



Pleasant News

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church

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WORSHIP TIMES

- 8:45am Bible Study Groups
- 10:00am Worship in the Sanctuary

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Inspiration Point

Ephesians 6:10-18 (KJV) "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins gird about with truth, and having on the breast plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints;"

As most of us do at one time or another, I was scrolling on my phone the other day. Without meaning to, I came across a person of power and influence in the organized occult. He served in a very high position over an area from Maine to Jamaica. This was noteworthy because I felt the strongest evil influence coming from him that I have ever felt in my years of ministry!

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The problem with this is that most Christians today do not even believe in demons or evil spirits. As a result, they will watch movies, TV programs, or read books about the occult, not realizing that these evil spirits have attached themselves to them. When you bring these items into your home, the demons come with them! As you indulge yourself with them, the demon will transfer over onto you. It is a quiet thing at first and you do not realize they have done so. Before long, the peace in your home will be disrupted! You will have strange temptations and dreams! Go through your home and remove all occult items! Movies, books, horoscopes, fortune telling, and then pray over the home! Plead the Blood of Jesus over all people who live there and cast the evil spirits out to wander in dry, dark places!

The spirit world is more real than the one you live in, and Satan lived for millennia with God in heaven. He knows God's ways more than we will ever find out! Take on the whole armor of God and clean yourself! Study your Bible and practice what it teaches you! Most of all, develop a strong prayer life and maintain a very close personal relationship with your God and Savior, Jesus Christ! May you be blessed with good health and lots of love!!!

Brother Phil



Ongoing Bible Study at Pleasant Grove

We currently have a Bible study in progress at Pleasant Grove. Phil Turner is leading a Thursday Night Small Group Meeting that takes place in the Family Life Center Upper Room at 6:00 PM. All are invited. Currently we are studying the Work of the Holy Spirit. For more information and to inquire about joining, feel free to contact Phil. It is always a good thing when a body of believers comes together to dig deeper into the Word of God!!!



From the Pastor's Desk



Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

While preparing for our first Communion together, I began to think about the different ways that Christians encounter God's work of reconciliation through Jesus Christ. Rather than clinging to one theological viewpoint on the atonement (how human beings can be reconciled to God through Christ's sacrificial death), there are also many ways faith groups encounter and practice Holy Communion, and no one group has the one right way. Within all this diversity of Christian beliefs and practices, there is still one God offering God's-self to us and inviting us to join in the celebration feast!

The *Body of Christ* as described by the Apostle Paul, is a powerful way for us to think about how our many diverse human gifts are channeled through God's spirit for the broader work of bringing Christ to a hungry world. The world isn't fed and changed despite the Body's diversity but because of it, and the Church always functions best when all people come together bringing with us our unique experiences, gifts, perspectives, and practices.

Could it be that when we come together to worship and receive Communion and to serve others, that we, like Christ, mysteriously become nourishment and restoration for our world? Sure, it is a fearful, divided, and hungry world, yet it's also a world with such diversity and promise, a world always on the verge of reawakening to the possibilities of God's love!

So, when it comes to following Jesus' words, "*Do This in remembrance of Me,*" does it really matter if you take the cup this way or that, if you dip, sip, or bottoms up, if you wafer, cracker, or whole wheat? Does it really matter which one-way of atonement through which you practice your faith? For there is still one God, inviting us to join in the celebration feast, to bring our unique gifts together in love and unity and share them with our hungry world. Through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and by God's mysterious Spirit, WE are called to be the Body of Christ, the Church!

I'm looking forward to us receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion together on the first Sunday of each month, and I hope you will consider joining us to learn more about the various theories of atonement through our Thursday evening Lenten Bible Study.

Grace and Peace in Christ,

Pastor Sam



THE FOLLOWING GIFTS WERE MADE TO THE CHURCH IN MEMORY OR IN HONOR OF:

