



# Faith & Family

A Special Supplement to

THE SAMPSON  
INDEPENDENT



# Celebrating the Resurrection of **JESUS**

**By Tyanna Yonkers**

Guest Columnist

**E**aster is the most important of holy days for Christians. While the word Easter is the most common name for the day, it is also known by the names Paschah Sunday and Resurrection Sunday. "Pascha Sunday" is used largely by Orthodox Christians. The word Pascha comes from the Hebrew word Pesah or Passover, connecting the death of Jesus to the Jewish Passover. In his death, Jesus becomes the Pascal Lamb enabling eternal death to pass over us, just as the blood of the Passover Lamb protected the Hebrews' first born from death the night before their Exodus from Egypt.

Paschah Sunday often falls on a different day than the one celebrated in Roman Catholic and

Protestant traditions. This is because Roman Catholics and Protestants observe Easter on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. This year that day is April 1. Orthodox Christians use a different calendar to compute the day which often results in a different celebration date. This year Orthodox Christians will celebrate Paschah Sunday on April 8.

There are also some Christians who prefer the name "Resurrection Sunday" since the word resurrection more clearly identifies the focus of the day, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. The name "Easter Sunday" is shrouded in conflict and mystery with too many options to present in this space.

Ultimately, the name Christians choose to



**Dr. Tyanna Yonkers**

Courtesy photos



First United Methodist Church of Clinton, NC, is the mother church of Methodism for the city of Clinton.

With a history of over 150 years, First UMC Clinton has a history of ministry and missions for over a century, and still remains today as a strong and visible witness of God's love for the world.

First UMC Clinton has been recognized as one of the top 100 churches for its programs of innovative and dynamic ministry.

The church is over 675 members strong, and continues to grow with new families each month. The membership is well balanced with all ages and stages in life represented.

With the church's dynamic music program representing a choir that has given concerts around the world, the new pipe organ, new youth house with a strong and growing youth ministry program, and with ministries to families and children, including an after-school care five days a week, First UMC Clinton continues to be a well-balanced church with ministries for everyone.

We belong to Harbor District in the NC Conference of the UMC.



**Reverend T.R. Miller**

**Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors**  
208 Sampson Street • Clinton, NC 28328

**910-592-2035**  
firstumccanton.com

designate the day does not really matter. What matters is the focus of the day which is to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The life, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus the Christ, is the wondrous Pascal mystery. This event is God's deepest revelation of God's Very Self to us. It expresses the depths of God's love for all people even as it calls us to embody this kind of love for others. Easter is the feast day of all feast days and it marks the start of Eastertide or the Pascal Season, a 50-day joyous celebration during which we work to see the world through new eyes. We live imagining Christ being physically present with us. We intentionally practice living as though we are in an Eden-like-time, where all of creation is in harmony and humanity reflects the fullness of God in whose image we have been created. We live fully in love with all other people regardless of our differences. We relate to all people with equality, imitating the behavior of Jesus. We live seeing the Christ in others and we treat them as we would treat Christ.

If we can imagine such a time and dedicate ourselves for fifty days to imitate and create such a life, not only will our own lives be transformed, but we will also then work to help others be freed from oppression and difficulty. Living in this way will make real our prayers when we say, "God's kingdom come, God's will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven." May we live this way not just on Easter Sunday, and throughout Eastertide, but every day of every year for the remainder of our earthly journey.

Dr. Tyanna Yonkers is a professor of religion and co-director of UMO Theatre.



Dr. Tyanna Yonkers is a professor of religion at the University of Mount Olive.



Known as the most important of holy days for Christians, Easter is also known by the names Pascah Sunday and Resurrection Sunday.

**Only GOD**  
 can turn a MESS into a MESSAGE..  
 A TEST into a TESTIMONY..  
 A TRIAL into a TRIUMPH..  
 a VICTIM into a VICTORY!!

*We ought to weigh well,  
 what we can only once decide.*

**Complete Funeral Service including: Traditional Funerals, Cremation  
 Pre-Need-Pre-Planning**

*Independently Owned & Operated  
 Since 1920's*

**Butler Funeral Home**  
*2 locations to better serve you*

401 W. Roseboro Street  
 Roseboro, NC  
 910-525-5138  
 910-525-4337 (fax)

Hwy. 24 Windwood Dr.  
 Stedman, NC  
 910-223-7400  
 910-307-0353 (fax)

# Resurrection Light

By Dr. Ray Ammons

Guest Columnist

We can imagine a tomb to be a dreadfully still, dark, place. Appearing to be absolute and final, its cold lifelessness extends shadows and shrouds hope. With that foreboding image, someone may longingly ask this week, “Is it true?” They will be referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. With all of my heart, mind, and soul, I believe it is true. We know the report and we have come to profess and proclaim that God raised Christ from the grave. I don’t believe it is true because I have seen evidence to prove the resurrection. For me, the resurrection is what Frederick Buechner once called “a truth that can never be proven, but can only be lived for, believed in and loved.” And I don’t believe it is true because I think that the resurrection is a doctrine I must believe to be an “orthodox” Christian. The resurrection is a truth deeper and more remarkable than any church or denominational doctrine.

