

Charity & Children

The historic publication of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, first to tell the story for 135 years.

     @bchfamily

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Issue 3

Volume 136

Camp helps, leading me to successfully living life

By **Ethan**, 2023 Cameron Boys Camp Graduate

When I was four, my mother told me she didn't love me and told my aunt to come and take me away. I remember waiting on the doorstep in the cold for my aunt. My life fell apart that day. I felt there was no one I could trust.

After that, I slowly went downhill. I was angry and created chaos everywhere I went. I didn't know how to handle being abandoned. I stole things. I lied. I began avoiding everyone who cared for me—even my aunt who was trying to help. One of the ways I coped with my problems was playing video games. I tuned everything out. I played for hours each day. I gradually spiraled out of the control and got in trouble at school. The department of social services became involved.

(Continued on page 7)



Stone family shares story of Princess' adoption

Amanda and Jared Stone shared their testimony of how God works through Christian Adoption Services to Baptist Children's Homes Trustees on January 17 during the group's biannual meeting in Thomasville. The couple introduced their daughter Princess and recounted their story and how, during a three-year wait, God was preparing Princess in the Philippines to be adopted.

"When we began the adoption process, Princess was facing insurmountable challenges," Jared recalled. "But God was using this time to transform her life and prepare us to bring such a special little girl home." *(Continued on page 3.)*

Remembering Jennie Counts

By **Michael C. Blackwell**, President/CEO
(Chief Encouragement Officer)

Dear *Charity & Children* readers and friends, it is with great sadness that I inform you of the death of Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) staff member Jennie Counts. She died suddenly on January 5.

Jennie was a long-time and deeply loved and trusted friend/colleague/employee/confidant. She joined the staff of the president's office on November 30, 1987 in a full-time position. As much as anyone, she encouraged me in my early years as president. She and her husband Howard were always available for wise counsel and personal and professional assistance.

She retired from her full-time position as Executive Vice President of Executive Administration in 2006 but, after three years, rejoined my staff (part-time) as Director of Presidential Projects.

It was my honor to participate in Jennie's funeral services held Saturday, January 14. I am sharing portions of the eulogy I delivered as this month's column:

"Jennie Counts was many things to many people: wife, mother, teacher (Master teacher of Sunday school and biweekly Bible studies for over 50 years), counsellor, confidante, author, encourager, leader, entrepreneur, public speaker, promoter, 'perfect in her kindness,' generous, mentor, deep thinker, adventurer, luminous, compassionate, sophisticated, authentic, intentional, warm, affectionate, champion, cheerleader, inspirational, uplifting, peace maker, empathetic, listener, classy, and one who possessed the gifts of discernment and hospitality.

"These are real words from real people. I wrote a group of her BCH colleagues in preparation for today and got these responses from them. I know others could add their own words or phrases or paragraphs, or chapters or short stories or an entire book. That's the impact that Jennie Counts had on people. You just enjoyed

being around her.

But woven throughout all these words of affirmation was one that is the bedrock of everything else. Jennie Counts was FRIEND with a Capital F. Dependable Friend. Available Friend. Trusted Friend.

"And she loved her friends. She drew strength from them. And she did not like it when she could not be with her friends. 'I haven't seen my friends in such a long time,' she



would say. The Pandemic took a toll on those breakfast and lunch meetings with friends in Thomasville, Danville, Greensboro, High Point.

"But, then, on certain bright, bright, sunshiny days, she would meet with her friends and laugh and hug and share good times. We were among those friends who received the blessing when were in her presence and she smiled and prayed. And, oh my, could she pray!

"Jennie and Howard, her husband of 55 years, faced the darkest of dark moments when their first-born son, James Counts, passed way. I knew Jim well. He was brilliant in so many ways. He had established deep roots and relationships in the London area. They, too, were family. David lost his big brother. And David became a rock for his parents.

"If you knew Jennie well, you may have been on the receiving end of written words from her. A handwritten letter or note of encouragement,

a birthday greeting, a thank you note. She would even write a thank you note thanking people for their thank you note. I know her friends have clung to those notes and reread them, finding encouragement.

"Jennie Counts had a symbol. She was never without that symbol. It was a VIOLIN. A violin pin or bracelet or necklace. She wore a violin every day. A reporter once did a story on Jennie and asked her about her Violin Pin. She replied, it represents Music. Music to live by. Music to celebrate. Music to be played. She believed that we should all play our music before the music ended. She

would encourage you to do the same. Play your music before the music is over. She would want each of us to celebrate life, for life is a gift.

"And during this time of loss, this is what we celebrate—the Life and the Legacy of Jennie Counts. Knowing that one day, when our own Music on Earth is done, we shall join that Heavenly Choir where Jennie now plays her music once again.

"What a day of rejoicing that will be, when our dear friend Jennie we will see. When the gates of Heaven open wide and we see Jennie and Jim with Jesus, welcoming us to eternity and we shall join them in singing that sweet, sweet hymn—*what a day of rejoicing that will be...*

"Jennie Lynn Beal Counts, December 1, 1943 to January 5, 2023. So long for now, dear Friend. We'll see you again."

Jennie Counts Eulogy
Saturday, January 14, 2023

Please be in prayer for Howard and David Counts. My staff in the president's office are still wounded. We are feeling this loss deeply and personally. Jennie Counts was one of a kind. Her compassionate presence and vibrant personality is deeply missed by those who knew her. Weeks have passed, but I know Howard Counts would value your card or letter. You can contact him by mail at 251 N. Creekside Dr. High Point, NC 27265.

Mission:

sharing hope . . . changing lives

Vision:

To provide the highest quality of Christian services to children, adults and families in a caring culture of measurable excellence

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Trustees hear how ministry impacts young lives

(Continued on page 3.)

The members of Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Board of Trustees were captivated as they listened to campers Sadie and Krisalyn share stories of how their lives have been changed since living at BCH's Camp Duncan for Girls in Aberdeen. Both told of the new hope they have and how their lives have changed. Sadie testified that the night before she had given her heart to Jesus.

Camp Duncan director Brad Gearhart took time to encourage Trustees to help share BCH's need for chiefs. There are open positions at both girls' and boys' camps. He asked board members to think if there was someone they personally knew. Gearhart encouraged the group to publicize the need in their home churches. Chiefs are servant-minded, passionate, hard-working people who are seeking a great mission career opportunity.

