic, but for some reason we still leave it feeling refocused and not only at our table, but also at Mamaw and Papaws table on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Even on Fridays our dinners are late because we wait for Haven to get off work. Mamaw usually cooks us meals that consist of cornbread or homemade bread, beans, a type of potato, a meat and a salad or coleslaw. Sometimes it's tacos, or soup, or stir fry. But, whatever the food may be, we put away the phones, we gather, we sit, we pray and sing, we sup and we converse. Papaw sits at the head of the table with Mamaw on his right and the rest of us fill the empty spaces around the table.

Most of our dinners at their table is filled with laughter and stories, but we also talk of the important things in life. We talk politics, religion, and family. We tell stories and ask about "so and so". We talk about hard things with no need to tip toe around them. We tackle them and we come away knowing and loving a person or persons more than we knew possible. We leave the table renewed, refreshed, and revived.

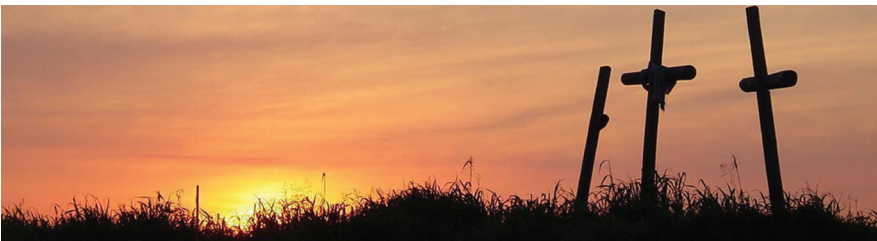
On Sundays we all go to church together, Mamaw and Papaw included. At our church we partake of communion every Sunday morning. Together, all eleven of us, approach the table. We take the bread and the wine. Together we gather, we pray, and we sup. Together we are refreshed, renewed and revived. Together we share in the hope and joy we have in our Lord.

The dinner table is more than a place to sit. The food is more than nutrition. It's coming together to connect and have conversation. It's coming to receive leadership and discipline. It's coming for Dad's leadership, Mom's instructions, Haven's knowledge, Heidi's joyfulness, Haddie's smile, Hobie and Hyder's funny little sayings, Hope's chattering, Papaw's jokes and laughter, and Mamaw's stories. It's about making time for one another and it's about feasting. It's about finding out each other's need and wants. It's about sharing joys and sorrows. It's about laughing together. It's about sharing the hope we have in Christ. Often, we talk about politics and our government at the table. We feel frightened and enraged at new laws or abortion and what the doctors are allowed to do and what we're not allowed to do. We become upset at high taxes and national debt. We're frightened of wars and terrorists. But at the end of each meal we get up smiling and usually laughing, because together we may share these fears and concerns, but more so we share hope and joy in the Lord for what He has done and what he will do. These fearful things have no hold on us.

Really the dinner table reminds me that we're in this together. This life and our eternal life, because I know one by one He will call us home. He will call us to His table and together, we, His flock, will gather around His Table where He sits at the head and around Him we sit, and we will sup, and we will sing eternal praises. And we will be eternally renewed, refreshed and revived.

So, eat dinner together at the table, because really it's Heaven here on earth.

Hannah Hensley, 21, lives in Erwin, TN with her family. She is the oldest of 7 children. She loves living in the Blue Ridge Mountains, writing stories and visiting her grandparents.



100 Percent Jesus

By Dr. Tracy Jessup

“Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ...their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.”

- Philippians 3:17-21

My daughter and I have different tastes when it comes to fruit juices. I prefer orange juice. Her juice of preference is apple juice. My orange juice container displays a picture of a fresh-looking orange with a striped straw properly inserted, implying that drinking this product is the same as drinking straight from an orange. In fact, the words “100% Orange Juice” adorn the picture as well. Equally impressive is the packaging of my daughter’s apple juice container, which boasts a picture of two delectable apples along with a single slice of another. Prominently displayed in large print are the words, “100% Apple Juice.”

The Food and Drug Administration requires manufacturers to list all ingredients in the food on the label. According to the FDA website, “Ingredients are listed in order of predominance, with the ingredients used in the greatest amount first, followed in descending order by those in smaller amounts.

On the back of my orange juice container, I was pleased to see “100% Pure pasteurized orange juice” as the first ingredient, followed by calcium hydroxide, malic acid, citric acid, and Vitamin D3. I was not surprised to see the additional ingredients since the orange juice I buy is no pulp with calcium plus Vitamin D. However, one might imagine my confusion and disappointment when I looked at the side label of my daughter’s apple juice only to discover that the first ingredient listed was water. The second ingredient was “apple juice concentrate.” Looking back at the front of the container, I noticed underneath the bold, colorful words “100% Apple Juice” were words in smaller, lackluster, type, “From Concentrate with added Ingredients.”

In today’s passage, the Apostle Paul contrasts the ingredients of his example with the example of those who live as “enemies of the cross.” He challenges us to live a life in agreement with the truth about the cross of Jesus Christ and his second coming, at which time Christ “will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself” (v. 21). On the contrary, those who live as “enemies of the cross” (because they are separated from God) recognize no authority apart from their personal satisfaction, take delight in the things of which they should be ashamed, and have their minds set on earthly things.

This should cause us to consider whether we falsely project a misleading outward appearance that skillfully disguises watered down ingredients. Writing about an experience similar to mine, Erin Bunting, asserts "My packaging may be convincing. I may look and sound like the real thing. But what if someone came to me looking for Jesus beneath my "Christian" label and found something else? Something Jesus-flavored, but not Jesus-filled? (kyria.com, 10-07-09).

Prayer: Lord, when someone looks at the label of my life, may Jesus be the only ingredient they see.

Dr. Tracy Jessup 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 Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in 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 and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Anna.



Easter Drama

By Sheryl Tron
Burke County

VALDESE — Individuals and families interested in celebrating Easter with a visual re-enactment of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ will have the opportunity on Easter Sunday.

The Waldensian Trail of Faith will host its new Easter sunrise production, “Resurrection Light,” at 6:45 a.m., on Sunday, April 21, at 401 Church St. NW in Valdese. The event is free and open to the public.

After the 15-minute drama, attendees will move to the replica of the Temple of Ciabas, located in the small village of Angrogna, Italy, for a 10-minute service, then to the visitor center for coffee and donuts provided by East Valdese Baptist Church.

The Waldensian Trail of Faith has hosted an Easter drama for around 20 years, said former N.C. Sen. Jim Jacumin, president of the outdoor museum, who came up with the idea to have the drama on Easter Sunday.

“It was a natural setting with the cave and the oldest Protestant church in the world right next to it,” Jacumin said.

This year’s drama was written by Karen Knight, president of Heartsongs Ministries Inc., Jacumin said. She is best known for playing Mrs. Noah in the production, “Noah, The Musical,” at Sight and Sound’s Millennium Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

“She is one of the finest Christian ladies you’ll ever meet in your life,” Jacumin said. “We sort of came together. It’s almost a miracle that we met, and all of this came about.”

In 1993, when they were building the Trail of Faith exhibits to represent 2,000 years of Waldensian history, the replica of the cave was important because in Italy, the Waldensians had to hide in a cave in order to worship. Many of them were slaughtered when they were discovered.

For the Easter drama, Jacumin wanted to add a huge stone to place in front of the cave to represent the tomb of Jesus. To make the resurrection more realistic, Jacumin also decided to make the stone roll away on its own.

“The idea came to me about how to sort of do it,” he said. “The details weren’t working for me. I kept praying about it, and the vision came to me for how we could make it move without people being able to tell how. That is how I designed that aspect of it. My grandson and I made the rock out of cement. Then Matt Little’s company, Fabrication Associates Inc. in Charlotte, actually formed the stone angles and the channels that it rolled in, which would have been several thousands of dollars in fabrication work and they ended up giving it to us. Then , Parker Welch from the North Carolina Zoo actually painted the concrete to look like rock.”

Sheryl is the office manager at the Trail of Faith.



This year's Easter drama at the Waldensian Trail of Faith will feature a huge stone placed across the cave.



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BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

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

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

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

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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Church Directory



The Bridge Church of WNC

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

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

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

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

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

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

Pastor - Steve Williams

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

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Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-584-8212

Pastor Rick Mercer

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

Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.
Micaville, NC 28755
(828)-675-9284
www.ffcnc.org
www.ffcncradio.org

Pastor: David Gillespie

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

Altapass Baptist Church

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

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

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

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Grassy Creek Baptist Church

793 Old NC 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-4620
www.grassycreekbbc.org

Sunday School 10:00am
Morning Worship 11:00am
Sunday evening 6:30pm
Wednesday:
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 7:00pm
Seekers (young adults) 7:00pm
Mid-week worship 7:00pm
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may know Christ"*

West Burnsville Baptist Church

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

Pastor: Terry Long

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Morning Service: 11:00 a.m.
Evening Service: 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.

Church vision: Glorifying God through
knowing, growing, going, to build the church
and impact the world.

Burkemont Baptist Church

4668 Burkemont Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-2357
For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. Luke A. Lane

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

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

4527 Hwy 19E
Plumtree, NC 28664
828-765-6919
www.plumtreepresbyterian.org
Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org
Sunday School 9:45 am
Worship Service 11:00 am
Life Groups Tuesday-Thursday evenings, 7:00 pm
Fusion Youth Wednesday's, 6:30 pm
Healing Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 6:30 pm
John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you
and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that
will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you
ask in my name.

Bear Creek Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bruce Cannon

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

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

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

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

Pastor Barry MaHorney

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

Pine Branch Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

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

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St. Lucien's Catholic Church

695 Summit Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
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Sunday Mass 9:00 am
Wednesday Faith Formation
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Food Pantry Wed. 1:00-
4:00pm

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

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

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

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

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Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

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

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

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

The mission of Spruce Pine United
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Education, and Nurturing Service

First Advent Christian Church

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

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

Sunday School 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship 11:00 AM
Wed: Youth Meal 5:30PM -
Meeting 6:30PM
Adult Bible Study/Prayer 6:30PM
Choir Practice 7:15PM
Sat. Band Practice 4:30PM

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An Upside-Down Nation Is No Joke

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Most people can appreciate a practical joke. Some people are really good at setting them up.

During Hollywood's golden years, there was a fellow in the film industry who was probably the best that there has ever been at practical jokes. Writer and movie director Jack McDermott would go to great lengths to pull off a good one.

One of his favorite gags was to take his guests for a ride in his Model T. Ford into the mountains of California, where he would careen around curves at terrifying speeds. When his guests would protest for fear of their lives, he would yank the steering wheel from the column and throw it over the mountainside while still driving. The panic-stricken passengers were unaware McDermott had installed foot controls for steering.

McDermott also lived in a house with secret places, sliding panels, and specially designed rooms for his antics.

One featured room was hidden and upside down. The rugs and furniture were attached to the ceiling. The drapes and pictures, along with the fireplace, were upside down. Even the floor had a chandelier that extended straight up from its center. If a house guest had too much to drink at one of his wild house parties, McDermott would take the drunken individual to that upside down room and place him on the floor to sleep it off. You can imagine what it was like to wake up in there.

When we look around at our country today, many of us feel like we are waking up in an upside-down room. Seemingly everything has become topsy-turvy.

Here are a few recent happenings that I noticed which appear to demonstrate the point.

Some states dominated by the Democratic Party have joined the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which means these states intend to circumvent the Electoral College and award the results of a Presidential election to the popular vote. And in North Carolina, my home state, a Democratic judge knocked down the votes of 4 million people who were in favor of two state constitutional amendments, one which provided for a cap on state taxes and the other which required a photo ID for casting a ballot. Democrats in the state have been supporting the judge's terrible ruling. Why instead haven't Democrats at home and across the country, who believe every vote should count, decried the judge's decision?

This seems upside down to me.



woman, who rose up the ranks of one of the most recognized global real-estate companies in the world, spoke before 25 million people at the Republican National Convention, and now successfully oversees the largest HUD program office in the country?"

Good question! Anyone seeing it? It's a form of inverted racism.

I think Michael Medved well described this kind of topsy-turvy thinking when he said: "A quick glance at the American left reveals a movement in the midst of a nervous breakdown, displaying behavior that goes beyond inconsistency into the realm of bipolar moods and multiple personality disorders."


According to the apostle Paul in Romans 1:25, the defining moment for the incredible Roman Empire came when she "exchanged the truth of God for a lie."

Isn't this what America has done? Isn't this where our moral relativism has taken us? Paul adds, "And because they did not think it worthwhile to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them over to a worthless mind...." (v.28).

Nothing else better explains this upside-down nation in which we are now living. And that ain't no joke!

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

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. Matthew 28:1-20



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The #MeToo movement vehemently speaks out against toxic masculinity, sexual harassment, and the sexual assault of women. However, the same movement is cravenly silent about a recent federal court ruling that says it's unconstitutional to require only men to register for the military draft. Where's the outrage by that same movement that women would now be coerced to do combat? Surely they don't think they'll only be fighting other women, and that if they were defeated in battle and captured it would never involve a sexual assault.

Hmmm....this turns the matter of women's rights on its head.

Speaking at a forum in Omaha, Nebraska, on Thursday of last week, former Vice President Joe Biden called Vice President Mike Pence "a decent guy." But when leaders in the LGBTQ community bitterly complained about Biden's assessment of Pence, Biden backpedaled and faulted Pence's position on gay rights, saying, "There is nothing decent about being anti-LGBTQ rights, and that includes the Vice President."

So does this mean former Vice President Biden considers the millions of Americans who still believe, as Pence does, that sexual practices outside of marriage between one man and one woman constitute immorality are indecent people? Either Biden believes that Pence, and everyone who holds to a traditional view of marriage is decent or indecent, which is it? He can't have it both ways.

Any way one looks at this, it's the wrong way up.


Last week, Republican Rep. Mark Meadows from North Carolina invited Lynne Patton, a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) official, who is black, to address the accusations Michael Cohen made during the House Oversight Committee that the president is a racist. Patton, born in Birmingham, Alabama, said she would never work for a man who was a racist.

Later in the hearing, Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib from Michigan said calling on a person of color like Patton to testify was nothing more than using her as a racist prop by Rep. Meadows.


Patton was puzzled by Tlaib's accusation, asking why anyone on the House Oversight Committee would place "more credence on the word of a self-confessed perjurer," and "criminally convicted white man," over "a highly-educated black

National Health Care Decisions Day

April 16th



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Bear Creek Baptist Church

Our Priority

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County



“April showers bring May flowers,” or so the adage goes. Time is absolutely flying by. Our grandson is already twenty-one months old and it seems like he was born just a few days ago. Where does time go?

The Scripture is replete with warnings about procrastinating, boasting of tomorrow and so forth. Yet, for me the challenge is to prioritize my life to do the most important things and let the things that can wait do so.

What should be our priority? Our relationship to the Lord. Prayer time, attention to the Word, attendance to His house for worship and following His leadings as the Spirit directs-- all should be priorities.

The juggling act takes place when we try to fit in appropriate family time and still hold down jobs. Proverbs 3:5,6 state, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

It takes the Lord directing our paths to fit everything in to its proper place. How many moms or dads regret time spent with children? None! How many believers regret time spent in prayer or Bible reading? None! Yet these are the things that get cast aside quicker than other less important things.

Do we presume upon God’s good graces and think He can wait in the background while we do other “more important” things? Are our children or spouse more expendable than fleeting pleasures or mundane tasks?

Let God order your schedule. He will fit it together as it needs to be done. He wants parents to spend time with children! He wants us to spend time with Him! Recently I heard an internationally known pastor state, “My life is so busy until I feel like I can’t get everything done that needs to be done without spending several hours of day, every day, in prayer.” How seemingly contradicting! Yet, how profound! What is happening? God is ordering His life and schedule to give him time to do the most important tasks.

Spend time with the Lord. Ask Him to arrange your schedule and see how much easier things work and how much happier you will be.

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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Pastor Of Asheville Deaf Church
Shares Bible Stories In Other Lands

By Kiesa Kay

Phillip Easterling, pastor of the Asheville Deaf Church, travels the globe teaching stories from the Bible and helping to start up and maintain Deaf churches. God gave him the gift of understanding many different sign languages across the world. With this gift, he has been able to help start Deaf churches in more than 30 countries, including Czech Republic, Hungary, Holland, Japan, Egypt, Madagascar, and Romania, which he has visited six times.

“All we do is for God’s glory,” Easterling says through an interpreter, Becky Lloyd. “God has given me a spiritual gift to know what to do.”

All good comes from God’s grace and through Jesus Christ, Easterling says. He loves Ephesians 2:8-10: *By grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

“I teach with stories,” Easterling says. “I have to figure out the ways of the other cultures so I can empower them in their own Bible teachings. I encourage others to travel with me to see God’s work in other countries, where it is so different. Sign is different in other countries, as spoken language is, too.”

He also leads Asheville Deaf Church, which meets for Bible Study from 6:30 to 8 pm Wednesday, with Sunday school from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. and Deaf Worship from 10:45 a.m.

to noon, at Long Shoals Baptist Church in Arden, NC. The services belong to Deaf people and hearing people of all denominations, Easterling says. The church’s congregants represent many Christian denominations: Catholic, Free Will Baptist, Southern Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, and more. A Deaf church differs from a church with an interpreter, Easterling says.

“Everyone interprets a little differently, and as a Deaf man, if I’m watching an interpreter and don’t know a sign, I have to figure out the context,” Easterling says. “By the time I get past that moment, the speaker may be on a completely different topic. In a Deaf church, everyone signs. We can talk in groups, taking time to discuss and explore the Scripture.”

To become a pastor starting churches did not come as his plan, but as God’s plan for his life. It took him some time to embrace and accept his calling. After he met his wife, Elaine, at a school for the Deaf in Spartanburg, SC, he planned to become a photographer.

“In 1989, the Lord found me and my wife, Elaine,” Easterling says. “Our children, ages three and five then, led us to Jesus. A friend took us to the First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, for a half day program for kids, to paint, draw, and do drama. We would ask what they learned each day. We heard their stories, and we wanted to know more.”

Sam Davis, an assistant pastor at First Baptist, inspired the Easterlings. In 1991, they went on a summer mission trip and met Vesta Sauter, a Deaf affinity global strategy leader.

“A church in Ohio contacted me in 1992, searching for a pastor,” he said. “They called my house and I said, I think you have the wrong number.”

Easterling had grown up on a farm and attended school, and he hadn’t considered moving away from Spartanburg, SC. He and his wife prayed, and they felt that if God truly wanted them to go in this direction, the church would call again. A week later, while Elaine was washing dishes, the phone call came, and God’s call for their lives came with it.

“We have no peace, they told me,” Easterling says. “Your name is the one God has given to us.”

Easterling felt uncertain at first, and a friend reminded him that throughout time, God has called people to do work that needs to be done in the world, and has given them the strength to fulfill the calling. His friend told him to consider that everyone, even Moses, faced challenges, and no one has to be perfect to do God’s will. Moses’s speaking was affected after his tongue got burnt in childhood, yet he surely was called to speak and lead by God.

“The same year, communism fell, and I went three times to Romania,” Easterling says. “My wife was very excited, but I got angry with God for three weeks. I got mad at Him for changing my life. At the end, though, we both felt nothing but peace – my wife, my two children, and me.”



Easterling, who was born deaf, considers his wife, Elaine, to be one of the great blessings of his life. They met at a school for the Deaf in Spartanburg, SC, and married in December 1981. In the beginning, he commuted to classes at Gardner Webb University and came home every weekend. Now, in his worldwide work, Elaine and their two children sometimes travel with him.

Attending a Deaf school empowered him, he says. In Deaf schools with Deaf teachers, children tend to thrive. Family and community support also help. His mother started learning American Sign Language when her son was a toddler and reinforced his interest in visual cues. His sister, Dawn, also is Deaf, although both of his parents have hearing.

“We need to let Deaf people be independent and utilize their own ways to thrive,” Easterling says.

Easterling trusts that God will provide. He believes that he must do his work, and trust in God. As Exodus 14:14 says, *“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”* He wants to do all he can to share the word of God in the world. “I feel blessed,” Easterling said. “Two thirds of all people in the world can’t read or write, so I would like to create more videos in American Sign Language to show how God works in our lives. My passion is to sign what God leads me to see.”

Kiesa Kay, a playwright who lives in Western North Carolina, can be reached at kiesakay.com. For tickets to her play about Rebecca Boone, contact the Orchard at www.altapassorchard.com, 828 765 9531, or White Horse Black Mountain, at www.whitehorseblackmountain.com, 828 669 0816.





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Kairos Retreat

By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell Counties

For with God, nothing shall be impossible. (Luke 1:37)

In a few short weeks, a group of committed Christian men will enter the gates of this institution to lead a selected group of incarcerated men through an outstanding ministry opportunity known as a Kairos Retreat. The Kairos Retreat is a 3.5 day adventure into a world the participants might never expect. From the moment the Retreat begins the participants are welcomed and cared for by men from the “outside” who bring an incredibly humble spirit with them that is instantly disarming. Nothing is forced or compulsory. Rather these amazing volunteers patiently wait for the demonstration of God’s unconditional love (agape’) to be felt and embraced. What often begins with anxious expectations from both the volunteers and participants soon becomes a blessed gathering! I will wait until the Retreat has passed before saying more so as not to “spoil any surprises”.

- But I won’t wait to point out some important related truths...
1. The incarcerated population is one of the most neglected demographics by the Christian faith. However, many of the heroes of Judeo Christian faith heritage were at some point incarcerated themselves. Portions of the New Testament were written by believers who were imprisoned for breaking Roman laws written to protect the power and authority of the emperor.
 2. The message of the Gospel is in fact Good News to ALL people! The incredible revelation of God’s unconditional love expressed in Jesus Christ is not reserved for the “good”. It is made known to the world through the witness and testimony of those surrendered to Christ as Lord.
 3. The work of God in the world is precipitated through prayer. The importance of prayer to the men involved in Kairos cannot be understated! Would you commit to pray for the offender participants AND the Kairos volunteers who will be available for the Blessing of God’s Grace. There will be an online prayer vigil held leading up to and through the event. It can be found at kairosamcinc.org then select Application Forms and Prayer Vigil. Your prayers in the weeks/days leading up to this retreat, throughout this retreat and even beyond this retreat will be a foundation that will undergird every person! <https://prayer.kairosministry.org.za/vigil.php?pvId=140> is the specific link address to sign up if you have any trouble.
 4. Many lives of incarcerated men have been touched by this ministry. For some, the changes in perspective and practice are eternal and the effects of these changes are seen and felt by those who experience them. These changes impact the institution as well! I can personally attest to how these changes affect the volunteers, the staff and the overall culture of this unique setting.
 5. Prepare now for an inspiring report of the miraculous work of God through this Retreat! Set your expectations high because we serve a Mighty God through whom all things are possible!

Thank you and may God bless you for your prayers and support of High Country Prison Ministry, the nonprofit that sponsors the Chaplain position at Avery Mitchell Correctional Institution!



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



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Typical Things People Say To Those Grieving
(And What We Can Say Instead)

By Pastor Dennis Love
McDowell County



James 4:6a

I want to continue to share with you some things we should say, some things we should not say, some things we should do, and some things we should not do when we are reaching out to minister to those who are going through a time of grief.

- Grieving people will often hear people say some of the following:
- (1) Silly sentimental things like---“I guess God just needed another angel in heaven.”
 - (2) Spiritual things such as---“It must have been God’s plan or will.”
 - (3) Twisted Scripture things such as---“God will never put more on us than we can bear.”
 - (4) Plain outright wrong things such as---“God needed them more than we did down here.”
 - (5) Put on the pressure things such as---“Just think how God is going to use you because of what you have been through.”
 - (6) Hate the question things such as---“How are you?”
 - (7) Put the pressure off you things such as---“Just call me if you need anything.”
 - (8) You mean to be encouraging things such as---“Well, at least they didn’t suffer.”
- Or “You’re going to be fine.”

Instead of saying, “You’re going to be fine”-----try saying-----“I cannot imagine how hard things are for you right now. I want you to know that I’m going to be here with you in the hard times and I’m going to believe that God is going to give you the grace you need to face each day.”

Instead of saying, “It must have been God’s plan or will”-----try saying-----“You know, I don’t understand why God allowed this to happen. It really makes no sense at all to me. Sometimes I just wish Jesus would put an end to death for good. But until He does, I’m asking Him to give you the faith you need to simply trust Him and His timing.”

Instead of saying, “Just call me if you need anything”-----Call them instead and tell them what you can do for them! Grieving people are not going to call you. Here’s a list of things you could say instead.

