

Clay Me Down in Green Pastures

Two cannibals are eating a clown when one says to the other, does this taste funny to you?

I believe that God unconditionally loves all things. We humans have a huge potential for wrong. But we also have an ability to do right. God ultimately loves us anyway. God has molded me from a little boy into a growing man, and my life experiences were his hands molding me.

Like the music artist Kid Cudi, throughout my youth I spent more time inside my head than anywhere else. At the blink of an eye I would dive into my imagination. I regularly daydreamed. I believed in God so fiercely that, even when playing action figures with my little brother Zach, whenever one of us suggested anything like “This guy is superman; he the most powerful being in the universe!” the other one would snap back, “You can’t do that; God is!” Then the other would say, “Oh yea, well, besides God.” I thought a lot about God. I knew that God had written this big book called the Bible; everyone seemed so obsessed with it that it got old quick for me. Maybe that’s a by-product of being a preacher’s kid. I used to ask God to hurry up and come out with the Bible 2 so that I could read something with new stories in it. So I tried to ignore the Bible, since it seemed so old anyway. What I believe about God now, I learned by watching all of you and my parents and my peers. Only later did I realize that most of those ideas actually came from the Bible. **Doh!**

I came to believe that God is 3 things: Love, Forgiveness and Understanding. **God is Love** in that God loves all things regardless, since God created us, but also because that just seems to be the main message that God conveys. I believe that **God is Forgiveness** in that we humans are so messy sometimes and do really bad things—even horrible things. Still God forgives us, never stops loving us in spite of our worst. Finally, **God is Understanding**--in that humans are obviously intelligent and sentient, but I would argue that we are not morally sane; we do a lot of weird, inexplicable things and we think even odder things. Anybody else would just scratch their head, but somehow, amazingly, God understands that we are crazy, irrational, reckless, and an embarrassment-- sometimes even to ourselves. God loves us when we are both our best and our worst.

My understanding of God hasn’t neatly followed some organized catechism. Instead, it grew organically. My learning was less systematic—more haphazard—and usually more experimental in nature. In fact, perhaps some of my most influential experiences have been my accidents.

The first two were BMX accidents where I was being brash on my bike. In the first, Jason Drew and I were out biking on BMX trails at the Zone, which is a whole network of dirt bike trails, ramps, and jumps. Jason is one of my best school friends, and he told me that one particular trail had a 15-foot drop that no one had been stupid enough to go down yet. I decided I would be the first. Before much else could be explained, I went down it without really thinking. My bike promptly flipped, I flew off, and I landed harshly on my face. *Then* the bike landed *on me*, and that hurt. That seriously injured one of my wrists, but it obviously wasn’t enough for me to get the message.

I know this because about four months later I tried to jump a creek on my bike. The banks were about 6 feet high and the creek was 7 feet across, with the water being only about a foot deep. On that day we had been getting some major air using these big wooden ramps and, though this should have seemed impossible, I figured I could jump this 7-foot creek. I was sort of a daredevil at the time, and when someone mentioned how awesome it would be if someone made it over the creek on a bike, I immediately told them I would do it. They were enthusiastic and told me I had some serious cajones. Don’t ever say that to a guy. We’re vulnerable when you play to our bravado.

As you can guess, everything went wrong all at once, and I ended up flying headfirst onto some rocks imbedded in the bank, trying to block the fall with my hands—bad idea. At first my friends didn’t understand how seriously I was hurt. They yelled, “Oh

snap! That didn’t work.” When I came out of shock, I started screaming while trying to extract my legs from the twisted bike, pulling myself out of the creek with only my elbows since my hands were messed up and bloody. They realized I was not okay, and called my dad to take me to the hospital. As you might have guessed, I was banned from taking a bike anywhere but the street. **From this I learned that being brave is only of value when combined with brains.**

The most recent accident was a car crash—only 5 months ago. On a more serious note, I totaled my car and might have died. In hard rain, I was driving on Wendover Avenue, I didn’t see a car in my blind spot while changing lanes, and I was hit hard. My car did a 360 and then hit a tree and a big cement pole after I was pinned by the other car. Amazingly, Ed Smithey was one of the first firefighters to arrive on the scene. After looking over my totaled car, he said that I probably would have died if my dad hadn’t had the sense to get a heavy car with lots of steel, airbags, and side curtains for me to drive. These events gave me a clear understanding of my own mortality. My favorite saying of my dad’s is that “Life is hard; it’s even harder when you’re stupid.” I learned that the hard way.