IN MEMORY

Keith Lewis

Winnie and Barbara Clement

Kappy Canfield

Jim and Tina Canfield

Bobby Torrence

Steve and Karen Dellinger

Don Upton

Roy and Margaret Parker

David and Susie Johnson

Lib Primm

Sue Phillips

Hazel Sanders

Steve and Karen Dellinger

William Pugh

Steve and Maria McClure – Cemetery Fund

Tim and Terri Honeycutt – Parsonage

Genesis Sunday School Class – Parsonage

Terry Kelly – Cemetery Fund

Joe Primm

Hazel Sanders

Terry Kelly – Cemetery Fund

Angela Walker

Hazel Sanders

Terry Kelly – Cemetery Fund

Mary Kelly

David Kelly – Cemetery Fund

IN HONOR

Jacob Bolick and Meghan Cox Wedding

Steve and Karen Dellinger

Bob Canfield

Jim and Tina Canfield

UMW Circle #6

Hazel Sanders

Shirley McClure

Rick and Lynda Elliott – Cemetery Fund

Roy and Margaret Parker

Don Haynes

Tim and Terri Honeycutt – Parsonage

Ray McClure

Tim and Terri Honeycutt – Parsonage

Trena McClure

Roy and Margaret Parker



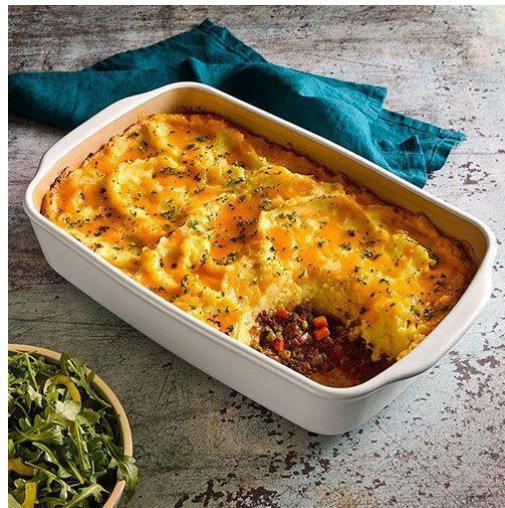
The Recipe Box

This month we are pleased to welcome a new voice to the *Pleasant News* volunteer staff!!! Peggy Green is taking on the role of our resident recipe guru and we couldn't be happier to have her! Each month, Peggy will provide us with a wonderful recipe that she feels will satisfy our church family in our desire to continue providing tasty meals for friends and family, or as we just want to spread our wings in the kitchen and try something new. Be sure to thank Peggy for her willingness and her volunteer spirit, as well as her cooking expertise, when you see her. We are so happy that she is now a part of *Pleasant News*!!!

St. Patrick's Day, celebrated on March 17th, was originally an event remembering St. Patrick as one of Ireland's patron saints. Religious services and feasts were a part of this observance. There are many delicious foods that have been adapted in the United States, coming out of this tradition. One of them is **Shepherd's Pie**, a wonderful comfort meal. Here is an easy version.

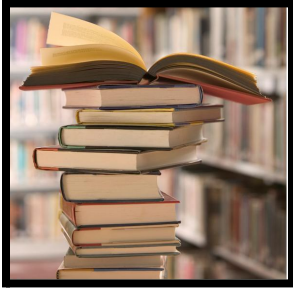
Shepherd's Pie

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 lb. 90% lean ground beef
- 2 tsp. parsley
- 1 tsp. rosemary
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 cup beef broth
- 1 ½ cup frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 packages "butter flavor" instant mashed potatoes
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese



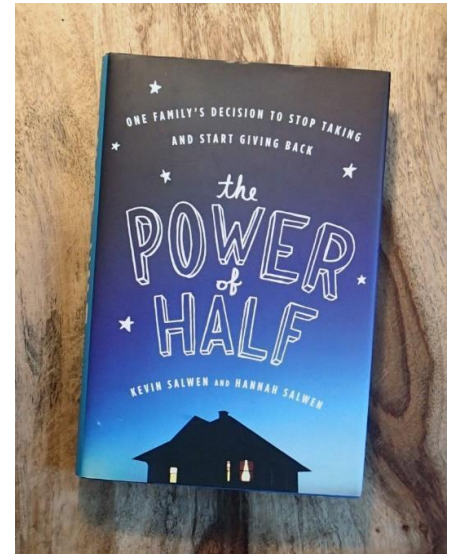
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prepare a 9 x 13 baking dish by greasing or spraying with cooking spray. Add olive oil to a large skillet. Sauté onion for 5 minutes. Add beef, breaking it up in the pan. Add parsley, rosemary, salt, and pepper. Stir and cook for 6-8 minutes. Add garlic and Worcestershire sauce. Stir and cook for a minute or so. Add flour and tomato paste. Stir until the clumps of tomato paste are gone. Add frozen vegetables and broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce to simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set this aside. Prepare the 2 packages of instant, buttered, mashed potatoes. In the greased baking dish, spread a layer of potatoes. Then, spoon in meat mixture and top with remaining potatoes, covering the meat layer completely. Bake at 400 degrees for 25-30 minutes, uncovered. Remove from oven and sprinkle top with cheddar cheese. Return to oven and bake for 5 more minutes. Cool for 10 minutes before serving. M-m-m-m! Enjoy!!!

