

# the *Good News* banner

## Thoughts from the Pastor

Jack Gill

With January being a very cold month, I thought I'd give you a warm "picture." The beach!

Years ago, I had the blessing of living across the street from one in Hawaii. No matter which beach you might have gone to there – from Waikiki to the North Shore – you always found a common theme of activity at the beaches...building sand castles. Some were very rough and simple, and others would often be extremely elaborate – looking very much like expensive works of art! My castles bore no real likeness to authentic ones – except for a wall and moat. Others, though, sometimes crafted mermaids, built elaborate fixtures and embattlements, had deep moats – some as tall as me! However, at the end of the day, all of us would do the same thing. We would look over our creations, nod in approval of our efforts, and then go home. We might return on another day and we always found the same result: Our castles and art were gone, washed out to sea. The tide had done us all in. So it is with earthly prosperity.

Our times here in Loudoun have been changing gradually. We are not seeing the wealth that we once had in our county or nation. For many, the sand castles that were built and seemed so permanent are washing away. Whenever that happens, it causes us all to reevaluate where our lives are and to ask, "Am I building a true prosperity?"

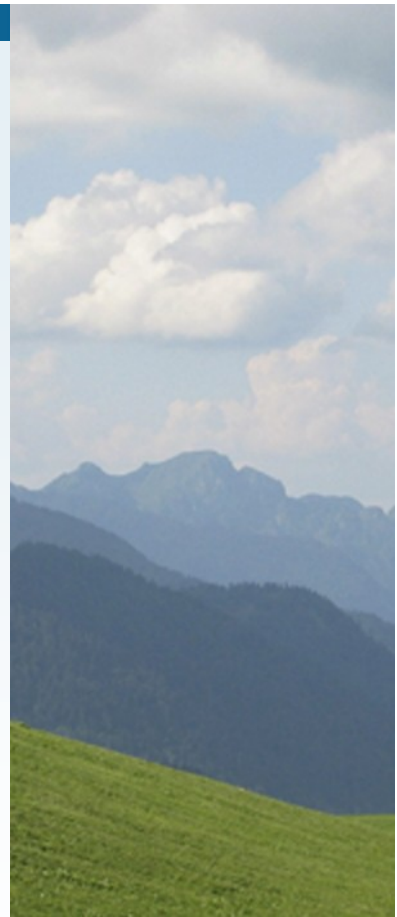
In Psalm 73, Asaph looked about him to find the wicked prosperous, and he then fell into a little pity-party. He wondered why those who didn't follow God were doing so well – and why those who seemed to follow God were suffering in various ways. As he reflected on what he saw with the world, he came around to a different perspective that we would do well to reflect on as our new year begins.

First, like Asaph, we need to realize that true prosperity recognizes God's continuous presence. In Psalm 73:23 Asaph says to the Lord, "But I am continually with you; you hold my right hand." The writer of Hebrews wrote, "Your conduct must be free from the love of money and you must be content with what you have, for he (God) has said, 'I will never leave you and I will never abandon you.'" As long as we have the Lord, we WILL have all that we really need. Second, we need to realize that true prosperity comes as God guides us through His Word. Again in Psalm 73 we read, "You guide me by your wise advice, and then you will lead me to a position of honor." Those apart from God do not have the prosperity of his guidance. The best they can have is the insecurity of living life as an experiment in the darkness – with no sure word from God that their efforts will last. Like sand castles, their estates, their wisdom, and projects might look elaborate, (or in some cases even rough!), but they most certainly will wash away.