"I am always amazed by these dynamic young ladies," BCH President/CEO Michael C. Blackwell said, affirming the Duncan campers. "And these girls' testimonies remind us how



Camp Duncan director Brad Gearhart stands with Camper Sadie as she shares her testimony before Baptist Children's Homes' Board of Trustees at the group's January meeting held at Mills Home Baptist Church in Thomasville. The full board meets twice a year.

these chiefs are used daily to bring about this godly change. Help us get the word out. We need chiefs."

Camp Duncan's Chief Aubrey spoke how her life had been enriched as a chief. She said it was hard work and that chiefs pour themselves into their task. But she also said it was the most

rewarding thing she had ever done.

Gearhart said that prospective chiefs could learn more at www.bchfamily.org/careers or call him at 717-623-1114.

Blackwell welcomed nine new Trustees: Pam Annas, Fellowship Baptist, Hudson; Vickie Burge, Village Baptist Church, Fayetteville; Denise Critcher, Mt. Vernon Baptist, Boone; Dana Dixon, Aversboro Road Baptist Church, Garner; Matt Hollifield, FBC Charlotte; Roy Howell, Green Level Baptist, Apex; Matt Martin, Cool Springs Baptist, Sanford; Sandy Saunders, Snyder Memorial Baptist, Fayetteville; and Rit Varriale, Elizabeth Baptist, Shelby.

Trustees heard a tribute to BCH staff member Jennie Counts by Trustee Ken Haigler. Counts passed unexpectedly on January 5. Investment consultants reported that despite last year's challenges, 2023 was beginning strong. BCH's COO Keith Henry, Senior VP Sam Barefoot, and Executive VP Brenda Gray made reports.

The next Full Board of Trustees Meeting is slated for September 19 in Thomasville.

Seventh cohort welcomed into leadership program

A new Baptist Children's Homes University (BCHU) cohort began its leadership journey February 1 on the Mills Home campus in Thomasville. Cohort 7's orientation launched the two-year program that is designed to provide high-potential employees an overview of every facet of the ministry as well as provide a quality educational experience and exposure to the necessary skills needed to run a large non-profit agency. Students commit to in-person learning, independent reading and assignments, and a final graduation project. Like previous cohorts, Cohort 7 will develop final projects in a group dynamic and present business plans to leadership, supervisors, and BCHU directors for future consideration.

Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) President/CEO Michael C. Blackwell greeted Cohort 7 during the orientation and asked each participant to share what they hope to gain by completing BCHU. Responses ranged from professional growth, a desire to inspire family to achieve new goals, and to learn more about the ministries of BCH. While students shared their personal testimony, an underlying unity resounded in their willingness to follow God's call on their life and make a difference in the lives of BCH clients.

"BCHU continues to help some of BCH's best to define their leadership skills," Blackwell said. "I am confident that BCH staff members are some of the best. And those who are the best of the best have always risen to help guarantee the brightest of futures for this ministry we all love so much."



Left to right, Laura Nichols-Virgilio, Exec. Dir. International Adoptions; Becky Stegall, CAS Office Manager; Jessie Chilson, KH Foster Care Supervisor; Courtney Stilwell, Accounting Manager, Business; Dr. Blackwell, President/CEO; Sian Saunders, BH Cottage Parent; Keith Henry, COO; Bond Kiser, VP Staff Compliance & Engagement; Jody Yopp, Dir. of Dev., Metrolina Region

Hope transforms, bringing healing and new life

By **Brenda B. Gray**, Executive Vice President, Development & Communications

I do not have the gift of seeing an old piece of furniture or an old house and seeing what it could be when placed in the hands of people who have a gift of restoration. However, I have been the beneficiary of a number of these special treasures.

My husband loved to do what I call dumpster diving. I never knew what he was going to bring home. Going to yard sales or auctions is one thing. Going through others' trash is quite another—in a word, *yuck!*

I was recently dusting an old oak bookcase that sits in my hallway. The bookcase has a special memory, as it was found in the basement of an old house at the children's home where we served as houseparents. It was clean-out day and it was being placed on the trash pile. My husband claimed it, and I thought, "Why?"

It was filthy dirty and had multiple coats of paint that had long faded. But in his hands, it became something very special. Underneath the surface was a beautiful solid oak antique treasure. As I dusted the shelves, I was thankful for this special bookcase and the memories it holds.

On the top of the bookcase sits an old camel-back clock that John rescued from the dump as he was hauling away trash. As I dusted the beautiful old clock, I remembered the day John presented me with this treasure—and, at the time, it was anything but a treasure. "What in the world do you want with that?" I asked, as he proudly held his new find.

Unimpressed, I forgot about the old clock until one day it returned. I couldn't believe it! It was refinished, new works with a full set of chimes, and a new door in the back. It was beautiful and it has a lovely sound. That hopeless old shell became a treasure. As I dust the clock, I hold it carefully in my hands celebrating the beautiful memories I have of its journey. All it took was someone who could see its value and commit to restoring it. What looked hopeless wasn't hopeless at all. The old clock just needed a *loving touch* from one who saw its beauty.

About eighteen months ago, I received a call from Keith Henry, BCH's chief operating officer, to join him for a tour of an old house located across the street from the house where I live on the Mills Home campus. The basement had three feet of water buildup, had been empty for sometime, and it was in bad need of major repair. My immediate reaction was: "You want to do what? Why?"

As we walked through the house, Keith was excited about what the home could be—a real treasure. He encouraged me to look below the

layers of dirt, coats of old, chipped paint, and the three feet of water in the basement. But, all I saw was a mess. The excitement and vision was contagious and I began to see it differently.

Keith envisioned it as a home for birth moms. He saw a place of support as birth moms walk through the emotional grief that comes with placing their child for adoption. That got my attention. It would be a place where lives would be changed and new beginnings could be experienced. It would be a lot more than a building. This place would be a treasure where hope and healing can be found for each young woman who walks through the home's doors.

I recently toured the house that is now called Emmanuel Home. The water problem is gone. Volunteers gutted the house and the layers of dirt and old paint have been removed from the walls and floors. *A treasure has emerged!*

Beautiful stained glass, gorgeous wooden ceiling beams, exquisite hardwood floors tell a story of restoration. Life has been brought back to this house and it is now a home.

Like my beautiful oak bookcase and my camel-back clock, Emmanuel Home is a treasure. It is a place where memories will be made. I am excited that these young courageous ladies who have chosen life for their babies will be living across the street from my house. I am so thankful for the opportunity to pour encouragement into their lives.

