

# Brief Visit from My Soldier Son

Several years ago, as [Labor Day](#) approached and parents nationwide began that end-of-summer ritual I know all too well — packing the children off to college — I found myself facing a new and particularly fraught task: preparing to return my son not to college but to war, to the mountain passes northeast of Kandahar, Afghanistan, near the border with Pakistan. Instead of going to Staples to compare the features of the latest line of laptops or to pick out an alarm clock as I had done with our older children, I went shopping with Ian in the hunting section of Ray’s Sporting Goods, where we bought every last can of sandstone and olive green spray paint to camouflage his gear.

I am a minister in an affluent suburb of New York City. Nothing in my life had led me to expect that Veteran’s Day would honor the military service of a child of mine. But on September 11, 2001, a morning when we lost many friends and neighbors, Ian left high school and drove to the top of the parking lot at Overlook Hospital in Summit, where he watched the second tower of the World Trade Center come down.

A varsity lacrosse player, he decided in the ensuing months that instead of following the path of his siblings and peers, he would enlist in the Army, the only senior at Summit High School to do so. Eventually he would become an Army scout with the 25th Infantry, doing reconnaissance work in the hunt for [Al Qaeda](#) militants.

It is strange when your child can be on the front lines, scouting the mountains of Afghanistan and still able to call you on your cell phone at the beach. But that is what Ian did that August from a satellite phone, the reception so clear it sounded like he was right down the road.

“Dad,” he said. “I’ve got some news.”

“Are you O.K.?”

“Yes, it’s all good. I’m coming home in two weeks on leave. But I need you to talk to Mom.”

“About what?”

“I’m getting married.”

Ian had always been an impulsive, passionate kid, and we knew that he and Brandi had been dating for a year — she was also in the Army in Afghanistan, stationed in Kandahar. So it wasn’t the wedding news that threw us as much as the fact that we would only have two weeks to prepare.

No matter. We assumed that it would be a modest affair, attended only by family and a few friends, given the short notice. But word spread quickly, and soon we found ourselves planning a wedding for 200. Luckily, nearly everyone who found out about the sudden ceremony volunteered to help, which is the only way we were able to get it done.

Ian and Brandi’s route home took them from Kandahar to Uzbekistan to Kuwait City and then to Frankfurt, where they rushed to make a commercial flight to Newark that was being held for them.

The pilot of that plane announced that they were awaiting two soldiers on leave from Afghanistan who were going home to get married, and when Ian and Brandi finally boarded, dressed in their fatigues, the passengers stood and applauded.

At our end, I got choked up to see them still in uniform as they came toward me carrying so little. Unlike our college kids, who can fill a Chevy Suburban and then some with all their clothing, furniture, books and electronics, all of Ian’s and Brandi’s gear fit into two Army backpacks.

When Ian hugged me, he felt strong, very strong.

For the rehearsal dinner, my wife and I and our future in-laws presented a slide show of Ian’s and Brandi’s childhoods — a review of the kind of outdoorsy people they had always been, with a lot of laughter and joking. But in the middle of the show I had a moment of emotional weakness, remembering a similar slide show someone put together for a funeral I had recently attended.

I never wanted to pass around photos of Ian while talking about how great he was when he was alive. The fear of death always hovers over the families of those on active duty. Sometimes you try to bargain with it or push it aside, but it’s always there. All I felt we could do that would be spiritually productive was to celebrate the wonder and goodness of life in the midst of our anxiety. What better occasion to do that than a wedding?

And what a wedding it was. The church filled with Ian’s friends who had delayed returning to college to be there — all beautiful young people, so handsome in their suits and evening dresses, on their way back to Georgetown, Middlebury, Duke and Brown.

They were respectful but surely curious at the spectacle. My son was a bit of a wild man in high school — not a person anyone would have predicted to be the first to marry. And in the college world his friends inhabit, especially the fraternity world, marriage is not exactly at the top of everyone’s list.

