

## Youth Sunday Sermon

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When we were young we all had dreams. My friend wanted to become a drummer, another one a scientist, my best friend wanted to win the lottery and one girl wanted to marry a rich model. Growing up in a country with a high rate of poverty as I did might influence you to acquire such dreams, but whenever someone would ask me what I wanted to be, poverty and the economy would come instantly into my thoughts. A journey of experiences and events has shaped and formed who I am, so that now, at the end of my high school career, the same future I imagined when I was younger is about to start becoming my present.

Senior year is an unforgettable and rich time in our lives, in which questions arise like: “What are you going to do next? How’s college going to be? There is fear of a new, yet interesting step in our lives. If someone asks my answer to the question: “What are you going to do next? It would be to study economy. In this world some people, and I say some because they are just a few, own enough money to sustain themselves and their families for their entire lives, such as people who are famous, the ones who appear on TV, and some others. However, what about the ones who are not famous, or the ones that simply don’t have enough? Are they doomed to a life of despair? We are all God’s creation so isn’t everyone of the same value under God’s eyes? I believe the answer to that question is yes, but because of our society and the importance that we have given to money and material properties, it is hard for people to believe so.

I want to earn a masters degree in Economy because I believe that if we can improve our economy and our world even by a little it would increase the fairness and equality for everyone who inhabits it. God can’t do everything for us if we do not start proving that we want a change and that we’ll do something for it. While some people misuse their money, there are millions that die of hunger and health problems. If I can help, even just a little, I know it would be totally worth it.

Ecuador is the country that I was raised in, a country full of poverty, corruption and despair. If you are as bad at geography as I am, I’ll give you the hint that it’s located in South America. I was lucky to be born within a family of well earned success and principles which taught me everyday to respect and love every person, even the ones that from my point of view did not deserve it.

We were going through the city one day in our car and a little boy asked us for money. My grandfather gave him some and right after that we saw the boy running to his mom just to get the money snatched from him and used to buy cigarettes! She had at least 3 other kids, all of them hungry, sad, and in an unhealthy environment, but she used the money to buy cigarettes! From that moment on, my grandfather started buying fruits and food to give to all the people that would ask for money daily in the streets of the city. Money can be a powerful and destructive tool, so there is a need to manage it well so it can be used for wise and loving purposes. My grandfather is a respected man and an Economist as well; to him I owe great part of any wisdom I may possess. He taught me what was good and bad and he never gave up, no matter how stubborn I was.

I once received an e-mail that narrated the conversation between a barber and his client about God; the barber said that God didn’t exist because if He existed He wouldn’t allow poverty, suffering, or any bad things to happen in this world. The client didn’t answer because he didn’t want to create any confrontation, but as he left, he saw a poor old man with extremely long hair and a beard just outside in the street. The client immediately turned around and went back inside to tell the barber that barbers didn’t exist. The barber was shocked by this commentary and said: “how can that be if I’m right here? The client said: “Well, there’s an old man with extremely long hair and a beard just outside in the street. How can he look like that if barbers exist? At this the barber answered: “Well they do not come to me.” “Exactly” said the client, “God exists we just don’t come to him.”

We might not be able to change the world or cause a great impact on society, but

if we come to God and do our best, we can become God’s tools in this world. Economy is one of the paths I have chosen to, and if it is meant to be, then this will be the right path to provide my best to the world. If it is not I know giving up would never be the right path in front of any situation. “Don’t collect any more than you are required to” Luke said in Luke 3:13, and I respect his words and will follow them. Money has become more than just a trading tool as it was meant to be, for it is now a reason for war, death, abuse and pain. Instead of being used for a good purpose, it is now misused, causing nothing but dreadful outcomes.

I once read a story which agreed with my thoughts about human nature. A man and a woman moved to a nice and quiet apartment. One day the woman looked through the window and saw an old lady hanging some sheets on the clothesline. She thought, “Those sheets are so dirty, somebody needs to show her how to wash them properly” The husband said nothing, he just watched through the window. This same incident occurred a few more times until one day , while looking through the window, the woman saw the old lady hanging some sheets that were now properly clean, so she said to her husband, “look she finally learned how to wash her sheets” but the husband said, “no, today I woke up earlier and washed our window.” I think we spend too much time worrying about the mistakes and lives of others instead of trying to make our own lives and our world a little bit better. We criticize and say the others sheets are too dirty instead of realizing that it might not be them but just our window. I can’t change other people, but I can change myself and hope this impacts others as well.