Asaph gives a great conclusion as to true prosperity here:

Whom do I have in heaven but you? I desire no one but you on earth. My flesh and my heart may grow weak, but God always protects my heart and gives me stability. Yes, look! Those far from you die; you destroy everyone who is unfaithful to you. But as for me, God's presence is all I need. I have made the sovereign Lord my shelter, as I declare all the things you have done. (Psalm 73:25-28)

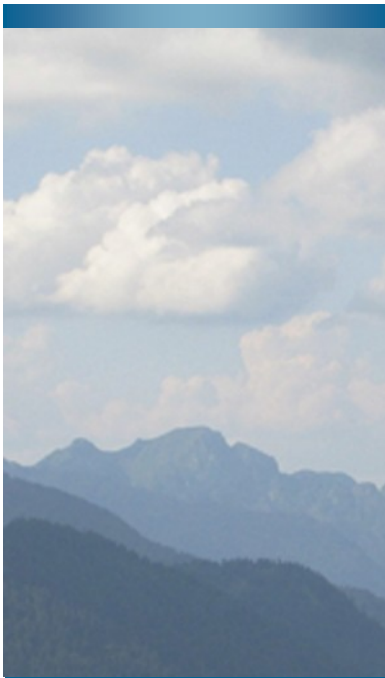
True prosperity is found in God's in-depth, long-range goodness to His people. The wicked do not prosper. Not really. What will you pursue this coming year? Will it be sand castles – projects and possessions that might be elaborate and decorative works of art, but with no lasting substance to them? Let us be like Asaph in 2009, keeping our focus and eyes not on what is so temporal and quick to take wings – or wash away! If God is with us, we have all we will ever need!



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- Jack Gill - Pastor
  - Rich Shipe - Associate Pastor
  - Tom Gossage - Worship Pastor
  - Debbie Stevenson - Administrator
  - Ryan Mottice - Layout, Design, & Editor



## Administratively Speaking

by Debbie Stevenson

It's a new year!! And yes, as we all get another year old, the years go by at a faster pace than for people who aren't old like me. Wasn't it just yesterday when we had concerns about Y2K? Here are just a couple of admin things for your planning as we move into 2009:

### Giving Statements

We plan to send out giving statements by January 31. If you do not receive one and think you should OR if you have questions about the contents of your giving statement, please contact me ([debbie@brbible.org](mailto:debbie@brbible.org) or 540-338-2299).

### Annual Business Meeting

Make plans now to attend our Annual Business Meeting and Potluck, January 31, beginning at 5:30 p.m. This is always a great time of fellowship and reminiscing about what great things God has done and is doing here at Blue Ridge!

### Church Membership

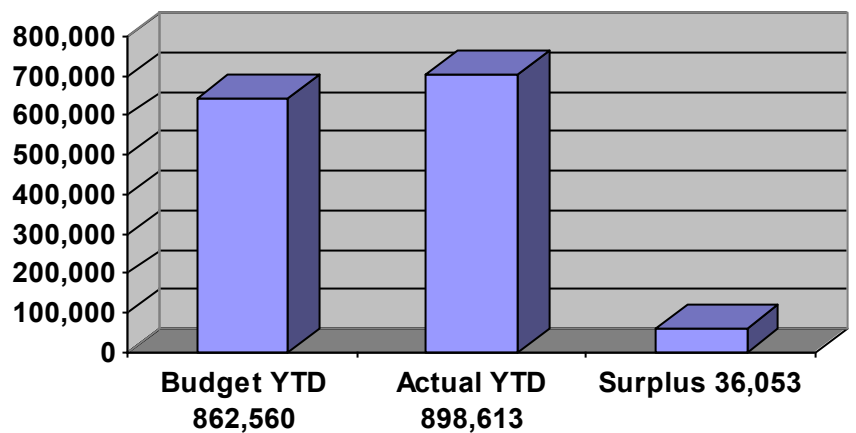
Our next opportunity for those interested in finding out more about Blue Ridge and the church membership process is during the Sunday school hour on the four Sundays in February (February 1, 8, 15 & 22). Please contact me ([debbie@brbible.org](mailto:debbie@brbible.org) or 540-338-2299) or indicate your interest on a bulletin tear-off slip on Sundays

*Don't forget our Annual Business Meeting and Potluck - January 31, 5:30 p.m.*

### Attendance

	12/7	12/14	12/21	12/28
<b>Sunday School</b>				
Adults	104	97	65	77
Children	107	113	68	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Worship</b>				
Auditorium	368	381	398	355
Classes	43	36	32	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>386</b>