The BCH staff members are anxious to stand in the gap for these precious women and be a daily reminder to them of the true Savior who loves them more deeply than any human ever could.

So many people walk through our doors everyday needing the right place and the right people to help them. They feel alone and hopeless. The people who were supposed to protect them and provide for them either couldn't or didn't. They are desperately in need of people who can see them as the beautiful treasure they are in the hands of our Lord and Savior. And then there is healing, then there is restoration, then there is Easter.

Easter is about hopelessness and hope—in that order. After Jesus' arrest and trial, the disciples were afraid. While the disciples had some uneasy feeling about going to Jerusalem

for Passover, they never anticipated the horrific turn of events. Betrayed by one of his own, carried away under the cover of darkness, and facing a trial at the hands of his opponents, things were going very badly. Then came the crushing news that Jesus was to be crucified. The one they had placed all of their hope in was to die. The one they thought was the fulfillment of so many years of expectation would now be placed in a cold dark grave.

And then there is Easter!

In the middle of hopelessness, something happens. Not a cliché, not the power of positive thinking, but something really happens. Easter!

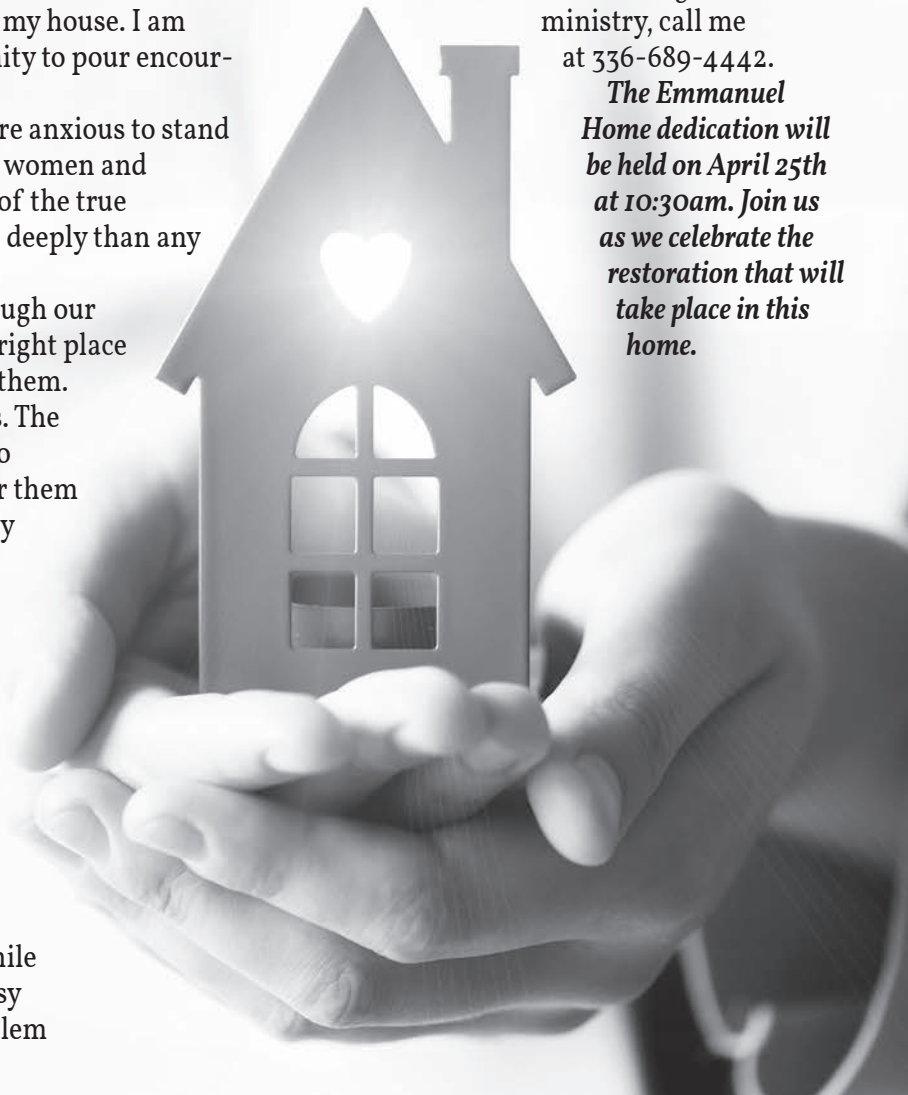
In the very heart of this hopeless time, hope was born! In the wounds that were meant to take life, life finds renewal and restoration. At the victory, messengers proclaimed triumph. In the moment of hopelessness, God acted and created Hope with a capital "H" and it forever stands as a promise that hopelessness has once and for all been defeated.

And then there is Easter!

From broken and worn by trauma and darkness, restoration and new life breaks forth! For more information on how you can be a part of this transforming restorative ministry, call me

at 336-689-4442.

The Emmanuel Home dedication will be held on April 25th at 10:30am. Join us as we celebrate the restoration that will take place in this home.



"We don't have Easter clothes."

This was Tina's response as Mrs. Sonya, Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) cottage mother for the seven year old and her younger brother and sister, shared plans for the cottage to attend the upcoming Easter Sunday church service.

For their safety, Tina and her siblings had to be removed from their family home where they were severely neglected. They did not even have basic necessities as all their parents' money went to feed their addictions. They arrived at BCH with next to no belongings much less nice clothing. Tina had always wanted good clothes and a pair of beautiful shoes.

Later that week, Tina came home from school and found brand-new clothes and shoes on her bed. She was so excited as she and her siblings, who also received new outfits, walked into the Easter service.

Three weeks later, Tina asked Jesus into her heart.

When you make an Easter gift, children like Tina are forever changed! Through your gift, you are a part of every life that is transformed.

Please make your life-changing Easter gift today. **Thank you!**



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☐ I have included Baptist Children's Homes in my estate.



Serving more than coffee—The Mill serves others

By **Blake Ragsdale**, Managing Editor

Achime sounds every time the door to Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) new coffee house opens. For the baristas, who daily greet new customers as well as those whose faces' have become familiar, that sound is more than an alert — it signals an opportunity to serve someone in a manner beyond fulfilling a coffee order.

"The women that work here are just very Godly and caring. It's hard to even know how to word it," says Charlotte Edwards.