- Do you need any suits or dresses cleaned for the funeral? I’ll take them right now.
- I’d like to go to the grave sometime soon. Do you want to go together?
- I’m really good at putting tax information together. Can I come over and help you get your tax information together?
- I’m planning on mowing your grass the rest of the summer, so there’s one less thing you have to think about.
- I’d really like to help you whenever you are ready to go through their things. I’m not rushing you, but I would like to help when you’re ready.
- We know your anniversary would have been this weekend. Could we come and take you out to lunch? We would love to hear you tell us how the two of you met and fell in love.
- We knew putting up a Christmas tree would be hard this year, so we want to come over and put it up for you.

Instead of saying, “I guess God just needed them in heaven more than we needed them here with us”-----try saying-----“It’s so hard to think about life here without (so and so).” I miss him/her already.

Instead of saying, “How are you”-----try saying-----“What is your grief like to-day?” Or, “Is there any particular times of the day or days of the week that you are finding especially hard?”

Or, “Is there anything I can do to help you get through that day?” In essence, all of these questions are asking the person, “How are you?”

What else can we say to someone who is grieving? Believe it or not, one of the best things to say is-----“I don’t know what to say!” This simple statement makes their loss great! Here’s a list of okay things to say to a grieving person:

- I’m so sorry for your loss.
- I grieve with you.
- I really miss (so and so).
- One of my favorite memories of (so and so) is
- I don’t know why this happened.
- I cannot imagine what you’re going through, but I want you to know that I care.
- I thought about (so and so) the other day when
- Some things to ask or say about the person who has died.
- I’m here to listen as long as you need me to.
- What was he or she really like?
- I miss them too.
- I am here for you.
- I remember
- Losing a spouse is so hard.
- I see your dad’s contagious smile in your smile.
- I will always be in it with you.

Grieving people love to hear stories about the person who died. Share a memory with the grieving person that you have of their loved one. Here is a testimonial from a grieving person.

Don’t bring me flowers. I can’t bear to watch anything else die. And don’t bring me a plant either. I have so much to take care of during my grief that I cannot even take on the responsibility of watering a plant. I spend all day being sad and I forget to water it. So I end up watching it die too. I’ve watched enough death. Bring me your memories of my loved one; those I can hold on to forever!

Dr Dennis Love is the Senior Pastor at Glenwood Baptist Church in Marion, NC. He and his wife Vicki have been married for almost 39 years and they have been in Marion for almost 5 years. They have two sons and three grandchildren.

By Doug Harrell

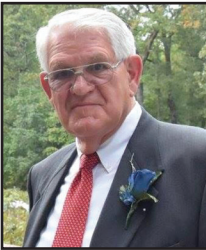
As we approach another Easter, I am trying to really get a grasp on the true significance of the event that took place 2019 years ago. I have been involved in Church all my life and I don't think I have ever missed being in Church on an Easter morning in my life. Now I don't remember the very early years, but knowing mother and dad, I am sure that I was there then as well. We see the commercial part of Easter with the Easter baskets, the Easter bonnets and fancy dresses and suits that we all used to wear. I kinda wish we still made the big deal of putting on our very finest for Easter Sunday but that does not happen as much as it once did. I can remember my mother working so hard to make new dresses for the girls and shirts and pants for us boys at Easter, still have some pictures from long ago that were made up on the hill at Pleasant Grove Church of the Brethren on Easter Morning.

The real importance of Easter goes so much deeper. It is the most defining event in history for the Christian today. Nothing in history comes even close to the events of that day so many years ago. The skies turned black and dark, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, the sacrifices of the lambs were no longer needed. The Lamb of God had been slain and shed his blood that you and I might forever be redeemed, and He arose again on the third day never to die again. No other religion, no not one, has a living Savior that is still on the throne and will be there forevermore. The real importance of the resurrection was the establishment of a New Covenant between God and His people, now rather than sacrificing a lamb so blood could be spread on the door post at Passover, the unblemished Lamb of God shed His blood for us. Rather than killing the fatted calf, it was done on the cross. Rather than living by the law, we live under the grace. *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

Ephesians 2:4-10 KJV
"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
Titus 2:11-14 KJV

Take time to fill the Easter baskets, dye the eggs and have fun with the children, but make sure that you spend time teaching them the real significance of what really took place that 2019 years ago. Those teachings can last a lifetime, and an eternity. Eggs will not. Give thanks for the precious blood of our Savior so willingly shed for us, give thanks that we will be able to spend eternity in Heaven seated by the throne of God!

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



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Rejection

By Christy Young
Mitchell County



If each of us are honest with ourselves, I think it's fair to say that we all have faced rejection in one way or another. As school age children, we all had that desire to fit in, to belong to a particular group. We want our families, friends, coworkers, pastors, church family, etc. to accept us. That desire to belong follows us throughout our life, but at what cost? The world is often cruel and being rejected can cause our emotions and feelings to spin out of control.

Is rejection destroying your life? We must identify the causes of rejection. The spirit of rejection can lead to hurt, anger, bitterness, rage, pride, fear, rebellion, and more. All these things can torment your life. So how do you overcome rejection? The answer is Jesus! Jesus does not want us to live a life of turmoil. He wants to set you free. God wants us to have a life of fulfillment. He wants to bring deliverance to each of us. That comes with a close walk with God, and finding our self-worth in Him. 1 Peter 2:4 says, *"To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious."* You are precious and chosen in the eyes of God. Before you were born, God the Father, knew you, loved you, and had sacrificed His One and Only Son for You. He has great plans for you. Most importantly, He wants to be your Savior. He has given the greatest gift ever, Salvation. He will never reject you, never forsake you, and never stop loving you. Romans 8:31 says, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* This world is temporary. Don't let the unkindness and rejection of others destroy your life. Remember that you are precious in the sight of God. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"* Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so Christ power may rest on me." Claim freedom over rejection and move into a life of acceptance found at the foot of the cross and purchased by the precious blood of Jesus!

Rejection

Christy Young is the blessed wife of Chris Young and proud mother of Hunter and Holden. She is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, bookkeeper at Young, Miller & Gillespie, PA, and a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.



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Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

The Bible: The Word of God

By Billy Graham



This article was originally written in 1951. The Bible is being discussed today more than ever before. Some people want to get rid of it completely. Some want to keep it just as literature. And many, believing it to be God’s Word, want to live by it. Does the Bible have anything to say to us?

THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR FAITH
The United States has a constitutional form of government. A number of men, after long argument and debate, drew up the Constitution and submitted it to the 13 Federated States for ratification. The presupposition of these framers of the Constitution was that law was absolute. People in the United States were to be free, for they were to know what the law required and also what the law could not do. They were to know their rights, their privileges and their limitations. No judge was to be unfair but was to judge cases as the law required.

People found that if they knew the law and kept it, they would be truly free. They knew where they stood, for constitutional law made it clear. The Bible is the constitution of Christianity. Just as the United States Constitution is not of any private interpretation, neither is the Bible of any private interpretation. Just as the Constitution includes all who live under its stated domain, without exception, so the Bible includes all who live under its stated domain, without exception.

God’s laws for the spiritual world are found in the Bible. Whatever else there may be that tells us of God, it is more clearly told in the Bible.

Nature in her laws tells of God, but the message tells us nothing of the love and grace of God. Conscience, in our inmost being, tells us of God, but the message is fragmented. The only place we can find a clear, unmistakable message is in the Word of God, which we call the Bible.

True Christianity finds all of its doctrines in the Bible; true Christianity does not deny any part of the Bible; true Christianity does not add anything to the Bible. For many centuries the Bible has been the most available book on the earth. It has no hidden purpose. It cannot be destroyed.

The Bible has a magnificent heritage. It has 66 books, written over a period of 1,600 years by more than 30 writers, and yet the message is the same throughout—so clearly that the 66 books are actually one book.

The message, in every part, is straightforward. No writer changed his message to put his friends in a better light. The sins of small and great alike are frankly admitted, and life is presented as it actually is.

THE CENTER OF CONTROVERSY
The Bible has been the anvil upon which the critics have worn out their hammers. Critics claim the Bible is full of forgery, fiction and unfulfilled prophecy, but the findings of archaeology have corroborated rather than denied the Biblical data.

“The Bible is the constitution of Christianity. Just as the United States Constitution is not of any private interpretation, neither is the Bible of any private interpretation.”

Our faith, which is not dependent upon human knowledge and scientific advance, has nevertheless presented a magnificent case at the “bar of knowledge.” How many times we have heard someone say, “Why, the Bible contradicts itself!” Very few who make that statement have used the family Bible for more than a storage place for pressed flowers.

The first requirement placed upon critics is that they read carefully every chapter of the Bible. They ought also to know something about how we got our Bible, the miracle of its writing. Biblical history is fascinating and makes us appreciate the Book that has been preserved for us to this day.

If you are setting yourself up as a critic, it is your responsibility to read and know both sides of the question. It is significant that very few Bible critics have bothered themselves to read the literature available on the defense of the Bible, much less the Bible itself.

The Bible will always be the center of controversy. For many centuries there have been purges and bonfires. There are Bibles in existence today that were baked into loaves of bread to keep them from the hands of leaders who wanted to destroy the Word of God. There are Bibles in scores of languages; organizations are working around the clock to provide Bible portions for remote tribes so that they, too, may have God’s Word.

THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE
You may ask me today, “What is the message of the Bible?” The message of the Bible is Jesus Christ.

The Bible is concerned only incidentally with the history of Israel or with a system of ethics. The Bible is primarily concerned with the story of humanity’s redemption through Jesus Christ. If you read Scripture and miss the story of salvation, you have missed its message and its meaning. The story of Jesus can be traced through the Bible.

- In Genesis, He is the Seed of the Woman.
- In Exodus, He is the Passover Lamb.
- In Leviticus, He is the Atoning Sacrifice.
- In Numbers, He is the Smitten Rock.
- In Deuteronomy, He is the Prophet.
- In Joshua, He is the Captain of the Lord’s Hosts.
- In Judges, He is the Deliverer.
- In Ruth, He is the Heavenly Kinsman.
- In 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles, He is the Promised King.
- In Nehemiah, He is the Restorer of the Nation.
- In Esther, He is the Advocate.

- In Job, He is My Redeemer.
- In Psalms, He is My Song.
- In Proverbs, He is Wisdom.
- In Ecclesiastes, He is My Goal.
- In the Song of Solomon, He is My Satisfier.
- In the Prophets, He is the coming Prince of Peace.
- In the Gospels, He is God in Christ Jesus, come to redeem.
- In Acts, He is alive in the Church.
- In the Epistles, He is Christ at the Father’s right hand.
- In Revelation, He is the Mighty Conqueror.

The message of Jesus Christ, our Savior, is the story of the Bible—it is the story of salvation; it is the story of the Gospel; it is the story of life, peace, eternity and Heaven. The whole world ought to know the story of the Bible.

But if this Gospel is hidden today from anyone reading these words, it is hidden because you have never opened your Bible—or you have opened it, but with a closed mind.

HE BRIDGES THE GAP
The story of the Scriptures is the story of your redemption and mine through Jesus Christ. The Scriptures teach the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Gospel. His death, burial and resurrection is the Gospel story, and without Him you are lost and doomed.

The Bible teaches that there is a hell and a Heaven. The way to Heaven is by receiving and trusting Jesus Christ. The Bible says, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). The Bible says, “*The wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). The Bible says, “*The soul who sins shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:20).

And the Bible says the only way to bridge the gap between us and God is through Christ. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6).

Today you can accept the Christ of the Bible. You can know peace of soul, peace of conscience and peace of mind by letting Him come into your heart by faith.

Will you now, as you read these words, open your heart to Christ?
Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version.





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Join Us

By Monica Henley-Kritz
Mitchell County

Days of Repentance precede the National Day of Prayer.

Please join us in praying for the true repentance of our nation, in each of the following areas:

- 1.) the church
- 2.) the media
- 3.) the family
- 4.) the business world
- 5.) the government
- 6.) the military
- 7.) the educational system

We plan to meet : Thursday, April 25

Friday, April 26

Saturday, April 27

[Sunday, April 28 -- please plan a special time of prayer in your churches.]

Monday, April 29

Tuesday, April 30

Wednesday, May 1

Each day will be at 12:00 noon at Riverside Park at the amphitheater (the 2nd entrance to the playground area).

Please help me in announcing this in your churches & please attend. Bring church vans &

come for a time of calling out to GOD in repentance & for HIS help. Also, plan a prayer gathering in your workplace, if you are unable to attend.

Thursday, May 2 --The National Day of Prayer (Riverside Park at the amphitheater)

Theme: "Love One Another"

Scripture: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34

2 special times: 12:00 noon
6:30 p.m.

Please come for a time of prayer for our nation, our state, & our county. It will also be a time of special fellowship, music, & speakers. Please plan to attend, & bring someone with you.

JESUS said: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20

Mrs. Monica Henley-Kritz
County Coordinator for the National Day of Prayer Associational Prayer Coordinator. Monica is a member of Crabtree Chapel Baptist Church, where Jason is the pastor.



Blue Ridge

Spring Home Show

Remodel - Repurpose - Relocate



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Outdoor Living

May 18 & 19, 2019

Saturday 10am-6pm

Sunday 12pm-5pm

Innovative Home Design

Lawn and Garden Design



Using the Resurrection to Share Christ

By Rev. John B. Sorensen

Have you ever tried to share your faith with someone who doesn't believe Jesus rose from the dead? The resurrection of Jesus is the hinge of Christianity. Without it, salvation cannot exist.

So how do we share our faith when we encounter people who believe the resurrection didn't happen?

The Empty Tomb

The location of the tomb was well known at the time. Many people reported seeing it empty, not just the disciples. Even Roman officials tried to explain the absence of His body. But even more amazing is that more than 500 people reported that they saw Jesus alive afterwards. They touched Him. They talked to Him. Can that many eyewitnesses be false?

Point out: Christ's resurrection from the dead proved Christ's power to defeat death and God's acceptance of His sacrifice on our behalf.

The Behavior of the Disciples

After the crucifixion, the disciples scattered. They were scared. Their lives were in danger. Then suddenly, their behavior changed. They boldly proclaimed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Their words would cost them their lives. How can we explain this dramatic change? No one dies for what they know to be a lie, and yet all the disciples, without exception, went to their graves without ever recanting what they saw and believed.

Point out: Throughout history, people's lives are being changed after meeting Jesus, including mine. The Gospel transforms us from the inside out. We act and talk differently. You and I are living proof that Jesus still exists and changes lives today.

The Growth of the Church

After the resurrection, the early church expanded rapidly in Jerusalem – a place that was steeped in centuries of religious custom. Most scholars agree that changes in cultures and worldviews happen slowly, over time. New ideas have to percolate and rise from creation to general consensus to acceptance. That didn't happen in the early church. Overnight, the day of worship changed from Saturday (the Sabbath) to Sunday (the Lord's Day) and thousands chose to follow Jesus.

Invite: Even today, church attendance spikes tremendously during Christmas and Easter. Many people are open to attending church on these holidays than any other time of the year. Invite someone to join you for a special program or service to learn more about the real meaning of Easter or simply share more of your personal story over coffee or a casual dinner. Perhaps this is the year, they may be ready to meet Jesus for the first time.

There's no better time to begin sharing your faith than today.



Poverty and Attitude

By Dan Collison

Everything about North American culture says more is better and money is power. But everything about Jesus' ministry suggests the opposite.

Jesus went with great intentionality to the poor, who suffer some of the worst that our broken world has to offer. He even said in Luke 6:20, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (NASB).

How can it be that the marginalized, overlooked and excluded are blessed? Poverty seems to curse many of the things needed for successful living in North America — education, communication skills, life skills, income, relationships, health, living conditions, hope and more.

Our attitude toward the poor will provide evidence of our commitment to Christ, who went far out of his way to reach those most victimized by this broken world.

Most of us do everything we can to improve these experiences for ourselves without giving much thought to how our success affects others. But this is exactly where the gospel – God's good news about the human condition through the incarnate Christ – intersects the hard realities of life. Consider the following.

- The gospel does not measure how much we have; it measures what we do with what we have.
- The kingdom is not concerned with amassing power and resources; it leverages our eternal inheritance for the benefit of those overlooked by others.
- The church is God's method of bringing reconciliation to His creation; it's not a bubble in which self-indulgent people can escape reality.
- The King — who was homeless — came not to be served, but to serve by giving His life.
- As the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina continues to encourage affiliated churches to impact lostness through disciple-making, our attitude toward the poor will provide evidence of our commitment to Christ, who went far out of His way to reach those most victimized by this broken world.
- We will have to do the same if we want to reach the lost in North Carolina because large numbers of people live under the crushing weight of poverty.
- For example, in Charlotte, five of the 12 pockets of lostness within the city limits have a majority population earning below a livable wage. Yet our pattern and motivation in confronting this crisis can be found in Christ Himself.
- In 2 Corinthians 8:9, the apostle Paul writes, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor; that you through His poverty might become rich" (NASB).
- The only question is whether we will live out the gospel of Jesus that prioritizes the poor and blesses them for their good and His glory.



Dan Collison / Strategic Focus Team / Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

Out of town? You can still check out our new Website www.brcnews.com And find us on Facebook

Rev. John B. Sorensen, D.D. is the President/CEO of Evangelism Explosion International, headquartered in Arden, N.C. EE has been a leader in equipping Christians to share their faith for more than 50 years. For more free tips and resources, visit evangelismexplosion.org.

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TIPTON HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE

-Easter Egg Hunt-

April 20th - 11:00am

(at the Tipton Hill Playground)

FREE LUNCH

following at the Community Center

Children 10 yrs. and under

Easter Bunny will be there!

Get your Easter Baskets ready

You might be a Winner!

Questions call 828-688-2524

In case of rain hunt will be in the Community Center



Community Action

By David Burleson
Burke County



Flowers blooming and birds singing are a sure sign that spring is here. Even though spring is officially here, the month of March reminded us that winter has not lost its grip. We all know that late March and early April can still bring some snow and bad weather to Burke County.

Spring brings a flurry of activity at Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM). Our ministry continues to meet the needs of over 10,000 individuals who need a hand up for an assortment of reasons. Our Soup Kitchen is serving an average of 1,288 meals per week. Our food pantry is providing an average of 15,558 lbs. of food per week to our families. Our clothing closet continues to stay busy providing clothes, shoes and other items to our clients. Also, the cold temperatures this winter have stretched our funds for financial assistance. BUCM has had many clients needing some additional assistance with higher than usual utility bills.

To support our clients and provide them with an additional hand up, BUCM opened a Learning Lab with 20 computer workstations and other teaching resources last year. Because of a generous grant from James Tool and Waldensian Presbyterian Church and the support of Western Piedmont Community College, our clients are able to use this lab to work toward obtaining their high school equivalency (formerly a GED), enroll in on-line college classes, complete job training programs, do job searches, have food preparation classes, learn how to budget, and a variety of other activities.

Also, in collaboration with Blue Ridge Community Action and through a grant from the Community Foundation of Burke County, the first Circles Program began at BUCM in March. This program is designed to teach participants financial management and how to access community resources. Allies for the program are being recruited at this time. Allies are mentors who work with the participants and encourage them as they pursue financial independence. Anyone interested in being an ally needs to call us at (828) 433-8075.

BUCM is very thankful for all our volunteers, donors and sustaining churches who provide the resources we need to meet the needs of our clients. BUCM is very blessed to have the support essential to do the work that is accomplished daily in our ministry. To say thank you to our volunteers and donors, BUCM will be having our Volunteer Banquet on Monday, April 8 at the Morganton First Methodist Church at 6 p.m. We look forward to seeing all our supporters on this very special night. Please call Elizabeth Norris at (828) 433-8075 ext. 237 or email her at info@bucm.net to let her know that you will be joining us. The theme this year is, "Making a Difference for This One".

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the ministry of Burke United Christian Ministries. Year after year, volunteers contribute time and energy to assist our agency. During the last fiscal year, volunteers at BUCM gave 36,353.96 hours. Volunteering at BUCM provides individuals with the opportunity to help and support others.

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

- Food Harvesting – Going to local grocery stores and restaurants to pick up donated food.
- Clothing Closet – New opportunity – Assist clients in our clothing closet as they shop with a clothing voucher. The social workers write up a clothing voucher that allows the client to shop. Volunteers assist clients and then tally up their selection. No money is exchanged.
- Sorting, Inspecting, and Hanging – Interested in being behind the scenes of the clothing closet or Saved for You Clothing Store? Volunteer to prepare items for the sales floor or clothing closet.
- Warehouse – Unload, sort and organize perishable and non-perishable food items. Assist in stocking the Food Pantry. Help keep the warehouse, freezers, and refrigerators organized.
- Clerical Support– Assist with production of newsletters, bulk mailings, flyers and more.
- Learning Lab Support – As our learning lab gets up and running, BUCM will need volunteers to take the lead in developing and organizing the resources that are offered. Volunteers will be needed to just open the lab, work with students, tutor students or assist with students as they work on the computers.
- Willing to do whatever or being on-call – Is your volunteer time flexible? Are you interested in just being called on in a time of need? Volunteer to be called on when the donations are plenty or support is needed in the food pantry, clothing closet, dining room, front office, or anywhere in the ministry. We are especially in need of an on-call soup kitchen team for times when something comes up for the scheduled team or in times of bad weather.

Anyone interested in volunteering should submit an application and let's talk about how you can make a difference with BUCM. BUCM asks volunteers to commit to a schedule, if possible. It could be weekly, bi-weekly or once a month. This allows for our department staff to plan and prepare for volunteers. For on-call volunteers, commitment is not requested. Without volunteers, we would be unable to operate, so we are willing to work with you to fit your schedule.

One ministry that makes a tremendous impact for our clients during the winter months is the fire wood ministry. Each winter, under the direction of Birch McMurray and Chris Witherspoon, volunteers from the First Methodist Church in Morganton cut and haul fire wood to families who need the wood for heat. This year 51 loads of wood have been provided with the help of over 50 volunteers.

A big thank you to Phil Scarborough, Mark Brittan and the staff at Friday Friends for all their help and support for our successful breakfast fundraiser. I

continued on page 37

Crossword Solution

E	H	U	D		C	O	A	T	S		A	F	A	T
B	E	N	E		H	A	L	E		B	R	I	D	E
B	A	T	S		A	R	M	S		A	E	N	O	N
S	L	O	P	E	S		S	T	A	B		A	P	T
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P	A	P	E	R		D	E	A	L		H	A	L	F
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A	S	S	A	I	L	S		T	E	N	T			
F	A	T		T	Y	P	E		S	K	I	L	L	S
A	R	I	E	L		O	A	R	S		R	I	O	T
S	A	L	V	E		T	R	U	E		E	A	S	E
T	I	L	E		A	S	S	E	S		D	R	E	W

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Sudoku Solution

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

The Rest of the Story
Doug Harrell

Wow, it has been nine years since this story took place, that seems unbelievable! It seems like it was only yesterday when the notorious Clint Pollard started the journey of becoming Farmer Clint. I remember the phone call to come rescue him, fertilizer, backpack and old blackie! I can close my eyes and see the precarious position the truck was sitting in, not a pretty sight and Clint was an absolute wreck. I guess I never realized how out of shape and overweight he was when he made his appearance that Sunday afternoon that started his residence at Harrell Hill Farms. I don’t remember much about the evening meal, but I do remember that Clint was one whipped pup that evening. The comedy goes on and we have all been blessed by the hilarity of his stories.

Funny Farm

A Cornucopia of Catastrophes
Or
A Hodge Podge of Hilarity
Or
A Diary of Dangers

I now know that you don’t care how I title these little missives, your interest runs no deeper than to guffaw at my misdeeds and near-misses with meltdown. Wherever I go people approach, stare at me, shake their heads, smile and say…”Can’t wait to hear what you did next!” If it weren’t flattering I could be down-right humiliated. ☺

Why just the other day a lady telephoned my office and said her mom, a mere 92+ year old saint, was ill and would love nothing more than a visit from Farmer Clint. Astounded by this newfound celebrity status I, of course, asked for an appearance fee and was promised vine-ripened ‘maters – perfect! I love fresh vegetables grown by sincere, honest, hard working mountain folks like me – okay, I haven’t exactly earned my “mountain folk” badge yet but you gotta admit I’m working on it!

Day 1 On The Farm

It was late March, 2010, when I arrived at Harrell Hill Farms. I hailed from the Big City of Hendersonville, NC, a mere 1 ½ hours away but it might as well be another planet. Imagining myself a “country boy” all my life, try to picture my surprise when I truly arrived in the real country; thinking I was from “the mountains” in Hendersonville, consider my shock as my eyes beheld the hills of Yancey and Mitchell County. Holy smokes!

I figured my buddy Doug Harrell would have mercy on my first-ever Farmer Clint day. You know, maybe I could carry a stick of firewood, possibly feed the cows, do whatever it is that greenhorns do when they first set out to be farm hands. But nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo, not Doug…no mercy had he!