In the world of the enlisted men and women, however, a premium is placed on loyalty and steadfast support, and this translates into a high rate of marriage, even among young people who are only in their late teens and early 20s. Every day, from basic training to daily missions, where they depend on one another for survival and success, what really matters are loyalty and people who can be counted on. And so it was for Ian and Brandi.

We had to have the reception at our house as my son was just shy of 21 and could not legally drink. This was nothing new to him; American soldiers in Afghanistan are on dry deployment. They don’t have access to cash, either — just a credit card that can be used at the base.

There is precious little to spend it on anyway. Ian’s unit was hardly ever off duty, and often their missions in the field would go on for weeks at a time in those rugged, hostile mountains, periods during which he and his fellow scouts were self-sufficient and capable of sleeping anywhere at any time.

The evening before he had to return, after we finished buying the camo paint, we drifted over to the gun cases. I asked Ian about the sidearms they use in the Army, and he showed me the Glock 9 millimeter pistol that is standard issue. He told me officers complain about it because people can be shot two or three times and they keep running.

“How does the Army prepare soldiers spiritually to kill people?” I asked.

“You train over and over so that when you get there it isn’t a big deal,” he said.

But I worried for him because I knew it was a big deal. So far he had been able to avoid heavy sustained fire. Considering where he was, though, it seemed inevitable that he would engage in deadly combat, and that he would come back changed.

I wanted to stop and pray for his burden right then and there, but I did not. I just put my hand on his shoulder.

At home later, we had our last family meal before his mother and I would take them to the airport in the morning. He and Brandi were so rested from their two-week leave, so full of energy from being together and ready to make plans for a home. But all of that would have to wait until their tour was over. Back in Afghanistan they wouldn’t see each other for long periods of time, and when they did reunite they would literally set up their tent together. But they never once complained to us about this or anything else.

When I used to take my older kids to college, I’d always have to wake them up and get us all going on the morning of departure. Then there were all the last-minute items they typically needed, as well as cash for some extra bill they hadn’t anticipated. I used to joke that each hug cost me \$100.

But the morning we took Ian and Brandi to the airport, my son was the one to wake us. It was well before dawn, but they were packed, ready to go and surprisingly alert, considering how little sleep they’d had. There would be no \$100 hug.

As it happened, though, he did have one request involving money, though it was about his money, not mine. After spending a few minutes standing around the coffeepot, he handed me a folder. “Dad,” he said. “I need you to hold on to this for me.”

Inside were the records for a bank account he had opened with their wedding gifts, including the name of the teller if I ever needed to speak to her, and some deposit and withdrawal slips.

“The last couple of things are for you,” he said. “You may want to keep them separate.” It was a power of attorney that would enable me to access his account in the event of his death.

I know I’m supposed to be a pro in these situations, but I could not stop a despairing rush of anxiety from surging through me. My eyes became blurry, and I had to turn away to regain my composure.

As we drove to the airport, nobody spoke. At the departure terminal, I parked the car and got out, and my wife and I and pulled Ian and Brandi close.

I didn’t want to let go of my son — I feared it might be our last hug. But I knew he needed us to be strong and to support them in what they had to do, so I made myself let go.

I kissed them each on the head and said, “You know who loves you.”

With that they turned and walked into the terminal. Ian still had that shuffle he had as a little boy. Despite the backpack and uniform, I saw him as the toddler he once was wearing footie pajamas and dragging his blanket behind him. But he was no longer that boy. He was a man, not yet 21, who looked as if he could handle anything. He had his arm around his wife in support. And just like that he was gone.

Charles Rush  
Senior Minister of Christ Church in Summit, N.J.  
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## 2010 Contribution Envelopes

New envelopes for the 2010 year will be distributed in December. If anyone wishes to receive a boxed set that has an envelope for every week in 2010, including special offerings, please contact the church office, 273-1779. These boxed sets are numbered and each contributor must have a number assigned before contributions can be entered into church records. The new envelopes will be available for pick up at the Christmas banquet and subsequent church services from the table in the parking lot entrance vestibule.

