

HAZEL LEAF

Hazelwood Baptist Church

265 Hazelwood Avenue

www.hazbap.org

Waynesville, NC 28786

"To express the love of God through worship, caring, sharing, and reaching out to others with the good news of Jesus Christ."

April 2025

A Time of Renewal

We are in full swing of the spring season! The trees, plants and flowers are green and colorful. Nature has renewed itself once again. This season can bring to one's mind ideas of personal renewal, a time to start fresh and new. As believers we have the great blessing of renewal in times of spiritual difficulty or weakness. When we first come to Christ the scriptures say that we put off the old man (person) and are renewed in the spirit of our mind (Ephesians 4:22-24) but it doesn't stop there. We'll still struggle with worldly desires and thoughts but have the continued opportunity to avoid conforming to this world but rather being transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2). Living the life of a Christian can be overwhelming at times, especially when combined with the physical and mental stresses of everyday life. But our confidence can be found in the following verse. *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day."* (2 Corinthians 4:16). Just as the tree puts out new leaves, the birds build new nests and the grass grows green again, we have the great blessing of spiritual renewal!

For lo, the winter is past,

The rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;

The time of singing has come,

And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

Song of Solomon 2:11-12

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

3. Clifford Ruff
7. Gerri Underwood
10. Al Bowers
12. Arlene Reynolds
17. Barbara Buchanan
18. Dick Young
20. Nashawna Aldridge, Logan Byrd, Susan Norsworthy
22. Lily Geeting
26. Gabby Hightower
27. Angel Abercrombie-Cabe
29. Paige Shell

SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO . . .

- . . . Jerry Farmer in the passing of his cousin, Winnie Pressley.
- . . . Liz & Roger Schultz in the passing of Liz's brother, John Alan Howard in Colorado.
- . . . Krista & Nathan Beck in the passing of Krista's father, Richard Hooper.

MEMORIALS

Hazelwood Baptist Church has given a gift to the Benevolent Fund in memory John Alan Howard.

Cathey Cable & Family (Glenda, Donny, Charlene and Susan) have given a gift to the Audio-Visual Fund in memory of Philip Cable.

Jackson Steel, Inc. has given a gift to the Audio-Visual Fund in memory of Philip Cable.

OUR CHURCH'S GIVING RECORD BUDGET RECEIPTS FOR FEBRUARY – \$16,011.43

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Jackson & Sarah Heinz who will be celebrating their 5th Wedding Anniversary on April 2.

Congratulations to Monte & E. J. Plott who will be celebrating their 5th Wedding Anniversary on April 3.

Congratulations to Doug & Patty McClure who will be celebrating their 46th Wedding Anniversary on April 5.

Congratulations to Ed & Polly Leatherwood who will be celebrating their 65th Wedding Anniversary on April 9.

Congratulations to Chris & Paige Shell who will be celebrating their 14th Wedding Anniversary on April 9.

Congratulations to Nathan & Krista Beck who will be celebrating their 15th Wedding Anniversary on April 10.

Congratulations to Rusty & Tamara Moore who will be celebrating their 21st Wedding Anniversary on April 17.

Congratulations to Cody & Amanda Parton who will be celebrating their 8th Wedding Anniversary on April 22.

Congratulations to Ron & Joyce Ingle who will be celebrating their 42nd Wedding Anniversary on April 23.

4th ANNUAL ***Ezekiel's Journey: Celebration of Life***

Mark your calendars!

The event will take place on **Saturday, April 26**, at the picturesque campus of Broyhill Children's Home. The family-friendly celebration has something for everyone:

- 5K Color Run
- 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk
- Car Show
- Live Bluegrass Music from Connect Five
- Delicious Lunch
- Fun Inflatables for the Kids
- And so much more!

But Ezekiel's Journey is more than just a fun day – it's a time to honor and remember. The event is held in memory of **Ezekiel Morgan**, a beautiful child who passed away shortly after birth from Trisomy 13. His family found comfort and support through Mountain Area Pregnancy Services' **Eva's Footprints program**, which offers perinatal hospice and grief support to families experiencing similar heartache. All proceeds to benefit families facing a pregnancy crisis or loss. Register at **mtnpregnancy.life**.

THE HOPE FOUND IN THE STORY OF AN UNFAITHFUL DISCIPLE

Peter. The rock. The disciple Jesus planned to use to build his church (Matthew 16:18). The disciple who recognized Jesus was the Messiah (Matthew 16:15-17). Peter, who followed Jesus through thick and thin; who cut off a man's ear to defend Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:10). Peter, who walked on water (Matthew 14:28-29). Even this disciple stumbled...fell hard...gave up hope...lost faith. On the night that Jesus was betrayed, this Peter thought surely he would stand strong and remain faithful even if none of the other disciples did. Wrong. What made this disciple think that he could do it if no one else could?