The first clue that life was about to change for City Slicker Clint was hearing Doug bellow up the stairs…”Pollard, are you up? We’re burning daylight!” Mind you, I’ve always been an early to bed, early to rise sort of fellow…I’m talking in the rack by 10:00pm and up at 6:00am. Seems like a civilized schedule, don’t you think? The notion of arising at 4:30am was never a part of my thinking…until today.

I must admit that the serenity of an awakening farm is something very special…the unfiltered sunlight peering over the mountains, critters and their morning sounds, the total lack of traffic noise and city sounds, ‘twas somewhat heavenly. Plus, Doug prepared buckwheat pancakes with homemade syrup…oh yeah, and I had my first-ever taste of pure sorghum molasses, man alive that was fine stuff! Although partially asleep I still liked the way my new life was developing.

Unsafe At Any Speed

In previous tales I made mention of “Blackie”, my assigned mode of transportation and a vehicle I came to honor and adore. It is an ancient, let’s say 1965 model Jeep truck (I’m not sure that is correct but I am the one telling the story!) Anyway, Doug escorted me into the frigid morning air and introduced me to the ugliest, scariest, most decrepit looking vehicle you can imagine. Admiring my new ride I asked, “What am I supposed to do with that?” With that slight, mischievous, crooked grin I’ve come to love, Doug explained that this would be my farm truck for the day. I made every effort to be impressed and grateful, trying not to barf.

There were a few things I should know about “Blackie”…first, never turn the ignition totally off when stopped – it freezes the switch preventing you from being able to start the vehicle again; the brakes were a bit dicey, so it was wise to keep a hand on the emergency brake; the door handle on the driver’s side tends to ‘want to fall off’ (how does an inanimate object ‘want to do something’???) leaving you trapped like a rat inside; the window on the passenger side needs to be left rolled up….OOOPS, too late! (If you begin rolling it down, like I did, it falls inside the door and you need the jaws of life to retrieve it); ya gotta put the sucker in 1st gear when parked, otherwise it has a tendency to roll downhill since the emergency brake kinda sorta doesn’t work; notice that the truck bed is being held intact with baling wire so don’t make sharp turns; blah blah blah! Keep in mind, I arrived at this Funny Farm in my 2004 F150 Ford truck as my “ride of choice”… Doug would later chastise me for driving a “city truck”.



Fat Farmer “Wannabe” Fetches Fertilizer

My assigned task was to “side-dress” Christmas trees with fertilizer…using a foreign object which Doug called a backpack (more on that in a moment). I drove the short distance from the farmhouse to the barn on Harrell Hill Road to fetch gazillion bags of fertilizer. Remember, if you can, that I was not the svelte, fit Farmer Clint you know today…no, I was a rotund 290+ lbs of pure blubber. Well, by the time I finished loading TONS of fertilizer on this death-trap of a Jeep I felt as though I had done a week’s work – and it was only 6:30am.

Slip Sliding Away

I was dispatched to the home of Larry Harrell, Doug’s brother, HIGH on a hill off Hwy 226. When I saw the driveway I was reminded of the Tower of Babel, you remember – men trying to build a tower to heaven? This doggone driveway seemed to disappear into the clouds…the steepest climb I could imagine, not forgetting that I was in Blackie! I motored up the first leg of this death driveway finally arriving at the top. Knowing that I would have to carry the 400 gazillion pounds of fertilizer bags I decided to drive the Jeep into the Christmas tree patch…bad idea!

FIRST LESSON for Farmer Clint…a 50 year old Jeep with questionable brakes, heading downhill on wet grass/weeds, is likely to slither right off the edge of the cliff…as I maneuvered this bucket of bolts, or better said as it maneuvered me, my life flashed before me…I was sliding uncontrollably toward the precipice on grass slick as glass, soon I would be toast…and this my very first day! When what to my wondering eyes should appear but a tiny dogwood tree protruding from the cliff’s edge…putting Blackie into a power-slide, okay so it put its own self into a power slide, the Jeep came to rest precariously on the very lip of the cliff, held in place by the twig. I quickly dismounted, dropping the erratic door handle in the grass (more on that later), and knelt in the wet grass, happy to be alive. Immediately I phoned a friend in Hendersonville, recounting my first hours on the farm, and warned him that he may need to rescue me from this madness!

Flubber On The Mountain

I was encouraged by the way Doug described the backpack thingy…”You don’t have to carry the bags of fertilizer; you just pour them into the backpack and use this little hose to drop the pellets around each tree.” Yeah, yadda yadda yadda…

First of all, there are about 5,000 trees that I will have to dance around… Second, the 5,000 trees are planted on the side of a MOUNTAIN…a BIGGG MOUNTAIN…

Third, I am FAT, VERY FAT, and I have to walk my chubby self sideways on this mountain…

Fourth, when you dump the fertilizer into the little backpack thingy it weighs 50-60 lbs…

Fifth, when you add 60 lbs to the backpack thingy, and then add that to 290+ lb Farmer Clint…you now have 350lbs of Farmer Clint walking sideways on a HUGE MOUNTAIN…

Sixth, did I tell you that my right ankle is fused? Well it is…that means it is more like a hockey stick than an ankle, it does not bend and has no flex…

Seventh, when a man with a fused ankle tries to walk sideways on wet grass on a BIG MOUNTAIN and his foot doesn’t bend he is very prone to FALL OVER…

Eighth, when a FAT man – with a fused ankle – carrying 350lbs falls down the BIG MOUNTAIN, he rolls a long way…

Ninth, it is very hard to get back up when a fat man is lying on wet grass, on the side of a BIG MOUNTAIN, with 350lbs attached!

But get up I did! Over and over and over again, I fell my chubby cherubic self down that BIG MOUNTAIN, spilling fertilizer as I barrel rolled down the hillside…but I always arose and climbed back to my last position.

Rescue #1

As the sun set behind the beautiful mountains of Mitchell County I heard the roar of a diesel approaching my Christmas tree patch…at last I was to be rescued… it was Doug on the Kioti ☺. That ever present smile on his handsome mug, he joined me alongside Blackie, hooked a BIG chain to it and pulled me to safety. Back at the barn, arm in arm, Doug asked, “Well, Pollard, how was your first day?” Not to be outdone by this Paul Bunyan of Harrell Hill, I replied, “It was great Doug. Can’t wait for tomorrow!”

Praise the Lord, once again I had cheated death on the Funny Farm!

Blessings to all,

Farmer Clint



Town of Valdese

Concert Lineup

By Morrissa Angi
Burke County

Family Friday Nights in Valdese will begin on May 24th with a special season kickoff featuring the band, OUTSHYNE. “We are so excited for this year’s Family Friday Nights Summer Concert Series. We have shortened our season to offer even bigger events with even better bands,” states Morrissa Angi, Community Affairs Director for the Town of Valdese. “The season will bring back local favorites and will also debut many new talents. We are excited to celebrate the summer!”

Kicking off the summer series this year will be OUTSHYNE on Friday, May 24th at 7:00pm located in the Wells Fargo/Town Parking lot. With around ten years together, OUTSHYNE, has seen nearly half a million road miles. Influenced by music favorites Lynyrd Skynyrd, George Jones, Eric Church, Keith Urban, and Jason Aldean, they have played some of the best venues and biggest festivals in the U.S. such as "Taste of Country" in New York and CMAfest in Nashville along with many others. They have had a #1 on Sirius/XM the Highway with "Moonlight Crush". They have shared the stage with Jake Owen, Keith Urban, Darius Rucker, Neal McCoy, Colt Ford, Corey Smith and Gary Allan just to name a few. Hailing from South Carolina, OUTSHYNE’s first single "Dirt Road Romance", written by friends Florida Georgia Line and Arlis Albritton, went to #29 on the Music Row Chart and #46 on the Billboard Indicator Chart. The album titled "Starting Over" was produced by Grammy nominated Chip Matthews and hit song writer Jeffrey Steele, and debuted #11 on iTunes the day it was released. The bands second single "Moonlight Crush" hit #1 on Sirius XM’s The Highway Countdown and also was the stations #18 song of 2014. The two singles combined have over 100,000 downloads and over 1 million YouTube views.

The Valdese summer will feature two major weekend celebrations with the Main Stage located at the corner of Main Street and Rodoret Street. The first being on June 28th as Valdese celebrates our Nation’s Independence with a night of music by Little Johnny Trailer Trash, Valdese famous Fireworks and concluding with an extra special performance by On the Border, the Ultimate Eagle’s Tribute. The second major celebration of the summer is the 44th Annual Waldensian Festival on August 9th & 10th. Festival Friday night will kick off the weekend-long celebration

with a trip to the 80’s with Cas-sette Rewind followed by a flash back to 90’s with Gump Fiction. Festival Saturday night will feature beach music legend, Gary Lowder & Smokin’ Hot. The Valdese Family Friday Nights Summer Concert Series will continue every Friday night through August 30th when it will conclude with a grand finale by beach favorite The Tim Clark Band.

Concessions will be for sale during the concert series and different civic groups will offer 50/50 raffles every Friday. Season lineup cards will be available for pick up at the concession trailer. Myra’s classic and antique car show will be held at 6pm each Friday. The Valdese Family Friday Nights Summer Concert Series is presented by the Town of Valdese and proudly sponsored by Carolina’s Healthcare System Blue Ridge, Settlemyre Nursery, WSVM 96.5 FM. For further information about events in Valdese and the full Family Friday Nights Concert Schedule go to visitvaldese.com.

- 2019 Season Lineup:
- May 24: Concert Series Kickoff Celebration – Outshyne
 - May 31: Rated PG
 - June 7: Dirty Grass Soul
 - June 14: Emily Minor
 - June 21: The Night Move Band
 - June 28: INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION & FIREWORKS DISPLAY
 - Little Johnny Trailer Trash & Ultimate Eagles Tribute- On the Border - Eagles Tribute Band
 - July 5: Southwind
 - July 12: Shake Down Band
 - July 19: The True Grass Band
 - July 26: Tony Bailey Band
 - August 2: Skaterink Jukebox
 - August 9 & 10: 44th Annual Historic Valdese Waldensian Festival
 - Friday Night Entertainment - Cassette Rewind & Gump Fiction
 - Saturday Entertainment - Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot
 - August 16: Carson Hill
 - August 23: To Be Announced
 - August 30: Concert Series Finale Celebration – Tim Clark Band

Morrissa Angi is Director of Community Affairs and Tourism



SEARCH (Sustaining Essential and Rural Community Healthcare)

Learns About Health Care

By Susan Larson, Co-leader
Mitchell County

How do we know what would make a difference in the healthcare of local people? Best way is to ask them directly, and that is what the Outreach members of SEARCH (Sustaining Essential and Rural Community Healthcare) have been doing in Yancey and Mitchell counties. They have been conducting Listening Sessions to hear the experiences, the needs of families and communities and the ideas and hopes that can inform the decisions made about healthcare in our region.

Team members have met with over 115 people in churches, at community centers, in fire departments, at nonprofits and schools to ask simple questions such as what are the strengths in our local health care? What do you wish were available in health care that would help your friends and family? What kind of issues are your friends and family dealing with? The sessions last about an hour and often are scheduled through a presentation to an umbrella group, such as the Yancey County Fire Chiefs or the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners.

The information is recorded as it is spoken and then organized under two categories – essential services and social determinants of health. This will be made available to organizations that can develop programs or services and apply for funding to meet the needs expressed by residents. It can also be helpful to board members of the Dogwood Health Trust and AMY Wellness Foundation as they shape their priorities of funding.

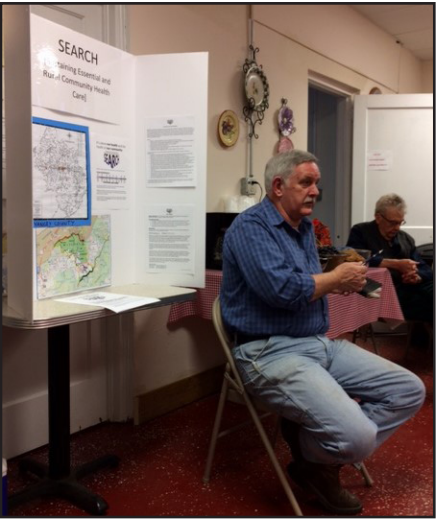
Last year the Toe River Health Department, in conjunction with Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, conducted the Community Health Assessment. The results of SEARCH’s in-person sessions are meant to complement the assessments, which were conducted in both counties by the compilation of data and through extensive telephone interviews.

Because both the Dogwood Health Trust and the AMY Wellness Foundation will focus on the Social Determinants of Health, a goal is to hear about the factors which prevent people from being as healthy as they can be. For example, in a recent Listening Session at the Tipton Hill Community Center, some of the topics that were discussed were the need for dental care, the desire to have a doctor or PA come on a regular basis, the long distance to any hospital, the uncertainty of ambulance availability when needed and the need to travel long distances to find work.

The Listening Sessions will continue through 2019. Communities wishing to schedule one can contact Karin Rolett at Karin.rolett@gmail.com.

SEARCH meets most months, alternating between Burnsville and Spruce Pine. The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 23, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 15 Hemlock Avenue, Spruce Pine. It is open to anyone who’s interested in ensuring that the citizens of Mitchell and Yancey counties have access to safe, quality, affordable and local healthcare. For more information visit the website: www.searchwnc.org or the Facebook page: searchwnc.

Susan Larson is a co-leader of SEARCH. She resides in Mitchell County with her husband, retired physician Dr. David Larson.



Mike Burselson makes a point about healthcare at the Tipton Hill Listening Session.



Karin Rolett (right) of SEARCH listens intently to local Tipton Hill residents.

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I am the Woman at the Well

By Alan Griffin

The story of the woman at the well can be found in John 4:5-26. I met Je’Tajia the first time when she was eleven. This is her story.

I am the woman at the well. My name is Je’Tajia. I was born October 25, 1981 in a housing project on the west side of Charlotte, North Carolina, called Boulevard Homes. I was the oldest of nine children and lived with my mom in a 2 bedroom flat. The boys slept in one bedroom, we girls slept in the other, while my mom slept on the couch. Every day after school I would babysit my siblings until my mom returned home, which was usually after we had gone to bed. My mom was a prostitute and drug addict. She spent her nights at an apartment across the court. Her money was spent getting high. We survived on food stamps and handouts from churches and agencies that frequently came to the projects. My dad was sent to prison when I was 1 1/2 years old and I didn't see him again until I was 11. We didn't get along very well, he was always demanding me to do better in school, but would never better himself enough to help me with my basic needs of clothes and school supplies.

I am the woman at the well. I was seduced by an older man when I was 15. I can't call it rape because I let him do it. He was the first person who really paid any attention to me. He would get me high and we would spend time together while my brothers and sisters played in the living room. I became pregnant and had my first child at 16. I had to quit school to watch after Joshua. I continued to stay with my mom until I met a young man in the neighborhood. He was very charming and convinced me to move in with him and his mom. It was just the 3 of us and there were some good times until I became pregnant again. As I grew with his baby inside of me He lost interest and moved out of his mom's house to get away from me. I had a 6 pound 2 ounce baby girl. I named her Jasmine. His mom was evicted when Jasmine was 8 months old. I had no place to go except the women's shelter.

I am the woman at the well. Shelter life was hard. The other women were competitive and mean. Their children were constantly picking on Josh who was now 3. The only good memory I have of the place was Albert. He was a tall, lean man who did the custodial work at the shelter. He paid attention to me, and was always giving me nice complements. I was hungry for someone to love me and I would mistake sexual attention for love. I realize now the two are very different. I had his daughter on March 30, 2001. She was a very pretty baby so I named her Camellia, which in Africa means "beautiful." He made so many promises which he never kept. Two months after Camellia was born I got into an altercation with three other women at the shelter. They beat me so severely I had to be hospitalized for a month. My children ended up in foster care. By the time I had completed my physical therapy all three had been placed in homes. They were placed with good families, and I could never provide for them as they could.

I am the woman at the well. I am a 21 year old drug addicted, homeless, black female with no place to go. I have nothing but the clothes on my back and 20 staples in my head. I have lived with several men and have yet to be married. I am a product of my environment, and I have never felt more lost in my entire life. I am a number at a physical recovery clinic with no place to call home. My social case worker came to me with a recommendation, or what I call my only option. It was either the street or a drug rehabilitation program. I chose the street.

I am the woman at the well. For the next ten years I moved from crack house to crack house doing drugs of whatever kind I could get. I had sex with men, with women, it didn't matter. I lived by the motto of the day, "If it feels good just do it." After abusing my mind and body for so long I contracted pneumonia and had to be hospitalized. After a couple of days of hospital care my mind became clear and I realized I had become my mother in every way. I was living the same life of daily suicide. Every day I would take drugs and sex to another level until eventually I would end up just like her, dead! In the hospital room in the second drawer beside my bed I found a pamphlet. It was a story about a woman who lived her life much as I did mine.

This was an amazing story to me. I had walked by churches before, but they were filled with very uppity people, wearing fancy clothes, and driving cars. I saw no one there who was like me. I had nothing at all to give, but this story tells me that God is interested in all of us, regardless of what we have or don't have. The Bible says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." I discovered by reading the Bible that had been left in my room by the Gideon's, that I could grow in faith. He took the broken little girl that was inside of me and transformed me into a woman with power. Power to change my future, power to overcome the helplessness I had always felt, the power to overcome drug addiction and poverty, and the power of prayer.

I spent 11 days in the hospital recovering from pneumonia and going through detoxification. I checked myself into a 30 day inpatient rehabilitation program. I listened intently to the daily instruction. The hardest part for me was not overcoming the drug use, God took care of that. But Tuesday nights everyone had their family come and to see them. That is when I sat in the corner by myself for 2 hours being polite, speaking when spoken to and trying to appear normal. I read a verse in the book of Romans that says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." One Tuesday I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life.

Since that moment I have never looked back. I completed high school and went on to college where I obtained a degree in counseling. I was smart and didn't even



realize it. I received my master's degree in child psychology when I was 40. I worked as a social worker and youth counselor. Over the past 20 years I have helped thousands of kids get on the right track. Through my relationship with Jesus Christ I have changed my life and many more around me.

God has blessed me with a home and a husband. This time a real relationship with a man who fears God. On my 57th birthday Joshua, my oldest son, found me. He had grown into a talented young man who had a wife and daughter of his own. I had been a grandmother for 12 years and didn't even know it. Three days later both of my beautiful daughters came to see me. Jasmine and Camellia were healthy and hardworking young women.

It is my turn to have a family you see at church on Sunday. It is my turn to know how wonderful the holidays are when we are all together. "And God is able to make all grace abound in you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written; He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever... Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift," and His unmerited mercy, through faith in the sacrificial death and resurrection of His loving Son Jesus Christ."

If you have been waiting for a reason to change your life, wait no longer. The longer you wait the more pain you will suffer without the loving hand of your King and Savior. He is there beside you waiting for you to turn away from the world and turn towards Him. He doesn't care what you have done or where you have been. All He cares about is you. Talk to Him and He will remove the weight that is bearing down on your shoulders. "Call upon His name and you shall be saved."

Alan Griffin started the kidsnchrist ministries in November 1997. He has worked with inner city kids for 21 years. He found a need for specialized Biblical literature that would reach people of all ages and has been writing since 2005. The ministry has expanded their websites to reach around the world. Kidsnchrist.com, millennialchristian.com, teensnchrist.com, seniorsnchrist.com, picture-verse.com, and soulworks-smallgroups.com. We had an outreach of over 13,000,000 people last year with 36,000,000 impressions. If you have any questions for Alan you can reach him at alan@kidsnchrist.com



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Glenn to Receive First Annual Terrell Scholarship

By Abigail Griffith
Mitchell County

Mitchell County Soil and Water is pleased to announce Jessy-Kate Glenn as the recipient for the 2018-2019 Terrell Scholarship. Glenn is passionate about agriculture and 4H in Mitchell County and across North Carolina. Glenn hopes to attend North Carolina State



Ed Terrell, Jessy Kate Glenn

University and major in Agriculture Education. Glenn is the daughter of Darrin and Susan, and resides in the Penland community. The Terrell Scholarship was created to honor Mr. Ed Terrell, who has devoted his life to agriculture and youth development in Mitchell County through the Cooperative Extension and other philanthropic activities. The scholarship is available beginning in August at the Mitchell Soil & Water office with a deadline of September 8, 2019. Any high school senior or graduate from Mitchell County interested in post-secondary education in agriculture or conservation related fields is encouraged to apply.

Abigail Griffith is the new Coordinator at Mitchell County Soil and Water.



The C-Clamps of Life

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

A C-Clamp fits the description of a useful tool that belongs in every carpenter’s toolbox. The large threaded screw at the bottom of the C extends through its hole as the woodworker winds it upward. Typically, lumber or other objects are placed between the screw and a worktable. As the screw tightens, the C-clamp enables the wood to remain stationary so that the artisan can use his tools to produce a beautiful project.

My daughter and I recently became human C-clamps when my husband finished a laundry room project. We needed a shelf above the washer and dryer, but the wire-coated rack required extra support where it met the wall. He used a fifty-inch board and wanted to route it for a finished look. But using a freehand router required it to be stationary while he routed a lovely edge. Asking us to lean our weight upon both ends provided support and enabled the builder to do his best work.

As the wood curls fell softly on hands and shoes, a spiritual truth dawned. Sometimes, we, as Christians, need to hold firmly to our sisters and brothers as the Master Carpenter applies life’s storms to carve splendid finishes to their faith. The



Father lovingly touches His children constantly, much like my husband runs his fingers up and down the wood, affirming its perfection. God is present in our trials, smoothing the tears from our cheeks and gathering them for future glory. He is finishing our faith so that others can see His marvelous work in us. The router of life’s circumstances bites into the edges of our unfinished lives, and the high-pitched whine can terrify us. But no sorrow is wasted as He finishes our faith to a golden sheen, and others want to know who could produce such priceless work.

The wood moved underneath my hands, but I clamped harder, determined to help in this work of crafting an excellent and practical piece. Leaning into the process, friends and family drifted to mind. I determined to hold on tight to them in love, knowing that God’s presence and superb work would be completed in them just as the Bible promises. When the router of life’s storms touches your friend, hold firmly to them as the Master Carpenter shapes their faith into a glorious tribute to Him.

PS: While writing this article, we again became C-clamps. Excited by his success with the shelf project, he began to craft a small board to hold pottery bowls. But this time my Sunday clothes seemed to prevent me. And another truth occurred to me. When friends need us to hold them firmly as their faith is fashioned, we may have on our Sunday-best and perhaps do not realize that we are focusing on religion rather than restoration. I pray that our eyes open to others’ storms, regardless of preplanned days.

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

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Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Why Does God Ask

By Pastor Steve Bietz
Burke County



Questions. All day long. Endless, continuous, relentless. Moms must deal with questions from their kids. Researchers claim that 4 year old girls ask the most questions, asking on average, 390 questions a day. Considering the time a 4 year old girl is awake, that averages out to a question every 2 minutes. And the questions of a 4 year old girl can be very provoking. For example,... Mom, where does the sun go at night? Mom, are there more leaves in the world or blades of grass? Mom, why are oranges, orange? Mom, why don't stores sell warm ice cream?

Of course, as we grow and mature, so do our questions. And it is inevitable, that if we have any prayer life at all, we will ask God questions. I have heard some well-meaning people suggest that we should not ask God questions, just leave it to God. I actually believe that God welcomes our questions. Our questions do not scare God. We certainly find in scripture, individuals on record asking God questions. The Psalmist David asks questions, Job asks questions. The trials of life produce questions. Even Jesus asked, *"My God, why have You forsaken me?"*

What about when God puts the shoe on the other foot and asks us the questions. The fundamentals are different.

When we ask God, we are searching for answers. We don't know...so we ask. But God can't be asking us questions because He doesn't know. God knows everything. God does not need to ask us what's going on because He already knows.

Many times, in the Bible, we are shown occasions when God asks questions. There are too many to cover, so I will just present a handful. A question catches my attention that God asks the man Cain and it is recorded in Genesis 4:8,9. *"Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose against Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother?"* Is the Lord asking Cain this question because the Lord can't find Abel? Does the Lord already know exactly where Abel is located? So early on in the Bible, we see that God does not ask questions for the same reasons we ask. God does not ask questions because He is unaware. Why does God ask where Abel is at, if He already knows? Very peculiar.