Recommended Reading



The volunteers working on *Pleasant News* always try to recommend a good book to our church family in our monthly publication. Sometimes we suggest a work of fiction. Sometimes we think you might enjoy an informative read from history or science. Sometimes it's a biography, or autobiography, of an important figure in the Christian faith. And then there are the times that we recommend a book that just might change your life! *The Power of Half*, a true story by Kevin Salwen and Hannah Salwen, isn't a book chock full of spiritual truths. It isn't a book about some heroic effort to save a portion of humanity. It isn't even a book full of scriptures and important quotations. But it is the story of how one family's unassuming change in thought leads them to a life that fulfills an ethical and spiritual imperative... "that in giving, we receive."

It all started when 14-year-old Hannah Salwen had a eureka moment. Seeing a homeless man in her neighborhood at the same time a glistening Mercedes pulled up, she said, "You know, Dad, if *that* man had a less nice car, that man *there* could have a meal." Until that day the Salwens had been caught up like so many of us as we pursue the American dream: providing a good life for their children, accumulating more and more stuff, doing their part but not really feeling it. So when Hannah was stopped in her tracks by this jarring disparity, her parents knew they had to act on her urge to do something. As a family, they made the extraordinary decision to sell their Atlanta dream house, downsize to a home half its size, and give half of the sale price to a worthy charity. What began as an unbelievable plan became a remarkable journey that transported them across the globe and well out of their comfort zone. In the end they learned that they had the power to change a little corner of the world...and they found themselves changing, too! Through the story of *The Power of Half*, families in all income brackets can be inspired by one family's experience to boldly do something for others, to reconsider their spending and their stuff, and to live in better alignment with their values.



Although *The Power of Half* was published in 2010, its meaning and importance still ring true today. In reading this book you will be led to a new perspective on life. You won't be able to help but recommit to the values you hope to share with a younger generation...and you'll be reminded that the younger generation has much to teach you, too! *The Power of Half* is available from most booksellers. But you're in luck! It's also available in our own Lending Library. Just look for it on the bookshelves in the Gathering Room of the Family Life Center! Happy Reading!!!

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk
in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor;
blessings and prosperity will be yours.

Psalm 128:1-2



After School Care Post

After School Care is still going well...even as we continue to lose and gain students from time to time. Some parents have returned to work, some of our parents have had changes to their work hours, and some have even experienced layoffs, no longer needing after-school care for their students.

The children celebrated their 100th day of school, so they are over half-way through the school year. We had a nice Valentine's Day party with cupcakes and jello! Our craft on party day was a snowman made of shaving cream and glue...and our snowmen were all dressed up for Valentine's Day! The kids are still all wishing for a little bit of snow!!!

We are now working on St. Patrick's Day crafts to decorate our room. Soon Spring will be here, and Easter will be right around the corner! We have been taking the children to the gym as much as possible. They love to play and get some of that extra energy out.

The staff is already working on plans for Summer Camp, and we have already had a number of calls as parents begin to make plans for the summer months. We are expecting another FUN Summer!

We thank Pleasant Grove for housing our program and allowing us to be together after school and during the summer. We pray that the entire Pleasant Grove family will stay safe and healthy!



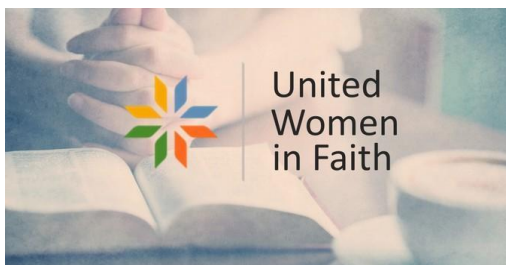
LUNCH TIME

PG Prayer Lunch

The PG Prayer Lunch meets every Thursday at 11:30 a.m. at The Stockyard Restaurant. Everyone...men and women, church members and friends, are welcome to join us. We would love to have you with us for this time of food, fellowship, and prayer as we come together seeking God's power and presence in our lives and in the world around us.