Edwards is the manager for *The Mill: Coffee & Community* at Mills Home, BCH's flagship location in Thomasville. In step with the organization's mission of *sharing hope...changing lives*, Edwards and her staff at The Mill offer an environment that is enriching to all customers with an extra focus on families with children.



Jessica and Olivia

while also seeing someone doing their school work or spending time on their devotional," Edwards shares. "It's amazing that all of this can go on at the same place. Everybody is happy and feels welcome."

The smile on six-year-old Olivia's face affirms Edwards' perspective. She and her mother, Jessica, visit The Mill multiple times per week. Jessica home schools her young daughter and has found The Mill to be an ideal spot for them.

When her school work is completed, Olivia



The team at The Mill: Coffee & Community is passionate about serving others. Top Row: Kristin Allmon, Assistant Manager; Charlotte Edwards, Manager; Caitlin Adamcik. Bottom row: Kim Hearn, Lisa Pauley, Courtney Turner.

"You can see kids playing on our outdoor playground



The attention of community children is completely focused as barista Kim Hearn leads a "Storytime" event at *The Mill: Coffee & Community*. The new coffee house, located at Mills Home in Thomasville, has quickly become a part of BCH's overall mission.

likes to read on the couch in the sitting area or join other children on the coffee house's fully-fenced playground. While Olivia plays, Jessica opens up her laptop and tackles her own responsibilities.

"Olivia thinks The Mill is a living room you pay to come to visit," Jessica shares with a laugh. "She just fell in love with the atmosphere. 'Mrs. Kim' introduced her to a game on the coffee table and she was sold."

Kim Hearn, or "Mrs. Kim," is one of several baristas who serve at The Mill. A mother whose two boys enjoyed reading, Hearn began envisioning a regular event at the coffee house called "Storytime."

"When we opened, one of my first thoughts was we have this playground, and we have this great environment where moms are going to come. Let's also offer something to encourage them to come," Hearn explains.

During "Storytime," Hearn reads an

illustrated story book to children giving their family members an opportunity to relax and enjoy their coffee.

"It's been really encouraging because it's not the same families all the time. We've constantly had new people join us," Hearn shares. "It's been fun to have the kids come out to hear something new and sometimes make a craft and just interact together."

The staff have seen "Storytime" continue to grow with nearly 20 children attending their first Saturday event.

Overall, Edwards has seen traffic increase as word has spread about The Mill and the extra services offered to the community. Because it only used a smaller portion of the larger

building it occupies, the coffee house has been able to expand and increase its sitting capacity. The new area opened up in time for its special Valentines Day event on February 14 that offered live music and special holiday-themed amenities for guests—an ideal event for a coffee house whose motto is, "*Do good. Be kind. Love a latte.*"

In addition to the newly-completed expansion, they are in the process of refurbishing another room that will create a larger meeting space that can be utilized for multiple purposes.

"It gives us more room for 'Storytime.' There's also a baby shower taking place here in March," Edwards divulges. "We hope the community will find even more reasons for it."

As with all of Baptist Children's Homes' services, The Mill is nonprofit with funds going back into the BCH mission including the tips collected in the jar by the cash register. It's another reflection of how The Mill, and its dedicated baristas, is focused on serving others.

"It's warm and peaceful here," Edwards says. "It's a peace where you know God is with you."

Joy of starting over drives desire to help others

By **Ethan**, 2023 Cameron Boys Camp Graduate
(Continued from page 1)

Once I entered high school, I got a job. I could have used this time to make extra money and help my aunt, but I was charged with grand theft at the restaurant where I worked. The owner told my aunt if she found help for me, he would drop the charges. That's when my aunt learned about Cameron Boys Camp. She discovered it was a wilderness residential program that helps at-risk boys work through their problems.

Now at Camp, I started doing the same thing. I didn't take it serious. I was so used to avoiding help and doing my own thing that I didn't take advantage of all that was offered to me. The traumatic events from my earlier life caused me to tune it all out—my aunt, the chiefs, my group—everyone who was trying to help.

I became tired of arguing so much. I was exhausting myself trying to prove how I had been wronged and defending my actions. Since I didn't trust anyone after my mom left me on the porch, it was difficult to accept help.

But no one gave up on me and, slowly, I began building relationships with the other boys and chiefs. Once I did that, I was able



Ethan

to trust them. I was able to care. I was able to care for myself and my actions. I began to care for others.

In April of 2022, I realized I needed Jesus. All the bad things I'd done were weighing

on me and I knew I needed a savior. Over a home visit with my aunt, I went to church. When I was there, I read Ezekiel 36:26, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Immediately after reading this verse, my preacher shared the exact scripture. That's when I knew God was calling me personally. It was then and there that I asked Jesus to



Ethan graduated from the Cameron Boys Camp program on February 2. His aunt Marie and siblings joined him as Camp director Drew Scott presented his graduation certificate and certificates of achievements that encompassed completing eight week-long trips, canoeing 625 miles, and building six tents during his time at the Camp.

lead my life. It has been the best decision. It hasn't been a perfect journey since then but I've been steadily growing in my faith.

At Camp, I began to work on my goals even harder. I've been working on several goals throughout my time at Camp, but the most recent goals were:

- I will respect authority by taking initiative, supporting them and trusting they will meet my needs.
- I will be proactive by being thoughtful and using the Apostle Paul's writings as my guide.
- I will be trustworthy by being honest about my feelings, words, and actions.
- I will show I care by being agreeable and letting things go.

The main goal I have worked on was the last one. When I starting doing this, all the others began to fall into place. During my home visits I wasn't arguing with my aunt. I was being more respectful and I was helping out with my siblings.

But as hard as I thought I was working, I was challenged to dig even deeper to reach my full potential. Instead of failing to trust

and blowing the people in my life off, I decided to change, to readjust. From that time on, I pushed extremely hard for my fellow campers and my family. Everyone has noticed my progress. My aunt saw my growth and told me about it. She says I have become a different person since coming to Camp. I agree. I can hardly believe it is the same guy when I look at myself in a mirror. My group, especially my chiefs who had been with me the entire time, thought I was ready to go home and begin successfully living life. We all agreed. I was able to begin to make plans to go home and be successful with my family.

By accomplishing my goals and helping others, I will be graduating camp on February 2nd. I plan to finish high school and go on to college. I have created a plan for my life, and have decided to go to Campbell University and come back as a chief. I feel God has called me to help boys in need and I want to be involved with Camp the rest of my life.