Another episode where God is asking the questions and it perks my interest is also in Genesis. The Bible records that the Lord came by the home of Abraham one day. To Abraham, all he initially sees is some travelers. And we watch as Abraham in the typical Bedouin sheik manner, invites these heavenly travelers disguised as 3 mortals, to enjoy his hospitality. And as Abraham pampers his guests, it becomes obvious that these travelers are not mere men. For the Lord announces to Abraham that he and his wife Sarah will give birth to a son. Now the age of Sarah would seem to present an obstacle to this announcement. Sarah is approaching the age of 90. And she is near enough the tent flap, to hear this prediction from the Lord, even though it seems that she is out of their sight. It would have been unseemly for complete strangers to gaze upon the face of the wife of the host in that era under these circumstances. It is here that we see the Lord ask a question, recorded in Genesis 18:13. *"Why did Sarah laugh?"* We see the Lord asking Abraham what his wife thinks is so funny. Now Sarah is pretty sure that her laugh was not audible. Is the Lord confused? Not hardly. The Lord has a very provocative follow up question recorded for us in Genesis 18:14. *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* In other words, Please Sarah, feel free to share with us what God can't do. My title to this article is again, Why Does God Ask.

Another time, we see God ask a question of the man Moses. Things had not gone as Moses had planned. He had early on in his life chosen to not become the Pharaoh of Egypt. But, he did feel that he would lead a revolution and guide the Hebrews to overthrow their masters, the Egyptians. But the cause of independence fell apart the day Moses murdered an Egyptian and tried to bury him in the sand. So, instead, Moses would guide sheep from pasture to pasture for 40 years. Not revolutionary. Then, God shows up in a wilderness thorn thicket that is on fire but refuses to extinguish. God would tell Moses that He had handpicked him to go back to Egypt and lead the Hebrews on their quest to independence. Moses is sympathetic to the cause of independence, but is downright convinced that he is not the man for the job. As God illustrates His power, Moses would continue to balk, claiming his speech is horribly lacking. It is here we see God ask a question, recorded in Exodus 4:11. *"Who has made man's mouth?"* As Creator, we must recognize that God knows all about our mouths. So, why does God ask? Peculiar.

One more question, this time taken from the New Testament. We find the Lord and His followers attempting to find some time away from the glare of the lights and have some time of rest. The Lord is nothing short of a rock star in Palestine and escaping the crowds proves unattainable. When the multitudes find the Lord, He consents to teach them, and for several hours, the Lord talks with the crowd. Finally, the disciples would step forward and interrupt the Lord's message and convey that it was getting late and the crowd of people need to get home and eat. The Lord agrees that it is time to stop and eat. But this is where things get peculiar. For we see the Lord tell the disciples...you feed the crowd. Lord, there are some 5000 men here not counting the women and children. But, the Lord asks a question of his disciple Phillip. *"Phillip, where should we buy bread, that these may eat?"* John 6:5 You are from these parts Phillip, you're from this area, where do you suggest we get food to feed these folk? John immediately informs us what we already have guessed, that the Lord does not ask the question to try and figure out what to do. The Lord already knows, and John adds that Jesus asks the question to test Phillip and the other disciples. Phillip answers that even if they could find a place to buy enough food to feed the crowd, they simply could not afford it.

Cain, do you know where your brother Abel has run off?
Sarah, what's so funny?
Moses, who created your mouth?
Phillip, where can we get food for this big crowd?

You know, when we ask God questions we are looking for a change in circumstances. Please heal, or please help me get a job or please help me with my test. We seek a change in circumstances when we come to God with questions. But when God is asking us the questions, He is not seeking a change in circumstances, rather He seeks a change in us. Phillip, is there a fast food restaurant in these parts where we can get food for this crowd? What if Phillip had answered, Lord, even if there was a place to buy the food, we don't have enough money to make it happen. But I have come to trust you and I know that if you desire it, you can make the impossible happen. Now that would have been an answer that would have brought a smile to the face of Jesus.

Why does God ask us questions? To help us grow in our trust of Him. When we come across those questions in scripture that God asks, may we see them as very valuable lessons of love. May we each commit to being a teachable student of God. Indeed, may we trust our God, more and more with each passing day.

Steve Bietz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: Job 19:25-26

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

Earl Horton American Legion Post 122, Inc.

American Legion's 100 Year Anniversary With Burnsville Post 122

By: Lester R. "Les" Heavner
Second Vice Commander/Adjutant
Yancey County



As the American Legion celebrates its 100th anniversary March 15-17, the Earl Horton American Legion Post 122 works to advance the service legacy of Post 122. The Burnsville Post was first chartered in April 1921. Then, as now, the Post is in Burnsville. Membership now represents communities in Buncombe, Madison, Yancey, Mitchell and Avery counties.

The national organization traces its roots to March 15-17, 1919, in Paris, France, where, in the aftermath of World War I veterans of the American Expeditionary Forces set forth the vision which today defines the American Legion – a veterans association unlike any other - one not serving themselves, but one built on strengthening our Nation and our communities.

The American Legion was chartered by the United States Congress on September 16, 1919 dedicated to veterans, national defense, youth and patriotism. Today there are 5,400 posts in operation locally and The Legion has grown to 13,000 posts around the world with a membership of 2.2 million wartime-veteran members.

The Burnsville Post 122 was reactivated on August 4, 2015. A new charter issued by the American Legion authorized retention of the name for which the Post was first chartered in 1921 – The Earl Horton American Legion Post 122. Earl Horton was the first Yancey County soldier killed in action in World War I. Members in today's Post 122 are dedicated to the vision which continues to define the mission of American Legion posts. Examples are: (1) sponsorship of the American Legion U.S. Constitution Oratorical Contest scholarship program for 9th-12th grade students from Mountain Heritage, Mitchell High School, Tri-County Christian School and Bethel Christian Academy; (2) sponsorship of boys and girls attending the North Carolina American Legion Boys and Girls State at Catawba College each summer; (3) sponsorship of eligible boys and girls who wish to attend the North Carolina American Legion Trooper Camp at the N.C State Trooper Training Center in Raleigh; (4)funding cost of materials to construct high school tennis court practice backboards and physical training tower; (5) assisting in the clean-up of fallen trees on cemetery graves; (6) collecting donations for the American Legion Poppy Program (all monies so donated used to purchase gifts/items Post and Auxiliary members carry to veterans in local area nursing homes); (7) placement of Ceremonial American Flags on the graves of veterans Memorial Day, 4th of July and Veterans Day (presently 11 cemeteries/325 flags); (8) construction of a wheel chair ramp for a veteran; (9)introduction and sponsorship of the American Legion Senior League Baseball Program (the 2018 Post 122 Timberwolves team roster filled by high school baseball players from North Buncombe, Madison, Yancey and Avery counties).

These programs and services are all on-going and the membership continues to work, expanding on these and bringing other new programs and services forward to the communities membership represents. Our Post Family now constitutes Post 122 veterans, the ladies in our Post 122 American Legion Auxiliary, and the Post 122 Riders Chapter. We have interest in forming the Post 122 Legion Cruiser Chapter and will also welcome sons of veterans who are interested in forming a Sons of the American Legion Chapter. Interested individuals are encouraged to give us a call – (828) 675-0290 or Cell (828) 208-2675 – to learn more about these initiatives and opportunities.

Additionally, any reader who has any old newspaper articles or other material about the old Post 122 is encouraged to share that with us. We have very little of historic nature to incorporate into the new history now being created.

Les Heavner is a member of the Earl Horton American Legion Post 122



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Embrace Disaster Preparedness for Older Adults

By Dr. Sandy C. Gregory



The yellow shirts of North Carolina Baptists on Mission (NCBM) disaster relief volunteers are a welcome sight after disasters in North Carolina and around the world. These dedicated volunteers relieve suffering by providing hot meals, debris removal, childcare, and in many other ways help families rebuild their lives and their homes after disasters.

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) works closely with NCBM. When not serving in disaster relief, the men and women of NCBM are some of NCBAM's most dedicated volunteers. We call on them for wheelchair ramp construction, handyman repairs, transportation assistance, and anything else that helps NCBAM fulfill its mission to help aging adults maintain their independence in their own homes.

Over the past several years as natural disasters have appeared to increase, NCBAM began to research how to help older adults be better prepared for emergencies. We learned that disasters of all kinds affect older adults disproportionately. For example, older adults were 15% of New Orleans' population, but accounted for 74% of hurricane Katrina casualties.

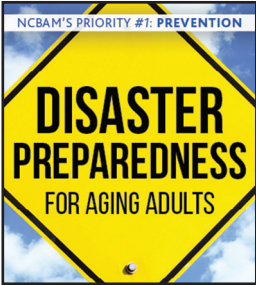
However, the statistic that solidified our resolve was found in the Disaster Ministry Handbook (Aten and Boan, 2016). In 2011, Tuscaloosa-Birmingham was struck by an F5 tornado and 348 people were killed. Forty-six percent of those were over age 55; half of those were over 80. Ninety percent of those older than 55 were members of local churches—none of which had any preparation program or communication plan to assist people during severe weather.

Because of this sad and startling statistic, NCBAM saw great opportunity to help churches protect their most vulnerable members as well as the most vulnerable in their communities—those over 65. NCBAM rolled out its disaster preparedness workshop in 2018 to an unprecedented response from Baptist churches. Fifteen workshops were held and 366 attendees were trained. Each participant of the workshop received a handout with detailed instructions as well as an NCBAM "Grab-and-Go" bag to help them begin the preparation process.

NCBAM's Disaster Preparedness workshops train churches to plan, implement, and maintain disaster preparedness ministries. Our focus is on older adults, but churches can, of course, choose to implement the program for all members as well as those in the community. The workshop has also received attention from other organizations. It will soon be presented to the Burlington Chapter of the Federation for the Blind where the material will be offered in braille.

In December of 2018, AARP-NC recognized NCBAM for "Outstanding Disaster Relief" for the role its Call Center played in assisting older adults affected by hurricanes Florence and Michael. One of our Call Center Specialists, Shirley Carlson, was able to provide especially powerful ministry to Callers because of her decades-long involvement with NCBM Disaster Relief prior to joining NCBAM. She knew first-hand that among the many needs of disaster victims, they sorely need someone to listen to what they've gone through. Shirley and other NCBAM Call Center Specialists were able to listen, pray, and refer Callers to NCBM groups, FEMA, and other agencies offering shelter and resources.

Baptist churches in North Carolina have embraced disaster relief for many years and are now embracing disaster preparedness because they understand that disaster ministry is only partly about the church being prepared for emergencies or extreme events. It's primarily about the core ministry of the church—to be of service to those in need.



Sandy Gregory is director of North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry

A Step Back in Time

By Timothy W. Tron
Burke County

“Thus, saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”-Jeremiah 6:16

Sitting under the overcast, gray sky, the river rolled past, heavy from the night’s rain. One could see their breath in the chill of the air; it was a wet, dampness that encompassed not only the body but the soul as well. Barney and Otis were my lunch companions, each patiently sitting apart, respectfully waiting without being imposing. I sat on the aged picnic table facing the Johns River, as it flowed beneath the bridge in Collettsville.

Once more, my mind sought a rest, something beyond what had become the daily grind, something that had the ability to enrich while reaching beyond the surface. Like the turbulent waters rushing past, time was fleeting. Should we pass from this life to the next without taking time to appreciate what God has made for us in this life, we fail to live to the fullness as He intended. Thrusting one’s hand into the confluence in an attempt to stop its advance was as fruitless as holding water between our fingertips; slipping away before its sustenance can press upon our parched, dry lips. Rather, it required an attention of fullness in order to find what it was that would find its permanence within.

The day before, as the gray light of dawn began to lighten my bedroom, there was a whisper to my heart about something so seemingly insignificant and frivolous, that at first, it was dismissed. However, it came again, accompanied by another likewise meaningless idea; wonder if they would ever get checkers and hot chocolate down at the general store? The thought caused me to chuckle. It had been over a week since I had stopped in to visit the store down in Collettsville. As a matter of fact, it had been at least that long since I had seen Barney and Otis, my four-legged friends who so loved to simply sit by my side and be petted; an inspiration in and of itself. It became a point of destination for my walk later in the morning after a sufficient amount of time had been spent encompassed by my studies and schoolwork. There I soon learned of two new additions to the store. You guessed it, checkers and hot chocolate.

The thought of the whisper to my heart returned, and it warned my being. Too often we try to explain away the voice of God if we would only listen.

The children of Israel had fallen away once again, and through the prophet Jeremiah, he was speaking out to them, reminding them of the errors of their ways. He even gave them direct commands to follow, “Thus, saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” Unwilling to listen, they went on their own paths to destruction, disregarding the former and ignoring the law which God hath given them through Moses. Again, and again, they would face the wrath of God because of their own choosing. They pushed on, proving that there would be no rest for the wicked.

Yet, my journey was guided by His hands as the scripture tells us, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”-Prv3:5-6

Once more, guided by that still small voice, I found myself nestling the head of Otis in my lap as he napped, while Barney sat faithfully at my side while we occupied the bench on the porch of the general store. Content to rest and take in the world passing by, like the waters of the Johns River behind us, my thoughts wandered as aimlessly as the twitching leg in the sleeping dog’s dreams. Our repose was interrupted when the son of the store’s owner pulled up, Garrett. The tall, thin young man looked scholarly in his black-rimmed glasses. He was already quickly becoming a good friend, and today would encourage that bond even further. Walking up, he held an armload of vinyl records.

“What you got there,” I asked while continuing to find Barney’s favorite spot to be scratched.

“Oh, just some old records I found at a consignment shop.”
“John Prine,” I read out loud. “Wow, you like the old stuff?”

Smiling broadly, he began to show me the rest of the collection; names like Cash, Jennings, Daniels, Miller, Nelson, and so on appeared. It was like a walk back in time. “I even found a Roger Miller Greatest Hits,” he said holding up the nearly flawless album. My mind flashed back to that eight-track player my dad kept in the back of the Prowler that sat in the driveway back in Booneville. The sounds of that album would play continually as long as the power was turned on. Us kids would play in the driveway to the sounds of, “Dang me, Dang me, they outta take a rope and hang me,” blaring no-stop, until the word had been forever etched into our minds.

“That was one of my dad’s favorites,” I answered, pointing to the Miller album. “You like vinyl?”

“Yeah,” he answered respectfully, “I’ve been collecting them since middle school.”
“That wasn’t long ago,” I chuckled. He laughed at that too.

“Do you have a way to play them here at the store?”
“Yeah, I’ve got a little turntable I brought to play them on.”

Our conversation continued on, and we soon found ourselves stepping inside. Garrett pulled out a little portable record player, one that was a vintage remake, something he had bought at a Barnes-and-Noble; quite a sharp little unit.

“Got time for a game of checkers,” I said pointing to the barrel with the board stretched across the top?

“Sure, he said,”
“Want to play a record we can listen too while we play,” I asked?

“Yeah,” he said, “I was just thinking the same thing.”
“Got a particular one you want to hear?”

“I’ve never heard that John Prine 71 album you’ve got there,” I answered, “How bout that one?”

“Sure.”
“The only one I know on there is Paradise. It’s a Bluegrass Classic.”



“Yea, I know how to play that one too,” my young friend replied.
My thoughts rambled on to how we need to sit down sometime and just pick together. “This young man just continues to impress me the more I get to know him,” were my thoughts at that moment.

Not long after that, we settled into and began playing that ancient board game. In the background, the hiss and pop of the needle finding the groove in the record only added to the nostalgia of the moment. It was only fitting. The new owners had spent countless hours and dollars to remodel the store to resemble an old fashion country store, complete with hardwood floors, and ship-lap siding bare wood walls. Our checkerboard sat atop a seasoned antique wooden barrel, like one that might have held crackers in one of the old Carolina style general stores. As our play lengthened, we shared stories about places, times, and events in our lives. It wasn’t so much the game we were intent upon, but rather, the fellowship through its activity. Like those old days sitting on the porch at Sharpe’s Store back in Chatham, it wasn’t about why you came, but rather, what you learned through the fellowship of being there, and pausing long enough to take in life.

Daily, in my classroom, I watch as children try to keep up with the light-speed pace of the world around them; memes, social media, snapchat, viral videos, ad nauseam; many becoming frustrated and exacerbated by the feeling of being left behind. Their peers challenge them to keep pace, and if not, face ridicule if they don’t. Too few have any idea from whence they came beyond what the textbooks have told them. However, once in a while, you will find an old soul, an outcast of their own choosing; one who finds shelter in the old songs, old traditions, or ways of the past. Their upbringing often reflected in their manners.

The young man that spent time playing checkers; this past Saturday was just that, an old soul in a young man’s body. His upbringing has been well done, to which his parents should be congratulated. But even better, he shared with me his devout faith. Like a youth after my own heart, he plays music for his church and shares the gospel through the gifts by which God has endowed upon him. “If only there were more Garretts in today’s world,” I thought to myself as I pulled away from the store later on.

Yes, the whispers of frivolous things, as they appeared to me at that time, led to greater things than had been possible to imagine. Hot chocolate and checkers would find a way to replenish and refresh a weary soul.

“When I was a child my family would travel
Down to Western Kentucky where my parents were born
And there's a backwards old town that's often remembered
So many times that my memories are worn.”

That afternoon, we took time to step out of the torrent of the day-to-day grind and paused. There, a young man and an old friend stopped to step back in time, allowing their souls to rest. Like those moments of repose upon the bench with my friends Otis and Barney, Garrett and I chose to take the path God had intended, the old paths, the old ways.

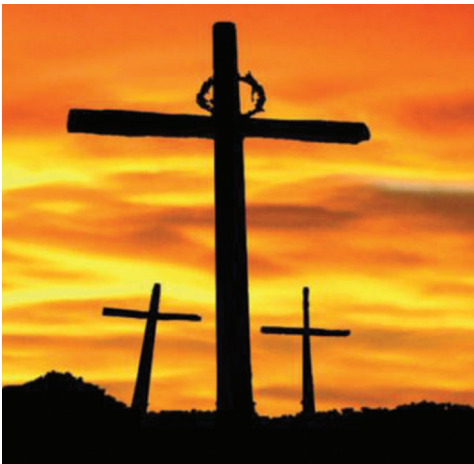
Yes, there is hope for the next generation. It is up to us to pause long enough to spend time with them to share where we’ve been, and how God has helped us to get where we are. Like reaching into the roaring confluence of time, we can’t stop it, but we can grasp just enough to spill a few drops that may inspire those tender hearts who have yet to live.

Allow yourself to spend time alone with God and listen to that still small voice. What you might hear may sound insignificant and frivolous at first. But if you follow his call, the path you take may turn into some far more glorious and precious than you could have imagined. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for; evidence of things not seen.”-Heb.12:1

Thanks be to God.

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





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Plumtree Team Returns to Uganda

By Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
Avery County



Monday, February 11th, David Mark Gillespie, John Stevenson and I ventured back to Uganda. After a very successful first trip in 2017, our hearts were eager to return. We had seen the Lord save and heal many people and we were excited to partner with God and His work in Uganda again.

After almost a day and a half of traveling we made it to our hotel around 1:30 am. Following a good night's rest, we ventured out to a very remote place called Gomba; where Pastor Thomas' church were anticipating our arrival. I shared a few gospel messages with them and prayed for several people who were healed. It was a great first day of ministry.

The next morning, we walked with Pastor Thomas to visit some of the local widows of the area and blessed them with gift bags of sugar and soap. We also prayed for those who needed prayer. They were so appreciative. Then after breakfast we ventured back to the church where we had prepared a medical camp to bless the people of that region. A large group of Christians, Muslims and unbelievers had gathered from all over to receive free medical treatment. We had hired three doctors (who rode in on bicycles) to treat these people with the medication we had purchased. This camp lasted most of the day and many were touched and encouraged. We also prayed for each person before they received treatment. We prayed against negative side effects and for their healing. One man I prayed for named Paul was partially deaf in his right ear. He could only hear if someone was yelling. The day before in the church service, God had opened his left ear and now was asking for prayer for the right one. I prayed a short prayer commanding His ear to be opened in Jesus' name. Instantly he was hearing even at a whisper; repeating back phrases from my translator friend Joseph. Praise the Lord!

After Paul, a lady named Angus came for prayer with ear problems. She was deaf in her right ear, had ear pain, and she heard sounds in her ear that she described sounding like crickets. I prayed a short prayer and again Jesus opened her ear, removed the pain and the strange sounds she was hearing. She was so excited and praised Jesus.

For hours we prayed, again and again for person after person, men, women and children with issues like knee pain, back pain, chest pain, stomach issues, typhoid, creutzfeldt-jakob (a human version of mad cow disease), and malaria just to name a few. Everyone who received prayer was touched by the Lord; pain left backs, knees, stomachs, etc. With some of these diseases we will have to wait and see over time if they were healed, but I know that everyone was touched by God's loving kindness.

The next day, we travelled a short distance to sister Mary's church. We were only there for one day and we had lots to do. In the morning, we visited widows and gave them gift bags. They were so touched. We got to pray for this sweet lady who was blind. God totally opened her eyes.

It was such a beautiful scene, I wish you all could have been there. Her first words after her eyes were opened were, "There's a white man praying for me!" We all laughed and said, "Yes there is." Then we took her outside for a short walk. Her left leg had been partially paralyzed for 8 years. We have heard back since we returned home that she has been walking around her house and getting stronger every day. Praise the Lord! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8). After visiting and praying for several other people we ventured back to the church where we had a graduation planned.

Before our arrival in Uganda, we started working with their network of leaders and pastors providing them with free Biblical training in one of their native languages, Luganda. Most of the pastors in Uganda are untrained because Bible schools are so expensive. Their government is currently in discussion about shutting down all of the churches with untrained pastors. Some of these churches need to be shut down because they are corrupt and manipulate the people out of their money. Others are good, solid churches, but the pastors cannot afford training. These pastors and leaders went through 48 discipleship lessons from Andrew Wommack's Ministry



continued on page 23

and completed them over several weekends. We printed certificates with each of their names on them and rented caps and gowns, making it a very special day for the graduates. We also provided Bibles for each graduate in their language. Many of the pastors didn't have their own Bible or they had several pages missing, so, this was a huge blessing to them. Friends and family travelled for miles to see their loved ones recognized. This was very emotional at times. I could not hold back the tears as couples hugged and gave gifts celebrating their accomplishments and the fact that the government could not shut down their church now as they had received training. Altogether we had three graduation ceremonies, in three different towns, graduating 93 pastors and leaders with training certificates and Bibles. It was wonderful!

The next day we visited a small town called Fever. It was so hot (maybe this is where they came up with the name of the town). The largest of the three graduations took place here with about 60 graduates. We brought with us 44 solar lights to give away. Four big ones for the four churches we visited without power and 40 small ones that they can wear on their heads for pastors and leaders. We gave out ten small ones at each of these churches.



Sunday morning we split up so that each of us could minister at a different church. John at one church, David Mark at another and I was at our host church with Pastor Badirus. These churches were very small, built with mud and sticks with a dirt floor. They did not have electricity or running water. The restroom was an outhouse like building with a hole in the ground. This congregation was thrilled to receive their solar light. They said, "Now we can have evening prayer meetings." This really touched my heart.

The next morning we walked with Pastor Badirus visiting the widows in his town. Again, we gave each one a gift bag and offered to pray for them. We had the privilege of praying for another blind lady who was totally healed. We walked a distance away from her and held up our hands asking her to tell us how many fingers we were holding up. Each time she answered correctly and even said what color hands she saw. We all greatly rejoiced with her and gave praise to Jesus for this miracle. Her 30 something year old son was so shocked and happy about his mother receiving back her vision that he followed us around from house to house telling everyone what God had done.

Tuesday morning we crossed the equator while traveling to Pastor Jonah's Christian school and church. Once we arrived at the school we had t-shirts, jump ropes, candy and a soccer ball for the kids. They were very excited especially about the candy.

One of the amazing things about this school is that on our previous trip in 2017 I prophesied over Pastor Jonah that someone was going to give him money to start a Christian school. This word was fulfilled shortly after and now here we stood 15 months later in the school with 150-160 children. Glory be to God! After we visited with the children we went to the church for our third graduation service.

That evening we travelled back to Kampala where we stayed for the remainder of our trip. In the morning, we went to Pastor Robert's church. This church had electricity, a sound system and even a keyboard. They had around 200 members, with a strong ministry to children and single mothers. They were so full of life and had many young people there. They love to dance and celebrate what Jesus has done for them.

One lady named Grace was a first time visitor and she got saved that morning. It was a beautiful sight for sure. That evening she got healed from a headache and back pain. It was so great.

Since we returned, we have heard several testimonies. Pastor Jonah reported that many people were blessed and healed. An elderly lady who suffered with the back pain for more than 10 years said she now is totally healed, and she is praising God for her healing and for the solar light she received as she is no longer has to live in darkness at night.

Pastor Robert reported that on March 9th, they baptized 29 people. Many new people joined their church and they are filled beyond capacity which forced them to enlarge their church to create room for another 140 seats. They are believing God for more money to purchase chairs. Some are having to stand, and others sit on mats during their services.