### Total 2008 Actual and Budgeted Offerings





*The Willet Family*

## Getting To Know You: The Willet Family

By Breana Paist

Meet Mary Ann Willett, a gal who accepted Christ as her Savior at the age of five. Now may I introduce to you Dean Willett, a guy who became a Christian in his early teen years, having been greatly influenced by his youth group leader. Mary Ann was born in Ontario, Canada. Dean was born and raised in Canton, Ohio. When Mary Ann was 13, she moved with her family to...Canton, Ohio! – my, but won't this work out lovely? "Dean and I met in youth group when I was 14 and Dean was 16. I was quite shy so Dean arranged to have kitchen duty together during a youth group retreat!" Mary Ann's family moved back to Canada. But Mary Ann stayed in Ohio, of course; and she began attending Malone College, where she and Jodi Benedict (another current member of BRBC) were roommates! Dean and Mary Ann were later married on October 9, 1976. "We are best friends who have been married for 32 years, and we thank God for this blessing." Mary Ann explains.

The Willetts' daughter, 20-year-old Lindsay, is in her junior year at Grove City College, majoring in mathematics. She is considering a career in either applied mathematics or as a college professor. She loves being at Grove City and is always happy to talk to teens who are interested in the college! Lindsay strongly feels the lessons learned, friendships forged, and memories made there will last a lifetime. When not studying at college, Lindsay enjoys attending InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and hanging out with friends. She also loves reading, traveling, writing, and listening to music: Switchfoot, Chris Tomlin, and Telecast being at the top of her favorites' list. The last thing you should know about this 20-year-old are her favorite Bible verses, found in Romans 12:1-2 (look them up!). Okay, well actually, the last last thing you should know about Lindsay is that she is an avid tea-drinker. After Lindsay started college, Dean and Mary Ann decided to move to Virginia—both for their jobs and the nicer weather. The family moved to Round Hill in May of 2007.

An experience that has particularly impacted the Willetts' lives happened while they were still living in Ohio. One day, while Dean was working in a hospital during his Family Practice Residency, he was dragged out of his car and beaten, and for years since this has resulted in chronic neck pain. "My pain is constant although some days are better than others," Dean says. "Through this time our family has learned to really lean on God, to accept His grace and His promises. Genesis 50:20 correctly says, 'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good ...'"

Due to these complications Dean had to leave full-time medicine in 2002. "God is always faithful,

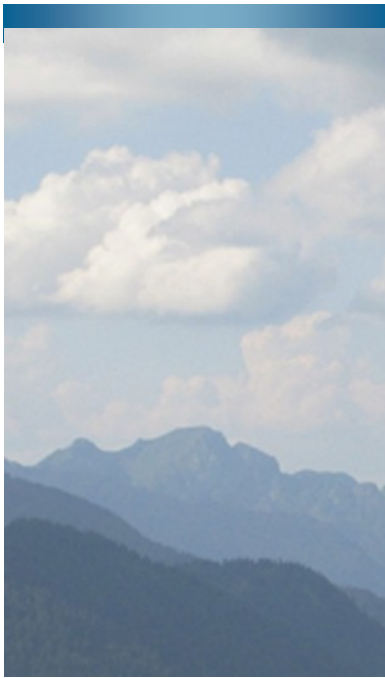
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## Thanks

We want to tell everyone how much we have appreciated your support this year. Knowing that so many were bringing our family to the throne of God on a regular basis was a great source of encouragement. God blessed our family tremendously because of your prayers! With Hayden being off the monitor (a wireless baby for the holidays!!), his eyes developing correctly, and gaining weight like a pro— well, we feel like we are just so excited to be in the stages of simply having a baby! Praise God for his protection of Hayden and our family! We praise Him for giving us peace and joy through this journey. And we praise Him for your kindness and faithfulness.

Many blessings on you all!