But my life-learning experiences haven’t all been negative. Some have been amazing. On that more positive side, growing up in this church has really changed me. There is no other way to put it, other than this place is not just a sanctuary but a second home to me. As a senior up here, I can see all these little guys and girls who will be in my place in the next decade. If any of you think that you are the weirdest member of our youth group, guess again. Some of my favorite memories of being in the youth group were strange but fun. One, for instance, was years ago, having a water noodle fight with one of the older youth. He whacked me in the nose and my nose started bleeding. Everyone was like, “Oh, poor Nate!” but I thought it was hilarious. I just started laughing. I kept hitting him with the noodle just still laughing--and eventually everyone else started laughing too. It sounds ridiculous now when I tell it, but it’s one of those wild memories that never fails to make me smile.

Another time at a beach retreat, we were playing ice cream football (yes, ice cream football—welcome to Club Jesus!), when I finally got handed the sand-covered vanilla ice cream football. I looked for a clean spot, and then started chowing down. No one could believe I was eating the football, but it just seemed like the thing to do at the moment.

You’ve caught the undercurrent, I’m sure, that I can be a creature on impulse. Two years ago for my secret Santa gift at youth group, I gave a canine by-product wrapped in tin foil. I actually got in big trouble for that, but now some the younger guys think that I’m the best secret Santa. Watch out for anyone trying to follow in my footsteps.

Like a lot of young guys, I developed a lot of anger, and I didn’t know what to do with it. That’s when I started wrestling which served as a volume dial to my rage. Wrestling emotionally drained me of anger because it was so demanding. That daily anger drain allowed me some room to mature beyond my fury. Now I have grown to the point where I no longer feel like intense aggression dominates me. I think that God wanted me to learn that, and I am grateful. I consider my new freedom from my more intense emotions and base instincts perhaps my greatest gift from God. That’s how God used sports to mold me.

I also started Boy Scouts about the same time I joined the youth group. While Boy Scouts was intimidating at first, it became a reprieve from the rest of the world. If you ever have trouble experiencing God, go into the woods, or mountains, and just get lost. I mean physically lost. When you are in the city or around other people, you are seeing life only as we have made it. But out there, you see the world as God made it, and it is much easier to see where you fit into everything. There is so much beauty to be admired in this world that does not come from a fashion salon. When you witness this nature, it lets you see farther into yourself than you would have thought possible.

Scouts are encouraged to develop skills, learn priorities, be prepared, and to steer clear of making dumb mistakes, which I had a slight tendency towards! Plus I got to play

with knives and fire; what else could a boy want? Just doing my Eagle project—which so many of you here helped make happen—was a culminating experience. It’s designed to be a leadership project—from planning, to recruiting volunteers, to helping with the execution phase. Adults are encouraged to pull back and let you make your own mistakes; it’s learning by planning, and then trial and error. It brings many moments where you say, “Wow, with better planning, that could’ve been better.” This suited me well, since I’m a learn-by-doing kind-of-guy, even if that means learning-by-mistakes.

I awarded Bill Ingold, Ed Smithey, and Wayne Jones mentor pins at my Eagle ceremony. They are small tokens of respect that one awards mentors who have made a difference in one’s project and life. But in addition to those men, I’m fully aware that *many* of you helped me to various degrees and in many ways. I could never have pulled it off without such a supportive church. Rydell and Lin, and Patsy & Frank have been great.

Besides, church, sports, and Scouts, I feel like God used one final other area of my life experiences to shape me: my summer jobs spent life-guarding. I first started out at our quiet little neighborhood pool, Hamilton Lakes--the same one where I learned to swim, break most of the rules, and spent several summers on the swim team.

Honestly, I don’t treasure the pressure of life-guarding, which was bumped up *too* many notches this last summer at Wet n Wild. I felt a lot of pressure there NOT because of my own stupidity—but because of OTHER PEOPLE’S! I have learned that I can keep learning, not just through *my own mistakes* but also through *others*. I cannot get over how many people know they cannot swim, but decide to go for a loop in the deep end anyway. They think they are invincible. When they think they might drown they think “Oh no biggie! The lifeguard will save me.” Does that strike you as insane? It makes my summer workdays anything but stress-free. If I had an “off-day” at work, someone would die, which will never happen to me because I care, but other guards have let people die before, and some do not care. Sorry to break the magic.