Moreover, I don’t believe it is true because I think I must believe in the resurrection in

order to get on God’s good side. We are on God’s good side, because of God’s grace, and not, essentially, because of our personal “certainties.” I believe what we are saying and singing on Easter is true because of what the resurrection says about God. Easter’s message is not that Jesus “woke up” or “got up.” Easter’s message is that God raised Christ from the grave. With an intentional, new act of creation, God and Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit overcame the finality and punishment of death’s attempt at termination. God lifted our Savior up from the tomb to empty it and fill our hearts and lives eternally with forgiveness, hope, and love. A dead, entombed Jesus who becomes the resurrected Christ is a Savior worth being “lived for, believed in, and loved.”

The resurrection says something about God. The resurrection says God is never finished. God always has something new for us. God can take what looks like the end of everything good and turn it into the edge of something new. Despite any overwhelming evidence to the contrary, God is going to have the last word, and if the last word said is going to be God’s,



then the last thing done is going to be “good.”

That is what the resurrection says about God. Now we know or at least have been reminded where the story really begins. It seems to begin in the dark, where we may ask, “Is it true?” Yet for us, through the radiant, loving power of God it begins, at last, with the sunrise.

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it... The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.

**Matthew 28:1-6 (NIV)**

Dr. Ray Ammons is the pastor of First Baptist Church, 408 College St., Clinton.



# Live a Life Devoted to **JESUS**



## By Kaitlyn Royal

Guest Columnist

**T**he Easter season is a very special time of the year for my family and I. During Easter, we gather and have a meal with our extended family, attend the Easter service at church, travel, and attend Easter egg hunts. Just like Santa at Christmas time, the Easter bunny is a big hit and what kids generally tend to look forward to on Easter morning.

All of these activities are fun and make for a great time of fellowship, however, there is one key concept that is more important than anything that I just mentioned. That is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Jesus is the light of the world, our Savior, our Redeemer, a sinless person, someone that brings hope into our

life, someone that brings life to lifeless people, someone that heals hurting and broken hearts, and someone that represents love. In Ephesians 2:10, He calls us His masterpiece. Jesus laid his life down so that we could live and be forgiven of our countless number of sins. How many people do you know that would lay their life down for someone that they have never met before?

We use both Easter and Christmas as times to direct our focus on Christ, however we should live and give God the glory each and every day of our life. I read a quote whenever I was 13 that said, "God died for you in public, so don't just live for him in private." I also read 1 Timothy 4:12 which reads, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in live, in faith, and in purity."

Both the quote and verse hit home in my life and lit a fire of passion within me that led to me accepting Christ into my heart as my Lord and Savior that same year. Ever since that day, I strive to live everyday according to God's plans and desires for my life. Romans 8:28 says "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." I put my full trust in Him and said "God use me as you need me to further your kingdom."

I never imagined that His response to me would be sending me to Guatemala as a medical missionary, using me as a disciple within my community and within volunteer organizations such as The Christian Food

Bank of Salemburg and GAIN (God's Anointed In Need) Retreats, and lastly in my school as the president of Fellowship of Christian Students at Clinton High School, where I have been given the opportunity to minister to my peers and even lead a few to know Jesus. Within my four years of high school, I have been honored to have received many prestigious awards, however, I give God all of the credit because He lives and works through me every day.

Not only has he opened numerous doors in my life, but he has closed a few as well. I have learned that I must not get frustrated with God, but instead praise him for the direction He leads me. I am very grateful for the village of people that God has surrounded me with. This includes my parents, friends, family members, CHS teachers and employees, my dance family, my pageant family, my theater family, my church family, and the countless number of other people that have shaped my life in some way. In the fall, I will be attending The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and cannot wait to continue sharing the love and light of God within me on the campus and continue being the hands and feet of our powerful and wonderful God.

Kaitlyn Royal is a senior at Clinton High School.

**THORNTON'S  
BODY SHOP, INC.**  
**24 HOUR WRECKER SERVICE**

312 Isaac Weeks Road, Clinton

Bus. Phone 592-6493

*In Loving Memory of*

*W.P. Bishop and Paul Bishop*



00915628

# The Active and Passive of **EASTER**

By **Gilbert Owens**

Contributing Columnist

**T**he real story of Easter is the whole story about Jesus Christ.

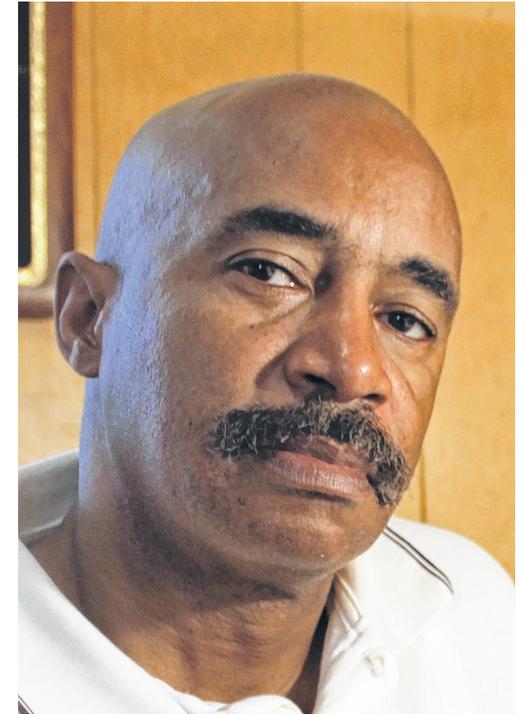
Jesus as the Son of God actually had two missions to fulfill for God. He has an active ministry to complete and He had a passive ministry to complete. Both ministries were designed to glorify God and to give eternal life to the people of God. In my personal study and meditation of God's word, the Holy Spirit revealed three important verses to me that led me to the truth stated above.