**Logan Turner** is being deployed December 12 to Balad Air Force Base in Iraq for six months. There he will fly as crew in the MC-12 Liberty, the newest manned recon plane. His cell number is (405) 595-8746. His mother encourages his friends to call him before he leaves.

## God’s Booty Call

All this month I’ve been Rev Malaprop for some reason. During Jeff and Lynn’s rededication service, I twice mispronounced the word *bless as breast*. So their reaffirmation of their vows are now breast by the holy spirit, as are their new rings. Oh, well. Many of you were here one Sunday when I misspoke talking about Buddhism and called it Bootyism. I joked on facebook this week that when I misspoke, I had instantly several hundred converts to Bootyism. Several of you suggested hymns, like Baby Got Back and guest musicians for the service like KC and the Sunshine band and Sir Mix A lot. (Breast, booty, paging Dr. Freud, Dr. Sigmund Freud to the pulpit please.) Now the booty I want to talk with you about this morning is akin to pirate’s booty, booty meaning treasure, gold, money. What does the Bible say about this kind of booty? First, I want to talk about a passage in 2 Corinthians, then say something about a theology of possessions, and then finish for a moment about our situation at CP.

When Paul passes the offering plate in Corinth for the poor, his most persuasive argument for giving is *grace*. Grace begets gratitude and gratitude begets giving.

Why do we give? How do we give? The last verse of chapter 9 tells us: thanks be to God for God’s inexpressible gift (v. 15). And that is how Paul begins too. He tells the Corinthians he wants them to grow in the grace of giving. Giving money is a response to grace and is itself an act of grace. Six times in the first 9 verses of chapter 8 Paul uses the word *grace*, sometimes to mean God’s act, other times to signify our act. Everything we do and are in Christ is grace.

Paul is concerned about the poor in Jerusalem. His first, last, and best appeal is grace, but he pulls out all the stops, using other appeals as well to pry open their pocket books.

He first appeals to their spiritual **pride**: You have excelled in the other gifts of the Spirit—faith, tongues, knowledge, etc.—now I want you to excel in the spiritual gift of giving, in the grace of generosity (8:7).

Then he uses **shame**. The Macedonians have given a big offering and they are poor folks themselves. You would look awfully bad if you gave a stingy offering. Besides, I’ve already bragged on you. Don’t let me down (8:1-5; 9:3-5).

Next Paul appeals to their **self-interest**. He uses a farming illustration: if you sow sparingly, you’ll reap sparingly; if you sow bountifully, you’ll reap bountifully. We should not give this a crassly materialistic interpretation. God does not reward us tit for tat, dollar for dollar, but he rewards us with a better, fuller way of life. If you sow abundantly, the kingdom of God will yield a bountiful harvest in you (9:6-12).

Next Paul appeals to their **trust**. Don’t be anxious, he says, God is able to take care of you. God will provide more than enough so that you can keep what is enough and keep on giving generously to others. How interesting a theology of stewardship is in this verse: God gives you more than enough so that the *more than what is enough* you can give to others (v.8). Trust the God who blesses and provides, he says. Giving is an act of trust.

This is our **worship**, too, Paul goes on to argue. Worship is not just for the poor. For your giving, he says, not only supplies the wants of the saint but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God. So Paul appeals to pride, to shame, to self-interest, to trust, and to worship. But his best and truest appeal is *gratitude*. Grace and gratitude. Thanks be to God for God’s inexpressible gift (v. 15). Look at the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich (8.9).

Paul closes with **doxology**. Thanks be to God for God’s inexpressible gift, Jesus Christ. There aren’t enough words or words good enough. There aren’t enough deeds or deeds pure enough, there aren’t enough songs or songs beautiful enough: *Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small*.

Such giving is not to be painted in the somber tones of martyrs’ deaths, nor in the

unhappy drone of duty. As those who give by grace, in grace and as grace, we give freely and joyfully. So Paul says, each one must do as she has made up her mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (9.7). The Greek word for *cheerful* is *hilaron*, from which we get the word *hilarious*.