What really upsets me, though, was seeing parents of younger children put their kids at risk. Whether it’s forcing kids down slides they have no business going down—all with the assumption that I would just save their kid—to watching parents ditch their kids for the better part of a day. I’ve found crying, hungry toddlers with no parent to be found for hours, despite our staff making every effort to locate the parents. That was deeply upsetting to me, and I’ve decided that I can learn from mistakes other than my own. These incidents have made it clear to me the kind of person I *don’t* want to be. As well as the person I want to be.

God used the many experiences of my life, both the good and the bad, to create God’s art project that is my life. Some of my rough experiences I think of as sand in the wet clay that God is kneading. Others, the positive, great experiences, add color and interest to the final work of art. But they both add texture, shape, and beauty. I’m far from who I would like to be, and none of us will ever reach perfection, but I do trust that God loves us. God wants to mold something beautiful out of the experiences that have shaped my life, and yours too. UNC Wilmington will be the next set of influences that will shape me. I can’t wait to see what comes next. God clays me down in green pastures—and the sunlit beaches of Wilmington.

Nate Usey



Pots, Pics & People

I've never been much for making pottery, myself. In fact, for most of my life I haven't considered myself to be an especially creative person at all. But even though making art hasn't been an activity I've participated in much, Jeremiah's words about the potter and the clay resonate deeply with me. When I was about twelve, I learned to use Photoshop to manipulate pictures on my computer. At one point in my life I would spend hours of every day experimenting to see what I could make the program do. From swapping the heads on church directory pictures to putting my dad's head on Mount Rushmore, creating something new was a lot of fun. Restoring pictures in Photoshop actually has quite a bit in common with creating a piece of pottery, I think. It's the careful shaping and reshaping of the item in front of you until your vision is realized. It's a gradual process.

Like pictures and like pottery, all people have to start the process of being shaped somewhere. For me that journey, in many ways, starts in church. I was born on a Sunday, and went to church for the first time exactly one week later. For as long as I could ever remember, church was not only the center of my spiritual life, but also of my social life and family life. For the majority of my life, I was a relatively sheltered, well-meaning, conservative evangelical Christian. During my teenage years, however, my world view began to change as I met individuals who challenged my once-clear understandings of many things in life. But as I began to question what I had always thought about who God was and which individuals God valued most, I found myself increasingly at odds with the only community of faith I had ever known. I eventually stopped wanting to go to church at all. So I found new motivations to fill the vacuum left by my shrinking spiritual life, throwing myself into school and plans for a career as a lawyer. I was still physically present in church, but my mind was somewhere else – exploring Mars, say. I became detached from those I went to church with, as I lost the ability to relate to Christianity as they were experiencing it. A little over a year ago, things came to a head when I shared my theological views with my youth pastor and was told that if I believed such things, I was going to hell. I'll admit, my first reaction was the overwhelming temptation to inform him that he was a stupid head. Thankfully, my inner five-year-old lost out.

That was when I knew it was time to make a change. If I was going to continue in the faith that had been so important to me throughout my childhood, I needed to find somewhere I could be who I was and where my questions would be welcome. That same week I asked my parents if Sam and I could look for a new church. It was difficult for them to let us go, I think, but they understood why we were asking, and agreed that we could try other churches. My dad explained his view this way. “All I've ever wanted for your life is that you pursue holiness and be happy.” Knowing that finding a new church would enable me to do those things more fully, we began to look for a place that might fit.

My brother and I first came to College Park on a Wednesday night last March, not knowing quite what to expect. We got lost trying to find the fellowship hall within the first five minutes. I guess we must have looked as lost as we were, because it wasn't long at all before Jessica Gourley asked us if we were visiting, then showed us where to go and introduced us to Cindy Dillon. I met so many people that first night, I was convinced I would never be able to remember all of their names, although many of those names now represent dear friends. Everyone present that night got a handout to go along with the parables study being done for Lent, and I remember keeping mine on my bedroom mirror for weeks. Not because the material on the sheet itself was unique; it was the text of familiar parables I'd read dozens of times before. I kept it because, as I told Sam later that night, that Wednesday had been the first night I'd enjoyed going to church in years, and I was afraid I wasn't going to feel that again.