In John 4:34 we find these words, "Jesus said unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Jesus made this statement after his disciples asked him to eat something and he replied to them that, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," {John 4:32} Jesus was letting us know that He

had come to earth to finish the work that His Father had started as outlined throughout the Old Testament. Jesus was also letting them know that as a result He was been fed by His Father with a meat they were not aware of. Obviously that meat was the Holy Spirit.

Prior to saying those words as quoted in John chapter 4, Jesus had received the anointing of the Holy Spirit that landed on Him like a dove, as outlined in Matthew chapter 2. It was at that moment when Jesus began his active ministry.

Jesus active ministry lasted close to three years. During that time period, Jesus was bold with resisting the temptations of Satan, the attacks of the religious community, the healing of the sick and performing many wonders and miracles. But more importantly, Jesus was boldly active in declaring the Word of God and with glorifying God.



**His Voice Quartet**

**hisvoicemusic.com**

1230 Ozzie Road Clinton NC 28328  
(C) 910-590-5906 (H) 910-592-7939  
drs970@centurylink.net

**KIVETT'S**  
*Fine Church Furniture*

**CHAIRS** **PEWS** **FURNITURE**

**WE ALSO DO REFINISHING!**

**COMBINATION STYLE THEATRE SEATING** **FIBERGLASS STEEPLES** **COURTROOMS**

Catch us in the Easter edition of  
**Faith & Family!**

711 Southwest Blvd | Clinton, NC 28328 | 910-592-0161 *Family Owned Business Since 1958*

In John 17:4-5 we find these words, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gave me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me, with Thine own self with the glory I had with Thee before the world was."

This represents a significant turning point in the life of Jesus while He was here on earth. Jesus was telling God that his work was finished. Jesus was referring to his active ministry and that he needed God to glorify Him for His passive ministry that was about to begin. That is why Jesus first said, before making that request, these words in John 17:1, "Father the hour is come..." Jesus knew the hour had come for him to suffer and die for the sins of the world. Jesus knew also the hour had come for him to lay down His bold active ministry and pick up his passive ministry, which would allow Him to humbly take what the world had to dish out to Him.

Jesus had to invoke a passive ministry onto His life to completely fulfill God's will as outlined in Jesus own words when He said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, shall not perish, but will have eternal life. It was Jesus passive ministry that allowed him to suffer the way He did. It was Jesus passive ministry that allowed him to take upon Himself the sins of the world. It was Jesus passive ministry that allowed Him not to resist how badly He was treated. And it was Jesus passive ministry that allowed Him to take some of the abuse He took without saying a word.

Jesus passive ministry came to an end on the cross. In John 19:30 we find these words, "When Jesus therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished and He gave up the ghost. This was the end of his life and the end of His passive ministry. Jesus had completed the entire work that His Father started.

It was, after all, God who told Isaiah to give us this report about the coming life of Jesus when He said in the Old Testament, {Isaiah 53}, "For He shall grow up before us as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form of comeliness and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from Him, He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgression. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed...{from our decadent spiritual condition.}

Easter is a celebration of Jesus active and passive ministry on earth. God does not require us to have a passive ministry. Only His son was ordained to do that. But God does require us to always maintain an active ministry for Jesus. We should always use Easter as a reminder of that!!!



**EDWARDS**  
ALIGNMENT CENTER

**Alignment and Brake Services  
for Cars, Trucks and  
Tractor Trucks**



**HUNTER**  
Engineering Company

**Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm**  
**517 Warsaw Road**  
**Clinton, North Carolina 28328**  
**Email: [Edwardsalignment@gmail.com](mailto:Edwardsalignment@gmail.com)**  
**Ph: 910-490-1292 • Fax 910-490-1286**

**Michael Edwards Owner**

# Making Time for Serving **HIM**

**By Becky Spell Vann**

Contributing Columnist

**W**hat is your focus during the season of Lent and celebration of Easter? Honestly, have preparations for Easter been more secular than sacred in your heart and home? Family talks have surely included plans for long anticipated holidays away from work and school. Yet, has it been difficult to squeeze time into hectic schedules to talk about our Savior who gave His life as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins? Are we including plans for praise, worship, prayer time, and serving the Savior by helping others during the days of celebrating Easter?