One Hassan witch (a form of Wicca) saw the power of God and later brought her evil witchcraft ritualistic materials to the church to be burned. Just like the story in the book of Acts. Praise the Lord.

It is hard to put this trip into words. Altogether, we graduated 93 leaders, we saw 108 saved, and saw well over 100 healing miracles. To God be all of the glory, great things He has done!

Ryan Bridgeo can be reached at 828-765-6919. For more information you can visit the church website at www.plumtreechurch.com or email pastor@plumtreechurch.com



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How Stamps And Christians Are Alike

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County



I want you to imagine two letters that come in to the post office. One is beautifully typed-written on beautiful stationery, the language is eloquent, the letter is precise and neat, and not a word is misspelled. Another letter is written by pencil on note paper. It is smudged, and it contains grammatical errors and misspellings. The hand-written letter, however, has a stamp on it. The beautifully typed letter does not. Now here is the question - which of these letters will arrive at its destination? Some of our prayers may not seem as eloquent as others. Sometimes we don't say it just right, but faith is the stamp that gets the prayer delivered. As I think about faith it's our faith in God that is our Stamp that delivers us to heaven also. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"* Now this is not all original, I heard a preacher many years ago at the Tabernacle talk about Stamps and Christians. So, this is where I got some of my thoughts. I want to share some truths with you about Stamps and Christians. As we look at them they both have a Work to Do. The Bible says in James 2:17-18 *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."*

1st I want you to see the stamp has no value except that which is given to it by the maker. If it were not for the fact that the stamp is made by the government, this little square piece of paper would be of No value. It must have the imprint of the government on it to make it worth anything. And so it is with the Christian lives. It is only as we bare the divine imprint or seal of our maker Jesus Christ that gives us true value. The Bible says in Galatians 4:6-7 *"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."*

2nd The Stamp accomplishes the task assigned to it. Here is an important lesson for us to learn. Think about it. Sometimes we are apt to object to the task or job that has been given us. We will either attempt to do it or halfway do it. But when you place a stamp on an envelope it fulfils it task by carrying the letter to the person and place that you addressed it to. We should also do the task of the great commission that God has given us. We should deliver the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the people we can, The Bible says in James 1:22-23 *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass."*

3rd The stamp carries whatever message that has been entrusted to it. Sometimes it is a message of Joy or Love. Sometimes it is a message of Sorrow or Trials. Sometimes it just an invitation to some special event. Then again it may be a business letter. Whatever the message is, the stamp carries it.

Now what we have to see is the message of Christ has been entrusted to you and me. Are we carrying that message to where Christ has sent us? The Bible says in Matthew 28:19-20 *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

4th A good trait of a stamp is that it does not give up when it gets a licking. Now many years ago you use to have to lick a stamp before you put it on your envelope. Today all you have to do is peel it and stick it to the envelope. What I'm trying to say is if you lick it or stick it, the stamp stays where it's placed. In life trials and temptations and even hardships, they should cause us to stick even closer to God. But how quickly we become discouraged when they come our way or when we are doing God's work. We are tempted to walk away when we get

discouraged and when we don't see the results as quick as we would like to see them. Remember the Bible says in James 1:12 *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* So, let's learn a lesson from the stamp and stick to our task no matter how difficult or hard it may be, or become.

5th A stamp does not get into a fight. Have you ever heard of a stamp getting into a fight? Think about it when you place your letter with a stamp on it, before it gets to its destination, there is a canceling machine that hits the stamp right across the face, but the stamp never strikes back. I don't know many of us if we were hit across the face would do nothing. The Bible says in Matthew 5:38-39 *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."* I know I'm suppose to turn the other cheek, and do good for evil but I still have a problem with that. But many of you, if someone were to strike at us, we would think the proper or right thing to do would be to strike back. And we would strike back a little bit harder if at all possible. Think about all the misery, trouble and bloodshed that would be avoided if men and nations would only do as the stamp does in this respect, not fighting.

6th A stamp is also noted for minding its own business. I've lived in this small town for over 22 years and I'm not trying to be disrespectful to anyone, but it seems to me that everybody knows everybody else's business. A lady told me one time, "It is not necessary for a person to attend to his own business here, because there are so many other people who are willing to attend to it for you." No, a stamp attends to its own business and I believe we should do the same. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:29 *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. In Matthew 15:10-11 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."*

7th Again the Stamp never gets discouraged. If you change your address and someone writes you at the old address, if it is at all possible that letter will find you. So, this shows me as Christians we should preservere in our efforts to do whatever God has called us to do or to go. Don't allow things to discourage you and make you quit. The Bible says in Galatians 6:9 *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*

The final thing about a stamp is that it never gives up until it is dead. It keeps trying to do its duty until it finally lands in the dead letter Office. So, God expects me and you to labor until He calls us home. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* Stamps and Christians do have a lot in common don't they?

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





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Penland School of Craft

**Penland School Kids
Camp This Summer**
Contact Robin Dreyer
Mitchell County

Penland School of Craft is looking for kids who like to make things, and is taking applications now for this summer's Kids Camp program. These camps are taught by artists who love to work with children, and they cover a wide range of subject matter. Most camps are half-days—either mornings or afternoons. All camps are based in the Ridgeway building on Penland's Mitchell County campus.

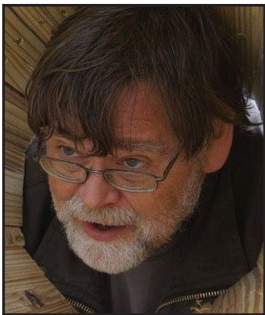
Camps begin on June 17 and run through August 2 with different offerings each week. This summer, the topics include making objects from felt and clay, screen-printing on fabric and paper, pie baking, mask making, woodworking, making patterns and designs on cloth, origami, writing, storytelling, and folk music. Some camps will also teach campers about different cultures or nature, and several of them will end with a performance.

The cost varies depending on the materials used, but most camps are \$115–\$125 for one week. A variety of community organizations support scholarships that enable one third of campers to receive a full scholarship. Penland also partners with several organizations and local school teachers to identify and serve scholarship students in need with transportation, meals, and language assistance.

Complete details about all thirteen camps offered this summer along with a registration form and a scholarship application form can be found on the Penland School website: penland.org. Follow the link under "What's New" on the home page, or look for "Kids Camp" under the "Local" tab. You can also call 828-765-2359 with questions or to request a Kids Camp flyer. Don't wait too long, as a few camps are already filling up.

Penland School of Craft is an international center for craft education dedicated to helping people live creative lives. Located in Western North Carolina, Penland offers workshops in books and paper, clay, drawing and painting, glass, iron, metals, printmaking and letterpress, photography, textiles, and wood. The school also sponsors artists' residencies, an outreach program, and a gallery and visitors center. Penland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution which receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. More information at penland.org.

Robin Dreyer is the communications manager and staff photographer at Penland School of Crafts.



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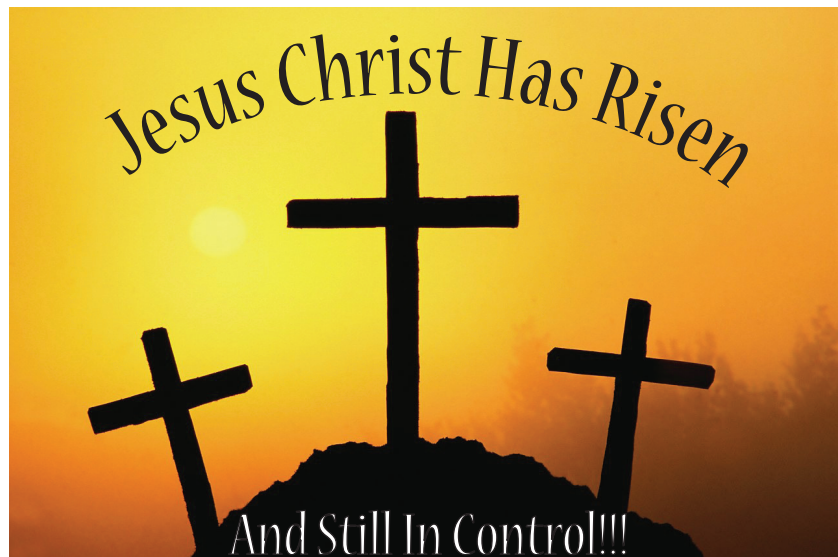


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~ Anne Richardson

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THE STONE

By Joy Harwood Baldwin

*They found the largest stone to place
In front of Jesus' tomb
The darkness shadowed all around
From the sadness of the moon.*

*The sun and stars and earth agreed
Twas the dreariest day of all
Tho when the stone came rolling out
They heard the angels call.*

*"Rejoice oh kings and peoples
Take joy ye earth and skies
The Savior has arisen
Lord Jesus is alive."*

*He stood in whitest garment
His face shone like the sun
His mission was accomplished
OH how God loved His Son.*

*Earth trembled at His entrance
The stone was rolled away
It bowed before the Master
Holding silent till that day.*

*When Jesus comes again to take
His bride to heaven fair
The stone will breathe in great release
When he breaks through the air.*



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

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*Registration
Begins:*
April 15th
Classes Begin:
May 20th

- Accounting
- Advertising and Graphic Design
- Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Technology
- Applied Engineering
- Associate in Arts
- Associate in Science
- Basic Law Enforcement Training

Business Administration:

- Business Administration
- Business Administration: Marketing and Retailing
- Business Administration: Operations Management

- Carpentry
- Computer Integrated Machining
- Cosmetology
- Cybercrime Technology
- Early Childhood Education
- Electrical Systems Technology
- Emergency Management
- Engineering
- Esthetics Technology
- General Education
- General Occupational Technology
- Health Information Technology

Information Systems:

- Information Technology
- Information Technology: Network Management
- Information Technology: Software and Web Development
- Information Technology: Web Administration

- Landscape Gardening
- Mechatronics

Nursing:

- Associate Degree Nursing
- Nurse Aide
- Practical Nursing Education

Office Administration:

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Burke County

Catawba River Baptist Association - World Changers will be coming to Morganton, NC. July 15-20, 2019 hundreds of students from around the country will participate in multiple mission projects around the area for families in need. This year a record number of students have signed up to come to our area. We are going to be needing churches to help feed the mission team's lunch each day. Churches will provide lunch for 8-14 people, four consecutive days at the team's designated construction site. We will also need volunteers to help at the school where the students will be housed. There are many ways to get involved. For more information or to volunteer call the CRBA office at 828-437-0137.

CRBA will be hosting a Community Night of Prayer on the National Day of Prayer May 2ndfrom 7 to 8 p.m. at the chapel of the Waldensian Trail of Faith in Valdese. This will be a great time of worship and prayer as we seek the Father for help in our community. This is a free event (no offering will be taken) where pastors and community leaders will be leading this special time of prayer.

This April we will be collecting grocery store gift cards for our North Carolina Children’s Homes. If you would like to provide food for these wonderful children being taken care of by the loving Children’s Home of North Carolina, please purchase gift cards at any grocery store and bring them to our CRBA of- fice. This is a great mission project for individuals, Sunday School classes and churches. Our goal this year is to raise at least \$100 in food cards from each of our 67 churches. For more information call the CRBA office at 828-437-0137.

Hickory Grove Baptist Church - Charlotte, NC - April 5-6, 2019 Special features include Mission Breakout Sessions, Volunteer Supper, Mission Testimonies, Mission Fair Exhibits and much more. For more information contact Tracey Ford at 800.395.5102 x 5596. Register online First Baptist of Marion Priscilla Shirer Simulcast Saturday, April 27 9:00a.m. - 3:00p.m. Blanton Family Ministry Center \$10/Ticket Light Breakfast & Lunch Tickets available in the Church Office

Be a part of the Vacation Bible School Team and sign up today. This year’s VBS is going to be a little different than in years past. We will have TWO VBS programs happening at one time. There is a Preschool Vacation Bible School and a School Age Vacation Bible School. Think about how you might plug in. Vaca- tion Bible School begins on Monday, 6/24 – Friday, 6/29 from 9:30 am to 11: 30 am. Want to be a Safari Guide? How about helping with the school age Bible Story? Feeling a bit crafty? Like to paint and set up scenery? How about prepar- ing snacks for those children and leaders braving the wild? Don’t forget we will need folks to teach our smallest of VBS attendees, our volunteer’s babies and toddlers. See Christi if you would like to help or have questions.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County - The Giving Heart Thrift Shop - Offers gently used and brand new clothes of all sizes and for all ages! As well as, furniture and small home goods! OPEN Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Location: 402 East Main Street, Glen Alpine, N.C. 28628 Like The Giving Heart Thrift Shop on Facebook @thegivingheartthriftshop The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a ministry of the Morganton Seventh-day Ad- ventist Church.

Great Hope Seventh-Day Adventist Church - Nature Travelogue with Jon Smith of Hendersonville adds superb photography, humor and stories together for an exceptional evening vespers program for the whole family to enjoy. Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2907 US Hwy 70E, Morganton (across street from Foothills Thrift Store in Drexel), Saturday, April 6, 7:00 pm. Public is invited. Free admission.

Health Emphasis Day with Jean-Ronel Corbier, MD who is Board Certi- fied Neurologist; Paul Corbier, MD who is Board Certified Internist. Both are Directors with the Brain Restoration Clinic of Indian Land, SC. Guest speakers at Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2907 US Hwy 70E, Morganton (across street from Foothills Thrift Store in Drexel), Saturday, April 20. 11:30 am "Wilt Thou be Made Whole?"; Vegetarian Buffet provided; 2:00 pm Brain Health and Total Restoration; 3:30 pm General Health and Restoration. Public is invited. Free admission.

Sommunity Night of Prayer at the Waldensians Trail of Faith 401 Church St. Valdese, NC. The event is May 2nd 7-8pm. People from over two dozen Churches will be coming together to pray for our Church, our community, and our world.

Town of Valdese Concert Schedule
2019 Season Lineup:
May 24: Concert Series Kickoff Celebration – Outshyne
May 31: Rated PG
June 7: Dirty Grass Soul
June 14: Emily Minor
June 21: The Night Move Band
June 28: INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION & FIREWORKS DISPLAY
Little Johnny Trailer Trash & Ultimate Eagles Tribute- On the Border - Eagles Tribute Band
July 5: Southwind
July 12: Shake Down Band
July 19: The True Grass Band
July 26: Tony Bailey Band
August 2: Skaterink Jukebox
August 9 & 10: 44th Annual Historic Valdese Waldensian Festival

Friday Night Entertainment - Cassette Rewind & Gump Fiction
Saturday Entertainment - Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot
August 16: Carson Hill
August 23: To Be Announced
August 30: Concert Series Finale Celebration – Tim Clark Band

McDowell County

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 Method- ist Church located at 85 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 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer op- portunities call (828) 803-8790 or email TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com.

First Baptist of Marion - The Children’s Committee is creating a library for the children and families with the church and daycare. We are accepting donations of new and gently used books for children of all ages and reading levels, as well as resources for parents. The donations will supplement the selection of books cur- rently on hand. Please leave donations in the main office. Thank you!!!
Vacation Bible School June 24-28, 2019 More information to come SOON!

McDowell will Host 4-H District Activity Day - On Saturday, June 15, NCCE- McDowell County Center will host 4-H District Activity Day. 4-H District Activ- ity Day is a long-lived Extension tradition where 4-Hers from across the West District will come together to compete in 4-H Presentations.

We need your help! This activity is a large undertaking that requires volun- teers. Let's show our western 21 counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee McDowell County hospitality.

Mitchell County

Bear Creek Baptist Church - Women’s Prayer Breakfast April 12, 8:00am at DT’s.

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

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families. There is also a Children’s program.

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - Grassy Creek Baptist Church will present the Easter Drama, “Three Days That Changed the World” three times this year! The dates are Wednesday, April 17th and Friday, April 19th at 7:00pm and on Sunday, April 21st at 11:00am. This drama depicts the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ accompanied by music by the GCBC choir. Pastor Nathan Silver and Mu- sic Director John Hall, along with the congregation of GCBC, invite everyone to attend. For more information or to reserve seats for a group, call the church office at 765-4620.

Mitchell County Chamber - Sign up for 2019 After Hours!
Business After Hours are held to provide an opportunity for Chamber members to network while allowing the Member to sponsor a chance to address and/or showcase their facilities. Business After Hours are held monthly to bi-monthly, and generally on a Tuesday or Thursday (unless other arrangements are made). The Member sponsor and the Chamber representative will coordinate the event. After Hours begins at 4:30 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. (unless other arrangements are made). Send your questions and reserve your month by emailing Kelly at kjones@mitchellcountychamber.org.

April: The Mitchell News Journal
May: Loafer’s Glory Rafting and Tubing, Bakersville, NC
June: The Brian Center
July: KB's
August: Mitchell County Animal Rescue
September: The Switzerland Inn
October-November: OPEN
We do not have After Hours in December.
Summer 2019 Workshops at Penland!
Summer 2019 workshop descriptions are here!
A few fun facts:
* We're offering 103 workshops this summer.
* Scholarships are available for all 103 workshops!
* Registration opens January 15.
* Scholarship applications open January 1 and are due by February 18.

2019 Calendar of Events for Downtown Spruce Pine

Spring Cleanup	April 13th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Fire on the Mountain	April 27th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Easter Egg Hunt	April 20th, First Baptist Church
Run for Holland	May 18th, Downtown Spruce Pine
TRAC Studio Tour	May 31- June 2nd, Mitchell & Yancey Counties
Troutacular	June 1st, Riverside Park
Downtown Day	June 8th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Reading is Alive Play	June 8th, Central Park
SPACE Festival	June 14-15th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Movies in the Park	June 14th, Central Park

4th of July Celebration
Movies in the Park
Movies in the Park
BBQ & Bluegrass
Movies in the Park
Mineral & Gem Festival
Summer Concert
Summer Concert
Walk A Mile Fundraiser
Fall Clean Up
Potter’s Market
Merchant Trick or Treat
Small Business Saturday
Kiwanis Christmas Parade
TRAC Studio Tour
*Farmers Market every Wednesday at Bank of America beginning in April
For more information about any of these events, contact SPMS 765-3008
Toe River Arts June Studio Tour
Run For Holland - PS registration is open so feel free to sign up for the 2019 race on Saturday May 18th, 2019.

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

Yancey County

Burnsville Town Center 6:30 pm Tuesday April 9
Mountain Piecemakers Quilt Guild will have their monthly business meeting, followed by presentation by Quilter Jackie Perry of Marion, Virginia. She will be doing a trunk show of her work. Mrs. Perry received the blue ribbon for her “Joy of Spring” quilt in 2018 AQS show in the Large Hand Quilted category.

The Journey at West Burnsville Baptist Church on Easter Weekend
In a busy world, it's sometimes refreshing to stop and redirect. Come join us at West Burnsville Baptist Church for a creative and purposeful look at the last steps Jesus took leading to the cross as we take an interactive journey through the Passover meal of Jesus and his disciples, Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and was arrested, the trial, and finally the cross. But Sunday is coming! Come back Sunday morning, April 21 for our 6:45 am sunrise service and 11 am worship to celebrate His resurrection!
Please call the church office @ 828-682-3990 to reserve your spot on Good Friday, April 19. The Journey lasts about one hour, and you may begin at 5, 5:30, 6, 6:30, or 7 pm. We think that the last steps Jesus took leading to the cross were steps that can realign your journey and refocus your direction.
April 8-12 Yancey Baptist Association spring revival @ 7:00 PM, featuring the Lancaster Family @ Shoal Creek-- 1867E Hwy 19E Burnsville, NC 28714, contact Yancey Baptist Association (Bro. Joe Miller (828) 682-2388) or Pastor Merritt Taylor SCBC (828) 208-2936 for more info)
April 20--Kids' Easter Extravaganza @ 2:00 PM
April 21-- Easter Sunrise Service @ 6:45 AM, following by fellowship breakfast--Easter Morning Worship Service- 9:00 AM

Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse ---Partners Aligned Toward Health Save the Date Burnsville 5K fit families May 11th

Mayland Community College
Mayland Earth to Sky Park—Join us at the Earth to Sky Park and Bare Dark Sky Observatory as we take part in the 2019 NC State-wide Star Party! April 13th, 6:00pm Watch the groundbreaking for the new planetarium and enjoy astronomy related activities for children, a food truck, and plenty of star gazing hosted by the MCC Astronomy Club. The event is FREE and open to the public.
Plant swap April 27th 8:00am-10:00am free heirloom tomatoes, shop for spring plants and bring plants to swap.

Allen Cook
Here are dates for FREE Small Business Center seminars scheduled in April.
Selling Products on Amazon and Etsy (2.5 Hours)
4/2, T, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Rudisill
Avery 828.766.1295

How to Price Your Art (2 Hours)
A challenge for many artists is determining the optimum price for their art. This class will provide a checklist of considerations that will assist artists in setting the best price.
4/10, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: LaBelle
TRA Spruce Pine Gallery 828.766.1295

Do I need an Online E-Commerce Presence? (2 Hours)
4/16, T, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Hawks
Yancey 828.766.1295

Using Social Media to Find Your Customers (2 Hours)
4/16, T, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Hawks
Yancey 828.766.1295

Effective Fundraising with the Help of Your Board (3 Hours) NEW!
4/23, T, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Pearce
Mitchell 828.766.1295

Donor Relations that Create Donor Retention (3 Hours) NEW!
4/23, T, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Pearce
Mitchell 828.766.1295

Strategic Planning 101 (3 hours) NEW!
4/24, W, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Pearce
Mitchell 828.766.1295

Grant Writing 101 (3 Hours) NEW!
4/24, W, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Pearce
Mitchell 828.766.1295

How to Create a Short Video to Market Your Art Business (2 Hours)
4/24, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Johnson
TRA Spruce Pine Gallery 828.766.1295

Selling on Shopify (2 Hours)
4/30, T, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Hawks
Mitchell 828.766.1295

Pinterest for Your Small Business (2 Hours)
4/30, T, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Fee Waived Instructor: Hawks
Mitchell 828.766.1295

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

Baptists on Mission Mission teams are needed to do Vacation Bible School, Evangelistic Outreach, and Construction projects in our partner states of Alaska, Vermont, Maine, and Pennsylvania. Mission teams can make a great impact in reaching these communities for Christ. Visit our website for full lists of projects at: <https://baptistsonmission.org/Mission-Projects/United-States/New-England> or contact NC Baptists on Mission at 919-467-5607 or mabernathy@ncbaptist.org

Deep Impact Kids Are you looking for a mission opportunity for the children in your church? Deep Impact Kids will be serving in many communities across the state with hands-on mission projects designed for 1st-6th grade children. Sign up your church now for a weekend, mini-week, or full week at one of these locations: Camp Cale, Red Springs, Shelby, Mundo Vista, Caswell, or Truett Baptist Camp. For more information contact Dollie Noa at dnoa@ncbaptist.org. Website <http://baptistsonmission.org/camps/di-kids>

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

No Regrets Family
Is Hunting Easter Eggs a Sin?

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

Easter is a great time for family. I know there is a lot of fun in hunting Easter eggs. We had fun doing that as well. But being a parent, I want my child to get a little more out of Easter than just hunting an egg. So how do I get the most out of one of the Greatest Christian events of all time --the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ?

Well first, just like Christmas when you read the Nativity story out of the Bible, provide a time where you read the crucifixion and resurrection account of Jesus in the Bible. Make this a special time with your children. This could be the opportunity you have to lead your child to Jesus Christ. Children can handle the details about Jesus suffering for our sin, the Cat of Nine Tails, Crown of Thorns, and the piercing nails of the Cross are all things children need to know about Jesus suffering for them. Help them understand that Jesus took their place and paid for their sin and died on a cross. And his body was placed in a grave. It is o.k. to help your children understand this. Many children live in a fantasy world of video games and social media. Help them understand the truth about Easter.

Oh, and then on that third and glorious day, Jesus arose from the dead. Help your children understand that death could not keep Jesus in the grave. Jesus arose from the dead and He is alive today. Help them understand Jesus came out of the tomb and walked around on earth for forty days and was seen by more than five hundred people. And then Jesus ascended to heaven where He lives with His Father. Help your child understand Jesus is alive, He is the living Savior. This is what Easter is all about.

Second, couple the Easter story with an Easter drama at a church and it will really help bring the truth of Easter into your child’s mind and heart. Go to church and celebrate a sunrise service or communion with your family. Do not make church attendance just a one time occurrence with your family at Easter. If you do, then your child will understand that it is not all that important. Go to church every Sunday and Wednesday and your child will know how important Jesus is to you. Parents, we must lead by example. If you make a greater issue out of Easter eggs and a basket then where does that leave Jesus? Is hunting Easter eggs and a basket a sin? Jesus said, “*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” God investigates our heart and knows our motives and intent behind every action.