**God loves a hilarious giver!** Hilarious givers are those who, lured by the extravagant kindness of God, give with their own kind of crazy extravagance, the way lovers give gifts to their beloved. Not counting the cost and with no miserly pinching of pennies, we try to figure out how much we can give rather than how little. And the giving is with no calculation of return; we give *because of*, not *in order* to.

There’s an old line about how we should give: “until it hurts.” What a dreary formula. Better we should say, “Give until it no longer hurts,” or “do not give out of your pain but out of your joy.” Give as those giddy with God’s grace give: recklessly, lavishly, hilariously to the God who has so recklessly and extravagantly loved us.

So that’s a quick biblical tour of giving a la Paul. This summer Ann and I were cleaning out the back bonus room of our house. Looking out over all of our stuff stored back there, I said, *Where on earth did we get all this stuff?* Ann said, *Well, what do you want to get rid of?* And I replied, *Well, some of **your** stuff. I **need** all my stuff.* In that moment, I felt like an old magnet I found one day in a desk drawer, coated with paper clips, pins, and every metal do-dad imaginable. Is there something within me that attracts, accumulates, and holds on to, but never lets go of, anything that comes within my sphere of influence?

How is the Christian to live with regard to possessions? A person came once to Steve Shoemaker, the pastor of Myers Park in Charlotte, and said, “I’ve never been able to find some peaceful middle ground between sackcloth and silk!” Is there a way between sackcloth and silk? I think so. In fact, these two represent two ways which lead us astray.

The first way is the dominant cultural voice of affluence. It says: you are what you own. It says: *my* power, *my* hand. It is characterized by a grasping hand, by getting and keeping. What flows into that life stops there, like the water that flows into the Dead Sea stops only to evaporate or turn to salt. It is the way of boredom—the curse of a people blessed who do not follow God’s call to be a blessing (see I pronounced that correctly).

The other way is the countercultural voice of asceticism. If the way of affluence is the silk, this is the sackcloth. It is the negative image of our affluent society. It says you are what you refuse. It is characterized by the hand extended, the palm up in refusal. It calls the blessing of God a curse. It pretends purity. It takes on airs. It wears sackcloth like a socialite wears a Halston gown. It may not be tempted by greed as the way of affluence, but it is riddled with pride.

But there is a third way beyond silk, beyond sackcloth. It is the biblical path of stewardship. Above all voices it hears the voice of Christ, and its way is the way of generosity. It is not silk, it is not sackcloth, it is not even a sensible cloth coat.

The way of Christ is stunningly different. It’s hand is not the grasping hand of affluence characterized by getting and keeping. Its hand is not the ascetic palm up in refusal. Its hand is open, joyfully receiving and joyfully giving. It is the way of generosity. It knows “kept grace” is a contradiction in terms. Grace given is always on its way to someone else. It knows that a life which only catches blessing and does not become a channel of blessing ruins the life and spoils the blessing.

This is the way of generosity. It may appear affluent, but its look is altered by a truly generous life-style. It may look modest, but its goal is not to look modes or to look any way but to love God and neighbor.

A miracle has happened to the Christian. The closed circle of getting and keeping has been broken. We become vessels of receiving and giving, channels of blessing.

This is where we are as a congregation at College Park. We seek to be channel of blessing to Greensboro. There is good news and bad news about the financial status of our mission. The good news is that giving is up from last year. This year was a difficult

year for many of you—a few lost jobs, many had either pay cuts or no raises, and most felt the pinch of tightening up the belt. Nevertheless, you have given more than last year, and we are in the black concerning our giving versus our actually expenses. Thanks to the foresight of the financial committee last fall, we planned for our spending to be wisely and carefully done, with our expenses down and giving up, we have money in the bank.