Nathan and Audra Richmond



## BRBC Home School Support Group

Ladies, come be blessed by Vickie Farris at our next meeting on Tuesday, January 13th at 7 pm in the quad room. Vickie draws from oodles of years of experience teaching her ten children. You won't want to miss this chance to pick her brain and glean insight into making your home schooling day a success! Contact Geni Hall ([genihall@aol.com](mailto:genihall@aol.com)) with any questions.

and He had a new job ready which allowed me to better cope with my chronic neck problems," Dean explains. "I became the Administrative Partner of The Genesis Group – Mark Benedict is the Owner/Managing Partner; he and his family are also members of BRBC! Leaving full-time medicine has also allowed me to become the Forwarding Agent for the Christian Dominican Medical Mission. I have traveled to Thailand and the Dominican Republic on medical mission trips; Mary Ann joined me last year and the whole family is planning a mission trip to the Dominican Republic in January." Mary Ann now works part-time, for The Genesis Group as well. She has also just transferred her teaching license to Virginia and is considering going back to teaching next year, depending on how God leads.

Dean, Mary Ann, and Lindsay became members of Blue Ridge Bible Church in July of 2008. "We were attending a church in Leesburg when Mark and Jodi Benedict invited us to visit BRBC in February 2008." Mary Ann says. "We felt like we were finally home – everyone was so friendly and welcoming. It reminded us of our church in Ohio." Dean is now on the Missions Committee, while Mary Ann co-teaches the Kindergarten Sunday School class and is on the Women of Faith committee; they both attend the Fontaines' small group on Tuesdays. When Lindsay is home from college, she helps in the Kindergarten Class as well. The family says that they

## God Answers Prayer

By Heidi Berry

For weeks we were encouraged to pray for the Christmas play and tell our friends and neighbors to join us for a wonderful evening. You did it and God multiplied the turnout.

Each evening had a huge turnout, with an estimated 350 to 400 people each night. Blue Ridgers commented about all the new faces in the audience. No one was disappointed! The play was a huge success and comments were very favorable.

Thanks to Jessica Cole for her vision with the story and to Mark and Patrice Smith who took that story and ran with it. They added wonderful nuances that made the play a delight to watch over and over again. Their skilled direction took a group of willing participants and turned them into a tight knit group of actors who brought a Purcellville Centennial story to life. Most of their family was involved and the

love the Bible-based teaching and preaching, along with the fellowship with other believers.

As a family, the Willetts like to play games, watch movies, and travel. Their favorite family vacation spot is in Sanibel Island, Florida. Dean and Mary Ann both enjoy reading and Dean likes to play golf (he appreciates that the season in Virginia lasts much longer than in Ohio!). An interesting tidbit about the Willetts is the fact that they've all studied Tae-Kwon-Do: Mary Ann advanced to the green belt level, and both Dean and Lindsay have earned their black belts.

A guiding thought for the Willett family has been that God allows every day to be a new beginning. Lamentations 3:22-23 says, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." "We think of this verse when we've had a rough day or feel discouraged that we haven't done our best for Christ. We then remind each other that 'tomorrow is a new day' to trust in Him more and in ourselves less. He is in perfect control of everything and He is all we need." Dean, Mary Ann, and Lindsay's goal is to live out 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

little ones who weren't deserve credit for long hours of waiting and watching and not complaining.

Tom Gossage, a man of MANY talents who worked on so many aspects of this play that are too numerous to count. He sings, directs music, rewrites music, organizes choirs, orders microphones, lights, stage props and stayed until 11:30 Sunday night to vacuum the church and take down sets. Jack gave him Orders from Headquarters to stay home on Monday. However, he drove to MD to return microphones and showed up again that night to finish tearing down the sets.

Christy Shipe did a superb job with the "play within a play." She directed the children's choir and the children's play as well as collaborating and singing with Tom. She uses her many talents to joyfully serve the Lord.

Linda Brown, a truly dedicated, organized and

efficient woman, frugally and cleverly gathered or created all the costumes for the cast. They were fabulous. She is the thrift shop queen which helped her to be under-budget on costumes!

Carter Farley, with the help of others, put in so many hours installing lights that our budget would be broke if we had to pay him. Thanks also to his wonderful wife Shelly, for never complaining.