Thursdays - 11:30 AM - The Stockyard

News from United Women in Faith



The Pleasant Grove Unit of United Women in Faith is off to a great start for this year. Circles #3 and #6 have planned their year and as always are looking for ladies to join and become more involved in missions. The members of these Circles have truly formed a sisterhood...supporting one another throughout life as well as bringing a fuller, richer, and deeper walk with Christ to one another. We also support projects around Pleasant Grove, within the Oakdale community, throughout the Carolinas, and across the globe. Who could pass up the chance to be a part of this group of “get things done” ladies?

The Metro District has two Spring events on the calendar and we need to support these efforts. The first is the district Mission Study on Saturday, March 4th, at St. Stephens and the second is the Spiritual Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, April 29th, at Simpson Gillespie. Please let Jeannie know if you will attend either of these meetings. Our support is needed if you can make it happen.

The door is always open to greet a new smiling face to join us. You never know what you might learn by coming or even how other ladies might learn from you! Looking forward to seeing someone new...will it be you?!?



Sharing The Love

We all know that the winter months are difficult for our homeless neighbors. We also know that we are called to care for those that find themselves in less-than-ideal circumstances. And, we know that “but for the grace of God, there go I.” Because we know these things, the Pleasant Grove Family has gone into action.

During January and February, we collected items for Roof Above. Some of the items were specific winter needs and some of the items were items that are needed year-round. As the Body of Christ, we were able to gather 16 pairs of gloves, 35 pairs of underwear, 26 deodorants, 10 boxes of dryer sheets, 15 containers of laundry detergent, 9 boxes of trash bags, a good bag of odds and ends, 10 cans of foot powder, and countless pairs of socks. Just imagine how good our neighbors will feel knowing that someone cared enough to send these items their way!!!



On Tuesday, February 14th, Valentine’s Day, we delivered our offering to Roof Above. What a great day to extend the Love of Christ in this way! The volunteers and staff were so grateful for our efforts and they were so excited to put them to use immediately. Thanks, once again, for being the hand of feet of Jesus in the world today. Be on the lookout for our next opportunity to bless others with the blessings we have received!

*“Love your neighbor as yourself.”
Matthew 22:39*

Girl Scouts...Having Fun and Doing Good



Girl Scout Troop 882, which meets in our family life center, had a blast at a recent overnight “camp-in.” While spending a Friday night in the gym, their main task was to sort out their Girl Scout cookie orders...over 330 cases of cookies! But, they also pitched their tents, painted letters for their cookie booth, and made Valentine’s cards for the sick and shut-in. The girls learned how to use sewing machines as they made pillows for kids in need. These pillows will be distributed through Crisis Assistance Ministries. They ended their evening together by making friendship bracelets...and we are sure that many friendships have been nurtured and

encouraged within the time spent together as a Troop.

As a church, we are so proud of the two troops that meet at our campus. These girls are amazing human beings who are making the world a better place, one service project at a time. We appreciate the leaders of these troops and look forward to hearing more awesome stories of what our girls are doing.

Way to go, Girls...Keep up the great work!!! God bless you all!!!



Spring Cleaning Begins Early at Pleasant Grove

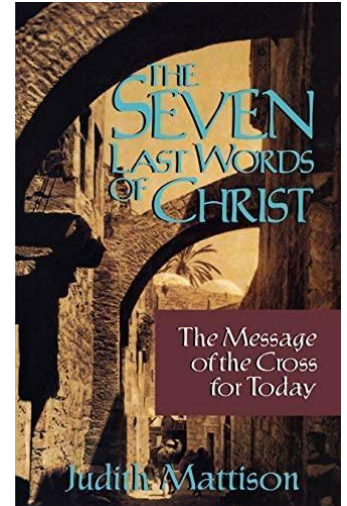
We all know what it's like at our homes...when a room isn't being used for a specific purpose, it can become the landing spot for the "stuff" that doesn't necessarily have a home of its own. Well, it's just the same way at our church home! We have several spaces around our campus that haven't been in regular use in a couple of years and things just sort of piled up in these spaces. No surprise, really. But a group of dedicated volunteers recently got together and decided that it was time to clean up, clean out, and spruce up these rooms. After all, how we treat and care for our House of Worship is an indicator of our devotion and work within the Kingdom of God! So far, our cleanup crew has worked in the Heritage Room, the Refuge, the Conference Room, the Music Office, a classroom, and a couple of dedicated storage rooms. And what a difference this work has made! The goal, going forward, is to touch every space on our campus with love and care, so that as we welcome our community onto our campus we can do so with a sense of pride and the knowledge that we are putting our best foot forward as we honor God and the ways He chooses to use us. There are more cleanup days to come so stay tuned, roll up your sleeves, and bring your best attitude to the work at hand! God Bless Pleasant Grove!