Last, memorable events and time spent with family will make lasting impressions on your child. Good Friday is a day that commemorates the death of Jesus Christ. Start early in April looking forward to Easter. Just as you would anticipate a birthday celebration, look forward to Easter. Ask God to prepare your heart for that special time of the year. Your children will notice what you do and what you talk about. I guarantee you every Hebrew child knows what Passover is and how important it is to their family. Jesus is our Passover Lamb the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the World.

God bless you, we love you and care about you and your family. Remember live life with “No Regrets”

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



Her Story

By Tracy Black
Mitchell County



She was all alone in the world. Domestic violence had destroyed her relationships with all of her family and alienated her from her only child. She needed to regroup and figure out how to get her life back. She remembered how she used to love nature. As a teen she was always able to clear her head by taking long walks in the woods. Maybe that’s what she needed to do.

So, she packed up her things, grabbed her cat and headed to the Mountains. As the big city grew smaller in her rear view mirror, her heart felt lighter and a giddy excitement engulfed her. It didn’t take her long after she reached her destination to find her Xanadu, a pretty little cabin tucked away in the woods with the proverbial babbling creek to lull her to sleep each night. Little did she know the terror that was waiting for her!

On her second day, a truck pulled up her drive. Two men got out and the older man introduced himself and his son and explained that they were her closest neighbors. He invited her to come to their house and meet his wife and the rest of the family. They would love for her to stay for dinner and he would even show her their horses. “Finally,” she thought, “I’ll finally have some friends”. So, she jumped in the truck and off they went.

When they got to the house his wife and the rest of the family wasn’t there (they had left him a month ago). “Oh, they just went into town, they’ll be back any minute. Come on inside and wait.” She was a little hesitant but, not wanting to insult her new friends, she went on in and the horrors began.

These pages cannot contain the vileness that was done to her during those hours spent in that house. She fought mightily and finally was able to escape. She found her way to a hospital who contacted law enforcement. Fighting fear, she told them of her experience and directed them to her attackers. The man and his son were arrested and charged with rape.

When she was finally able to leave the hospital, she went to stay at a Women’s Shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. As the ensuing months progressed, She tried her best to recover. Yet, despite her rapist being locked in a jail cell and She was living behind locked and alarmed doors, her dreams were filled with terror and fear that he was coming after her. It only intensified as the trial grew closer. Finally, the trial began.

As I sat on the front row in the court room, I watched her as she bared her soul to an entire room full of strangers. I couldn’t help but marvel at her courage and dignity despite his best efforts to destroy it. At the end of the day the jury convicted him, and he was sentenced to 16 years in prison.

That was nearly 10 years ago, and I hear from her occasionally. Even after years of trauma therapy, She still relives that day in her dreams and probably always will. She struggles with relationships and can’t seem to find stability.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The statistics are startling. In the United States, one in five women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime and 1 in 4 girls will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18.

In elder female sexual abuse victims, 81% of the abuse was perpetrated by the victim’s primary care giver, 78% were by family members of which 39% were adult sons.

In this case, the perpetrator was a stranger, but the fact is that in 8 out of 10 rape cases the perpetrator was known to the victim.

Mitchell County SafePlace is here to provide services to the victims of sexual assault. If you or someone you know needs our help or just someone to talk to we can be reached 24 hours a day at 828-765-4044. Your call will be held in strictest confidence and you don’t even have to tell us your name.

Tracy E. Black, Interim Executive Director Mitchell County SafePlace



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Obedient Heart Fellowship

Freedom In Christ?

By Jim Huskins
McDowell County



While the theme of the Biblical narrative is: “God so loved,” the conflict in the story is: “man so sinned.” Sin barred the gate of Eden, flushed the filth of Noah’s generation, and erected the cultural barriers required to stop Babel. Sin kept an entire generation from entering Canaan, bought the House of Judah seventy years of captivity, and dispersed the House of Israel to the four corners. Sin nailed Messiah to a cross. Sin made Judas a betrayer. Sin left Ananias and Sapphira dead at Peter’s feet. (Where was that Amazing Grace when they needed it?) Deliberate sin brings even believers a “fearful expectation of judgment.” (Hebrews 10: 26-27)

Modern Christians all but ignore sin, but the Bible does not. 1 John 3:4 tells us that sin is the transgression of the law. James 2:9 says that when we commit sin we are convicted by the law as transgressors. Sin is clearly defined as breaking God’s law. A related concept is rebellion against God. Deuteronomy 9:7 says that rebellion provokes God to wrath. The context of this rebellion is—again—breaking God’s law. Joshua 1:18 tells us that those who rebel against God’s commandments shall be put to death. Sin is breaking God’s instructions. The wages of sin is death.

Contrast sin with the Biblical definition of righteousness. In Deuteronomy 4:8, Moses gave this summary of God’s instructions for living: “*And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?*” Two chapters later, Deuteronomy 6:25, he said this: “*And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.*” Even though the word “commandment” is singular, Moses is referring to the totality of God’s instructions: the Torah. Psalm 119:7 says, “*I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous rules.*” The clear message of scripture is that to be righteous is to keep God’s instructions for living: His Torah.

We also know from scripture that the practice of righteousness is the only sure indication that someone has entered a saving relationship with Jesus by grace and through faith: “*If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*” (1 John 2:29) “*Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.*” (1 John 3:7) “*Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God.*” (1 John 3:10)

Jesus and his apostles exhort us to pursue righteousness: “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*” (Matthew 5:6) “*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*” (Matthew 6:33) “*So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*” (2 Timothy 2:22)

Scripture also tells us that God’s righteousness will never end: “*For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool, but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.*” (Isaiah 51:8) In short, righteousness—obedience to God’s instructions for living—is at the core of what it means to love and follow Jesus and always will be.

I am shocked when people who claim to be Christians tell me that they are under no obligation to righteousness because they have “freedom” in Christ. They tell me God’s instructions are flawed, but Psalm 19:7 says that Torah is perfect. They tell me God’s instructions are burdensome, but Psalm 119:44 and James 1:25 say that Torah is liberty. They tell me God’s righteousness is impossible but Deuteronomy 30:11, Romans 10:8, and 1 John 5:3 say that Torah is not too difficult for us. They tell me that no one was ever able to keep God’s righteousness, but Genesis 26:5 says that Abraham kept Torah, and Luke 1:6, speaking of Zechariah and Elizabeth, says: “*They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.*”

Many Christians tell me that Paul cancelled God’s righteousness, but how is that possible? Jesus said plainly that the Torah and the prophets will be in full force for as long as heaven and earth remain. Paul CANNOT teach that which directly contradicts the Son of God. Superficial understanding of some passages of some of Paul’s epistles may give the impression that Paul teaches against Torah, but it is impossible for any Bible writer to contradict God.


The condition of the modern Church is astounding to anyone who reveres the entirety of God’s Word. Christ’s call to take up our crosses and follow Him has been replaced by the assurance that we will “feel good” if we show up and warm a pew. His call to self-denial has been replaced by the promise that if we tithe we will prosper. His insistence on discipleship has been exchanged for passively swallowing whatever is being served from one’s pulpit of choice.

But the most troubling critique of the contemporary Church is this: For most of its history, the Church believed and taught and lived like Messiah died to free His followers from sin. The majority of those who now claim to love Jesus believe and teach and live like Messiah died to free his followers from righteousness.

Obedient Heart Fellowship believes that the entire Bible is true and relevant. We accept salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, and we attempt to love and serve Him by keeping his commandments. We meet each Sabbath—Seventh Day—at Abba’s House, 72 South Main Street in Marion. 10:00 A.M. 828-460-7913.

Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.





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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 46



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

On March 14, the North Carolina Senate passed legislation that provides small businesses with a cost-effective health insurance option to offer their employees. By allowing small businesses and independent contractors to pool together for insurance coverage, the legislation will allow for less expensive coverage options.

The measure includes many state and federal consumer protections, including the requirement to cover those with preexisting conditions. By allowing small businesses to pool together, their coverage will be cheaper but will also be in line with existing laws governing large group plans.

Senate Bill 86, The Small Business Health Care Act<<https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookUp/2019/SB%2086>>, <<https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookUp/2019/SB%2086>> – sponsored by Sens. Joyce Krawiec (R-Forsyth), Dan Bishop (R-Mecklenburg) and Chuck Edwards (R-Henderson) – allows small businesses and sole proprietors to band together and form Association Health Plans (AHPs) to be classified as one “large employer” for the purpose of offering health benefits. This will allow small businesses to enjoy the same regulatory and financial advantages as large corporations when it comes to purchasing health insurance for their employees. It is estimated that these modifications to North Carolina’s insurance code could potentially benefit up to 110,000 North Carolinians. Senate Bill 86 passed the Senate with 38 votes and is now in the House. If you are a small business owner, I recommend you contact your Representative in Raleigh and express support for this bill.

It was a pleasure to meet with representatives from the NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature in my Raleigh office on March 14th. It was Senior Tar Heel Legislative Day at the General Assembly and representatives from Region D and E shared their 2019 Legislative Priorities and advocated for the needs of our senior citizens. The NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature was created by the NCGA with the passage of Senate Bill 479 in July of 1993. The group provides information to senior citizens on the legislative process and matters being considered by the NCGA and promotes citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues. Each of the 100 North Carolina counties is entitled to one delegate and one alternate, both age 60 or older, to the Senior Tar Heel Legislature.

NC House District 118



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

HB 224-Assault with firearm on LEO/Increase Punishment

This bill sponsored by Representatives Moore, Hastings, C. Smith and Barnes was unanimously approved yesterday by a 116/0 vote in the House. This bill increased the penalty for this offense to a class D felony which mandates an active prison sentence. The legislation was passed in honor of fallen Shelby Police Officer Tim Bracken and his family. Mr. Bracken was killed in the line of duty.

Update on School Calendar Flexibility Bills

There have been as many as 20 bills filled to address school calendars throughout the state. To date, none of these bills have been heard in committee. "We are keeping our eyes on this".

Rep. Presnell was happy to visit with a few folks from Haywood Community College and Southwestern Community College.

The House welcomed the new 2019 Miss America

Nia Franklin was born in Winston Salem, NC. She attended Davidson High School and The University of North Carolina School of the Arts and majored in Music Composition. In 2018 she was named Miss New York and in June of 2019 won the title of Miss America. She is a very impressive young lady!



This week, President Trump signed into law a bipartisan public lands package, which included an effort of mine to make the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) permanent. This popular program was founded in 1965, but had to be periodically renewed by Congress. Now, under the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, LWCF will be able to carry out its important conservation work with certainty. This is especially good news for North Carolina and our countless parks, recreation sites, and hiking trails.

The LWCF helps preserve North Carolina’s Cape Lookout National Seashore’s iconic fishing, camping, and bird watching activities.

Here’s how LWCF benefits our state:

- Invests in Iconic North Carolina Parks: Since its founding, the LWCF has invested more than \$246 million to protect North Carolina’s iconic national parks and recreational centers, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Cape Lookout National Seashore, and the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.
- Preserves Important Historic Sites: The LWCF recently protected 51 acres of Civil War battlefields from urban development by giving localities the resources to acquire portions of the Averbosborough and Bentonville Battlefields.
- Creates Jobs and Grows Our Economy: Each year, the LWCF supports more than 260,000 jobs across the state, generates \$8.3 billion in wages, and produces \$1.3 billion in state and local tax revenue.
- Operates at No Cost to Taxpayers: One of the best things about the LWCF is that it costs taxpayers nothing. The LWCF uses royalties earned from offshore oil and gas revenues to support these public lands. The beauty of the program is that revenue from one natural resource is reinvested in preserving others. Over the last decade, I have been proud to make saving LWCF a top priority, so North Carolina can better preserve, maintain, and expand public lands for future generations to enjoy. And while this week’s news is a major milestone, rest assured my work in the Senate promoting commonsense conservation efforts will continue.



Rights of Babies Born Alive Should Not Be Up For Debate

This week, the Left proved just how extreme it has become when they voted against legislation that would have required medical treatment for newborn infants fighting for their lives.

The Born-Alive Abortion Survivor Protection Act - a bill I was proud to co-sponsor - is a simple but important bill. It would protect babies born alive after failed abortions by making sure they receive the same medical care that any infant born alive at that stage would receive. Currently, no federal protection of this kind exists. And as we’ve seen from Governor Ralph Northam’s deeply disturbing comments, there are those who think a baby’s right to life can still be debated even after they’ve been born. I’m astonished some believe infanticide is appropriate in any context.

Providing a newborn baby with proper medical care regardless of their birth shouldn’t be a matter of debate or controversy. It is the right and humane thing to do. The fact that many of my Senate colleagues voted this legislation down without justification says frightening things about where this debate is headed.

YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



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

to address this dilemma is to remove the restrictive requirement of physician supervision of advanced practice nurses (APRNs). To accomplish this I introduced The SAVE Act, entitled An Act to Deliver Safe, Accessible, Value Directed and Excellent (SAVE) Health Care throughout North Carolina by Modernizing Nursing Regulations. Covered under this bill are the following APRN roles licensed by the NC Board of Nursing: nurse practitioner (NP), certified nurse midwife (CNM), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), and certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA). Passage of The SAVE Act would allow these nurses to practice at the top of their licensing and training and provide faster and more affordable access to health care to thousands of our state's citizens.

Additionally, a 2015 study by Dr. Chris Conover of Duke University Center for Health Policy and Inequalities Research concluded that legislation allowing greater access to APRNs will save our state between \$433 million and \$4.3 billion per year and create more than 3800 jobs. Often, the only supervision of the physician over the APRN is a contract, which is a fee paid by the APRN to the physician. The struggle for APRNs to practice at the top of their licensing and training has been ongoing for 40 years, and, during that time, study after study has shown that physician supervision of APRNs does not increase quality of care. I am in favor of our state joining 22 other states and the District of Columbia in allowing APRNs to practice independent of physician supervision and fill the gap in health care coverage in our rural areas.

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

Rural Western North Carolina, along with other rural areas of the state, suffers from a lack of access to health care. More physicians are retiring and dying each year than are graduating from medical schools. The majority of new physicians, including primary care physicians, are concentrated in urban areas, while APRNs are more likely than physicians to practice in rural areas. One way



NC House District 86



Rep. Hugh Blackwell
919-733-5805
Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net

In Raleigh, the 2019 Long Session of the General Assembly is still young. As has been the case for years, healthcare costs can be a true burden. That can be especially true when it comes to certain medications. For example, patients with diabetes may be among those most affected by high costs. If you or someone you know may be faced with the high costs of buying insulin, they may wish to consider that there is a call center operated by Eli Lilly and Company, a major insulin provider, to assist patients struggling to pay for Lilly insulin. The number to the center is (833) 808-1324. Other major insulin providers have similar hotlines and patient assistance programs. If your insulin is manufactured by Novo Nordisk, you may call 1-866-310-7549 or visit novocare.com for assistance. These programs may be able to provide discounts if you need help.

If someone is having trouble paying for insulin, always talk with the doctor before using insulin differently than prescribed. A patient can also talk with the doctor about whether using human insulin may be a less expensive option. In July 2017, the legislature passed a law that allows pharmacists to inform patients of all options when paying for medications. Previously, pharmacists could be restricted from informing you that you might pay a lower price for medications by paying cash instead of paying through an insurance plan, leaving patients in the dark about lower prices. So, in addition to the doctor, patients should not hesitate to ask pharmacists for less costly medication options, whether with diabetes or another condition.

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The Orchard at Altapass

Monarchs Take Flight At The Orchard

By Kate Groff
Mitchell County

This year, the Orchard at Altapass celebrates its 25th anniversary—the time literally flying by. A few years into the stewardship, co-founder Judy Carson and naturalist Elizabeth Hunter planted a butterfly garden in memory of Jan McKinney Conley, a friend who had recently died. Over the decades, this small plot of showy flowers has seen good and bad times but has always held forth to provide the butterfly and bee a plentiful stopping over point.

Since the late 90’s, the Orchard has focused on the Monarch—that beautiful multi-colored butterfly that appears where ever milkweed grows. It is on these podded wildflowers (Milkweed is not a weed.) that the Monarch lays her eggs, where the larva feed, the chrysalis encases, and where they finally burst into flight, and head south. The Orchard Monarchs migrate to Mexico where they spend time in the warmth of the southern climate. Millions of these orange and black flyers fill the branches of trees in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, the wintering-over forest about 100 miles north of Mexico City.

As part of the Orchard’s mission to preserve the natural environment, the butterfly program originated as an experiment to determine if Monarchs could coexist and thrive in a traditional, carefully controlled, chemical apple orchard. The answer was resounding—Yes. The preservation and cultivation began in earnest. As prime pollinators for wildflowers and cross pollinators in the creation of more disease resistant plants, the Monarch’s continuation was important and remains so today.

The Orchard is a natural home for the milkweed, and the garden provides the fuel needed for those new and just passing through Monarchs. Today, the tiny eggs are collected and nurtured during the five-week metamorphosis. Those born in the fall fly almost 1,500 miles to their winter homes. Over the last decade the Orchard has tagged hundreds of Monarchs before they migrate. Although up to five generations can be born and die during one journey south, to date, six of those tagged by the Orchard have been found in Mexico at the migration site. (Tags weigh approximately 1% of the butterflies’ weight.) Information gathered is invaluable to the preservation of the butterfly, its environment and modulating health of the planet.

Although the changing climate world-wide and more specifically at the Orchard has affected the numbers of Monarchs, the Orchard continues to be a Monarch-friendly stop on its life cycle map. Come by to learn more about the Monarch butterfly and to watch the transformation. In late fall, pick up some milkweed seeds to add a “truck stop” for the Monarch in your own garden. And the Orchard is always seeking volunteers to help maintain the memorial garden and help with “saving the good stuff” for another quarter century. For more information about the Orchard and its programs, please go to www.altapassorchard.org. If you would like to get your hands a little loamy and help with the garden, please call Donna Stafford, Executive Director, at 828-765-9531.

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



Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church

The Morning Star – Jesus

By Patricia Jackson
McDowell County



I have been thinking about stars lately. Our Pastor has been teaching about creation in Genesis. I recall as a small child we often traveled by night, on the long journey visiting my grandparents in Virginia. As sleep eluded me, I became mesmerized that the stars and moon seemed to “stay in my window view, as if they were traveling along with me.” When we arrived, just before dawn, I asked my dad what the name of the big, bright star was. He told me “it was the morning star,” and it was time to wake up and start the day.” For years, I thought this star was named by him, as a means to encourage his child to get up and prepare for school or helping out on our farm. The star he was referring to is the planet, Venus, which rises in the east. Venus is far more dazzling than any of the actual stars in the sky. Venus does not appear to twinkle but instead glows with a steady, silvery light. On some moonless nights, Venus is so bright it has been known to cast shadows. Only the Sun and Moon are brighter than Venus. God placed the stars, sun, and moon in the heavens to provide us the means to tell the times and seasons, and as a means to navigate.

In the natural realm, it is a pointer to the dawn of a new day. In the spiritual realm, it speaks of the sure and confident hope of a coming or future new day when the Messiah will return.

Some of my earlier Sunday school classes were on the creation scriptures in Genesis and Chapter 1:16 states “*And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.*” Psalm 136.9 “*The moon and stars to rule by night; for his mercy endureth forever*”. What a blessed promise, enduring mercy and forgiveness for our sins!

On occasion, I would hold my hands in a square to attempt to count the stars in the square. I asked my dad “how many stars are in the sky,” he would answer “Only God knows.” The scripture in Psalm 147:4 says “*He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by THEIR NAME.*” It would only be natural for God to know the number of stars he created, and the name of each star, just as he knows my name and the very hairs on my head. Think how awesome it is that God took time to create, number and name the stars.

Job 38:7 tells us “*The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*” The angelic beings (here called morning stars and sons of God) did witness the creation of the earth and sang praises to God. While we did not witness the miracle of creation, I believe God expects us to shout for Joy at the magnitude of God’s creation. Psalms 148:3 is a call to all things in all creation to praise the Lord, “*Praise ye him, sun and moon, praise him all ye stars of light.*” I want to be one of those stars of light that praise Him. .

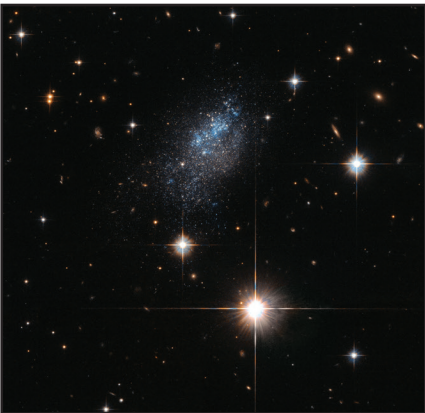
New Testament scriptures reveal that the wise men came to Jerusalem and inquired “*Where is He that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him.*” The star had led them to Herod, who sent them to Bethlehem, indicating he wanted to worship the new king. Verse 9 of Matthew 2 indicates “*and lo, the star which they saw in the East, went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was.*” The star itself moved to guide them to the newborn King. French astronomers in the late 19th and early 20th century referred to Venus as “The Shepherd’s Star.”

Revelation 22: 16 – “*I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star*” Just as the morning star (Venus) shines and welcomes the new day, Jesus will be the one who will introduce the rule of Messiah. What a glorious day that will be!!

After a long dark night, the appearance of the morning star means daybreak is imminent. Therefore, Christ as the morning star is a picture of great promise and hope. It means God’s light is about to shine forever on the universe, making all wrongs right, wiping away all tears, and fulfilling Revelation 21-22 with the creation of the new heavens and New Earth.

Glory be to God on High!!

Patricia Jackson is a member of Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church, Glenwood, NC. She is also a grant writer for non-profits and a published author. She lives in Rutherford County with her husband.



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Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:3

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God’s Will is Whatever

By Jason Koon
Burke County

In Mark 10:35-45, the sons of Zebedee come to Jesus with a bold request. “Teacher...grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left,” they say, clearly jockeying for an exalted position in The Coming Kingdom. Jesus responds with some wise words, saying that His people don’t lord it over each other like the Gentiles, “even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve,” he concludes. This is where we typically launch into an encouragement to humility or a warning against undue pride – and, certainly, these are important points. There is, however, another dimension to this exchange, the dimension of how we can understand God’s Will for our lives.

When younger people think about God’s will they might think about where to go to college, or who they’ll end up marrying, or what career field they’ll enter. If you have a few more years on you, you might think about whether to take that promotion, or if homeschooling is right for your family, or about downsizing after the kids move off. For James and John, it seemed to be about knowing their role in Jesus’ glorious reign.

In reality, however, they weren’t really looking for God’s will as much as for affirmation. I think the same is often true of us; the young woman seeking out the name of the man she’s going to marry, in reality, just wants to know that she’s going to end up being cherished and loved by someone. The young couple that wants to know which town they’re supposed to live in is often just looking for a way to short circuit the confusion and chaos of young adulthood. But look at Jesus’ response to James’ and John’s request. “To sit at my right or my left is not for me to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” In other words, God has a plan, but He’s under no obligation to let you in on it. You don’t need to know right now.

Mark doesn’t explicitly tell us, but I can’t imagine James and John are satisfied with this answer, so Jesus begins to explain what they do need to know right now. I’ll paraphrase; you don’t need to know the secret plans of God, because that’s not what God’s will is about. God’s will is about learning to become servants; understanding that I’m about to give my life up for you.” In other words, God’s will for their lives was not so much about the position they’d be given, but about the kind of people they’d become.

Today Jesus might say that the woman you’ll marry is not as important as the husband you are supposed to become. The place you show up for work in the morning is not as important as the person you are when you get there. For those who are a little farther along, the neighborhood you move to after the kids move out is not as important as the neighbor you’ll be when you get there. As the Apostle Paul wrote, God’s will is whatever. “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31). God’s will is more about knowing Him and conforming yourself to Him than discovering every twist and turn of this cryptic path He wants you to walk. So, fix your eyes on Jesus, discover who He is and what He has done for you, and commit yourself to learning to do life His way, and then wherever you end up, you can be sure to find yourself right in the middle of God’s Will.

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



Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

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Mine Creek Baptist Church

He Lives, He Lives, Christ Jesus Lives Today!

By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

One of the foundational doctrines of true Christianity is the literal physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. There are many who deny this truth and even false teachers and cults who teach that Jesus did not physically rise from death. If Jesus did not rise from death then all that He did in His sacrifice on the cross would have been null and void. If He did not rise from death then you and I have no hope of eternal life. This doctrine of the resurrection of Christ is an essential teaching that the church cannot and must not compromise on. Jesus' resurrection is what sets Him apart from anyone else. All He did, all He taught, and all He promised is false if there was no resurrection. Here are some important truths from scripture that explain the truth and necessity of His glorious resurrection that first Easter morning.

First, Jesus proclaimed His death and resurrection before it happened. On three different occasions Jesus told His disciples that He would be crucified and rise again.