Earl Hall and sons did a fabulous job managing eight wireless microphones that got passed to numerous actors and several microphones for the choir.

Marion Esposito and Suzanne Larry worked on obtaining props and organizing the behind-the-sets area. They enjoyed hearing the audiences' reactions to certain lines and how it changed each night with different audiences.

Russ Jenkins designed and built the fabulous sets. He drove around Purcellville and took pictures of buildings to come up with the right design. They were truly professional and definitely helped make the play realistic. Terry Schulman, after only attending BRBC for seven weeks, stepped in and painted most of the sets. She should be an

inspiration for every old and new person to use their gifts for the ministry.

Jayne Farris designed a beautiful program and Amanda Taylor made the eye catching postcard. Tim Chambers took time to take professional photographs of the cast to be used for advertising. Katie Dunn organized all the goodies in the kitchen for after the performances.

So many helped clean bathrooms, vacuum, stuff programs with inserts, build and tear down the numerous sets, make cookies, puts props on stage, work on hospitality, walk in the parade and take postcards around town to advertise.

I think everyone agrees that this is the biggest Christmas play the church has ever undertaken. To God be the glory for His blessing on the outcome. Continue to pray that hearts were changed and people would come to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior and that all the work, time, money and effort will continue to bear fruit.

Thank you Blue Ridge Bible Church members for your support through these last few months.

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*“...this is the biggest Christmas play the church has ever undertaken.”*

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## Missions Report

By Gordon McKay

My friend Sean West and I traveled to Ghana for nine days in October to serve as consultants for Johnson Asare as he begins the master planning process for his most recent project, Radach University, in Tamale. We thank you for your encouragement and support, and hope this will be the first of many trips to West Africa and the beginning of a promising new project.

We looked at universities in Accra and Kumasi as we drove to northern Ghana. Once in Tamale, we toured the site of the future Radach University, met with members of Johnson's ministry board, met with engineers and geologists, discussed layouts, schemes, and plans, and otherwise participated in exciting brainstorming about the future of RU. We were impressed by the size of the property and by the incredible opportunities present in Tamale. Literally everything needs to be done, and can be done with excellence if American Christians can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Johnson.

Observations about life in West Africa necessarily include dirt, dust, dirty water, germs, animals roaming the streets, and a lack of what we in America take for granted – clean air and water, reliable inexpensive electricity, laws and law enforcement, honest government and tax collection, good roads, protection of our natural environment, capital, easy credit, education, opportunity ... the list goes on and on.

But the astonishing thing is the great joy, peace, and sense of humor that these impoverished people of Ghana possess. Most of them are more than 1,000 times poorer than I am, yet they have more joy. How can this be? The fact is that I see now in how many ways I

am enslaved to things. While they make my life easier in some ways, they consume an amazing amount of my time. Earning, shopping, comparing, buying, maintaining, insuring, cleaning, storing, replacing...so much of my time is spent pursuing things. I am ashamed (embarrassed?) to admit how often God, family, friends, even my mental and physical health take second place to my things.

My solution to the problems of Ghana and of America, I now see, is to give my time, money, and energy away in very large quantities. The people of Ghana, particularly in the Tamale area, need everything and give thanks for anything.

Sean and I felt led to give 50 pounds of rice to the chief and replace the school roof in a village where the schoolchildren speak practically no English (even though it is supposedly the national language) and the people subsist on what peanuts, corn, yams, and other vegetables they can grow in their own small garden plots. The people were thunderstruck, and reciprocated with piles of peanuts. But I told them, "You gave us a gift from your hearts, we only gave you a gift out of our wallets." That's the exchange – love for money, thankfulness for paper, happiness, peace, contentment, and joy for what is mostly a burden.

It's the eternal exchange that Christ wants to make with us (Matthew 11:28-30). We have a great opportunity to revive the counterculture! Give away your great wealth, risk your health, invest your talents in Christ's kingdom, love your enemies, and find joy.

(continued on page 6)



By Geni Hall

We kick off 2009 at Awana on January 11<sup>th</sup>. For all clubbers who have finished half their books, there is a HUGE special prize! Keep memorizing over the Christmas break and be ready to recite on the 11<sup>th</sup>!