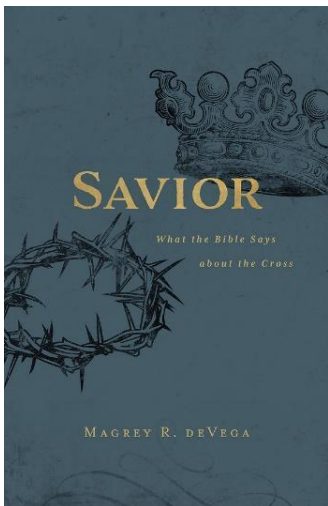
Lenten Sermon Series and Study

As we worship together during this coming Lenten season, you are invited to engage with a book by author Judith Mattison, entitled, The Seven Last Words of Christ: The Message of the Cross for Today. Gathered from the accounts of Good Friday in all four Gospels, *The Seven Last Words of Christ* provides us with an opportunity to focus on the cross and how Jesus' atoning sacrifice speaks differently within each Gospel writer's perspectives. Most importantly, engaging *The Seven Last Words of Christ* helps us explore our own Christian journey, by placing us somewhere within the greatest event our world has ever known, causing us to see ourselves together at the foot of the cross.

This sermon series will begin on the first Sunday of Lent, February 26th, during our 10:00 worship service. You are encouraged to purchase a copy of the book and read along each week, on your own, as a way of diving deeper into the message of the weekly sermon. This book is available from many online booksellers, including Amazon.



Thursday Night Lenten Study



You are all invited to participate in our Thursday night Lenten Study!!! As a guide for our time together, we will be using the book Savior...What the Bible says about The Cross by Magrey R. DeVega. The study begins on March 2nd and will be co-led by Pastor Sam Lewis and Colin Winslette. This is a five-week study that will take place in the family life center. Each evening begins with a light supper at 6:00, with a time of study and sharing to follow. Interested participants should sign up on the clipboard on the table at the front of the sanctuary. The deadline to sign up is February 19th. The cost of the book is \$13 and if you are able to cover the cost of your book, please make your check out to the church and turn it into the office or place it in the offering plate. Just be sure to mark it for the Lenten study book. We do hope that many of our church family will be able to take part in this study as spending time together in God's word strengthens the body of believers. We look forward to being together!!!

Good Friday Service



You are all invited and encouraged to attend a Good Friday service on Friday, April 7th, at 7:30 PM, in the sanctuary. This will be a Service of Tenebrae, or darkness, and is based on a twelfth century late night/early morning service with an extended meditation on the passion of Christ. Join us as we hear the Passion story from John's gospel, while being reminded of the drastic turn of events, from the celebratory mood of Palm Sunday to the betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and death of the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. Please mark your calendar now and make plans to be with us, as this will be an

impactful time of remembrance, introspection, and worship for the entire church family.



Easter Sunday at the Grove

Mark your calendars now and make plans to be a part of Easter Sunday at Pleasant Grove. There will be several opportunities to join with your church family as we celebrate our Risen Savior. We hope to see you all on this most joyous day!

Easter Sunday, April 9th

- 7:00 AM Sunrise Service (location to be determined)
- 8:00 AM Congregational Breakfast (fellowship hall)
- 9:00 AM Sunday School
- 10:00 AM Traditional Worship with Choral Presentation



Being a Blessing through our Blessings!!!

Once again, our sweet church family is being given the opportunity to help those in need...and boy, are we glad for this chance to reach out in love!!! Spring break is something that the students look forward to each year. They get to sleep in, play with their friends, and revel in the fact that they have no homework! But, for their parents, Spring break can present a very real and worrisome problem. When school is in session, these families rely on the two meals each day that the schools provide. But, a week with no school means those ten meals must come from another source. Pleasant Grove will once again be providing twelve families with grocery store gift cards that will fill in



this gap. If you would like to participate in this effort, simply make a donation, and either turn it into the church office or place it in the offering basket on Sunday morning. Just be sure to mark your contribution for Oakdale School. We all know how expensive groceries have become. Because of this we hope to be able to provide \$100 in gift cards to each of these twelve families. But giving any amount will be a big help as we can combine donations to cover the cost of these gift cards. Maybe you can go in together with another church member to cover one of these gift cards. Maybe a Sunday school class can cover the cost of one. Just do what you feel called to do as we do our best to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the Oakdale community. Together we can make a difference in the lives of those who find themselves in need!!! God Bless You All!!!