The bad news is that we are down from our projected budget. We need about \$40K in giving over the next 6 weeks in order to make our budget. It’s crucial we make our budget because we cannot in good faith increase next year’s budget without making this year’s. This is not impossible ground to make up, so I wanted to remind you that if you’re behind in your giving, please make it up as soon as possible. Ann and I are behind in our giving, mainly because for the last 3 years we have joined with my brother and sister in trying to endow a scholarship at Mercer University in my mother’s honor. Our mother went to Tift College, now a part of Mercer, and the scholarship is for people studying to teach. So we’re behind here, and we are committed to make it before year’s end.

I have found that every church thinks it is unique. Fortunately this self-evaluation is not completely true. God’s holy and wild spirit has raised up many diverse faithful and fun congregations. For example, we are not the only Baptist church in town—far from it. You can almost throw a rock and hit 4 other Baptist church buildings that are literally within a two-mile radius of ours. Nor are we the only inclusive congregation in Greensboro—there are others that are welcoming and affirming, for example, thank God. We are however the only Baptist congregation in Greensboro that is welcoming and affirming of everyone who follows Jesus as Lord. Being radically inclusive is not our thing—our thing is radically following Jesus, or doing the best we can, or at least trying not to embarrass Jesus by our following. We try our best to figure out what God is calling us to do, and then we try to follow. And since we are a free congregation in the free church tradition, we have only God and the Bible and each other to answer to.

As I’ve said to you before, we have three groups of people in our church: those who give generously, those who give as they can, and those who do not give. The first group, the generous givers, ponies up at least 10% of their income or more. I know at least one family here is committed to giving a third of what they make. This is about 30% of our congregation and they give about 80% of our budget. They carry the load for the rest of us. If you’re in this group, thank you and keep up the good work.

The second group gives what they can to the mission of CP. I understand that we have other places to give, and that, with finite financial resources, we all should give wisely. In the past I have everyone in this group to please consider giving at least 5% of their income. I choose not to know what people give, so this matter is between you and God. With 5% of our members’ income, we would survive and thrive. If we have 300 adult members making \$30K a year and giving 5%, we’d have \$450K, or \$100K more than our current budget. If we have 400 adult members who make on average \$50K and giving 5%, the results would be one million dollars, or triple our current budget. If you are giving now to CP’s mission, thank you. Please consider giving at least 5% or, if you’re at that level, then consider adding one percent more in the coming year.

The last group is members who are not yet giving to the ministries of our church. As I said there can be many reasons for this, and I understand that we all have other financial obligations. I want you to know that many of the church of which you are a part are deeply concerned persons who practice a regular discipline of giving, who make significant sacrifices for what they believe to be important. You are surrounded by people who take the church and the claims of God seriously. That is reflected in the stewardship of money. There are enough of us to do significant work, but there are not enough that we can say, Let someone else do it.

So there you have it: booty jokes, a quick study of Paul’s asking for an offering in 2 Corinthians 8-9, the beginning of a theology of possessions, and an overview of our financial situation and our needs. Because in Christ’s church, when you give your booty, your treasure, your money, you will be breast.

Michael

## Youth Hungary Trip

In the summer of 2011, the College Park Youth Group has been invited to assist Ralph & Tammy Stocks in a week of mission work in their Hungarian village. Ralph & Tammy have lived in Hungary since 1995, when they moved there to minister with and live among the Romany people (also called Gypsies).

For most of their history, Romany people have been treated as second-class citizens in Eastern Europe. Living on the margins of society, the Romany people still experience extensive persecution and discrimination. Gypsies are the poorest of the poor throughout Eastern Europe. Their communities are subject to all of the problems associated with acute poverty – illiteracy, unemployment, lack of access to health care, high crime rates, and low life expectancy. While in Hungary, Ralph & Tammy have worked with the Roma people through ministries that provide education to Roma children, seminary courses to Romany ministers, and support to local Roma churches.