Special note: We will still miss our faithful PHC students on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> and could use any available adult to help listen to verses. Please plan to stay and help!

January 18<sup>th</sup> is movie night. Dress as your favorite movie star and walk the red carpet! A G-rated movie may be shown.

Frosty January 25<sup>th</sup> is Luau night! Warm your hearts by dressing for a Hawaiian Luau! No bathing suits please.

We are already half-way through our club year. There is still more fun to be had! If you haven't attended, consider joining us and seeing what 185+ clubbers know is a fun, filled night!

## Awana January Calendar

**1/4/09**

NO AWANA (New Year's)

**1/11/09**

2nd quarter club/Sunday School attendance

Halfway Prize Night

**1/18/09**

Movie Night

**1/25/09**

Luau Night

Luckily, we don't have to go blundering about trying to find recipients for our vast wealth. BRBC has supported Johnson for many years, and he has proven worthy in every possible way. I can testify that he runs a tight, well-organized, incredibly Christ-centered ministry. I particularly loved the 8:00-8:30 a.m. worship that his Radach Conference Center staff led each morning. The whole staff, about 20 men and women, gathers to praise the Lord, read a passage of Scripture, and worship some more. I could understand only half of what was said, but the spirit was unmistakably joyful and I was always uplifted. And the meeting was punctual. The conference center was neat and clean, the staff cheerful and professional.

Johnson has a remarkably entrepreneurial view of his ministry. Every portion of the ministry needs to return some material benefit, if not an outright cash profit. His conference center turns hefty profits; he hires out the water truck for \$80 per load; his micro-loans to women (totaling nearly \$70,000) have to be repaid promptly in order for borrowers to qualify for more. His wells, schools, latrines, buildings, the clothing manufactured by his wife, Lydia, and countless other projects and products are well-organized, well-managed, and thrifty. The purpose of it all is to demonstrate the love of Christ to the people of Northern Ghana. Countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia are building mosques in Ghana. Johnson will dig the latrines and bore the wells of clean water. He is on the front lines of the war. The enemy hates; we must love. The enemy destroys and coerces; we must build and set free!

RU is simply Johnson's largest project to date. His conference center is also a multi-million dollar project, built over a short period of time through gifts, donations, and investments of many Christians. But the university will accomplish far more: it will transform the landscape and economy of Tamale; provide an educational opportunity to thousands of Christian young men and women from all over Ghana and other parts of Africa; draw faculty, research money, grants, publicity, and interest to Northern Ghana; graduate thousands of Christian men and women who will go out into the world as well-prepared "workplace missionaries" (aka tentmakers); and transform the lives of all those who donate time, money, and energy to bring it into being.

I am absolutely thrilled that I can play a small role in this project. I have spent many years in teaching, higher education, architectural design, and construction, so I have a lot to

share. So do you, my friends. Americans are "filthy" rich in cash, investments, and possessions, but also in knowledge, experience, and wisdom. We can solve many of Johnson's most pressing problems very easily. He needs start-up money to buy materials, hire professional services, purchase educational equipment and materials, hire faculty, etc. He also needs surveying, engineering, construction management, teaching, administrative help, curriculum planning, and infinite amounts of other skilled work done. Travel to Northern Ghana is not difficult, dangerous, or particularly expensive. Money can be transferred easily to British banks that do business in Ghana. There are no practical obstacles to launching this project; only inertia and doubt.

In addition to developing the master plan drawings that Johnson will need as he proceeds to raise money for start-up of RU, my own personal goal is to help Johnson raise \$100,000 for two pieces of heavy equipment: a tracked crawler loader and a 4-wheel drive backhoe. With these, he can begin the extensive sitework that will be required to build the roads, ditches, berms, culverts, drainage channels, wastewater management ponds, etc. If we can help Johnson acquire these pieces of equipment, he can put his own men to work immediately improving the road to the site, and also laying out the university site itself. Johnson can also hire out his men and equipment for work around the local area, earning revenue to sustain his project.