And if even Peter could fall when things got rough, what hope do the rest of us have? Yes, there's a warning for us in Peter's story, but there's also tremendous hope: a hope that can also be ours.

It was the week of Passover. Jesus and his disciples were together in the holy city, Jerusalem. Jesus had come into the city amidst cheers, but now there were rumblings of opposition from the Jewish religious leaders. A lot was going on, but they set aside time to have a meal together and celebrate the Passover. The conversation at this Passover dinner was different than any other. Rather than recalling that first Passover night, Jesus was talking about all sorts of things that confused and dismayed the disciples: betrayal, suffering, dying, going away, a new covenant in his blood...All very strange and unsettling.

Perhaps the most disturbing thing Jesus told the disciples was that they would all desert him that night (Matthew 26:31); they would all fall away (Mark 14:27). Imagine the uproar in that room...the shock...the denials...and through it all burst Peter's voice, "Not me, Lord. Even if all the others desert you, I won't! I will never fall away! Even if I have to die, I will die for you. I will never be unfaithful." Peter very passionately, and maybe rather arrogantly, believed his faith was strong enough – he was strong enough – to stand even if others fell. What made him think he was so different from everyone else?

How many times have we looked at Peter's denial and thought, "Peter, how could you? I'd never do that!" The truth is, we all could and we all have. (And remember that Jesus told them the other disciples would all desert him as well.) Maybe we haven't denied knowing Jesus (yet), but there are plenty of times we overestimated our ability to withstand temptation and failed the test.

The time to prepare for a trial is well in advance. Peter had that opportunity in the garden at Gethsemane. Right after dinner, Jesus asked Peter (and James and John) to keep watch and pray – that they might not fall into temptation (Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:37-38).

But what did Peter (and the others) do? He fell asleep! 1 Peter 5:8 warns us, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Jesus told Peter, "Yes, Peter, even you will fall tonight. In fact, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." (Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34; John 13:38)

And when Peter did fall, he fell hard. Jesus was arrested and taken to the home of the Jewish high priest to be questioned. Peter followed with another disciple – at a distance (already, Peter the bold was beginning to waffle). In the courtyard of the high priest, the religious leaders ridiculed and abused Jesus. At first, Peter watched from just outside the courtyard, behind the gate; but then the other disciple got Peter closer – right inside the courtyard – because he knew some of the priests (John 18:15-16).

That's when a woman recognized him. "You were with Jesus. You're one of his followers, aren't you?" Matthew 26:70 says that "*in front of everyone*" Peter replied, "No, I'm not. I don't even know him." Peter denied he even knew Jesus – *in front of everyone* ...the other disciple that was with him...the priests ...the Roman guards...the household servants...and ...Jesus. They were all in the courtyard together. Jesus was right there. I can't imagine what that must have been like for Peter – to feel Jesus' eyes on him as he disowned him. How that must have pained Peter; the shame he must have felt.

A little later, while Peter was warming himself by the fire with some of the guards, someone else thought he recognized him. "You must be one of his disciples." Again, Peter denied it. "No, I'm not."

And then, one of the household servants – one who happened to be a relative of the man whose ear Peter cut off in the garden (busted!) – didn't believe him. "Didn't I see you with Jesus in the garden?" (John 18:26) But Peter didn't give it up. Peter swore that he didn't know Jesus at all.

At that very moment, Jesus turned, and looked *RIGHT AT PETER*. (Luke 22:61) There was no hiding what he had done. There was no taking it back. Peter, who thought he was the most loyal disciple; Peter, who thought he was beyond falling away; Peter, who loved Jesus, had betrayed him in the worst way – to his face. Not even Peter was immune to this kind of failure – none of us are. Peter was devastated. He ran away weeping bitterly.

Thank goodness Peter's story doesn't end there – and neither will ours.

One morning after Jesus had risen, he had breakfast on the beach with his disciples (John 21). Jesus took Peter aside, one-on-one. There he was, face to face again with Jesus. That must have been a difficult conversation.

Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I do."

Jesus told Peter, "Then feed my lambs."

A second time, Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Again, Peter answered, "Yes, you know I do!"

Jesus told him, "Then shepherd my sheep."

A third time, Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" This time, Peter was hurt. Yes, this must have been painful. He answered, "You know everything, Lord. You know that I love you." Jesus knew, but Peter needed to say it out loud – just as he had denied Jesus out loud. Jesus gave him that opportunity. How incredibly personal. How incredibly intimate. How incredibly merciful!

Jesus told Peter, "Then tend my sheep."