Each summer, Ralph & Tammy provide a Christian summer camp for the Roma children, and they invite youth groups from the United States to help design and lead these camps. Our youth group will participate in this ministry. With Ralph & Tammy as our guide we will:

- lead the children's camp teaching about the love of God and Jesus through story, songs and crafts;
- meet with Gypsy teenagers and hear their stories;
- learn about Ralph & Tammy's ministry and meet with other ministers in the villages, and;
- learn more about the challenges faced by the Gypsy people as a result of discrimination and fear.

For many of the youth it will be their first time traveling abroad, and their excitement and anticipation is already building! They will get the full experience of being in Hungary. Not only will they live for a week in a Hungarian village, they will also spend a couple days in the city of Budapest eating in Hungarian restaurants, shopping in the marketplaces and touring historical sites. This trip will be a cultural and educational experience that promises to be enjoyable, memorable and life changing. If you were at College Park in 2004-2005, you helped support a previous trip to Hungary and you know what a gift that trip was to those youth.

We are now **20** months away and counting down to the Summer 2011 Youth Trip to Hungary. The youth began preparing for this trip with the Christmas tree fundraiser in August, and they will continue to find creative and fun ways to prepare for this trip in the months ahead. We thank you ahead of time for your support.

Lin Bunce

### Hey! What's for dinner? CPC Wednesday Night Fellowship

#### **December 2**

Country French Chicken  
Lima Beans, Rice Pilaf  
Apple Spice Cake

#### **December 9**

Christmas Banquet

#### **December 16**

Honey & Spice Glazed Chicken  
Salad, Rice w/ Veggies  
Pineapple Upside Down Cake

## Peggy Haymes' Books for Sale

Copies of Peggy's new book, *Didn't See it Coming, How I Faced Bouncing off a Buick and Other Assorted Stuff* are available for purchase in the church office. The price is \$15 per copy. Peggy is donating \$5 per copy to the youth mission trip.

## College Park Holiday Post Office

If you have Christmas cards for church members, don't fight the crowds at the Post Office. Simply place them in our own holiday post office located in the hall between the church office and the parlor. Then take the postage you saved and make a donation for missions during the Sunday offering. Don't forget to check the slot marked with the initial of your last name to find cards someone has left for you!

## Christmas Banquet

Our annual Christmas Banquet will be Wednesday, December 9, at 6:00 p.m. This catered meal will cost \$7 per person and a maximum of \$20 per family. Children under 5 eat free! The evening should be a festive one full of singing, laughter, and good food. Please make a reservation by calling the church office (273-1779) by Sunday, December 6th.

## Calling All Flutes!

If you are interested in playing in a flute choir during the Advent/Christmas season please contact Rachel Kirkman as soon as possible so we can begin rehearsing. Email Rachel at [rkirkman@golder.com](mailto:rkirkman@golder.com) or phone her at 336-294-3059.

## Buy/Sell Bulletin Board

Located in the Fellowship Hall, this bulletin board will serve as a place to post flyers and information about items to buy or sell. Furniture, vegetables, cars, and even services that you need or wish to offer for a fee. The price should be what is expected to be paid or received. Bartering or negotiating would be between the parties involved, but this is an attempt at haggle-free transactions. Hopefully, this will provide College Park members in selling what they no longer need or want, sharing within our church community and offering services that we may not have known existed within our membership all without the creepiness and uncertainty of ebay or Craig's list. Happy shopping!

## Used Books Needed

As you know, our youth are planning a wonderful mission trip to Hungry the summer of 2011 to work with the Roma children. To help raise funds for this trip, I am planning a used book sale. I would like to ask you all to go through your books and donate all that you have read. We would like to have as many best sellers as possible. You can place the books on the stage in the fellowship hall at any time. I will have large boxes marked for the sale. If you are unable to bring your books to the church I will be glad to come by and pick them up. Call me if you need pick up, Gwen Ware 286.6155 home or 580.3809 cell

We would also love to have a children's section so go through your kid's books and donate all the gently used ones you have.

Please tell your friends and relatives!! The sale will be in March but I would like to start collecting books as soon as possible.



## Calling all 3rd, 4th, and 5th Graders

Here are two exciting opportunities to make a BIG difference!