But I did get to come back, I came back more than I'd ever expected. What had at first been a plan to simply visit on Wednesday nights soon became Wednesday nights and Sunday nights, as Sam and I got to know Lin, the youth pastor, and all the youth sponsors. Then we began attending Tessera on Sunday mornings. When summer arrived, I came to both services on Sundays so I could keep in touch with friends I would normally have seen only on Wednesday nights. I had found something beyond

an open space that welcomed my questions. I had found fellowship and friendship in a community that made me feel like I was wanted and loved.

In addition to providing me with a faith community where I finally felt comfortable and connected, College Park has contributed to the shaping of my life in other ways. One of the most difficult parts of leaving my old church was feeling as if I didn't know what I believed anymore, or even who I was, spiritually. I wanted to understand God so badly, but I didn't even know where to begin. Through conversations in Sunday School, with Michael and Lin, with other kids and sponsors in youth, and with God, I've learned so much about what being a Christian means to me. I've also been given many wonderful books to read that have helped shape my thinking about God in exciting new ways.

I was given the chance to turn that new sense of understanding and direction into action on the youth's West Virginia mission trip last July. The ability to provide a family with practical help meant so much to me. In the past I had been frustrated with mission trips which you could easily have left feeling unsure if you'd made a positive difference in the community at all. Beyond the experience the work itself provided, West Virginia also gave me the chance to get to know my friends in the youth group on a much deeper level. In our laughing and crying together, swimming in the river and getting splashed by a truck in the rain, in teaching each other and learning from one another, I made some of my very best memories during that week. We were working toward a common goal, to show the love of God in Mt. Hope. In many ways, I came back from the trip a different person.

Through a combination of discovering what I believe and learning to act on those beliefs as I live my life, I've come to a better understanding of what being a follower of Jesus looks like for me personally. For a long time I felt as if I was faking my way through Christianity, copying what other people were doing in their lives and wondering why it never seemed to work the same way for me. What I've come to realize is that just as all of us are unique, so are our spiritual lives. Christianity is not a Snuggie: there's no one-size-fits-all answer to how to live out our faith. Since that realization, I've begun the process of searching for what works for me. The variety of ways I've seen worship done in my time at College Park has given me wonderful material to work with.

In August I moved to Chapel Hill to attend school at UNC. (Go Tarheels!) As a slight aside, I'm deeply convinced that watching Carolina beat Duke is about as close as we can get to the divine on earth. In all seriousness, I've learned so many wonderful things since last fall, both inside and outside of the classroom. Yet the transition to UNC has also been difficult for me. With staunch atheists on one side and angry preachers yelling at passing students on the other, finding friends who understand my commitment to my faith has been a struggle. I miss seeing my family and I stress too much over my classes. But even these difficulties at Chapel Hill have helped me grow as a person. When I'm most worried, I remember that Jesus said even faith as small as a mustard seed would be enough to move mountains.

In addition to my world view and my circumstances, my plans for the future have also been reshaped over the past year. The stress I've faced at UNC has made me realize that perhaps the competitive nature of law school may not be what I need at this point in my life. I don't know exactly what God is calling me to do in the long-term, but I feel at peace with my decision to apply to divinity school this fall. I've rediscovered a passion for Christianity and the church that I'd once thought was gone for good, and am so excited to see where this path will lead.

In Jeremiah, the potter works the clay, slowly molding it into something even better than what was there before. Or a picture is cleaned up to reflect the beauty of its original design. A person is shaped over a lifetime by the hands of God. In the real world, I don't think God just tinkers with human hearts and minds or instantly changes us into the individuals we'll become. Instead, I think God uses the people we encounter in our everyday lives to do the shaping. A kind word here, a piece of advice there; I believe those are the hands of God the potter shaping our lives. So many different people have helped to shape me over the years in too many ways to count, especially my parents, my brother, and my friends. But some of the changes for which I am most grateful have been found here, at College Park. For the past year you have been the hands of God in my life, and I give thanks for you all every day. The process doesn't end,

but I'm excited to continue to learn and grow alongside you all, and I can't wait to see the ways that God will shape our lives in the future.

Kelli Joyce

It's a Girl! And another Girl!