Matthew 16:21 From this time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Matthew 17:22-23 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

Matthew 20:17-19 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Jesus rose from the dead just as He promised. Had He not conquered death as He promised then He would have been found to be a liar. But glory to God, He rose just as He said, fulfilling the words He had spoken! In Jesus is truth and He fulfills His promises! When the women came to the tomb that morning the Bible states in Matthew 28:5-6 *And the angel answered and said unto the woman, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.* His resurrection was a fulfillment of the promise He had made.

Secondly, His resurrection was a literal and physical resurrection. There are those who teach that Jesus did not physically rise from the dead but that it was a spiritual resurrection. That is, His physical body did not rise, but only in spirit did He resurrect. On the authority of Scripture, this is a false teaching. Let us examine some scripture that prove He physically rose from the dead.

In John chapter 2, Jesus has cleared the temple of those who were making the temple a house of merchandise. The Jews asked for a sign to prove He had the authority to do these things. In verse 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews thought Jesus was speaking of the temple building itself which took 46 years to build. Verse 21 tells us But he spake of the temple of his body. 22. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.* He was not speaking of His spirit



being raised, but of His body being raised from the dead.

Luke 24 is a most important portion of scripture about the physical resurrection of Jesus. In verses 35-43 we read of Jesus' appearance to the disciples. He had appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and while they were sharing their experience with the other disciples, He suddenly stood in the midst of them (vs. 36). *But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have* (37-39). The scripture continues in verse 41-43 stating: *And while they believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.* Not only did Jesus present Himself to the disciples so they could touch His physical body, but He also ate in front of the them to give them further proof that what they were witnessing was true. He had physically resurrected from the dead.

Now with these things we must understand that His resurrected body was able to do things that you and I in our regular physical bodies cannot. His resurrection body was in a glorified, immortal, and incorruptible state. Though it was His physical body, it had been changed. Jesus even did things before His resurrection in His body that prove His power over the physical world such as walk on water. After His resurrection, He was able to vanish (Luke 24:31) and suddenly reappear (Luke 24:36). We also learn in this same chapter, verse 50, that He ascended up into heaven. Mark 16 records this event also. Jesus showed Himself physically to His disciples so they would know for themselves that He had physically resurrected from the dead. In this truth they stood and preached after He ascended into heaven. It was a core doctrine of the gospel of which they devoted their lives too. Some would even die for preaching the gospel. Acts 1:3 tells us that *he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians in his first letter chapter 15:3-7 he stated: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.* Yes, my friends, Jesus rose from the dead physically, and was seen and touched by many, many witnesses. This is a truth that the scriptures teach and to teach otherwise is to teach contrary to the Holy Bible.

Last of all, the resurrection of Jesus is essential for our salvation. In 1st Corinthians 15:12-20, the apostle Paul is writing to correct false teaching that had entered into the church in Corinth. There were those who were denying that there was a resurrection of the dead. Many Christians were troubled by this teaching because of the loved ones who had already died. Not only does Paul rebuke the false teaching, but he also proclaims the importance of the resurrection of Christ. For the sake of space here, I will let you read for yourself and just highlight some portions of this scripture. In 12-13 Paul says if there is no resurrection of the dead how can we preach that Christ is risen. In verse 14, he states that if Christ is not risen then our preaching and faith is in vain. In verses 15-16, Paul says we are false teachers if we preach that Christ is risen and then say there is no resurrection of the dead. If Christ is not raised, then our faith is vain, and we are still in our sins. In other words, we would still be lost if Jesus has not risen from the dead, verse 17. Not only are we lost, but those who had already died have perished, and there is no hope, verse 18. In verse 19, Paul states that our hope in Christ goes beyond this life because of the resurrection of Christ. And in verse 20 Paul states the truth that changes everything, *but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.* Jesus was the one who died and rose again, to never die again!!!! And because of Him, we have that hope too!!!

These are but a few of the scriptures that point us to the truth and hope of the resurrection of Jesus our Savior. My hope is that in this wonderful season of Easter, that the we will realize afresh and anew the importance of Jesus rising from the dead. May we celebrate and proclaim to all, that He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today, and most importantly, He lives within our hearts!

Happy Resurrection Day.

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



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Taking Ownership of Prayer

Dr. Terry Cheek
McDowell County



Who among us hasn't been faced with a situation that demanded prayer? I know I have. If for some reason you haven't, keep reading because the day will come when you will, and this article may help you deal with both the situation and your response with prayer. If you're like me and you have been there, done that and got the tee shirt; just keep reading maybe you too can find some inspiration in the words that follow.

From the sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew 7:7-11 we read. KJV "(7) Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: (8) For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (9) Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? (10) Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? (11) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" When I give attention to the verbs ask, seek and knock I find three very important attributes to prayer. These I fear, often become overlooked as we seek God in our daily struggles. Look with me at these words of action, one at a time.

Ask is a very simple word. Daily we go about life asking for many things. Yet, as we do, how often do we ask with humility? We can ask one of two ways. First, we can petition by way of words. Second, we can require, expect or claim. I am convinced that in the case of this passage the former applies. When the Lord directs us to ask, He is wanting us to petition God for our needs. In verse eleven Jesus plainly tells us our Father which is in heaven wants to give good things to them who ask! But, to petition someone, even God, requires humility. Only God has the resources and authority to grant our petition. Therefore, humility is required by us as we seek the Lord in prayer.

Seek is another simple word. Maybe not as simple as ask but nonetheless a word with obvious meaning. To seek can mean going in search of something, looking from place to place. To seek can also mean endeavoring to discover something. In our passage the later applies. When we endeavor, we labor from the heart. We desire something which has deep meaning in our lives. Our prayers should be coming from our hearts. They should not be words haphazardly thrown around with no conviction. An example is verse ten. Would you give your child a serpent or a stone if they ask you for fish or bread? Of course not, because we love our children and take seriously our responsibility for them. How much more should we love the Lord and take seriously His sacrifice for our souls? If we endeavor to provide our best for our children should we not also do likewise for our petitions to God the Father! May we seek Him passionately and with humility.

Knock is my third word for this article and passage. Have you ever visited with a church group and knocked on a stranger's door to invite them to church? To walk up and knock on a door requires a few things. First, it requires intent. You must be intentional when you walk up to that door. It's not something that just happens, you plan it and think through it. Second, you walk up to that door with a purpose. In the case of my example your purpose would be to invite someone to church. Third, you walk up to that door in faith. Not knowing who will be on the other side or how they will accept you, it is faith that gives you the strength and courage to make that contact. When we pray, we likewise need the same three ingredients in our prayer life. We should pray intentionally. We should plan our prayer life and execute it with a strategy that reaches the throne of God. We should also pray with a purpose. Whether it is healing or comforting or thanksgiving or gratitude or the list could go on and on. Our prayer life should have a purpose. Finally, we should pray with faith. Do we approach prayer expecting God to answer or do we pray merely hoping God will answer? Approach God with confidence.

The saved are His saints and they have His ear. Glory to God what a blessing it is to know that Jesus is at the right hand of God making intercession for us and the Holy Spirit is taking our groanings and pleading our case before the throne of heaven. Until next month practice your knee mail and may God richly bless you.

Terry is the Executive Director and broadcaster of The Inspiring Word media ministry. You can contact Terry by email at theinspiringword@gmail.com Or by visiting www.theinspiringword.org

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. John 14:19

also want to thank the Freedom and Patton Anchor Club along with the Patton Interact and Key Clubs for their help along with all those who came out and enjoyed breakfast with us. The funds raised will be used to support the BUCM food pantry and soup kitchen.

We have lots going on this spring, and we certainly appreciate the support of everyone in Burke County as we work to meet the needs of each of the clients we serve. As we look forward to the summer, we are asking our churches to consider doing a backyard Bible School at BUCM. We had a couple of churches do this last year and they were able to reach a large number of children.

Thank you for making Burke United Christian Ministries a special and wonderful place for all of our clients. We wish for you and your family a wonderful spring!

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



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Crossword

ACROSS

1 ____ put forth his left hand, and took the dagger (Judg 3:21) KJV
5 Uzziah provided shields, spears, helmets, ____ of armor (2 Chron 26:14)
9 and in ____ pasture shall they feed (1,3) (Ezek 34:14) KJV
13 They left ____ Jaakan and camped at Hor (Num 33:32)
14 lest he ____ thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee (Luke 12:58) KJV
15 the bridegroom and of the ____ shall be heard no more (Rev 18:23)
16 men will throw away their idols to the rodents and ____ (Isa 2:20)
17 He trains my hands for battle; my ____ can bend a bow (2 Sam 22:35)
18 John also was baptizing in ____ near to Salim (John 3:23)
19 the western foothills and the mountain ____ (Josh 10:40)
21 When he prophesies, his own parents will ____ him (Zech 13:3)
23 A man finds joy in giving an ____ reply (Prov 15:23)
24 the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go ____ Damascus (Acts 22:10)
26 the people gat them by ____ that day into the city (2 Sam 19:3) KJV
28 If you are unfaithful, I will ____ you among the nations (Neh 1:9)
31 pack animal
32 but I do not want to use ____ and ink (2 John 12)
33 O Sovereign LORD, ____ well with me for your name's sake (Ps 109:21)
36 Here and now I give ____ of my possessions to the poor (Luke 19:8)
40 Sit ye here, while ____ and pray yonder (1,2) (Matt 26:36) KJV
41 It came up and ____ a crop, a hundred times more than was sown (Luke 8:8)
44 "No one, ____," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," (John 8:11)
45 fishermen's equipment (Luke 5:4)
47 Cut down the tree and ____ off its branches (Dan 4:14)
48 In that day will I ____ up the tabernacle of David (Amos 9:11)
50 the seventh letter of the Greek alphabet
52 do not ____ what is evil but what is good (3 John 11)
54 God ____ me and tears me in his anger (Job 16:9)
58 he had pitched a ____ for it at Jerusalem (2 Chr 1:4)
59 that ye eat neither ____ nor

blood. (Lev 3:17) KJV
60 prepared for battle with every ____ of weapon (1 Chron 12:33)
62 Bless all his ____, O LORD, and be pleased (Deut 33:11)
66 I will besiege ____; she will mourn and lament (Isa 29:2)
68 Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine ____ (Ezek 27:6) KJV
70 not during the Feast or there may be a ____ among the people (Matt 26:5)
71 ____ to put on your eyes, so you can see (Rev 3:18)
72 But as God is ____, our word toward you (2 Cor 1:18)
73 now therefore ____ thou somewhat the grievous servitude (2 Chr 10:4) KJV
74 son of man, take thee a ____, and lay it before thee (Ezek 4:1) KJV
75 ten bulls, twenty she ____, and ten foals (Gen 32:15) (KJV
76 reached for his sword, ____ it out and struck the servant (Matt 26:51)
DOWN
1 now my life ____ away; days of suffering grip me (Job 30:16)
2 a time to kill and a time to ____ (Eccl 3:3)
3 He came ____ his own, and his own received him not (John 1:11)
4 But man, ____ his riches, does not endure (Ps 49:12)
5 that I may present you as a ____ virgin to Christ (2 Cor 11:2) KJV
6 rowing device (Ezek 27:29) KJV
7 Take heed that ye do not your ____ before men (Matt 6:1) KJV
8 the furnace for gold, but the LORD ____ the heart (Prov 17:3)
9 Come, you who ____ blessed by the LORD (Gen 24:31)
10 that we may consider them and know their ____ outcome (Isa 41:22)
11 you ____ the tongue of the crafty (Job 15:5)
12 You give a ____ of your spices (Matt 23:23)
15 newborn infants (1 Pet 2:2) (KJV)
20 She crieth at the gates, at the ____ of the city (Prov 8:3) KJV
22 we spend our years as ____ that is told (1,4) (Ps 90:9) KJV
25 You are a priest forever, in the ____ of Melchizedek (Heb 5:6)
27 among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ____ (Isaiah 44:14)
28 They hatch the eggs of vipers and ____ a spider's web (Isa 59:5)
29 With hooks they pulled him into a ____ and brought him (Ezek 19:9)
30 They cooked it in ____ or made it into cakes (1,3) (Num 11:8)
34 the two sons of ____, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests (1 Sam 1:3)
35 However, I ____ that I worship the God of our fathers (Acts 24:14)
37 John to the seven churches

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which are in ____ (Rev 1:4)
38 this is the ____ of David's mighty men: Jashobeam (1 Chr 11:11)
39 to let the oppressed go ____ (Isaiah 58:6)
42 the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into ____ (Acts 27:6)
43 was thirsty and you gave me something to ____ (Matt 25:35)
46 As Jesus walked beside the ____ of Galilee (Mark 1:16)
49 with the linen mitre shall he be ____ (Lev 16:4) KJV
51 This ____ was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABY-LON (Rev 17:5)
53 he took and sent ____ unto them (Gen 43:34) KJV
54 They proclaimed ____ and seated Naboth (1,4) (1 Kings 21:12)
55 no longer to call her ____;

her name will be Sarah.(Gen 17:15)
56 But Jesus ____ made no reply, and Pilate was amazed (Mark 15:5)
57 if the ____ are dull white, it is a harmless rash (Lev 13:39)
61 Speak now in the ____ of the people (Exodus 11:2)
63 let God be true, but every man a ____ (Romans 3:4)
64 do not ____ heart when he rebukes you (Heb 12:5)
65 let me have some of that red ____ I'm famished (Gen 25:30)
67 just as ____ was deceived by the serpent's cunning (2 Cor 11:3)
69 give God a tenth of your mint, ____ and all other (Luke 11:42)

Solution on page 14



Jamie Miller, CPA

Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC

1136 Greenwood Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

2301 Rutherford Road
Marion, NC 28752

phone: 828.765.4400
fax: 828.765.4880

phone: 828.652.6777
fax: 828.652.6755



jamie@highcountrypca.com

www.highcountrypca.com

Sarah’s Story

By Sarah Grindstaff Miller
Mitchell County

Before I tell you about my story I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself for those of you who don't know me. My name is Sarah Elizabeth Grindstaff Miller. I'm 31 years old. I come from a very loving, Christian family that I love dearly. I recently got married to Nicholas Charles Miller on May 26th of last year. We have a 3 month old son named Roman Joseph Miller. I also have a 14 year old son named Jonathan Garrett Yelton. We are proud members of Bethel Baptist Church. We have a house and 3 vehicles. I have a job that I love with a great work family. No one's life is perfect but compared to the life I had until a couple years ago in my opinion it's more than perfect. But I want to explain to you how my life was before and how it has changed into a life I've always dreamed of.

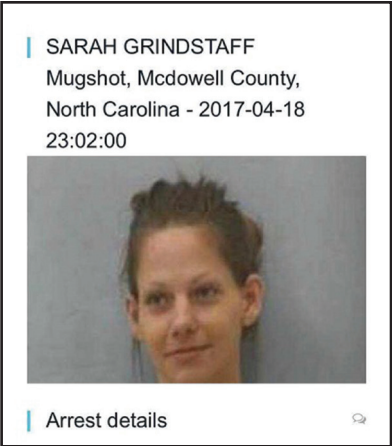
As a child my family and I always attended every church service. I was brought up to put God first in your life. I had a really good childhood for the most part. At age 11 is when I got saved. I was listening to a Ray Boltz CD and hearing the words of that song "At the foot of the cross" a feeling came over me like I'd never felt before. I knew I was lost and going to hell if I didn't ask God to save me. I felt like my heart was going to beat out of my chest, and I burst into tears. I felt so ashamed and unworthy. Then at that moment I begged God to forgive me of my sins and to save my soul and I truly believe He did that day.

But It wasn't long after that I let the devil deceive me and I gave into my flesh. The first time I was introduced to drugs I was also 11 years old. The first drug I ever tried was Meth. The Worst, most addictive drug there is in my opinion. I was a very hyper active child and craved attention all the time whether it was good or bad as long as I was noticed. I stayed in trouble at home and at school. I was constantly being grounded and disciplined when I did things I wasn't supposed to do. But It seems like the more I was punished the more I would act out and rebel. I hated being told what to do.

It wasn't long till I ended up getting pregnant at the age of 15. My family was devastated at first. I was pretty much a baby myself getting ready to have a baby. So, I thought getting married to the father of my baby would fix everything. I thought It would make up for all the hurt and disappointment I had caused my family. So, I quit school and got married to a man I thought I was in love with, but in reality I barely even knew this man. We were both young and dumb and didn't realize what we were getting ourselves into. After we got married we moved about 45 minutes away from my family. I had no car, no phone, no TV. I had no friends at the time and no neighbors that were close enough for me to talk to. My husband would work long hours. Even after he got done working he would usually go to his parents or his Grandmother to help them with different things. I have never been the type to like being alone so this caused me to become very depressed. We eventually moved not far from where we lived at the time. We had a neighbor who's name I will not mention because she is deceased now. But this is when I started doing meth almost every day. Eventually after a few years my husband got another vehicle for me to drive but by this time I was already using meth on a daily basis . This didn't help the situation because then I was able to meet new people that had drugs and It made my drug habit even worse. My son wasn't even 2 years old yet, when I realized I was addicted to this horrible drug. It had made my depression go away at the time and I felt invincible after using.

I could do everything a normal stay at home Mom could do in less than 2 hours. When in all reality it should have been an all day job. I would stay up for days at a time and my husband didn't have a clue that I was even on drugs, probably because he wasn't around me enough to tell. My husband and I started arguing more and more. I was completely miserable and felt so alone. After I got to the point that I realized I couldn't live like that anymore I planned to leave and to take our son with me. I didn't even know where we'd go. I thought about trying to go to my Grandparents or my Mom and Dad's, but I wasn't exactly sure. So, one night I packed two bags. One for me and one for my son. The next day my husband came home early and knew something

continued on page 41



The God Who Always Is

By Pastor Dan Qurollo
Burke County



Without a doubt, we serve an amazing God. He is both incomprehensible and knowable at the same time. His attributes exist in perfection and are never lacking at any time or to any degree. His attributes are not simply parts of God, but instead describe His entire being. One of those attributes is the eternity of God.

Simply put, the attribute of eternity describes endless existence. This endless existence extends both forward and backward, for He has never had a beginning and will never have an end. Although our minds are incapable of grasping eternity, the eternity of God describes in relation to duration. God exists in a realm not limited by duration but is instead eternal. He does not exist more during one period of time than He does the other. Furthermore, no distinction exists regarding past, present, and future. For God, His entire existence is one eternal present.

Many passages teach the eternity of God. Consider the following condensed list that teaches the eternity of God:

- *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.* – Deuteronomy 33:27
- *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.* Ps. 90:2
- *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.* – Ps. 90:4
- *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: 27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.* – Ps. 102:25-27
- *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.* Isa. 40:28
- *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.* 1 Tim. 1:17
- *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* – 2 Pet. 3:8
- *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; - Rev. 1:4*

As we celebrate Easter, we are to be reminded that the events of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus occurred perfectly on God’s timetable. His death was not a moment too soon, nor was His resurrection a moment too late. We can be assured that His return for His children will be right on time.

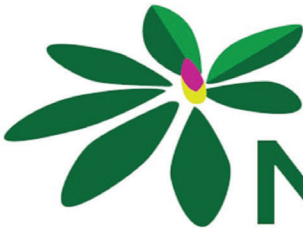
Furthermore, as believers we can be assured that God is always on time. He is never late, nor is He ever early; He is always on time. Furthermore, God is never rushed by deadlines, nor is He ever behind in projects. He is eternal and knows the end from the beginning. Our minds and hearts should be at ease when we understand the eternity of God. No wonder Isaiah could write, “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee*” (Isa. 26:3).

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

And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 1 Corinthians 6:14

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World Down Syndrome Run

March 21st

Contact: Adam Burleson
Mitchell County

Why March 21? The date for WDSR is the 21st day of the 3rd month and was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome. WDSR is to help raise awareness of what Down syndrome is, what it means to have Down syndrome, and how people with Down syndrome play a vital role in our lives and communities. Read below to see what Run for Holland is doing to celebrate.

RUN FOR HOLLAND will be in May. We are excited to announce that SPEED FOR NEED will be joining us at Run For Holland 2019.

The MISSION of SPEED FOR NEED is to empower members of the community affected by disability or disease through participation in fitness events. Simply put, our goal is to help people get to the Finish Line and FINISH the race... their race. Find Out More Here and here <http://www.speedforneed.org/> OUR LEGS, THEIR HEARTS

If you are a runner and want to push one of these four awesome individuals you can join a team. Go sign up for the race and select which chair you would like to join as a team.

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Pause...and Consider

A Whale and Resurrection

By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County



“So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land,” so it says in Jonah 2:10, NKJV.

Phew! That would be an experience never to be forgotten. The vapors surrounding Jonah as he was expelled from the whale told a graphic story.

Imagine what it must have been like in the belly of the great fish that God had prepared to swallow Jonah? Think of all that the whale had eaten, the digestive juices at work and the enclosed, suffocating cavity of this great fish. Then think about spending three days and three nights in there.

I wondered, why did God choose this particular avenue to get Jonah’s attention? Perhaps the second first verse in Jonah 1 gives us the answer.

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.”

The sins of the people were like a horrendous, sickening stench that he could stomach no longer. God called on Jonah as the instrument through whom he would work to take the truth of his word to Nineveh.

But Jonah didn’t want to go. So, he fled by boat to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Somehow in his desire to escape, he neglected to realize that he couldn’t hide from God.

When Jonah’s actions imperiled all on the boat, he told them to throw him overboard. And, it was then God rescued him in a most unlikely manner.

Just maybe God wanted Jonah to experience a stench that would resemble that which was afflicting his holy nostrils from Nineveh – to tangibly understand the foul rancidness of sin.

Though God couldn’t stand what was happening in Nineveh, his compassion was extended. And, on this Resurrection Day, we are reminded of these two characteristics of God. His holiness that cannot regard sin; and his compassionate love that provided the remedy.

Some of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day wanted a sign. But, Jesus – tired of the stench of their unbelief – said the only sign would be that of the prophet Jonah and his three-day/three-night entombment in the big fish. So, it would be for Jesus in the earth.

On that glorious resurrection day – out of the grave from which he had taken the sins of the world – he came ready to extend forgiveness adorned in compassionate love to all who would believe.

Jonah was given new life from his smelly tomb at God’s command to the fish. Jesus Christ went into the grave clothed in mankind’s putrid sin. He came forth like a new blossom in his resurrection body – the only perfect sacrifice to satisfy God’s holiness and love. Selah

PROMISE OF SPRING

*Decaying mulch hardly seems the bed for beauty.
Nevertheless, it emerges from beneath the ground
Purple and white crocuses breaking through winter’s
harshness.*

*A cross, crown of thorns and a borrowed tomb
hardly seem the likely place to find promise.
Till Jesus burst forth from the tomb...just as He said.*

*“Why do you seek the living among the dead?
He is not here, But is risen!”
Luke 24: 5 and 6*



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan's new blog @ pauseandconsider.net, Journeying with Jan; and Ken's photos at kenmeropphotography.com. kenmeropphotography.com is currently off-line. But Ken's photos can still be seen at ken-merop.pixels.com.

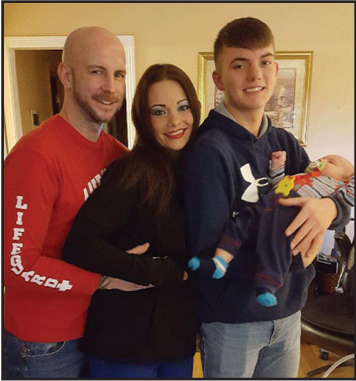
was wrong. Then he noticed the bags near the door, and he knew exactly what was going on. This caused a really big fight between us. As we were arguing I was trying to take our son with me, but he was determined to not let that happen. My plan had back fired on me. I still left that day but without my son. But I thank God that my plan didn't go like I expected because I was in no shape to be raising a precious little innocent boy. I needed to try to help myself before I'd be able to help my son. I was absolutely devastated because I didn't have my son and my whole family was so disappointed in me. The only thing that would help numb the pain just for a small period of time was using drugs. I lived from place to place with whoever would take me in. My family would have let me come stay with them, but I would have to give the drugs up and I truly believed in my mind that I couldn't live without them.

Eventually I got put into the system. I can't even count the times that I've been put in jail. There was a few times I called and begged my Grandparents to come get me out. I promised them that if they would just pay my bond and come get me that I would come live with them and I'd stop using drugs. Every time that they did this for me I couldn't even last a month at their house before I'd leave with the first person that offered me drugs and a place to stay. I did this over and over breaking my family's hearts. When you get so far in addiction you don't care about anyone or anything. All you care about is getting that next high. It's so sad to say but I chose drugs over my son, my family, and a happy life that I could have been living.