Excuses for putting Jesus on the back burner never pan out. God knows our motives and messes we will encounter when we allow things of the world to crowd Him out of our lives. Including Him first in our plans is pleasing to our heavenly Father. Sharing His

Word and ways while serving Him lovingly wherever we go gives joy on our journeys. Being courageous and passionate about an intimate relationship with Christ can encourage others to become a close friend of Jesus too!

However, Satan plunders hearts and homes with devious plans to extinguish passion for Christ, plant fear, and point God's children to a path of hatred, apathy, sinful living, and horror filled (not happily) ever after in the fiery furnace of Hell...where God is not!

During this Holy season of Easter, let us pray for people's lives to be touched and hearts opened to accept Jesus as Savior (to repent, seek revival, renew relationships) and serve Him with passion and purpose. Passing on God's love while preparing for Heaven and happiness forever and ever ensures a priceless, precious endless life we can only imagine -

complete with welcoming Home banquet and family reunion beyond anything we can fathom. I don't want to miss Heaven...how about you? When we all get to Heaven what a time of rejoicing it will be; we will sing and shout the victory and live for eternity...where God is!

The woman at Bethany is one of the first women of the Bible I want to talk with when God calls me Home. I won't know her name, but surely Jesus or my loved ones gone before me will help find her. This nameless woman bravely walked into Simon's house and interrupted an all-male gathering to honor Jesus. She walked up to Jesus, broke a flask of expensive oil, poured it on His head, and anointed Him. Jesus understood the woman's love for Him without regard for what it cost. He saw the genuine love and gratitude behind her offering of devotion. However, His disciples did not grasp the significance of what

**tim's GIFT, inc**  
*Giving Help & Hope*

*A Local Footprint of God's Grace*

Open M-W 8am-5pm Tuesdays Prayer 7-8 am and living free at 6:30.

We are grateful to God for "You" our prayer and financial partners who support Tim's Gift and enable us to "Give Hope and Help"



910.592.1126  
timsgift.com

108 Northeast Blvd.  
Clinton, NC 28328

was happening to the One who was about to drink from the cup and die on the cross. Judas even scoffed her act of love as one of wasting money on expensive oil to anoint Jesus when it could have been given to the poor.

Jesus told his closest friends that there would always be poor among them to help, but His divine words went right over their heads. Oh, that each of you reading this could have heard my pastor (Ray Ammons) preach about Jesus and this woman's sacrifices. His sermon inspired me to write this story and to search my own heart (as I encourage you to search yours) as we serve Christ courageously and help others selflessly. And if you are not in a Bible believing, passion filled church, I encourage you to pray about it and find a church home where you can grow in faithful service and enjoy fellowship among believers. Just walk right in the church of your choice courageously and God will take care of the rest. He did that for the nameless woman who interrupted the meeting with His disciples.

The woman at Bethany walked right in, sat right down, and let her long hair down. Then, she began the process of anointing Jesus' body with the expensive

oil in preparation for burial. What Jesus understood, they could not! What the disciples criticized, Jesus upheld as a sacrificial act of love.

He said that, "Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her". Matthew 26:13

In this story of the woman at Bethany, and often when we serve Jesus, the sacrifice outlives the one who sacrifices. Yet, we know courageously and faithfully loving Him, honoring His greatest commandment, living by His example, and serving Him out loud with passion and purpose gets God's attention and a reserved spot in Heaven.

Though people may never know our name and here we receive no fame, we will live happily and honorably without playing Satan's game. And when we are still and know He is God as we gaze into the starry sky... we can rest assured we, along with King David, are the apples of His eye!

Becky Spell Vann is a contributing columnist for The Sampson Independent.





## University of MOUNT OLIVE

### *Lives Transformed*

At the University of Mount Olive, we believe that faith transforms lives. We are here to educate and guide students as they prepare for service in their community and the greater world. The University offers convenient and affordable graduate and undergraduate programs in both seated and online formats for recent high school graduates, college transfers, and adult students.

**1-844-UMO-GOAL • [umo.edu](http://umo.edu)**



# From the Bunny Trail to the **CROSS**

By **Judy Johnson-Truitt**

Guest Columnist

**G**rowing up a “preacher’s kid” (PK) was definitely not the life I signed up for – as if you can sign up for a particular kind of life!! At the young age of three or four, I just knew that Daddy was different and that didn’t sit with us in church anymore. Admittedly, I was the type PK that made a mad dash to the pulpit as soon as church was over. There was always something “important” that I had to tell my Daddy and it just couldn’t wait. As soon as I would get to the pulpit, my Daddy would say to me: “Where is your mother?” I later learned that that was his way of telling me to go back to her.

Easter in the Johnson home was a time of thanksgiving – for God sending His only Son, Jesus. It was also a time for rejoicing because on Easter Sunday, Jesus arose from the dead. While I’ll forever be grateful that my parents introduced me to Jesus, I developed real

strong emotions regarding this particular holiday. At such a tender age, I just could not understand why people would treat Jesus that way. After all, He was loving, kind, played with kids, and loved everybody. Why in the world would mean people make Him suffer, bleed, and die on an old rugged cross?