Due Date: 4/09/11

Yes, it's official: Kevin and I are about to become the proud parent-like people of Shevan (12) and Cheyenne (11). Thank you all for your support and prayers while we were working hard to make this happen. Because this is an awesome church full of people always wanting to help, we are certain that some of you are now thinking, "What can I do to help these two woefully unprepared adults get ready for the total and utter chaos that is about to enter their lives?" Good question, and we have some ready-made ideas for the type of support we need right now.

- 1) Recommendations for
 - a pediatrician with a practice focus on teenagers
 - after school care (we are in the Kernodle district and both are going into the 7th grade)
 - summer care (btw: at what age is it considered safe or acceptable to leave kids home alone?)
 - summer camp opportunities--what is it and how do I get in it? dentists/orthodontists (do they accept Medicaid?)
- 2) What should we be considering about
 - charter schools?
 - ?? [things our minds are unable to even conceive at this time]
- 3) Invitations, invitations, invitations--don't forget the girls if your own similarly aged child is having a party, event, etc., for which you might consider including them.

We have already learned that we have no taste in bedding, shoes, or clothes, we eat too many whole wheat products, and no one, and I mean no one, should be buying fat free cheese (I personally agree with that last one-lks).

You may also have questions like, 1) "Do Kevin & Lisa know what they're getting themselves into?", 2) "Is this permanent?", 3) "Did they steal these children?"

Answers:

- 1) Yes and no. Yes, we know it will be difficult. Yes, we know it will turn our lives up side down and sideways. Yes, we are ready. On the other hand, no, we have no idea what we're getting into. No, we're not even close to being ready, but who ever is? At this time, it would be helpful if you resisted any impulse to mention your own (or your brother's, sister's, cousin's, friend's, someone you read about on the inter net's) horror story about raising kids in general, girls specifically, or girls from troubled homes. There will be opportunity in the future for you to share such horror stories; most likely when one of us says, "Can you believe [Shevan or Cheyenne or, heaven forbid, both] did [horrible thing that we did not anticipate]!?!? Feel free, then, to let us know that it could have been much worse....um...wait, nope, I take that back--still keep it to yourself.
- 2) Yes, God willing, this is permanent. (Repeat answer to question 1). There are still hoops that must be jumped, but possession is 9/10ths, you know.
- 3) No, we won them fair and square. These girls are Lisa's cousins who are in need of stable home. They are smart, funny, typical 11 and 12 year old girls. They have not been the victims of abuse, just really lousy parenting. A conversation with them will quickly reveal that they are from Georgia. Frankly, it will take a while before we can fully understand what they are saying. Sheesh.

Thank you in advance!
Lisa & Kevin Shortt

Photovoice Exhibition

The ARC of Greensboro and the TRAIN Grant Team/UNCG are presenting a digital camera photo exhibition on April 28th from 5:00 pm—7:00 pm at the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, 342 North Elm Street. Meet the photographers, see their stories and open your eyes to new perspectives of belonging.

Kirstyn Scarborough -Employee of the Month

Kirstyn Scarborough has been a dedicated and consistent staff at Lindley Habilitation Services working with her consumer since her first day at Lindley. She's been creative with addressing her goals, and is constantly seeking ways to promote her consumer's independence. When there was a lot of transition with staffing her consumer's hours, Kirstyn went above and beyond by picking up additional shifts and working extra hours to ensure that her consumer had the consistency she needs to be successful. She has been determined to help acclimate her consumer to additional community and peer-oriented activities, and after a few rough weeks of non-compliance, her consumer is now regularly participating and enjoying the agency activities. She's a strong advocate for her consumer, and never hesitates to contact her supervisor with concerns or questions about activities to run.

Kirstyn's attitude has been exemplary, and it has rubbed off on not only her consumer, but other team members as well.

Again Lindley would like to congratulate Kirstyn Scarborough as our April 2011 Employee of Month.

Thank You

College Park,
Thank you so much for the baby food! This gift will help others and us very much. We have been able to share this baby food with other families and it has been a blessing. Thanks for thinking of us!

Jared, Beth & Ruby Webb

Dear Friends at College Park,
On behalf of the Ruth School we want to thank you for including us once again in the 3 Nickels program. You've heard from us before how the Ruth School is breaking the cycle of poverty through education.