I appreciate Camp for all the kindness and God-given grace they gave me. I am truly thankful for being given a second chance. I want to help someone else experience the joy of starting over.

Food drive in April shows children love of Jesus

Much has changed in the past two years as individuals, families, churches, as well as caregivers at Baptist Children's Homes (BCH), have all navigated the challenges of COVID-19. In the midst of change, there



are some things that unfortunately remain constant: everyday, children throughout North Carolina go without eating.

“Our cottage parents and staff see the signs of hunger far too often,” said BCH President/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. “Boys and girls arrive in our care needing to eat immediately. It’s why the Food Roundup is vital.”

When churches, along with NC Baptists across the state, collect food, supplies and gift cards through the Food Roundup in April, it ensures BCH’s caregivers can provide three meals a day plus snacks to every one they serve.

“It is only through being on mission together with statewide associational missions strategists, church leaders and volunteers that makes the food drive possible,” Blackwell said. “We are immensely grateful for the difference they make through this annual effort.”

Blackwell shared that as churches are providing food they are pointing boys and girls



**FOOD
ROUNDUP**
BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES

towards Christ.

“When the children ask their BCH cottage parents why churches collect food for them, they are able to say, ‘It’s because they love you, but most importantly, it’s because they want you to know that God loves you.’”

A number of resources to help NC Baptists promote the Food Roundup—including flyers, slides, social media posts and a video—are available at bchfoodroundup.org.

Questions? Contact BCH’s Alan Williams at 336-474-1277 or awilliams@bchfamily.org.

Updated needs list focuses collecting efforts

MOST NEEDED (in bold):

- **Household cleaning products (i.e. bleach, Comet, Lysol spray and wipes, Clorox spray, Windex, Pinesol, Pledge, Tilex, etc.)**
- **Canned Fruits**
- **Fruit Juice (Apple, Orange, Grape, Cranberry)**
- **Laundry Detergent**
- Paper Products (paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, Kleenex) Bottled Water
- Dry Cereal
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Pasta (Spaghetti, Lasagna, Macaroni)
- Canned Tomatoes (diced, sauce, paste)
- Pancake Mix and Syrup
- Soups (All types & condensed)
- Sugar (Granulated & Brown)
- Flour
- Splenda
- Popcorn, Kettle Corn
- Apple Sauce
- Fruit Pie Filling (Cherry and Peach)
- Beverage Mixes (Tea, Tang, Kool-Aid, Lemonade, Cider Mix - All Sugar Free)
- Vegetable Oil, Shortening, Olive Oil, Pam Cooking Spray, Bakers Choice
- Canned Sweet Potatoes,
- Canned Yams
- Canned Meats (pink salmon, tuna, roast beef, chicken - packed in water)
- Stuffing Mix
- Gravy Mixes
- Hamburger, Chicken, and Tuna Helper (all types)
- Pickles (Sweet & Dill)
- Refried Beans
- Hot Chocolate Mix
- Snack Foods with & without sugar (Fruit Rollups, Fruit Cups, Beef Jerky, Slim Jims, Pepperoni Sticks, Cheese Nips, Pretzels, etc.)
- Healthy Snacks (Dried Fruit, Nuts, Raisins, Cranraisins, Trail Mix)

- Individual Cookie Packs
- Jello
- PopTarts
- Rice
- Instant Potatoes (scalloped, au gratin, mashed, julienne)
- Muffin Mixes
- Bisquick Mix
- Kidney Beans
- Pickle Relish
- Cranberry Sauce
- Mac & Cheese
- Corn Meal
- Jiffy Mixes, Corn Muffin Mix, Hush Puppy Mix
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly, Jams, Preserves (Strawberry is the favorite)
- Pizza & Pizza Dough Mix
- Saltine Crackers, Ritz Crackers, Graham Crackers
- Sauces (A-1, Steak, BBQ, Texas Pete, Cheese, Worcestershire, Soy, Teriyaki, Sweet & Sour)
- Spices and Seasonings (including Salt & Pepper)
- Dishwashing detergents
- Laundry pre-treating pro-

- ducts (i.e. Shout, Spray and Wash)
- Brooms, Mops, Scrub Brushes, Dust Pans
- Foil and Plastic Wrap
- SOS Pads
- Fabric Softener
- Dryer Sheets
- Sanitary Pads & Tampons
- Hand Lotion
- Shampoo
- Body Wash
- Soap

OTHER NEEDED ITEMS:

- Brownie & Cookie Mix
- Canned Vegetables
- Individual Chef Boyardee cups
- Clif brand nutrition bars
- Hot Dog Chili
- Coffee (Regular & Decaf)
- Coffee Creamer
- Sweetened Condensed Milk
- Evaporated Milk
- Powdered Milk
- Flavorings (Vanilla, etc.)
- French Fried Onions
- Honey

- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Oatmeal
- Parmesan Cheese
- Puddings, Pudding Cups
- Salsa
- Vinegar
- Paper Products (Cups, Plates, Bowls, Plastic Ware, Dixie Cups)
- Trash Bags (large & small)
- Zip-Loc bags (Sandwich, Snack, Quart & Gallon Sizes)
- Band Aids
- Rubbing Alcohol/Peroxide
- Anti-bacterial ointment
- Razors
- Shaving Cream/Shaving Gel
- Dental Floss
- Hair brushes
- Deodorant
- Conditioner
- Tooth Paste
- Tooth Brushes
- Diapers (all sizes)
- Baby Wipes
- Bug Repellent
- Wasp/Hornet Spray
- Sunblock 30+

- Batteries (AA , AAA and D)
- Disposable Gloves (Latex & Non-Latex)

Gift Cards are appreciated for buying perishables and items not received. (i.e. Wal-Mart, Sams Clubs, Food Lion, Lowes, Ingles, Piggly Wiggly).

We can use all size cans. Some locations prefer #10 cans (family size).

IMPORTANT: Please check for expired dates on food -- we cannot accept expired items.

Please help our volunteer truck drivers by packing your church's donations in small, sturdy boxes.

Pack like items together. Please do not pack chemicals with food.

Alumni encouraged to send families condolences – Special times and dear staff members remembered

By **Lib Johnson** (336) 299-7412 libsjohnson@triad.rr.com

Our hearts go out to **Sue Hooks Elliott** who lost her husband David on December 23. Sue uses Facebook as a platform on which she thoughtfully requests prayers for so many people who are suffering from sickness and various heartaches and problems. Let us remember her now at this time of sorrow. Friends can send condolences to Sue at 148 Fellowship Park Rd., China Grove, NC, 28023.