Happy St. Patrick's Day!!!

March is the month when Spring rolls in, the days get longer, the weather warms, and the Earth begins to green up once again! It is a glorious time of anticipation and of gratitude for the changing seasons. It is also the month when we celebrate St. Patrick's Day! Many cities have returned to holding St. Patrick's Day parades...Charlotte being one of them. Folks choose to prepare traditional Irish dishes. We wear green in an effort to avoid being pinched. We think about shamrocks, leprechauns, rainbows, and the proverbial pot of gold. But, this year, as we think about the "luck o' the Irish," maybe we can instead think about the many ways we have been blessed by God. Instead of looking for the pot of gold, let's look for a blessing in every circumstance, in every friendship, and in each and every day! And at the end of the day we will all know, without a shadow of a doubt, that luck has nothing to do with it all! And we can proclaim with all confidence, that "We aren't lucky, instead we are blessed!" Happy St. Patrick's Day, Pleasant Grove!!!





The church family recently received this note of thanks:

Dear Church Family,

We can say with assurance that love came our way from the Pleasant Grove Church Family during Don's brief illness and death. Words cannot adequately describe how the calls, visits, prayers, and cards lifted us in our time of need. Thank you, too, for the food that we received from Sunday School classes, groups, individuals, and from Pleasant Grove on the day of the funeral. It is wonderful to belong to a church and community that responds in the way Pleasant Grove did in our time of grief.

Again, thank you all for your love, support, and prayers.

---Jeannie Upton and Family



The church family extends our deepest sympathies to:

Jeannie Upton and family upon the recent death of their husband, father, and grandfather, Don Upton.

The family of Angela Walker upon her recent death.

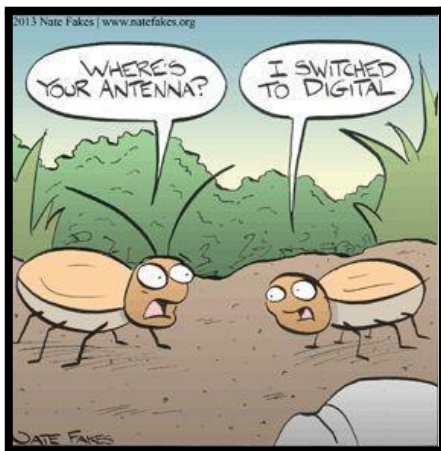
The family of Joe Primm upon his recent death.

The family of Mary Kelly upon her recent death.

Bill Wright and family upon the recent death of Bill's father, William Ray Wright, Sr.

The family of Pina Nance upon her recent death.

Just For Giggles!!!





MARCH MADNESS

WORD SEARCH



S	B	C	H	A	M	P	I	O	N	S	H	I	P
L	U	S	E	C	N	U	O	B	H	A	U	F	A
F	Z	T	N	E	M	A	N	R	U	O	T	S	B
Z	Z	L	E	A	G	U	E	C	E	A	S	B	R
A	E	T	U	M	L	N	K	C	F	I	H	E	A
R	R	I	E	E	A	U	A	F	S	A	C	S	C
E	L	R	B	A	E	R	E	T	G	N	A	T	K
B	E	E	B	S	M	S	C	A	O	E	O	A	E
O	M	A	D	N	E	S	S	H	A	S	C	A	T
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D	N	I	B	L	L	A	B	T	E	K	S	A	B
U	S	I	N	T	E	R	C	E	P	T	I	O	N
H	P	D	N	E	S	N	E	F	F	O	C	O	A

NAME: _____

SCORE: _____

- BASKETBALL
- OFFENSE
- ASSIST
- HOOPS
- TEAM
- MADNESS
- BUZZER
- INTERCEPTION
- GOAL
- REBOUND
- LEAGUE
- MARCH
- BRACKET
- BOUNCE
- CHAMPIONSHIP
- DEFENSE
- TOURNAMENT
- COACH