The hope we find in Peter's story is the hope of mercy, forgiveness, and second chances. Jesus didn't give up on Peter simply because he failed the test. The same mercy Jesus showed Peter is available to us. Just as Jesus forgave Peter, he will forgive us when we fall; and Jesus will meet with us one-on-one, just as intimately and personally as he met with Peter. What a marvelous hope!

After that, Peter was a different man. He had gained a new humility and learned not to rely on his own strength. Never again did Peter deny Jesus. Instead, when Peter raised his voice, thousands came to believe (Acts 2:14-47). Peter was tending to the sheep. For the rest of his life, Peter taught, cared for, and led Jesus' sheep. In the end, Peter did die for Jesus, just as he said he would. There is no biblical record of Peter's death, but early Christian writers reported that Peter was executed by Nero.

In spite of Peter's past failure, there was a place for Peter to do great things for the kingdom. When Peter repented, Jesus was quick to give him an assignment. We too can have hope for a future. Like Peter, our story isn't over when we stumble and fall. Second chances. If we repent and return to Jesus as Peter did, he will restore us and use us to do great things for his kingdom.

Greed Has Many Faces

By Max Lucado

Our obsession with stuff carries a hefty price tag. We spend 110 percent of our disposable income trying to manage debt. Who can keep up? No one can!

Jesus warns in Luke 12:15, "Be on your guard against every form of greed." Greed comes in many forms. Greed for approval. Greed for applause. Greed for status. Greed has many faces but speaks one language: the language of more. Wise was the one who wrote, "Whoever loves money never has money

enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income."

The only way to feel full is to feel fulfilled. The only way to feel fulfilled is to understand that everything we have comes from God - and he gives us exactly what we need. All of it is on loan! And, someday we'll have to give it all back, checking it at heaven's door!

BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES FOOD ROUNDUP

Dear Friend of Children:

One of the privileges I have is sharing with NC Baptists how appreciative we are for the food, supplies and gift cards your church collects for the Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) Food Roundup. That is because when you help meet a child's physical needs, it unlocks our ability to meet his or her need for the Gospel.

As much as 80% of the children we serve are unreached with the Gospel. Baptist Children's Homes is in the midst of a mission field. When a NC child is removed from the care of their family or guardian, it is often because they have gone without: without food, without clothing, without kindness, without the love and care they deserve. When boys and girls come to us from situations of neglect and abuse, they not only arrive physically hungry but spiritually hungry as well. God gives us the opportunity to model His unconditional love through the care of our cottage parents and EVERY CHILD foster and adoptive parents throughout the state. And NC Baptists play a vital role in making this possible.

Children see God's people meet their needs through the Food Roundup. When they are fed with the food your church collects, the love of Christ comes alive to them. It opens up the opportunity for BCH cottage parents, foster parents, adoptive parents and caregivers to have Gospel conversations with boys and girls. We tell boys and girls that churches collect food because of God's great love for them. We are able to share the Gospel because they see God's love in action through you.

It is impossible for us to serve hundreds of thousands of meals and snacks to the children and others we serve throughout the year without you. Thank you for being our partner in ministry and sharing Christ's love with NC children.

Brenda Gray
BCH Executive VP, Development & Communications

(Food & Supplies Needs List
is on the last page of the newsletter.
A table for your donations is near the piano)

Highlights from Beyond “The Three Steps”

*“This is the day the Lord has made,
let us rejoice and be glad in it!” Psalm 118:24*

As we look ahead toward Easter, my heart is overwhelmed with love and heart-felt appreciation for what Jesus did on the cross for you and for me. But without the resurrection of Jesus, we would have nothing to celebrate! Because our Savior, Jesus Christ rose from the grave and defeated sin and death with victorious power, we too as His followers can have the same victory and power over sin and death in our life. Thank you, Jesus!! Thank you, Jesus!! Hallelujah! What a Savior!

I hope you remember the goodness, sacrifice, and victorious power of our Lord, as you read the following Easter devotional by Debbie McDaniel.

The Life-Changing Power of the Cross and the Resurrection By Debbie McDaniel

“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

The cross is empty and so is the tomb.

You can try to bury Power, but it won't stay there. You can try to bury Truth, but it is not dead. You can try to bury Love, but it cannot be contained.

Jesus is alive, He won the victory of sin and death. And He's still the same, even in all the days after the Easter weekend. He never changes.

He made a way for us to live free.

No other truth in history has the ability to change our lives and affect our future like this. Yet so many still choose to reject Christ's sacrifice and love. He offers us a choice today, and it's the best decision you could ever make.

What Christ's Death on the Cross and the Power of His Resurrection Offers:

-It provides a bridge, a way, to God. It gives us an opportunity to have a personal relationship with the very God who made us and loves us more than we could imagine. Without the cross, there is no way to cross over to the other side of relationship with him. Any attempt will fail. He is the Only Way.