We are always deeply saddened to hear of alumni deaths, and unfortunately, we have several this month. **Linda Dorsett Hughes** informed me of the death of her husband **Raymond** on December 5, 2022. Raymond had suffered from a broken hip and a weakened heart for several weeks. He met further difficulties when he fell from his bed and suffered a brain concussion. Part of that time he was hospitalized and then he spent his last five days under hospice care. Raymond entered Mills Home (MH) in 1941 and graduated in 1954. In high school, he played football for both MH and Thomasville High School. Probably his most meaningful duty on campus was working in the print shop where he received great graphic art training. It was a skill on which he built a lifelong career. After serving his country for five years in the U.S. Navy, he returned to Thomasville and married **Linda Dorsett** who bore him two sons and one daughter. They now have one grandchild. Raymond loved to hunt and was very fond of his hunting dogs. Friends can send condolences to Linda and Raymond's family at 826 Turner Rd., Lexington, NC 27292.

Carter (CB) Cartrette informed us that **Ricky Dale Cartrette** of Monroe, GA passed away on December 14, 2022. He entered MH in 1966 with siblings **Carter, Joyce Ann, Thomas, and Mickey**. He left in 1971 to live with his mother although he had loved life at MH. He had enjoyed

hanging out with his brother **Mickey** and his friend **David Frisbee** at the pool and valley and he loved teasing the girls. As an adult, he felt strongly that MH had made a very positive effect on his character development. He also enjoyed the special Cartrette family closeness when they all vacationed together at the beach yearly.

Ricky Dale was the father of **Brittany, Amber and Brandon** and grandfather to seven grandchildren. He was predeceased by his beloved wife **Vickie** and his brother **Bill**. He is survived by all his offspring, their spouses, and children. He is also survived by **Lacy** and his other siblings listed above, and their spouses and children. His funeral was on December 19, 2022 and he was interred in Hill Haven Memory Gardens in Monroe, GA. Condolences may be sent to Carter Cartrette, 3679 Hayfield Ct., Thomasville, NC, 28360 and to Joyce Ann Hill, 209 Oakdale Rd., Jamestown, NC, 27282.

We were saddened also to learn that **Ronald "Ronnie" Lee Trantham** passed away on January 7, 2023 at his home. Ronnie was a member of perhaps the largest family group ever to enter (1957) our "hallowed arches": **Earline, Kaye, Ramona, Juanette, Jeanette, and Robert**. He was a member of Mt. Zion Wesleyan Church and the Inspiration Sunday School Class. Ronnie also was a member of the Mets Senior Group. He worked for more than 38 years as a machinist for Thomas Company/Brass Craft Mfg. He enjoyed fishing at Hatteras and enjoyed watching the Atlanta Braves and Dallas Cowboys. Ronnie was also a master craftsman and enjoyed building furniture and bird houses. On November 4, 1967, he married **Karen Love** and they enjoyed more than 55 years of marriage.

Surviving Ronnie are the following: his wife **Karen**; offspring **Julie and Brett Andrew**; siblings and their spouses, **Robert, Earlene Ward**

(Don), Juanette Thomas (Dan), Jeanette Hensley, Ramona (John), and Kaye (Gary); seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Ronnie's funeral service and interment took place on January 14 at Mt. Zion Wesleyan Church, Thomasville.

A note from **Kaye Trantham Mills** reads, "Ronnie and Karen were married for 55 years. Never leaving his side, Karen made a home for Ronnie where he was blessed with so much love. He lived the American dream having great times with his family and friends at his home on Hatteras, holding a job for over 38 years, and living a dedicated Christian life. He told me he was not angry over his brain cancer: 'Things happen in life. I love people and want to help them.' He talked about seeing Christ in a Lord's supper setting in the sky when he was a small boy, before Mills Home. And his talk always demonstrated his love of Christ and his great love for his six siblings as well as his MH brothers and sisters. We lost a great man, a Christian, friend, and brother. He is healed now and that is what I believe and hang on to. Ronnie was a true Mills Home kid through and through!" Condolences may be sent to Karen and any other family member c/o Karen Trantham: 204 Daisy Dr., Thomasville, NC, 27360.

Other alumni who have recently passed away and will be covered in the next issue are **Linda Wood Patterson, '54; Ruby Lee Laws, '58; Louise Maness Pierce, '64; and George Fore, '60.**

Estie Culler entered MH in 1958 with siblings **Martha and James**. She graduated in 1966. She loved life at MH and participated fully in life on campus and in school, especially cheerleading and basketball. She says, "My cheerleading actually began in the 5th grade when **Coach Corder** selected me to be on the Mills Home Little League Football Cheerleader Team (the Mills Home Redskins). I was a cheerleader and

played basketball for the Thomasville Bulldogs in Junior and Senior High. I served as Chief Cheerleader in Junior High. My first duty at MH was sweeping the sidewalk at the Biggs. My favorites were working in the Noah Richardson Library and working at the Woman's Building for **Miss Sallie** and also with **Mrs. Pearson** in the kitchen. Attending church and playing in the valley, pool and gym were among the highlights for me at Mills Home." After completing high school, Estie continued her education at High Point University and then continued to live in High Point, NC. After working many years in the Guilford County Superior Court, she ran for and was elected to the office of Clerk of Guilford County Superior Court, retiring in 1999. At that time, she was the only non-lawyer ever to hold that office.

In serving as Clerk of Guilford County Superior Court, Estie was a firm believer in showing appreciation to employees. She set up a plan to recognize an employee of the month and she brought treats for all employees on special holidays. She spent thousands of hours working side by side with employees trying to clear out a huge backlog.

Estie became active on the Alumni Council serving as secretary around 2000, First Vice-President 2012-2014, and as Alumni President from 2014-2016. One big task she tackled as a First Vice President was to set up a working schedule between the chimes company and Mills Home Baptist Church. She was a very efficient leader of the Alumni Association. In 2012, Estie published a book about her early life before entering Mills Home:



Insanity on the Road to Glory.

Lib Johnson was a resident of Mills Home from 1946 to 1957. Johnson began writing the Mills Home alumni column in 1992.