At that juncture, it was much easier to believe in the Easter Bunny and see him hopping down the bunny trail. While my brother and I were permitted to enjoy a few Easter activities in our neighborhood, our parents kept us grounded in the holiness of the holiday and not the hype. We continued to maintain family devotions, we spoke related passages of Scripture around the dinner table, and we recited our Easter speeches until we were blue in the face!! Here comes Peter Cottontail, hoppin’ down the bunny trail.

**Hippity hoppin’, Easter’s on its way...**

Speaking of baskets full of Easter joy, I can recall

two Easter stories, with precision, that shaped my younger years of Easter joy. My brother was two and a half years older and I absolutely adored his big brother “smarts.” He loved to assemble model planes, cars, and all kinds of other toys, but then, he would never let me play with them. How rude! One Easter, he convinced me to save my Easter basket and all the goodies inside. He told me that he had an idea that would make us the smartest kids in the neighborhood. He convinced me that we could produce our own biddies if we put our eggs in a dark place and leave them there for three days. Imagine that, three days! This willing PK sacrificed her basket and all the eggs, candy, and grass and watched as the basket was hidden behind some tall glasses on the top shelf of the cabinet. With unprecedented excitement, I peeped every hour, just waiting for the eggs to hatch. Day 1 – no biddies. Day 2 – no biddies. Day 3 – we forgot. Needless to say, by day six or seven, an unusual odor emitted from our kitchen. The next day, a small maggot was found in a glass. Our mother had a “fit.” By the next day,

**Clinton**  
APPLIANCE & FURNITURE

**HERE WE GROW AGAIN!**  
OUR NEW 5000 SQ FT  
ADDITION WILL BE READY SOON!



December 2017



January 2018



February 20th, 2018

**DON'T  
MISS IT!**

**NEW BEDROOM - BEDDING  
- LAWN & GARDEN**

**PRICE MATCH GUARANTEE**

several members of the maggot family found their way into other glasses. My mother hit the roof. After calling my Dad and getting him to help her search for the uninvited critters, I don't remember which was worse – the maggots or the smell!! Why did they take ALL the glasses out? There it was, pushed back into the darkest corner of the cabinet, Judy "Sweet Pea's" Easter basket, with a glob of unrecognizable rotten eggs, candy, grass – and lots of maggots. I learned much more about Jesus that day...

The next year, my brother and I received two Daschunds that we loved more than riding our bikes – well, almost! They followed us everywhere! That year, our little happy canines would followed us to the egg hunt, but were spooked by the noise and clamor of neighborhood kids. Unbeknownst to us, our happy canines would sniff their way back to the field and accidentally find an egg that one of us missed. The reason we didn't know this at first is because the dogs would hide their eggs somewhere under the carport or in a nearby flowerbed. Day six or seven – gee whiz, what's that smell?

Life was good back then. We knew about Jesus, we recited speeches about Jesus, but we were kids, and

unfortunately, Jesus was put on the back burner just as quickly as the stores put their Easter surplus on clearance. In a way, I was fine with that because I always hated the story of the cross – just the manner in which He hung, bled, and died... Yep, the bunny trail leading to the Easter Parade was much more appealing.

After years of experiencing life's interruptions, it was somewhat amazing how songs I learned as a child popped into my head during those times of frustration. I recall with clarity being drawn to ministry. During the early 90's, I heard a song by Angelo & Veronica, entitled "To Know You." The lyrics ministered to me in such a way that I could not get the song out of my mind. I picked up my Bible to Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 3:10-11. \*You must read it! In essence, Paul wanted to know Jesus so fully that he would know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. I remember crying out to the Lord: "Lord, how can I know you that way?" Whoever coined the phrase: "Experience is the best teacher," they hit the proverbial nail on the head!

Easter was no longer the same. The beautiful pastels, a myriad of colored plastic eggs, searching for new

outfits, and dreading the Sunrise Service – no longer had the same effect on my life or my thought pattern. This is when I knew I had fully outgrown the bunny trail. This is when I knew that – although my parents taught me about Jesus – I had to know Him for myself. All of a sudden, the lyrics to the Easter hymns became alive in me. I remember sobbing through "Wounded for Me" the first time I really listened to the words being sung. During my childhood, it would take seemingly forever for the Senior Choir to sing all the verses to "The Old Rugged Cross." But now, the lyrics stirred my soul like never before. The lyrics of the second verse had me in tears as well: "O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world, has a wondrous attraction for me. For the dear Lamb of God, left His glory above, to bear it to dark Calvary...so I'll cherish the old rugged cross..."

Glory to God! I serve a risen Savior!! As I write this, my faith journey provides the stimulus for this opportunity of reflection. Historical knowledge is good; however, there is nothing like a deep personal and experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ. My faith looks up to the Lamb of Calvary because today, He Lives! You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart!! Hallelujah!!

# REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON



**SOUTHEASTERN**  
Building Products

# = I'm Learning = Living a Life Marked by the **GOSPEL** and the **BIBLE**

By Greta Zwaan, ©2017

When you see me don't be alarmed, I'm not a finished project;  
A work in making, just begun, no longer known as reject.  
Many changes must be made, many plans to alter  
Efforts to reclaim the mold, are bound to often falter.