- 1) Sunday, December 6th, 4:45 p.m. -Serve dinner at Pathways Shelter for homeless families Meet at College Park at 4:45, travel together to Pathways and return around 7:00. We may need one parent to assist with this event.
- 2) Sunday, December 13th, 5-6:30 - Decorate and stuff small gift bags for individuals eating at the Grace Community Church weekly dinner for the homeless during the week of Christmas. We will decorate and stuff bags, and have dinner with our friends from Grace Methodist Church.

\*\*\***Important**\*\*\*\*

We will be collecting chapstick/lipbalm and packs of gum to put in the bags. We need to fill about 200! All church families are invited to contribute. Thank you so much.

## Thank You

Dear College Park,  
Jacob and I greatly appreciated the numerous cards and messages from you following the death of my mother, as well as your ongoing interest in my nephew's recovery from his accident and extensive injuries. Your care and support mean even so much.  
DiAnne Borders

To all our friends at College Park Baptist Church,  
Thank you so much for sharing your time and love with us during our Vow Renewal Service. Having you all there made the service complete.

Sincerely  
Ed & Wendy Smithey

## 3 Nickels Update

Back in June, College Park began a program called 3 Nickels, in which we collect offerings from our church family to fund mission projects outside the U.S. Our 2009 goal for 3 Nickels was to have 100 families or individuals pledge at least 3 nickels per day (\$1 per week) for the rest of the year. Many thanks to the 145 individuals/families who made a pledge!

College Park's Missions Committee then worked with church staff to select four international programs to receive our 3 Nickels donations:

- **Watering Malawi**—provides access to clean water, simple irrigation, and sanitation systems in the south African country of Malawi
- **Pennies for Peace**—provides education to children (especially girls) in Pakistan and Afghanistan
- **Heifer International**—provides livestock and other agricultural resources to families living in extreme poverty so they can have a source of food and a means of supporting themselves
- **The Ruth School**—gives educational opportunities to poor children, especially from Roma (Gypsy) communities in Bucharest, Romania

In addition to pledges, the 3 Nickels fund has received donations from our summer music camp participants and from children (and adults) who saved loose change in coin banks. As a result, we've already sent about \$1,100 to Watering Malawi and \$1,400 to Pennies for Peace. Our donations to Heifer International and the Ruth School will be sent in December.

**If you have not yet contributed to the 3 Nickels fund and want to, write "3 Nickels" on your check or giving envelope and turn in your donation before December 31.** And stay tuned for what the 3 Nickels fund will be doing in 2010!