Making News Every Day Around the State



Dr. Blackwell greets cottage parents
BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell welcome two new cottage parent couples to Mills Home. Cottage parents provide 24/7 care to children who need a safe home at BCH.



Asheboro Home ladies shine brightly
Women dressed in their best attire as they attended "A Night to Shine" sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. The prom experience was hosted by Rich Fork Baptist in Thomasville



Church tackles tree project
Livesent Ministries, a nonprofit outreach of Hickory Grove Baptist in Charlotte, brought their equipment to cut down and trim back vulnerable trees at Mills Home in Thomasville.



Former BCH youth graduates college
Cottage parents and staff celebrated Jackie's college graduation. Donors of BCH's advanced education funds made the former Mills Home youth's college dream possible.



Children study fruits and vitamins
The youngest class of boys and girls at Good Shepherd creatively learned about nutritious fruits and their vitamins. Good Shepherd serves impoverished, indigenous children.



Single moms focus on the future
Single moms and their children living in our Family Care cottages work to establish goals. The ministry equips them for a successful future for themselves and their children.



International adoption finalized
Through Christian Adoption Services (CAS), Seth and Kaylin are celebrating the adoption of their son Kean. CAS offers international adoption in the Philippines and Czech Republic.



Cottage mom and child play together
Cottage parent Diane Schwall and a young child living in her cottage play a game of "peek-a-boo." One of the greatest needs of BCH's children is to know they are loved.



Students volunteer at Kennedy Home
Students from Mintz Christian Academy in Roseboro tackled projects that included the painting of Greater Vision Outreach's eastern location.

Set Your Reminder and Join Us for these Events & Mission Days



FOOD ROUNDUP: April 2023

DEDICATIONS

Emmanuel Home
April 25 – Thomasville

Turner Cottage
May 22 – Hayesville

River Hill Refuge
To Be Determined – Shelby

CAMP FOUNDER'S DAY

Cameron Boy's Camp – May 20

FUNDRAISERS

Christian Adoption Services (CAS)
Charlotte Banquet: March 2

CAS Rocky Mount Golf
Tournament: April 21

CAS Apex Banquet: April 27

Ride to Clyde: May 10 – 13

Broyhill Barbecue Festival
May 13 – Clyde

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN SATURDAY MISSIONS

Cameron Boys Camp, Cameron –
April 15

Camp Duncan, Aberdeen – May 6

Kennedy Home, Kinston – May 13

Odum Home, Pembroke – May 20



For a complete 2023 list of events as well as registration and other details, visit bchfamily.com/events



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For each person's specific need, Baptist Children's Homes offers a unique ministry that is prepared to help. Reach out today.



Dr. Blackwell to preach Homecoming sermon— Alumni share good childhood memories

By **JOHN THOMPSON**, 104 Village Court, Havelock, NC 28532 (252) 671-3515 jthompson117@ec.rr.com

This year's Homecoming is just around the corner. Have you marked it on your calendar? June 3 and 4. Have you made motel reservations in Kinston or in the surrounding area? Now is the time to do it! We want to have a huge crowd this year and pack the choir loft. We'll sing a lot of short songs learned when you were in grades one through six. We will also sing our regular patriotic songs.

I'm very excited to announce that Baptist Children's Homes president/CEO **Dr. Michael Blackwell** will be our "campus pastor" for Homecoming. This year is a special year for him. He marks his 40th anniversary as BCH's leader. He has given half of his life to serving the Lord through Baptist Children's Homes. He has promised to deliver a sermon we will all remember. You won't want to miss it!

Letters will be sent out to all alumni pretty soon. It is very important to fill out the information sheets and reservation cards and mail them back the same week you get them. This is a big help to update our mailing list and know how to plan for Homecoming. It will help me a lot if you fill out at least one sheet of paper telling about when you were at Kennedy Home so I can share it in my *Charity & Children* column. Please do that for me.

Facebook is a very good way for you to keep up with the alumni, too. We have a special alumni Facebook account for you to use. We have a very active group who write on there all the time. I look on there every day to get ideas for my column. I believe we have between four and five hundred active members. We just had some new ones join. Let's welcome **Debbie Daniels(Conner)**, **James Gilliam**, and **Huey P. Newton**.

There is a special group of alumni who keep track of what is being said. They act as our "policemen."

There are some rules I want to share with you. Read over these rules and join right away.

1. Be kind and courteous! (All posts will be respectful and cordial.)

2. No hate speech or bullying (If you cannot say something respectful, don't say anything at all.)

3. This is not a political spot. Please use your own Facebook page for announcing and publicizing your political opinions.

4. If you STRAY... If you fail to follow group rules, you will receive a warning and be asked to delete the post. If you do not delete the post, it will be deleted for you.

5. If you continue to STRAY, then you will be removed from the group.

6. What are your appeal rights? The enforcement of the rules will be done by the Group Administration. If you wish to appeal, a decision of the Group Administrators, you can contact us through private messaging.

Now, it is time to remember.

Bridget Warren writes, "I remember my jobs. I was a tour guide at Cedar Dell mansion for visiting guests, cleaned the church, and was part of the campus crew. We worked with... can't think of his name...doing repairs on campus. I do remember that his wife was our cook in Bigg's cottage. I helped my friend milk cows and we worked in the garden on weekends. I remember the cottage back in the woods—it was creepy. We would spend the money we made during the week at the gym buying snacks. I tried to save some money. I won the Halloween costume contest with my friend, cause I made a 'nerd' candy box out of a refrigerator box (half orange and half purple). I remember singing in the choir and swimming in the pool in the summer. I have lots and lots of memories."

Debbie Caulder added a note about the cottage in the woods. It was know as the Skeeter Hut. I took many children down there

to spend the night. We would hear all kinds of sounds on the porch—deer I suppose. My **Becky** and our sons would go down there to spend the night. We had Halloween parties there. Would you believe Becky would dress as the old witch?

Bridget continues writing about her houseparents, **Ronald Bowdle and Ms. B.** She remembers that they were the best houseparents. "I loved them both so much it hurt and I still do love them. Tell Ms. B I love her."

Karen Meyers remembers **Mr. Bradshaw and Ms. Dolly** as "sweet folks." She writes: "**Mr. Bradshaw** was 'big' and 'jolly.' We all loved to watch **Dolly Parton** after church on Sunday all piled up on top of each other in the floor. We loved singing. It was such fun times. We also loved riding in the truck. I remember sneaking out the upstairs window and sitting on the roof at Biggs and singing with my friend **Gwen**."