Restoration will take time, the work God's undertaken,  
The mighty Master of the clay will not leave me forsaken.  
I'm pliable and need to learn, my spirit must be willing,  
God will not force His choice on me, He's lovingly instilling,  
New thoughts to form within my heart, ideas that will inspire,  
To make me more like His dear Son and give me that desire.

That all my plans fit to His will as each day dawns before me,  
I find the guidance in His Word in case sin should allure me.  
My safety lies within His love, my heart within His will;  
I need to listen to His voice, He's whispering, "Peace, be still."

By Rhonda Jessup

The University of Mount Olive

**M**OUNT OLIVE — Aaron Smith easily admits he is nothing without his faith. "Without my faith in Jesus every aspect of my life would lack purpose," he said. "Jesus gave His life for mine, so I owe Him my entire life."

Smith lives out his faith daily in everything he does. He is a 2014 graduate of the University of Mount Olive (UMO), Director of Student Life at Harrells Christian Academy (HCA), and the Connections and Student Pastor at the Vine Fellowship in Clinton. During the summer, he also works with the Eastern Baptist Association helping with student ministries.

At HCA, Smith wears many hats in his oversight of the middle and upper school student activities, including being disciplinarian and campus pastor. He also serves as the varsity boys' soccer head coach and an assistant coach for the varsity boys' basketball team. However, his most important role is being able to listen and communicate with students.

"I enjoy getting to plan chapel programs and retreats, but all that means nothing without relationships. I love when a student comes to my office with a question about their faith, the Bible, or just wants to talk about whatever."

An added bonus for Smith is that he gets to share his passion for ministering with his wife, Emily. Emily serves as the HCA upper school Bible teacher.

"It is great that we get to share in this ministry at HCA," Aaron said. "It is more than just a job for us. It is also a chance that we get to point students to the Gospel, even by the example of our marriage. I would not want to do this with anyone else."

Smith's own parents set the example for him growing up. A 2010 graduate of East Duplin High School, Smith grew up in Beulaville, the son of an Original Free Will Baptist Minister.

"It was a unique experience to live with someone in full time ministry," he recalled. "Essentially, I job-shadowed a pastor for 22 years. I learned that if you are in ministry you are always on the clock. Although the weight of pastoral ministry is heavy and taxing, it was very clear through watching my father that it is worth it. The early

## Tires Inc.



**NO DETOURS™ • Bandag Retread Dealer • Firestone Associate Dealer**





**We Sell...**  
 Tractor Tires • Industrial Tires • Logging Tires • Bandag Retread Tires  
 Medium Truck Tires • Passenger & Light Truck Tires • Trailer Tires  
 Lawn & Garden Tires • Used Medium Truck Wheels & Rims  
 Nitrogen for commercial, passenger and farm tires.

**We Offer...**  
 Road Service • Tire Repairs on: Cars, Trucks, Tractors,  
 Logging & Construction Equipment

**Michael Edwards, Owner • 910-592-4741**  
 317 S.E. Blvd., Clinton • NC 28328 • [www.tireincoclinton.com](http://www.tireincoclinton.com)

## Davis' Auto Body & Paint, Inc.

24 Hour Wrecker Service • Light & Heavy Duty

**Davis Tyndall - President**

**"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever." Psalm 107:1**

**276 Faison Highway, Clinton • 910-596-0049**

morning study sessions for a sermon or the late nights at a hospital are all worth it if one person decides to make Jesus Lord of their life.”

Although he was the son of a pastor and could say all the right things, Smith’s faith was not always as strong as it is now.

“Until my freshmen year of college, I my faith was based on what I knew, not on what I believed in my heart,” he recalled. “At the University of Mount Olive, the Lord showed me that things that I had put my hope in were broken cisterns that could not satisfy me.”

Smith remembers the details very clearly. It was a Thursday night. He was sitting in his UMO dorm room. A member of the men’s basketball team, Smith was very frustrated with the team and with the players. A sport he had always loved was becoming more of a chore than a pleasure.

“I found myself reading my Bible, praying, and asking the Lord why I hated the one thing I used to love,” he said. “In my frustration, I remember this still small voice breaking through and saying, ‘nothing will work until you have a relationship with me.’ I realized then that not only did the Lord see my sin, but He also saw my loneliness. God wanted a relationship with me, and I was only able to see that when I came to the end of myself.”

That moment was crucial for Smith’s walk with the Lord. His relationship with Jesus moved past a one-time experience into a daily relationship.

“My beliefs in Jesus began to give purpose to things God was using to shape my life,” he shared.

Smith graduated from UMO in May of 2014 with a bachelor’s degree in social studies education.

“When thinking about my time spent at Mount Olive, I would say I was exactly where the Lord wanted me,” Smith said.

At UMO Smith spent a lot of time lifting weights, playing basketball, and writing papers and lesson plans. However, the thing he enjoyed most about his college years was spending time

with friends.

“During that season of my life, God gave me a great community of friends who I will never forget,” he shared.

UMO also prepared Smith by giving him the tools to succeed.