On one occasion I asked my grandfather why he didn’t do anything or fight for his rights when another man used my grandfather’s ideas as his own, or when somebody got a position that they didn’t deserve just because they were friends of the boss. He answered me, “I’m happy with my job and I do my best at it, my conscience is clear but theirs is not, that’s not my punishment but only theirs. I might have deserved that job and those could have been my ideas, but I, as well as them, will always know who really deserved the outcome”. I thought he was crazy at first but I soon realized he was right. I asked him if he would’ve been paid more if he had received the other position. He said “maybe, but that’s not important, what matters is that I have this job to sustain my family and help this country the best I can. I’m also a professor so I can give my knowledge to everyone I’m able. You have to try to be the best person you can no matter how the other people act and no matter what they say to you.

There is a phrase in Spanish that I love which says: “Quien busca los errores de los demas no puede ver lo propios” In English this translates to: Who searches for the other’s mistakes, can’t see their own, so I ask God to give me and everyone else the wisdom to see our own mistakes, instead of somebody else’s, and to become His tools in this world so we can properly fight for righteousness. This is part of who I hope to be when I become an economist. God Bless, Que Dios los Bendiga.

Dennis Xenos

## Ultimate Frisbee.

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Join us for Ultimate Frisbee on Monday nights at 6:00 p.m. at Lake Daniel Park at the corner of Mimosa Drive and Radiance Drive (It’s on the same side of Aycock as the church.) The game is fun, fast paced, easy to learn, and a great way to get some exercise and get to know other people. Men, women, youth and children are welcome to join in. Pizza at Brixx afterwards once it gets dark, or we are all too tired to play anymore. For more information, contact Matt Cravey or email him: mattand-nancy@netzero.net.

## Reel Faith Adult Summer Sunday School Schedule—July

July 6 - Coffee & Donuts

July 13 - *Chronicles of Narnia* led by Mike Kirkman

July 20 - *Hedwig & the Angry Itch* led by Keith Burkhead

July 27 - *There Will Be Blood* led by Mark Fleming

## Thank You

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Dear College Park Church,  
I wanted to thank you for allowing us to host the Girl Scout Leadership Appreciation dinner in your fellowship hall on April 22. I would also like to thank you for allowing us to use your kitchen and dishes. You have no idea how helpful it was. The dinner was very successful largely because of your help. Thanks again.  
Clara Wynn

Thank you,  
Because you were kind, we were able to learn even better in school. Thank you for being generous and kind!!

Love  
Your Peck Friends  
Joanna, Niree, Guadalupe, Rosa,  
Nicholas, Ellijah, Darius, Hakeem,  
Jocelyn, Dylan, Bertha

Dear College Park Family,  
Thank you for the concern and prayers while Dennis was in the hospital. We appreciate our church family.

Tim & Lori Morgan

## Agnes Joyner & Rachel Luck

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June 18 was our own Miss Agnes Joyner’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. We can’t make a big to-do about each person’s birthday, or even decade ones, but making it to 90 can’t escape a bit of special notice. Especially when she gave us a bit of a scare last Sunday by getting dizzy when she stood up too suddenly to sing.

Agnes and I go way back. She is one of the most faithful older members this church is blessed with. I recall when I first came, I created bible study on Tuesday mornings, and learned quickly that one regular I could count on—unless she was in the hospital, no less—was faithful Miss Agnes. For all of 14 years she came faithfully unless she absolutely could not. And what I quickly grew to love about her was her motivation. She never came to anything out of a sense of obligation or some vague moral compunction.

She came because she loved to. In fact, it’s not too strong to say she feels compelled to. She loved the challenge of unpacking scripture’s layers of meaning in the company of fellow faith-journeymen. She proved what I had always suspected: that age does not mandate that one have a traditional reading defined by one’s background. Yes, Agnes has her genteel aristocratic Virginian accent and walks in a room unafraid to make a splash with, say, her vivid purple outfit, complete with hat and deftly placed feather. But she is not even remotely about being splashy and conceited. She simply cannot not be herself. That means her love of color and cooking and all things vibrant and full of life attract her.

But even more than these artistic elements of life, she is passionate about things of the mind and heart. And so her faith is absolutely top priority on her list. She naturally circles any Biblical text with great interest and openness. She studies and rereads it diligently beforehand. She sees things from new angles and is willing to share those views while seriously hearing out others’ views. What I love most about her is that she can’t not be passionate about it. If she finds a view challenging, she’ll challenge you.

Then she’ll sweetly worry over whether she’s offended you or come off too strong, almost apologizing for her passion. She’ll never know how much that passion honors, even beyond me, though it does that, it honors God. Agnes, you have been so faithful and committed to God and this church—you really exemplify how you can be your own person, yet a serious passionate Christian. And I still love that about you.