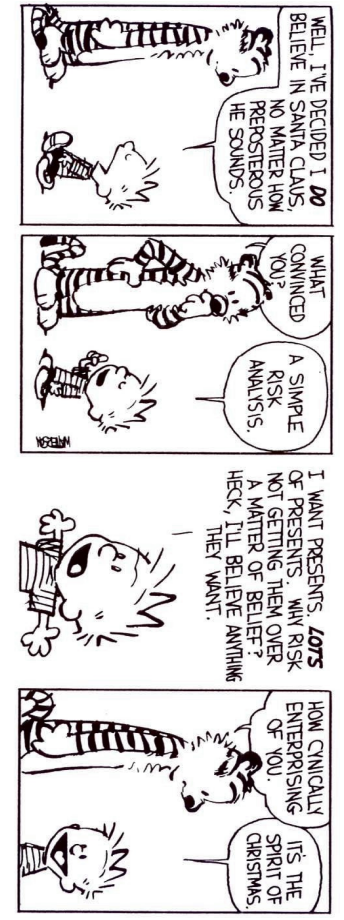
# Looking Ahead

- 1 Cynthia Stone's Birthday
  - 2 Dr. Diane Lipsett will be leading a study in Advent text.
  - 6 Peggy Haymes will Preach  
Outrageous Outreach will serve dinner at Pathways Shelter - 4:45 PM
  - 7 Deacon's Party at Ed & Wendy Smithey's Home 6:00 PM
  - 8 Yates & Brandi Austin's Son, Sam, Due
  - 9 Christmas Dinner
  - 12 Children's Christmas Party, 5:00-7:00 PM at Mike & Rachel Kirkman's Home
  - 13 Outrageous Outreach will decorate and stuff bags for individuals eating at Grace Community Church 5-6:30 PM
  - 16 Lovefeast—6:30 PM
  - 20 Youth Christmas Party  
GUM
  - 24 Christmas Eve Service—5:00 PM
  - 30 No Wednesday Activities
- 2010**  
January  
 6 Wednesday Night Activities Begin

### Every Member a Minister

- Lin Bunce, Associate Minister
- Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer
- Cindy Dillon, Minister of Small Groups
- Susan Finley, Handbell Director
- Rydel Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship
- Kathy Kirsner, Deacon Chair
- Georgia Murray, Office & Media Manager
- Helen Morehead, Sexton
- Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries
- Cynthia Stone, A 50-year-old Stone gathers no moss.
- Michael S. Usey, Pastor

www.collegeparkchurch.com      cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net  
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 Progressive - Diverse - Ecumenical



## Stewardship Focus

Ernest Hemingway once said that writing is easy; you just sit at your typewriter until your wrists start to bleed. Actually, I think it was a sports writer—either Red Smith or Red Barber—who said it, but the internet says Hemingway. Anyway, that is the thought that I was having shortly after midnight last night.

At age 14, I cut many of the yards in my hometown and my brother Bill cut some of the others. My second largest account was the local Baptist church. Three dollars for almost an acre of mowing. All work, however, came behind the common livelihood of harvesting tobacco. Almost every family farmed tobacco, had family members who worked on someone else's farm, or otherwise knew the status of everyone's farming. It was a small community. One week the weather was such that tobacco ripened faster than usual, and farms that usually operated three or four days a week were busy five and a half or six days. That week the church lawn went unattended. Between Sunday school and church, the men of the church stood on the front porch, smoked, and talked about happenings. The happenings included the remark that the grass was uncut, and "don't we pay that Eagles boy to cut the grass?" My daddy, whose greatest talent was stopping unwanted conversations, decided that he, my brother, and I would collectively keep the lawn mowed but take no more money. No money taken, no criticism allowed.

Several lessons came from that, but only one is important today. That lesson is that the church needs many contributions of various types, and each of us has a role to play in determining what the needs are, in deciding which needs we are best suited to fill, and in figuring how to help fill those needs.

Of the many needs College Park has, the most antagonizing one, the most persistent one, the most insistent one, is adequate funding for the missions you all think are most important.

From one point of view, our annual budget is in pretty good shape; we are likely to finish the year in the black. This is due to increased outside funding sources like tower rental and parking receipts and to a half-year of a vacant position. From another point of view, things are not so rosy. Our actual giving is below the giving level we as a church adopted for this year.

Our staff has received no raise for almost two years. This time period included covering for the vacant position for the first half of 2009 and has recently included adding a 9:00 a.m. service you might want to try.

It remains important for all of us to continue our financial support for College Park through this year and into future years. We have begun the budget preparation for 2010, and our ability to carry on and expand programs depends on your commitment to giving and on your follow-through. We will present the proposed budget during the Wednesday night business meeting in January. Please become involved in the budget process by contacting the Finance committee and by attending the business meeting.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support of the mission of College Park Church.

John Eagles  
 November 8, 2009

College Park  
 An American Baptist Church  
 1601 Walker Avenue  
 Greensboro, NC 27403

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1601 Walker Avenue, Greensboro, North Carolina 27403-2318  
 Church Telephone: 336-273-1779; Fax: 273-9637  
 www.collegeparkchurch.com      cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net

Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches - Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

November Peanut Butter Donations = 60 Pounds  
 Total Peanut Butter Donations for Year = 617 pounds  
 Total Other Food Donations for Year = 503 Pounds  
 Grand Total for Year = 1,120 Pounds