“At Mount Olive I learned how to research, prioritize my time, and be organized. “All of the papers, lesson plans, and exams taught me to do and be prepared for all the things I need in my busy work life.”

Smith’s brother, Jonathan, has followed his example, and is a junior at UMO.

“I can’t speak for Jonathan, but for me, the fact that Mount Olive was founded by the Original Free Will Baptist denomination was not the reason I decided to go,” Smith said. “I went to Mount Olive because that is where the Lord opened the door for me. I believe it is important for high school students who are transitioning to college to ask themselves, ‘where is the Lord opening a realistic door for me to attend?’”

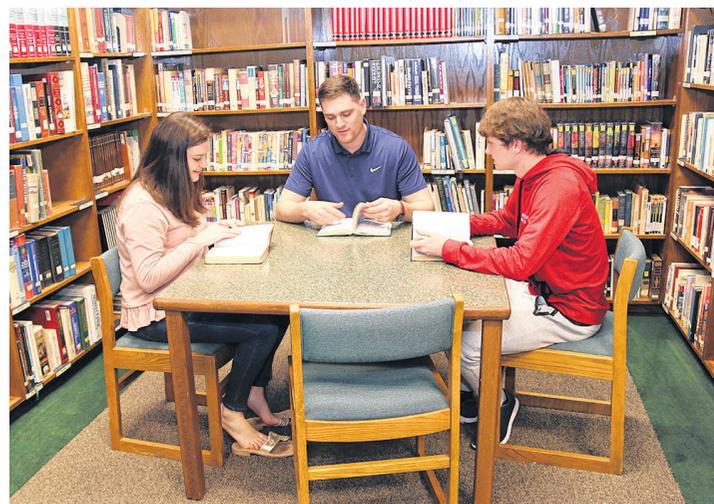
Helping young people work through their faith and find their open doors is what Smith does on a daily basis at HCA and at the Vine. Smith openly shares his faith and collaborates with students in growing theirs.

“I love that I get to help young people in their walk with the Lord,” he said.

Aaron and Emily Smith live in Kenansville. Aaron is the son of David and Dawn Smith of Beulaville. Emily is the daughter of Wayne and Angie Bass of Clinton.

The University of Mount Olive is a private institution rooted in the liberal arts tradition with defining Christian values. The University, sponsored by the Convention of Original Free Will Baptists, has locations in Mount Olive, New Bern, Wilmington, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Research Triangle Park, Washington, Jacksonville, and in Smithfield at Johnston Community College.

For more information, visit [www.umo.edu](http://www.umo.edu).



Courtesy photos

Aaron Smith is the Director of Student Life at Harrells Christian Academy (HCA), and the Connections and Student Pastor at the Vine Fellowship in Clinton.

# ≡≡≡ A Fool's Errand ≡≡≡

By Dr. David Gasperson

Guest Columnist

**H**ow long has it been since Easter fell on April Fool's Day? It will happen again ... in 2029. Maybe it's appropriate. So much of our hope would seem to so many a fool's errand.

We laugh at the women who wondered on the way to Jesus' tomb who was going to roll away the stone. "Oh, Mary! You really didn't think this thing through, did you?" We laugh again when they wonder who had taken the body of the Lord. We know the rest of the story ... we read ahead. "Oh, Mary...."

Soon these "foolish" women would become the first reporters of an empty tomb, a resurrected and appearing Savior. It was the people around them who became the ones who laughed ... at this fool's errand of proclaiming a risen Lord.

There really could not be a Christian Church without the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. As incredible as it sounds, the world's greatest hope is based profoundly upon this one, simple, but seemingly impossible tenet. And for those who follow Christ today, though we may not be able to say with Mary, "I have seen the Lord," we bear witness to the equally incredible truth that we have experienced the reality of the resurrection ourselves.

As to the effect of the Gospel we proclaim, there are still plenty of people who believe we are on a fool's errand ... preaching peace in a world filled with terror ... proclaiming unity in an ever more factionalized society ... holding forth moral standards in an era embracing relativism. But Jesus is the one who will "flip the plot." In the light of Easter morning, the things so foolish by world standards suddenly are known without doubt ... to be the surest reality!

Dr. David Gasperson is the pastor at Warsaw Baptist Church.

## SMITH TIRE SALES, INC.

**CERTIFIED NITROGEN TIRE FILLING SERVICE AVAILABLE**  
**SMITH TIRE SALES, INC.**

*Serving the public for over 40 Years!*

**Mastercraft**  
Tires

**Firestone**  
A TRADITION OF INNOVATION

**MICKEY THOMPSON**  
PERFORMANCE  
Tires & Wheels

**MICHELIN**

**INTERSTATE BATTERIES**

**BFGoodrich**  
Tires



1824 Hobbton Hwy.  
Clinton, NC 28328  
**(910) 592-7390**

**New & Used Tires, Custom Wheels,  
Wholesale & Retail**

**GPBC**  
BELIEVE GLORIFY PRAY COMMIT

**Service Times:**  
**Sunday School: 9:45 am Sunday Worship: 11:00 am**  
 Senior Pastor-Dr. Gary Threatt

**Grove Park Baptist Church**  
 609 NE Blvd., Clinton • 910-592-3937  
[www.grovesparkbaptist.com](http://www.grovesparkbaptist.com)

# Finding **COMFORT** in the Little Things

By Sampson County Resident

*“Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4)*

**T**he Beatitudes, or the Sermon on the Mount has to be one of my all-time favorite Bible passages for a variety of reasons. In its simplicity, it has provided me with whatever I needed, whenever I needed it.