## Living Wide Open: Landscapes of the Mind

I will not die an unlived life.  
I will not live in fear  
of falling or catching fire.  
I choose to inhabit my days,  
to allow my living to open me,  
to make me less afraid,  
more accessible,  
to loosen my heart  
until it becomes a wing,  
a torch, a promise.  
I choose to risk my significance,  
to live so that which came to me  
as a seed goes to the next  
as a blossom,  
and that which came to me  
as blossom,  
goes on as fruit.

Dawn Markova  
(Submitted by Connie Mashburn)

### Every Member a Minister

Lin Bunce, Wake Forest Intern  
Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer  
Cindy Dillon, Minister of Small Groups  
Jeremy Fox, Wake Forest Intern  
Rydell Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship  
Patsy Kendall, Deacon Chair  
Rachel Luck, Associate Minister  
Georgia Murray, Office & Media Manager  
Helen Morehead, Sexton  
Mike Pendergrat, Tear-Down Specialist  
David Soyars, Organist  
Amy Stocks, Campbell Intern  
Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries  
Michael S. Usey, Pastor  
Sally White, Handbell Director

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### From the Sermon

You know that I don't believe in that odd fundamentalist belief called the Rapture, the notion that God will snatch away all the Christians in the wink of an eye, leaving unbelievers here to suffer and perhaps repent. But I tell you this: If there is a Rapture, I'm not going. I am going to hold on to a tree, hug a car, or grab onto a left behind person. I'm going to stay here, with God's lost sheep, because that is where Christ will be.

Nevertheless, since we can't avoid hassling you about your famous signature: the wearing of a hat on Sunday morning, we decided that to salute your 90<sup>th</sup>, we had to say, both in words and gesture, our hats are on to you!

There's one more person I'd like to recognize. She doesn't wear a hat or make a splash when she walks into the room—except maybe on Halloween when she rented a full-scale 18<sup>th</sup> century style velvet floor-length dress, but Rachel Luck is also an individual in her own right who deserves recognition due to her 1-year anniversary with us, which fell on June 15.

It is, by the way, also Rydell's 2-year anniversary, but—as I already warned him—we don't do even-year anniversaries—just odd years. We still appreciate you, bud, but no further tip-of-our-hat to you. Too bad.

Rachel, on the other hand, has just completed one full year cycle with us, and she's been through it all; she knows our church now quite intimately: knows its warts and its unusual strengths. She knows enough that it means a lot that she's continued to choose to plant her roots down, yet further, with us in this church.

We, also, have had a full year to get to know Rachel. A year is enough time to size a person up, to see whether the shoe fits, to sense whether she's the right minister for the community. I think we have all breathed a collective sigh of relief to slowly realize she IS just that, the right person for the job. And of course, it's not just a job; a ministry position requires such an odd collage of skills, gifts, and commitments. My goal is to make sure we don't take for granted the wonderful gift God drew to us.

I just came off a week with Rachel at Passport kids Camp for our 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Close to 10 kids went this summer, around 30 youth went last summer and will go again this summer—along with other fun and meaningful activities. Rachel also oversees educational curriculum issues. So that reminds you of what she's about at this church.

But what she brings to those activities—that's harder to quantify, but of course that makes all the difference. And having just come off a week of seeing her close-up do her ministry makes me appreciate what a special minister we have in Rachel.

I noticed yet again that she is a natural leader. And in true Christian tradition, that of course means leading by being a servant. You all already know that we have been gifted with a leader who is a good preacher. Sunday nights with the youth has shown me she can be a good teacher and organizer of activities: that's, by the way, a huge part of her job and not an easy one.

But, she is, more importantly to this church I think, that indefinable mix of being quick to listen, quick to laugh, authentic and caring. Qualities we value deeply and mostly notice if we don't see them. But many ministers don't have them in equal measure. We are blessed, Rachel, that you are clearly doing this job for the right reasons. One, you wouldn't be doing it if your heart weren't in it (it's just not worth the hassles!), and two, you obviously have the gifts for doing ministry. You know that making plans is crucial, but flowing with the moment, truly enjoying people—something you can't fake by the way—and knowing when to stop well-laid plans and respond to a particular person in a particular moment—means putting people before plans. We're lucky to have found Rachel Luck. So our hats are off to you too this morning. We have grown to love you, and hope you'll be with us much more than just one more year.

Michael

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Boston or Bust  
Yard Sale

Saturday, July 12, 6 AM—1 PM

All proceeds go to our mission trip.

\*Only accepting clothes for infants to 5 years-old.