The more I did drugs the more I hated God. I blamed Him for every wrong thing that had happened in my life. The more I hated God the more I hated myself. I tried over dosing numerous times. I would cut my wrists in hopes that I would eventually bleed to death. I didn't care if I lived or died at this point. I would do anything and everything I could to get high and try to just forget about life. I put myself in horrible situations where I've been beaten , raped, thrown out of moving vehicles, left on the side of the road with no place to go and no food to eat, just feeling hopeless and empty. Some of these things still haunt me to this day. I have nightmares about them and wake up scared to death or crying. It's only by the grace of God that I'm alive today to be able to tell you this story.

Even after all of these things I had gone through I still wasn't ready to trust God. I tried to run as far as I could from Him. I spent years and years living this lifestyle and It led me to 4 different prison sentences. My last prison sentence before I was released my Grandparents asked me to come live with them again. But I knew it wouldn't last long because I had no intentions of trying to straighten up. I knew I would end up leaving like I always did. But to my surprise this time was different. I remember waking up one morning and going outside on the porch. I could see my Grandparents from the kitchen window. I immediately burst into tears thinking of all the heartache and pain I've put them thru. These two wonderful people were still praying for me and they were determined that one day I would let God turn my whole life around. I then felt the presence of God come over me. In my heart God was telling me that my past didn't matter that if I would just ask Him to forgive me He would do so. I then asked God to please forgive me for all the wrong things I had done and said. I've never had such a feeling of relief and peace in my life. God truly touched my heart that day. All those years I spent being miserable and running from God was all changed in a matter of minutes. God gave me the will power to quit using drugs without having to go to a rehab. God gave me the desire to want to go to church and to want so badly to make my family proud. After I made things right with the Lord that day everything started falling into place. It was only a few weeks till I found a job that I love. I was able to start seeing my son every other weekend and talk to him on the phone daily. I also started gaining my family's trust back day by day. My life was so happy now but the only thing I desired to have that God hadn't already granted me was to find a good, Christian husband that would love me and love my son like his own. I thought surely if God can bless me with all these things that I've always wanted then surely He would send me the man that I'm supposed to be with. I prayed and prayed night after night for God to send me someone. After a while I was starting to lose hope, but everything is in God's timing not ours. Right when I was ready to give up on finding a husband a handsome gentleman messaged me and asked me if I'd like to go to Celebrate Recovery with him. For a man to ask me to go to a church event with them as our first time meeting I was very eager and excited to get to meet this man. We started going to Celebrate Recovery every Thursday night and seeing each other on the weekends and attending church together. I've never been so truthful to anyone in my life except for God. Even when I had told him about my past, it didn't bother him at all because he said "your past is your past, you can't do anything to change that. All that mattered now is that you don't make the same mistakes." This made me respect him even more.

We both had a past but now we were trying to live right and obey God. We both prayed and prayed about our relationship, hoping it was God's will for us to be together. I knew in my heart that God had sent me this man to be my husband. We eventually got married. Then God blessed us with a miracle, a beautiful baby boy. When I say he's a miracle I literally mean a miracle because my husband was never supposed to be able to help conceive a child. Numerous doctors had told him this and I never thought I would be able to bear another child. But our God is a Miracle worker. Through many prayers and God's work, He granted us that blessing, a beautiful, healthy baby boy that has already been dedicated to The Lord. God has turned



continued on page 45

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Cardinal Insurance employees recently celebrated moving to new locations. Pictured, back row, from left, is Donna Taylor (Spruce Pine), Gaylene Potter (Newland), Martie McKinney (Bakersville), Chad Hughes (Bakersville), Michael McKinney (Spruce Pine), Teresa Young (Spruce Pine) and Susie Lewis (Newland). Pictured, front row, from left, is Jill Voland (Spruce Pine), Glenda Buchanan (Spruce Pine) and Katrina Hollifield (Newland).

3 Locations for Your Convenience



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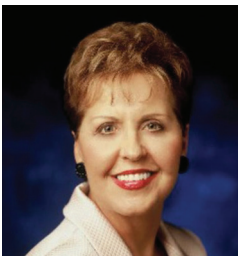
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Refuse to Live with Frustration

By Joyce Meyer



The old hymn “Amazing Grace” is a familiar church song for many, but I wonder if we really know how amazing God’s grace actually is. It’s such a common term in church or other religious settings that we can easily forget the value of grace in our lives.

Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly reveals that we are saved—for-given of our sins and granted eternal life—by grace through faith in Christ. “*And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast*” (ESV).

This saving grace is a gift—not something we can earn, purchase or deserve. That in itself is amazing.

Also, Romans 5:8-10 says, “*But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*”

Think about what these verses are saying. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. AMAZING! While we were enemies—before we even knew we needed Him or wanted His sacrifice on our behalf—Jesus willingly laid down His life for us so we could be reconciled to God and have a personal relationship with Him. AMAZING!

Notice that verse 9 says “*we have now been justified by his blood.*” This word “justified” means you are made “just as if you’ve never sinned.” AMAZING!

Here’s something else I want you to think about: If while you were still an enemy of God—before you cared one iota about Jesus—He sent His Son to die for you, then you can be confident He wants you to become everything He’s created you to be. God wants you to experience the amazing life He has planned for you! And the way you live this life is by grace through faith.

Living in God’s Grace

God’s grace gives us everything we need to live a joy-filled life. Colossians 2:6 says, “*Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in [union with] Him [reflecting His character in the things you do and say—living lives that lead others away from sin]*” (AMP).

My personal definition of grace is: God’s power made available to us free of charge, enabling us to do with ease what we could never do on our own with any amount of struggle or effort. Learning to live with this power in everything I do has been radically life-changing!

When I first started teaching at conferences, I felt so much pressure to make everything happen the way I thought it should happen. I’d pray so hard and spend so much time getting prepared spiritually and through Bible study that I was practically exhausted before the event even started!

But when I discovered that God doesn’t expect me to do it all, and that He is the only one who can change people’s hearts, it took all that pressure off of me. I was then free from the frustration of trying to accomplish something that I couldn’t do anyway and able to relax and enjoy doing my part of the process.

I do work hard, studying and preparing myself for each conference, but now I enjoy it because I realize what my responsibility is and what I must trust God to do. Philippians 4:13 says, “*I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose...]*” (AMP).

God is not just with us but in us, and He will do through us what needs to be done when we stop trying to do it ourselves and let Him work. AMAZING!

Stay Plugged In

Experiencing the grace of God comes as we learn how to stay plugged in to our power source—our personal relationship with Him. “Plugging in” means we feed our spirit and soul by studying God’s Word and spending time with Him in prayer. It’s critical for us to draw from the strength we have in Christ to live by God’s grace every single day of our lives.

When you feel weak, don’t let anything keep you from plugging in. Take a moment to pray, asking God for His strength. And remember to keep your focus on God’s Word and His many promises to provide everything you need, when you need it.

You don’t have to live with frustration. Stop trying to succeed in your own effort and start trusting God for His grace in every area of your life. He knows what you need and what needs to change. And you can never ask for too much grace; it has no limit so it will never run out!

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

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

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

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I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13

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Heart of the Gospel

By John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)

This, of course, is the very heart of the gospel, the good news. Jesus took our place. As Peter puts it, He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, (1 Peter 2:24). He took our sins and paid the price for them. He had no sins of his own and Scripture is very careful to record the sinlessness of Jesus himself. He was not suffering for His own transgressions, but for the sins of others. One writer has put it rather well .It was for me that Jesus died, For me and a world of men. Just as sinful and just as slow to give back His love again. And He did not wait until I came to Him. He loved me at my worst. He needn't ever have died for me If I could have loved Him first . That is the problem, isn't it? Why do not we love Him first? Why is it that we can only learn to love our Lord once we have beheld his suffering — His excruciating agony on our behalf? It is because of our transgressions, as this pas-sage declares. They have cut us off from recognizing the divine gift of love that ought to be in every human heart. Sin is a disease that has afflicted our entire race. We cannot understand the depth of human depravity until we see the awful agony through which our Lord passed, behold the hours of darkness and hear the terrible orphaned cry, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Matthew 27:46). All this spells out for us what we really are like. Most think of ourselves as decent people, good people. We have not done, perhaps, some of the terrible things that others have done. But when we see in the cross of Jesus, we realize the depth of evil in our hearts and understand that sin is a disease that has infiltrated our whole lives. Man, who was created in the image of God and once wore the glory of His manhood, has become bruised and marred, sick and broken, his conscience ruined, his understanding faulty, his will enfeebled. Genuine integrity and the resolve to do right has been completely undermined in all of us. We know this to be true. No wonder, then, this verse comes as the best of news: He was wounded for our transgressions. The bruising that He felt was the chastisement that we deserved, but it was laid upon Him .There is no way to read this and fail to see that our Lord is the great divine Substitute for the evil of the human heart. We can lay hold of this personally by the honest admission stated in Verse 6: *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.* How true that is of each of us! Who can claim anything else? Sheep are very foolish and willful creatures. They can find a hole in the fence and get out, but they cannot find it to get back in. Someone must go and get them every time. How true are the words, We have turned everyone to his own way .A popular song a few years ago, I Did It My Way. When you hear that it sounds like something admirable, something everybody ought to emulate. How proud we feel that we did it our way. But when you turn to the record of the Scripture, you find that that is the problem, not the solution. Everyone is doing things their way, so we have a race that is in constant conflict, forever striving with one another, unable to work anything out, because we all did it our way. The way to lay hold of the redemption of Jesus is to admit that All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way; and then to believe the next line, But the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He bore our punishment and took our place .Thank you, Lord, for taking my own punishment upon yourself. Forgive me for those times that I still seek to do things my way rather than yours .The problem of sin puts us all in equal need of redemption. Jesus died for us all, so that we could be free to live no longer for ourselves but out of worship and gratitude for His atoning death. Do our lives minimize this amazing grace? *Behold, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. As many were astonished at him—his appearance was so marred, beyond human likeness, and his form beyond that of the sons of men—so shall he alarm many nations...*

Isaiah 52:13-15 This section, which describes the remarkable impact that the Messiah would make upon mankind, opens with a declaration that He would be successful in all that He did: Behold, my servant shall prosper. That success would be accomplished in three specific stages, described here: He shall be exalted; He shall be lifted up; He shall be very high .First, in the words, He shall be exalted, there is a reference to the resurrection. Jesus was brought back from the dead, stepping into a condition of life that no man had ever entered before. Lazarus had been resurrected, in a sense, but he merely returned to this earthly life. Jesus, however, became the firstborn from the dead, (Colossians 1:18). He was thus exalted to a higher dimension of existence .Then, He shall be lifted up. After His resurrection, Jesus took His disciples to the Mount of Olives and while He was speaking to them He ascended into the heavens until a cloud received Him out of sight. So, He was physically and literally lifted up. Thirdly, the passage says, He shall be very high. The Hebrew puts it rather graphically: He shall be high, very. We cannot but recall the words of the Apostle Paul in the letter to the Philippians: *“Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.* (Philippians 2:9-11). Thus, by His resurrection, His ascension, and His kingly exaltation the Mes-siah has made tremendous impact upon humanity .Further, it is said of Him here



that many were astonished at Him. This happened in two different ways. First, as Verse 14 implies, many were astonished at His death: His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and His form beyond that of the sons of men. This is descriptive of the face of Jesus after He had endured the terrible Roman scourging, the beatings, the blows to His face with the rod, which the soldiers mockingly called a king's scepter, and the crushing of the crown of thorns upon His head. This is what the prophet sees: our Lord's appearance was so marred that those who passed by were astonished at his visage .But Verse 15 describes another form of astonishment: so shall He startle many nations. This refers to the tremen-dous accomplishments He achieved, not only during His ministry, but through the intervening centuries since. Many have commented on the remarkable achieve-ments of Jesus. How He could not from then on look at a sheep or a sparrow, a lily or a cornfield, a raven or a sunset, a vineyard or a mountain without thinking of that man. Truly, our Lord has made an astonishing impact upon our world. He is the Man who cannot be forgotten , Thank you, Lord Jesus, for all you have done for me. I praise you and worship you that you are One who continues to astonish me with your impact upon my own life and many others throughout the world .The Man Jesus has made an incomparable impact on world history. What are three specific and startling fulfillments of scripture describing details of His unique appearance? How do we respond to this, the greatest story ever told?

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





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Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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It's About Time

By Mike Stroud
Burke County

Finally, we are seeing one of my favorite things to see. March flowers have popped up from the ground with their beautiful yellow heads. That gives me great joy, knowing winter is about to kick the bucket. It just seems you have a little more energy, a little more kick in your step, and a smile creeping upon your face.

Days are longer, time to clean house, yard, and cars. Yes, indeed. Spring is now upon us. I always reflect about how winter reminds me of the dead in me, and now I need a reviving, new life, a resurrection. That's it, a new beginning. New birth is all around. There is a message in the seasons that the Lord has giving us to ponder upon. His mercy and grace are fresh and new every day. I rely upon that. It seems sometimes in our lives, that we get heavy laden with all the cares of this world. It is so easy to get stuck in the winter, but spring always comes. We have to endure the hardships sometimes in our lives to enjoy the victories that follow. I always think about Christ and what He endured for me to have a new beginning. He endured the beatings, denials, shame, abandonment, and the crucifixion of the cross; just to see me saved and have eternal life. Wow, that is mind boggling to me. When I cry and complain, I think of His pain that He went through for me. He endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him. We are his joy, his offspring. That is something to celebrate and be thankful for. I can be born again. I can spring forth into new life and new beginnings. Don't let anyone stop you from being all God has purposed you for. Rise up and believe the Good News of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil. This is going to be your best year ever. Believe it, receive it. God's intentions for your life are always good. No matter what you are facing or how hard it has been, remember all those who have gone before us and overcome. Our light affliction is but for a moment. Spring forth into a new you. You are an overcomer, and more than a conqueror. Believe what God has done for you through His Son. You are a joint heir in Christ. You are blessed in all you do. Raise your head up like those beautiful March Flowers, and Shine again.

Mike Stroud is the pastor at Summit Community Church in Burke County.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16



my whole life around. I have the life now that I've longed for all my years. I never in my wildest dreams thought that all this would be possible for someone like me, but God showed me different. I owe Everything to him.

So, if you're out there struggling with addiction and you've given up on having a happy life, please just look at how God has turned my whole life around. If He can do this for me, trust me He can do it for Anyone. If you are saved but you've somehow drifted away from God, all you have to do is ask God for forgiveness and He'll do it. If you are not saved all you have to do is believe in God. Confess your sins and ask for forgiveness. Believe He sent His son "Jesus" to die for your sins and that He rose from the dead and then ask God to save you. It's as simple as that. It's the best thing that could ever happen to you. I'm not saying your life will be perfect after you get saved. You'll face many battles, but God never gives us more than what we can handle. Sometimes He will put you through certain situations to draw you closer to Him. I beg of you if you are not saved to please think about where you're going to be spending eternity. Would you rather go to Heaven, where there's no sorrow, no pain? Everything will be perfect. Or would you rather choose to be tossed into the lake of fire burning forever and ever with no escape? Think about your family. There's going to be young and old, son's and daughter's, brother's and sister's, mother's and father's, grandparents. It says in the Bible that only a few will enter the gates of Heaven. I really hope you think about all these things and don't forget it right after you read it.

Sarah Miller is a former addict. She is now married to Nick Miller and they attend Bethel Church.

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Traditions

Baxter Makes Major Investment in McDowell Tech

By Michael Lavender
McDowell County



Baxter North Cove has made a major investment in the education of its employees and other students enrolled in the new Mechatronics and Applied Engineering Technology programs at McDowell Technical Community College in Marion, NC with the gift of an industrial-grade, high tech FANUC robot and associated hardware. The total value of the gift is well in excess of \$100,000, including related hardware, fencing, wiring and labor.

The new robotic equipment was dedicated on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 during a meeting of the McDowell Workforce Pipeline Committee at the Universal Advanced Manufacturing Center, located at 634 College Drive in Marion. The FANUC robot has been programmed by students in the current Industrial Systems program to do the ribbon “cutting,” demonstrating the versatility of robotic machines in the simplest of ways.

“With this major gift to the College, Baxter has made a commitment to the future of high-tech training in McDowell County,” said Dr. John Gossett, President of McDowell Technical Community College. “This piece of equipment also represents Baxter’s commitment to the partnership between McDowell Tech and local business and industry leaders to meet local workforce training needs, both for employers and employees.”

“We are grateful for their donation,” said Stacy Buff, who is currently leading the Workforce Pipeline Committee and is Dean of Continuing Education at McDowell Tech. While the college had a much smaller, less robust robot before this donation,” he said, “This newer, more enhanced robot opens up a whole new level of training. We are excited about the opportunities it will give current and future students. This is the same type of robot they will use in the workplace when they graduate.”

In fact, the new FANUC robot was one of a pair of robots shipped to Baxter’s North Cove facility last fall. The other robot has already been installed as part of a fleet of robots currently operating at the plant, which produces intravenous solutions (IV’s) and similar medical solutions products. Globally, Baxter is estimated to have a 30% market share in IV Solutions production worldwide, with annual sales in 2018 reaching \$11.1 billion, according to the company website.

What makes Baxter’s gift even more unique is that they used students in McDowell Tech’s Maintenance Apprenticeship Program, who also work at Baxter North Cove, to design, install, setup and program the new equipment, reinforcing the future value of the Apprenticeship program to their company. Adam Aldridge is the company liaison for Baxter and was instrumental in arranging the donation by Baxter.

“Baxter really is a company that is committed to their own employees,” said



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Eddie Shuford, Director of the Universal Advanced Manufacturing Center. “They grow their own, if you will. Employees who show promise and interest and have a Gold Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) may become part of their production technician program, which is a feeder for supervisory positions and the apprenticeship positions. They invest in those apprentices by enrolling them at McDowell Tech and paying for their education.”

“Even more important, talks are in the works for the College to take over a bigger share of the local plant’s overall training in the near future,” said Shuford. “In like turn, as we expand our program, we have hired three of their retired mechanics and one of their engineers as new instructors at McDowell Tech. They are highly-trained and super at what they do, and they will assist us with training for all of our students, not just the ones who come from Baxter.”

In fact, Baxter is just one of several companies that has an apprenticeship program with McDowell Tech, but each of their students will benefit from Baxter’s donation. Other local companies with apprenticeship programs include Columbia Forest Products, Continental, Auria Solutions and ABB. However, according to Robertson and Shuford, Baxter has the lion’s share of McDowell Tech students currently enrolled in an apprenticeship program.

While most of the current students in an apprenticeship program are males, the program is open to all genders and there has been a female student recently enrolled in one of the programs. Oddly enough, high school students are increasingly realizing the financial advantage of a career in Mechatronics or Applied Engineering, how easy it is to get a job in the field and the upward mobility it can provide. “The possibilities are unlimited,” said Robertson.

Efforts are underway to expand recruitment efforts with local public schools, and groups of students will be touring McDowell Tech in coming months. The new McDowell Academy of Innovation, the county’s newest Early College program, has expressed an interest in partnering with the College to offer Mechatronics and Applied Engineering degrees for their students.

As a result of increasing interest in these programs by recent high school graduates, the average age of students in Industrial Systems, a Mechatronics-related degree that is being phased out at McDowell Tech, is in the early 20’s, although all ages are welcome to enroll.

Baxter’s donation comes at a time when McDowell Tech is transitioning from the older Industrial Systems program to newer programs in Mechatronics and Applied Engineering that more closely match the technology needs of local industry.

“Mechatronics, our primary program, is a sort of marriage between technology and machines. It focuses on programming machines, using PLCs—Programmable Logic Controllers, to automate and expedite processes needed to complete some type of industrial task. That could be anything from teaching a robot to stack a pallet with boxes loaded with products ready for shipping, to automating how another machine cuts or molds steel and plastics,” said Steve Robertson, Mechatronics, Industrial Systems and Electrical/Electronics Instructor at McDowell Tech. “Mechatronics is definitely a multi-disciplinary program,” Robertson added. “Students in this program take classes in Machining, Electronics and similar areas. When a student graduates, we want them to be able to walk into any industry, set up a new robot, program it to automate whatever task that company needs at the time and keep that robot or machine running smoothly throughout the manufacturing or operations process.”

Mechatronics is one of the most in-demand degrees locally and nationwide. According to Robertson, graduates have unlimited career and salary potential, depending on their level of experience, education, certifications and specialties. “Obviously salaries vary from area to area, depending on cost of living and so forth,” he said. “In McDowell County, which has a very low cost of living, students with no experience can move straight from a two-year college associate degree into a job paying \$20-22 per hour, based on feedback we’ve heard from students and employers. That equates to a yearly salary in the low-to-mid 40’s. With a few years of experience, they might make \$28-30 per hour or more—high 50’s to low 60’s on an annual basis.”

Some Mechatronics and Applied Engineering students choose to go on for additional education and training to become mechanical engineers, where the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates median salaries to be around \$86,000 per year.

Robertson gushes about how proud he is of students in his program and how excited he is about raising the bar on robotics training at McDowell Tech. “I told my students, mostly second-year students, where I wanted the FANUC robot to be set up, and then I turned them loose. They already had most of the basic training in the program, and I was sure they were capable of doing the work, and they proved me right. They set up the air intake lines that pressurize the robot, did the electrical work, welded and bolted—secured—the base of the robot to the floor, ordered all the extra hardware and fencing that forms the cage around the robot, and installed everything all by themselves.”

Jonathan Braswell headed up the student team for his class. He is a maintenance mechanic at Baxter, and Baxter allowed him and his fellow Baxter employees to use paid company time to complete the project. Robertson also allowed the students to use some classroom lab hours to get everything up going. Braswell and the other students were recognized on Tuesday.

When everything was properly installed, Braswell and his team setup, initialized and programmed the robot to do some basic tasks, including the simple ribbon cutting, as it is being called. Technically, the “cutting” will not use scissors, but instead will break a ribbon that has been magnetized in the center, so that a series of pictures can be taken quickly without unrolling and setting up a new ribbon for each picture.

“It’s all high tech,” said Gossett. “McDowell Tech is changing to meet our ever-changing workforce needs and we are super excited to have Baxter partner with us in this effort. We hope others will follow their lead as we move forward.”

Michael is the Media and Promotions Director for McDowell Tech in Marion NC.

Saving Face

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County

Psychology Today says "The phrase to save face has been around a long time. Saving face signifies a desire -- or defines a strategy -- to avoid humiliation or embarrassment, to maintain dignity or preserve reputation."

In Psalm 42, the Sons of Korah, part of the temple worship team, talk about saving face. Their strategy to avoid humiliation or embarrassment isn't what you might think. It is found in a refrain repeated two times in Psalm 42 and again in Psalm 43:

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. (Psalm 42:5,11; Psalm 43:5, ESV)

The Sons of Korah are in a predicament. We don't exactly know what it is, but we do know that they have cried "day and night." They look back with fondness on how they used to "go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival." (Psalm 42:4) The throng has turned into a tumult. Songs of praise have become shouts of insult. Faith has been supplanted by doubt. "Where is your God?" the people shout.

Verses 5, 11 and 43:5 represent what counselors call "self-talk." In fact, the Sons of Korah are talking to themselves. They have been talking about the problem; they now talk to themselves.

What you say to yourself may be the most important thing you say all day. In the middle of the taunts, surrounded by enemies and flooded by their own tears they remind themselves to hope in God. Biblical hope requires definition. It is not anxious anticipation; it is confident expectation. Some of you are hoping your marriage will work, your dream job will come through, your son will come home, or your friend will come around. Don't stop praying for that. God can answer your prayers. But don't put your hope in them. Put your hope in God who never fails, who always comes through. Hope in the God of the outcome, not the outcome. Biblical hope requires definition. It is not anxious anticipation; it is confident expectation.

The Sons of Korah describe God as their salvation. The word salvation in these verses literally means "the salvation of my face." In other words, God is the one by whom they avoid humiliation or embarrassment. He maintains their dignity and preserves their reputation.

If you have trusted Christ, this is true of you too. God's most embarrassing moment--hanging naked between two criminals on a cross, beard plucked from his face, sword thrust into his side, blood and water gushing out--is your most dignified. His blood covers your sin, makes you righteous, tears down the dividing wall between God and you and ushers you into the very throne room of God Himself.

The Apostle Paul reflects on this with his own self talk in Romans 8:
What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31-32, ESV)

What shall we say? To ourselves and to others? God is for us! And if he would give you his only Son (which He did), will He idly watch as you wade through the difficulty of divorce, the disappointment of unmet expectations, the sadness of grief, the pain of a wandering child, the unthinkable diagnosis? Not at all.

God is for you. Let that echo in your mind today as you sit in the classroom, the waiting room, the courtroom or your living room.

Hope in God. God is for you.

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



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