Linda Jenkins adds: "I heard about the Skeeter hut but I never saw it. Some of my fond memories was swimming in the pool and swinging in the area next to the pool. I remember walking the lane to the gate and round the circle at the big, beautiful house, shelling beans, freezing corn, and going to the sewing room. Christmas and other good times were such a treat. The good always out weighed the bad and I thank God! I am thankful that as a result of living at Kennedy Home I have some lifelong friends. I like it because we call each other brother or sister. You all are my Kennedy Home family. Even the ones that lived there at a different time! We all understand each other. Kennedy Home is in my heart and will always be."

James Gilliam remembers all the good times, especially the Sunday walks up and down the road. "I have some close friends I will always keep in my heart."

Linda Jenkins went on to write: "I know a lot about what you folks

are saying as I feel the same...we made a lot of close friends. Those teen years were the years many met their first sweethearts. Our first loves and friends are never forgotten, just like other first-time events in those important years of our lives. It is so great when friends stay friends the rest of our lives.

"There is a special bond God placed between us. That keeps us caring about each other. Kennedy Home is the reason we know each other. Kennedy Home life had an effect on us all. All these things have helped us on our journey of life. I am thankful for my lifelong friends and special times and relationships that I will always hold close in my heart! Miles between us cannot cut the closeness and memories we share together. God bless each of you. I love you all."

Barbara Smith writes that she feels the same way and encourages readers to "re-read Linda's words again and again."

I always say miles cannot break a friendship but not staying in touch can. Getting too busy to type a short checkup on friends can harm friendships if you let it. Keep in touch. Post on Facebook or send me something for my column.

Let me remind you again, if you are ever in Havelock, stop by my house. I would love a visit. And don't forget, your stories are what is most important to our alumni column. I cannot do this in each *C&C* issue without you. Please help me. Send your stories about visiting homes, your experiences, and your good memories. I want to write about "visiting homes" next month. And remember, Homecoming will not be the same without you. Plan today to attend on the Kennedy Home campus June 3 and 4.

Love ya! jt



John Thompson served at Kennedy Home from 1972-1977. Today, he enjoys an active retirement.

Preparation is essential for a meaningful Easter

By Jim Edminson, Editor

The long, formal dining table supports travel cases and staged forget-me-nots including books, notebooks, plastic baggies, highlighters, shekels, water shoes, broad-brimmed hat, and Bible. As I go by, I lift a few items, carry them into the family room, and flip through my itinerary again, check my packing list again, edit my stash again. There are only days left for preparing the essentials, and then it will be *go time*.

I saw my friend and fellow Holy Land traveler at church Sunday. "Are you like Joyce and me, suitcase spread out on the table, adding and subtracting the must-haves?" I smiled my assent. "Just before coming here, we had a back-and-forth about umbrellas."

Yes, how well I know. My own small folding one is in the "possibles" stack, and I think I should add it to the case; my friend is more traveled than I, and if he is taking one, well maybe I should. Planning far out from departure time, I can decide and rethink before the big day. I know if I do not prepare, important stuff will be left, perusal of good resources will be forgotten, and the mad rush at the end will leave me, well, rushed.

Preparation: the word itself takes me to my childhood visits to my grandparents' Louisiana home in Covington, a big sprawling ranch fenced to enclose cherished gardens and rambunctious grands. Just before springtime rolled around, Mawmaw prepared to extend her collection of plants and flowers strewn around the almost two acre lawn. She busied herself dividing and transplanting

her gatherings and planting new cuttings from neighbors and friends. Tools, pots, and fertilizer jostled with the plants in her wheelbarrow. She moved about her domain like a general marshaling troops, careful in her plans and execution; she left nothing to chance. Even now, I am giving *silent thanks* for lessons learned about her processes and careful planning.

In different ways, Dad demonstrated the art of preparation. He never began a task unless he had already assembled what was necessary, carved out the needed time, and went about his work with method, wasting no movements. Under the hood, he was a master mechanic, and his toolbox amazed all who saw it. There was never a doubt if he had the right tool for the job; he had already made sure of that fact. Novice tinkerers came to him for advice and instruction, and many neighbors owed their cars' good service to his tutoring. But his tactical skill really shone when he packed the car for vacation. The man was genius in *space accommodation*. It started with assembling all the various suitcases, backpacks, picnic baskets, pillows, toys, and everything else essential for an Edminson outing.

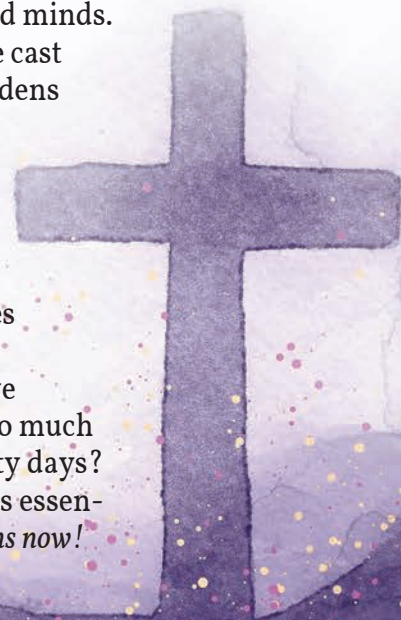
He assessed the stuff, planned his assault, and then began. Opening the trunk, he stowed the luggage of six with a precision that professional organizers would envy. After he finished, there was always room for those last minute additions Mom brought out. *He truly did think of everything.*

Scripture affirms the justness of planning. The word "prepare" occurs 159 times in the Bible. I think of this as I look at my calendar. The season of Lent is upon me. I must prepare my heart for this holy time. This year, I will spend the first days of the lenten season in Israel, and I want to be ready.

The forty-day span between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday serves as a time of preparation, focusing on the perfect gift of God to His creation: reconciliation and a new beginning in Jesus Christ. Some friends mark the season with an act of sacrifice, giving up something pleasurable to remember God's sacrifice; others add a diligent study time for delving into God's word as the holy resurrection day approaches. All prepare hearts and minds as a gift pleasing to the Father. As we look forward to our celebration of the resurrection of our Lord, we must prepare, not gardens nor luggage, but hearts and minds.

Join me as we cast away the burdens of sin and temptation and present ourselves as holy sacrifices to our God.

How can we accomplish so much in a mere forty days? Preparation is essential. *It all begins now!*



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