We believe in your program and want to do our part. Enclosed is a check to help.

Thanks again for your continued support.

Blessings,
Ralph & Tammy

Dear College Park Family,
I would like to thank you for your cards, prayers and visits during my sickness. A special thanks to Michael for his visits and prayers.

Jack Miller

Dear College Park,
I can't thank my College Park family enough for the all the prayers, cards, calls, emails and hugs I received after the death of my dad and best friend, Bob C. Your support was simply amazing and comforting. Thank you again.

Jerry Cunningham

Dear College Park,
Thank you Michael, Lin and friends for your prayers, calls and visits during my hospital stay and recovery.

Betty Lowrance

Dear College Park Baptist Church,
Thank you so much for opening your doors to our chapter with such short notice. We had a wonderful time and your fellowship hall was the perfect location. We will look to you in the future for more events. Thank you again!

Zeta Kappa Chapter
Chi Omega Fraternity, UNCG

Dear College Park:
There are times when we say it is difficult to find the words, and then there are times when it is really difficult to find the words. Words that can adequately express the level of gratitude and appreciation that we the Carden family have felt toward the members of this Church. Not only were we so warmly accepted and welcomed into this Church family since moving here two years ago; the level of compassion, love and concern shown toward us over the past four months during my repeated stays in Duke hospital has been remarkable to say the least. From numerous calls, cards and letters, to weeks of meals cooked for us by a veritable army of incredibly talented folk.

How can we possibly begin to repay such kindness, other than to embrace the fact we are a part of a wonderful Church family, and that this is how Jesus intended we should treat one another.

Thank you all,
The Cardens.

Thank You

Dear College Park Congregation:
We are truly at a loss for words to tell you how much your church has meant to our family. The love and extraordinary care you have shown to Robert and his girlfriend, Courtney, are truly what Jesus meant when he told us to care for his sheep. I wish that our daughter could have found a church like yours in Cincinnati.

I know that you have helped to guide Robert through all of the trials and problems college students can face when 500 miles away from home. I hope our church can learn from how you care for people as I share Robert's story of College Park.

Love in Christ,
Julie & Drew Dixon

Temporary GUM cooker needed for maternity leave!

PJ Stocks and Alison Schwartz are seeking a temporary replacement GUM cooker for the 3rd Sunday of the following months: June and July, to do our monthly cooking for GUM. Alison Schwartz will be going out on maternity leave starting in May and plans to return to cooking in August! Cooks need to be at the church at 4:00 pm on the 3rd Sunday of each month and plan to stay until 6:00 pm to prepare the meal for serving. PJ Stocks will be there to give directions, recipes and any necessary information, we just need a replacement for Alison while she is away on maternity leave! If you are available to help one (or more) of these months, please contact Alison Schwartz at arhschwartz@triad.rr.com.

Monica Williams & Rydell Harrison are getting married!

Please celebrate with us on Saturday, April 30, at 1:00 pm for the wedding of Monica Williams and Rydell Harrison. A dessert reception will be held in the Fellowship Hall following the wedding ceremony.

Ultimate Frisbee

Ready to get out and run? Join us for Ultimate Frisbee Monday nights, 6:00 pm, starting April 18th at Lake Daniel Park (corner of Radiance and Mimosa). No experience is necessary. Bring a red shirt, a white shirt, and some water and you are good to go! You will learn as you play! Or just bring a chair and relax and chat with your friends and watch the game. Ultimate Frisbee is a non-contact sport (most of the time) played on a field with two end zones. If you have the Frisbee, you can not run, but must pass it to another team mate. Points are scored by catching the Frisbee in the end zone. If we have enough players, we can have a beginners and advanced games going at the same time. For more information, contact Adam Team, Stephen Jones, or Matt Cravey. You can find us on Facebook at "College Park Frisbee."

Senior Wheels Fundraiser—Big Success

College Park Church made a difference! Thanks so very much to my College Park friends for your ticket purchases. If there had been a prize for selling the most tickets, I believe we won. I was asked to write a note informing everyone of the financial outcome of the benefit. It was our biggest fundraiser to date for the Spaghetti Dinners at Christ United Methodist Church on April 1st. In addition to the spaghetti dinner, there was a silent audition for a number of Theme Baskets. (These were provided primarily by churches.) The ticket sales and contributions amounted to \$2,590.00. (The expense to CUMC for purchasing and preparing the food is to be deducted from this amount. It will probably be in the range of \$600.00.) Receipts from the Theme Baskets were approximately \$1,000.00. Everyone was delighted with the success. Thanks again, you're the best!