-It provides opportunity for forgiveness of sin. Through the price that Jesus paid on Calvary, we

have the chance to be forgiven of our own sin. He took our sin and shame upon his very shoulders. He took the blows on our behalf so we wouldn't have to suffer. Such incredible love. Such amazing sacrifice.

-It provides freedom to all those who believe. Freedom from the shackles of sin. Freedom from shame. Freedom from fear. Freedom from worry. Freedom from hopelessness. Freedom from despair. Freedom from addiction. Freedom from guilt. Freedom from darkness and eternal separation from God.

-It provides new life. We are not only forgiven and set free, but we have a whole new life and destiny through Christ. We are changed, from the inside. He renews our minds. He changes our hearts and desires. He gives us fresh purpose for every day set before us.

-It provides power for us to live today. When Jesus died on the cross, and was buried, it didn't stop there. The final picture of all that the cross provides lies in the powerful Resurrection of our Lord. He won. He didn't stay dead. His power broke through, and that same power is alive within us today. As believers, God gives us the power of the Holy Spirit, living and moving through us each day.

-It provides the way to have victory over the enemy. We don't have to fear him or his attacks. As we live aware of his traps, the power of Christ over our lives gives us a covering and protection from his evil schemes. We're not left to fend for ourselves. We don't fight in our own strength. We can stand strong in the Mighty Name of Jesus Christ.

-It provides for us an eternal heavenly home. We never need to fear about what will happen when we die. In Christ we have been given the gift of eternal life. This earth is only our temporary home. God is preparing a place for us, with him, to live forever. And you can be assured it will be far greater than we could ever imagine.

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 15:57

Dear God, thank you for your great gift of love and sacrifice, so that we can live free. Thank you for the power of the cross and the Resurrection. We ask that the truth of it all sinks deeply into our hearts and changes us forever. Fill us fresh with your Spirit today. In Jesus' Name, Amen

Easter is a wonderful time to invite people to church. Our Easter Sunday will begin with our Easter Sunrise Service and then our Easter

Celebration Worship Service at 10:30 AM! Our choir will present the Easter Cantata, "All The Praise," in celebration of our Lord and Savior! He alone deserves all the honor and glory and praise!

I am truly thankful for each of you – my wonderful church family! Thank you for the wonderful privilege of serving as the Minister of Music and Worship at Hazelwood Baptist Church! I pray for you daily and truly appreciate your prayers for my family and for me! I am always available, so please feel free to contact me any time!

I love and appreciate each one of you so very, very much!

In *HIS* Service,

Denise

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Cell: 828-550-7408

Soli Deo Gloria

"To The Glory of God Alone!"

The First Easter

By Edgar Albert Guest

Dead they left Him in the tomb
And the impenetrable gloom,
Rolled the great stone to the door,
Dead, they thought, forevermore.

Then came Mary Magdalene
Weeping to that bitter scene,
And she found, to her dismay,
That the stone was rolled away.

Cometh Peter then and John,
Him they'd loved to look upon,
And they found His linen there
Left within the sepulcher.

'They have taken Him away!'
Mary cried that Easter Day.
Low, she heard a voice behind:
'Whom is it you seek to find?'

'Tell me where He is!' she cried,
'Him they scourged and crucified.
Here we left Him with the dead!'
'Mary! Mary!' Jesus said.

So by Mary Magdalene
First the risen Christ was seen,
And from every heart that day
Doubt's great stone was rolled away.

HBC LEADERSHIP SUPPORT COMMITTEE

With the help of Dr. Terry Long from the North Carolina Baptist Convention, our Leadership Committee has been working through the process and praying diligently to determine a path forward in making Hazelwood Baptist Church a thriving and God-centered church that will be pleasing in the sight of God. To that end, we will present a recommendation to our congregation very soon at a special called business meeting. After that meeting and discussion, a date will be determined for all active members of the church to vote on the recommendation.

Our constitution describes "active" as "attending an average of at least once a month and contributing to the financial support of the church. Exceptions to this definition are those who are unable to come to church due to physical limitations and want to vote on any issue where a ballot will be used. Absentee ballots may be used by any church member who meets the conditions of active or physically unable to attend, if they cannot be present at the voting. Absentee ballots may be picked up at the church office at designated times and accounted for by signing out the ballots."

Thank you for your support, prayers, and patience, Ray Moody, Chairman, HBC Leadership Support Committee

12 THINGS TO ALWAYS REMEMBER

1. The past can't be changed.
2. Opinions don't define your reality.
3. Everyone's journey is different.
4. Judgments are not about you.
5. Overthinking will lead to sadness.
6. Happiness is found within.
7. Your thoughts affect your mood.
8. Smiles are contagious.
9. Kindness is free.
10. It's okay to let go and move on.
11. What goes around, comes around.
12. Things always get better with time.