This may seem a roundabout way to start a university, but lacking the millions that would be needed for the contracts, plans, designs, and professional oversight that an American project of this size would require, I believe that the quickest way forward is "dig right in" immediately on the sitework. In faith, Johnson will look forward to receiving the resources that will be needed for construction of the first school buildings, but in the meantime work will still be going forward and also paying a return to his ministry accounts.

So I pray that you will also join Johnson as he moves forward with plans for RU in Tamale. I believe that God will move in the hearts of thousands of American Christians to give joyfully of their time, talents, and treasure to help. I believe the University will become an outpost of learning and Christian love in West Africa. It is absolutely needed and completely feasible. The real challenge is to move hearts and hands to take action, and this can be done only by the Holy Spirit.

# January 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Outreach Committee	2 Fernandes Small Group	3 Brotherhood Men's Breakfast Shipe Small Group
4 Worship Practice Elders' Prayer Missions Potluck (Holman/Rude)	5 American Heritage Girls Scouts	6 Youth Shelter Outreach Group Fontaine Small Group	7 Children's Choirs Praise & worship Practices Youth Group Missions Committee Wilcox SG	8 Smith Small Group	9 Women of Faith Fernandes Small Group	10 Brotherhood Men's Breakfast Shipe Small Group
11 Worship Practice Elders' Prayer Baptism Sunday Women's Ministry Committee  Awana	12 American Heritage Girls Scouts	13 Youth Shelter Outreach Group Fontaine Small Group	14 Children's Choirs Praise & worship Practices Youth Group Wilcox/Van der Vaart SGs	15 McPeak Baby Shower Newsletter Deadline	16 Fernandes Small Group	17 Brotherhood Men's Breakfast Shipe Small Group
18 Worship Practice Elders' Prayer  Awana	19 American Heritage Girls Scouts	20 Youth Shelter Outreach Group Fontaine Small Group	21 Children's Choirs Praise & worship Practices Youth Group Wilcox SG	22 Smith Small Group	23 Fernandes Small Group  Apostles of Comedy Outreach Night 8:00 p.m.	24 Brotherhood Men's Breakfast Shipe Small Group
25 Worship Practice Elders' Prayer Communion  Awana	26	27 Deacons Youth Shelter Outreach Group Fontaine Small Group	28 Children's Choirs Praise & worship Practices Youth Group Wilcox/Van der Vaart SGs	29	30 Ladies Fellowship & Bible Study  Fernandes Small Group	31 Annual Business Meeting & Potluck  Brotherhood Men's Breakfast Shipe Small Group

## Happy Birthday to...

1 Ken Richardson  
2 Renee Fontaine  
3 David Schulman  
4 Drew Stocker  
4 Carter Farley  
7 Jeff Stocker  
7 Connie Ponders  
9 Jim Shipe  
11 Mackenzie Lassiter  
12 Reed Rogan  
13 Jordan Yost  
14 Britton Lassiter  
15 Carlos Fernandes II  
15 Michael Virts

15 Patrice Smith  
16 Andre Fontaine  
16 Lily Rogan  
16 Tim van der Hoek  
18 Caleb Gill  
18 Jennifer Strickland  
18 Rick DeFazio  
19 Micah Yost  
21 Nathan Mehrens  
21 Gil Paist  
21 Gavin Rottman  
23 Brynna McCarthy  
23 E.G Parker  
23 Kim Strickland

24 Cristina Fernandes  
24 Joanne LaRock  
24 Matt Farley  
25 David Ness  
25 Anna Soltis  
25 Emma Jones  
26 Philip Message  
27 Parker Hall  
27 Tim McHale  
27 Catherine van der Hoek  
28 Steve Gregory  
28 Mark Smith  
29 Jodi Benedict  
30 Renee Phillips

30 Sadie Newton  
30 Mark Dillmuth  
31 Aubrey Claire Geyer

Blue Ridge Bible Church

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Blue Ridge Bible Church

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...helping people know God better  
and love him more!

## Just a thought...

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage. The Will of God never takes you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.