Betty Withers



Lent 2011 Theme



The theme for this Lenten season is "Inhale." Lent is about emptying ourselves and opening ourselves to movement of God's spirit. In these next weeks, we will be opening ourselves and trying to inhale God and the spirit throughout the Lenten season. Our Easter theme then, Exhale, will allow us to focus on the ways that we exhale God into the world.

A Scandalous Gospel:

How the Gospel writers understand and explain a crucified Christ.

During the Lenten Season, Dr. Richard Vinson will lead us in a five-part discussion on the gospels. Dr. Vinson will present on all four gospels allowing us to compare the gospels and helping us better understand their distinctions and unique approaches in telling the gospel story. We will also dedicate part of our discussion to comparing the "passion narratives" of the four gospels. The dates for this Wednesday night series are: April 13, April 20. These conversations will take place following the 5:00 pm dinner. Please plan to join us for this bible study, this is not an opportunity you want to miss.

About Dr. Vinson: Dr. Vinson and his spouse, Dr. Diane Lipsett have both recently led discussions for us during the Advent season. Dr. Vinson is from Alabama, and grew up on a farm outside Montgomery. Dr. Vinson graduated with a B.A. and M.A. from Samford University, he received a M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and earned a Ph.D in Early Christianity Studies from Duke University. He is now a Visiting Professor of Religion at Salem College to which he relocated after marrying Dr. Diane Lipsett, who is Asst. Prof. of New Testament at Wake Forest Divinity School. Teaching at Salem means they get to live in the same city! Dr. Vinson's research and writing is on the New Testament. He published a commentary on Luke in 2008 and a commentary on 1 Peter in 2010. He has another book underway on Luke's version of the Lord's prayer. Dr. Vinson has three sons, two step-sons, a daughter-in-law, and a 4-year-old grandson.

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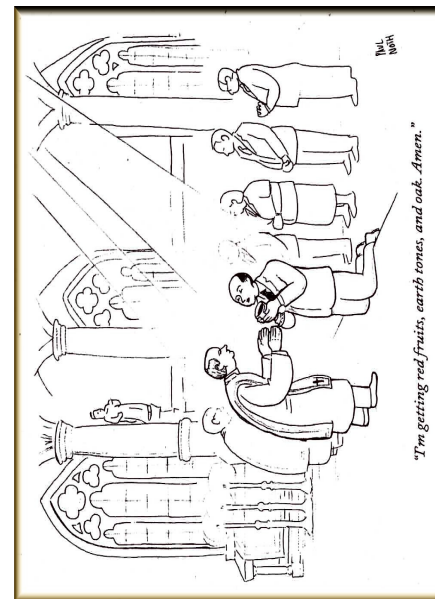
Every Member a Minister

Lin Bunce, Associate Minister
Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer
Cindy Dillon, Minister of Small Groups
Susan Finley, Handbell Director
Deanna Miller, Brian's Baby's Mama
Rydell Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship
Darlene Johnson, Sexton
Matt Lojko, Deacon Chair
Georgia Murray, Office & Media Manager
Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries
Michael S. Usey, Pastor

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Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches - Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

March Peanut Butter Donations = 55 Pounds
Total Peanut Butter Donations = 124 Pounds
Total Other Food Donations = 0 Pounds
Grand Total for Year = 124 Pounds



Looking Ahead

April

17 Palm Sunday
Children's Egg Hunt
24 Easter
(Bring your flowers for the flowering cross.)
30 Monica Williams & Rydell Harrison are getting married, 1:00 pm. Dessert social in the FH following the ceremony.

May

1 Bright Sunday
Church-Wide Picnic
11 May Business Meeting
Dylan & Julie Jackson's baby girl is due.
14 Gray Previtte & Stefani LeHaie are getting married.

June

1 David & Alison Schwartz's baby boy is due.
12 Pentecost
15-18 Passport Kids

July

29 - Youth Mission Trip, San Francisco, CA
August 6

August

28 Children's Back to School Picnic

Reminder

Please email the church office at cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net if you would rather receive the monthly newsletter via email.