When I was a child in the early 1970s, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (aka the Mormons) had a series of TV commercials. I was about 8 years old when one called “Pass It On” became popular. It showed people receiving small acts of kindness and then paying it forward with more random acts of kindness, while a catch little jingle, “Blessed are the peacemakers, the Lord says, ‘Pass it on, pass it on’” played in the background. As a middle child, the natural peacemakers, according to birth order experts, the message struck a chord with me.

I also liked, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.” I was very shy as a child and this verse helped me to be more accepting of myself. Later, as an adult working in a competitive corporate environment, this verse also helped me to stay true to my God-given nature even when manager and mentors

pushed me to become more forceful when relating to peers and subordinates and to “promote myself” when surround by members of upper management.

However, I never quite understood the verse which read, “Blessed are those who mourn” until the tragic loss of my 23 year old son, nearly two years ago. Initially, I struggle; people talked about relying on faith, but in the first weeks and months after Aaron chose to end his life, God just felt very far away and I couldn’t imagine feeling comforted, let alone “blessed.”

I couldn’t relate to the people who said, “I just turned everything over to God and he immediately took the pain away.” But lately, I have been experiencing comfort in little things: a single red rose growing in my backyard which I had never noticed before, or a random Facebook message from a young woman who told me that my son had once taken her on a date and had been such a gentleman that she thanked me for raising such a kind-hearted young man.

While part of me will probably always “mourn” at some level, I do feel God’s presence more now that I am learning to recognize that it is the smallest things that provide the most comfort and the biggest blessings.



Future Leaders  
Made Here

**Apply Today**

**harrellsca.com**

**910-532-4575**



*Connecting families and friends in faith since 1854*

**Service Times**  
 Sunday School 9:45am  
 Sunday Worship 11:00am  
 Dr. Ray Ammons, Senior Pastor

# What we believe

We believe in the Triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that God is the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of Heaven and Earth. We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son, was God in flesh revealed and that He came into the world that the world through Him can be saved from sin. We believe that the Holy Spirit reveals God to people and that those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth. We believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired word of God, that it is the authority and inspiration for the faith and practice of the Christian life, and that every Christian has an individual responsibility to God to discover the meaning of the Scriptures for his or her own life. We believe that spiritual regeneration must precede baptism, church membership, and commemoration of the Lord's Supper. We believe that God created humankind in His own image and made of one blood all nations.

We believe that God is faithful and just to forgive all people who confess their sins and profess their faith in Jesus Christ and that regardless of creed or race, they become the children of God and Christian brothers. We believe that as a local community of Christians, we are a part of Christ's Church which is universal in scope. Therefore, we believe that we should witness and work for Christ in fellowship with all children of God in an effort to oppose evil and extend the Kingdom of God throughout the world. We believe that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Why Should You Choose



**MATTHEWS**  
**HealthMart**  
 PHARMACY



We are a locally owned business committed to serving you and providing our community with the best. For **50** years, we have enjoyed working and living in Sampson County. Below are some of the services that we provide at Matthews Health Mart.

### Managing your medications has never been easier!

**We Offer Weekly Pill Packs,**  
 presorted medications by time and day.

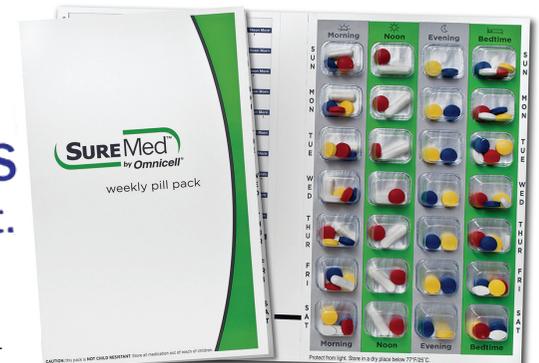
Contact Tara Jackson, RPh  
 or another team member  
 with any questions

CALL OR COME BY



**MATTHEWS**  
**HealthMart.**  
 PHARMACY

408 Northeast Blvd.  
 Clinton, NC 28328  
 Phone: 910-592-3121



- Organize your prescriptions and over-the-counter medications.
- Ensures that you are taking your medications correctly



## What Makes US Special at Matthews Gifts

Large selection with small town service  
 Complimentary Gift Wrap  
 Gifts for Every Occasion & Every Season  
 NEW Product Selection • We Deliver

Featuring:

- Ladies Jewelry & Fashion • Children's Clothing & Accessories
- Invitations, Printing and Engraving Services • Personalized Gifts
- Home Decor and Housewares • Specialty Foods and Gifts Baskets
- College & Mens Gifts in your Team section

352 NE Boulevard Clinton • 910-592-5100