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exchange

KATHLEEN COFFEY

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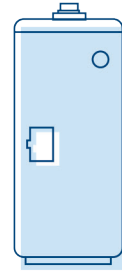
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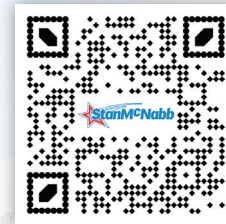
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Love Your Neighbor

The golden rule is golden for a reason.

THE PEOPLE of the year 1000 faced division, uncertainty, and fear for the future. They didn't know it then, but they stood at the edge of change, transitioning from the Dark Ages to the Middle Ages. Nine centuries later, in 1914, I wonder how people felt as the world erupted into the chaos of the First World War — or just two decades after that when World War II shattered any fragile sense of peace. History shows us that humanity has always played tug-of-war with stern conflict, whether with neighbors down the street or across oceans. It's a harsh reality of being human. Yet, the way people treated one another 100 years ago didn't just stay in the past — it shaped who we are today. And the way we treat our neighbors today will ripple forward, changing lives for centuries to come.

That's why it matters so much to treat others the way we want to be treated. The

golden rule is a guide for living and a good one at that! That rule is golden for a reason. When we choose kindness, when we choose to see the humanity in others, we make the world warmer and brighter with every interaction. Even the smallest actions — a kind word, a helping hand, or a passing smile — can spark a chain reaction of joy and compassion. These moments might seem fleeting, but their impact lasts far beyond what we can see. Loving our neighbors isn't always easy, but it is always the right thing to do. Love is in all of us — it's there, waiting to be discovered, shared, and passed along.

Good News Magazine is celebrating the people who are already living this way, those who make their communities better by choosing love and kindness. Their stories remind us of what's possible when we love our neighbors. **GN**

**Wesley Bryant,**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In our Hearts of Gold issue published on November 8, 2024, we incorrectly spelled Audra Weber's name as 'Andrea Weber' on page 18 and 19.

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Judge Andy Myrick



# The power of a

# COMMUNITY IN RECOVERY

Lincoln County Recovery Court gives  
Judge Andy Myrick and the community hope.

By Tina Neeley

Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Tony Patterson

**I**N LINCOLN County's courthouse, addiction's grip tightened relentlessly. Judge Andy Myrick's docket overflowed with repeat offenders, their charges a stark reflection of substance abuse's grip on the community. Theft cases multiplied as desperate individuals sought ways to fund their next fix. In juvenile court, confused children faced removal from homes where addiction replaced parental care.

Overdose calls burdened emergency services, each one a potential death sentence. In quiet neighborhoods, empty chairs at dinner tables and unused bedrooms told silent stories of families torn apart. As Myrick took in the stark reality of disrupted lives and lost futures, he felt the weight of the community's struggles. The need for a new approach was clear, and the seeds of the recovery court began to take root.

Myrick said, "Over the years, I saw the terrible effects of alcohol and drug abuse on our community: higher crime rates, destroyed lives and families. I was aware of recovery courts in other jurisdictions and that they were successfully being used to combat addiction."

For Tony Patterson, the recovery court's director, the devastating impact of addiction wasn't just a professional concern — it was deeply personal.



▲ Judge Myrick and Tracy Jett



“My wife was in active addiction for over 12 years,” Patterson shared. “I’ve been to almost every treatment center and emergency room within Tennessee, Northern Alabama, and even Southern Kentucky. In the end, I found my wife overdosed on her couch, and my administration of CPR was too late to bring her back.”

This tragic experience fuels Patterson’s commitment to the program.

“I do not want others to ever live through that horror. I’ll do what I can to prevent it,” he said.

In 2017, a grant from the State of Tennessee and the invaluable participation of the South Central Human Resource Agency (SCHRA) enabled the establishment of Lincoln County Recovery Court. However, not everyone immediately believed in the program’s potential.

“Many of my law enforcement friends were not too sure about the program... But when when they learned more about how the program works and saw positive, life-changing results in our participants, their minds were quickly changed,” Myrick explained.

Myrick and Patterson credit SCHRA for their role in sustaining the program.



▲ Judge Myrick and Tony Patterson

“We simply would not have recovery court without SCHRA. They obtain our grants, provide offices, provide treatment space, and pay our recovery court coordinators. SCHRA is the core of recovery court,” said Myrick.

Patterson agreed and said, “SCHRA shoulders the weight of this program.”

First United Methodist Church is another important source of support for the program. The church sponsors Celebrate Recovery, a Christian-based 12-step

program, and hosts graduations and other events for recovery court.

“Participants in our program often seek support groups to attend. Celebrate Recovery is one of the support groups that many choose to engage with, and it has been instrumental in the lives of many participants,” Patterson said.

In Lincoln County, where addiction treatment resources are severely limited, the recovery court program relies heavily on its partnership with Centerstone. This collaboration, supported by a grant, enables access to essential mental health services, including intensive outpatient programs and relapse prevention.

According to Patterson, without Centerstone’s support, the program would struggle to provide the necessary treatment options. The absence of local sober living facilities and limited recovery meetings highlights the challenges faced by participants returning from more resource-rich environments. However, this partnership has been instrumental in addressing those gaps and fostering growth in Lincoln County’s recovery infrastructure.

Myrick stated, “We are a rural community, so our treatment resources are not as great as the larger cities. Our biggest



▲ Judge Myrick and Lindsey Neely. Neely is a graduate that now helps teach a juvenile substance use class.





▲ Tony Patterson, Trevor Parks, and Judge Myrick

challenge is sober housing — safe places for our participants to live where they will not be exposed to drug or alcohol use. [As Alcoholics Anonymous teaches,] changing ‘people, places, and things’ is critical for a person in recovery.”

Community awareness continues to grow through the tireless efforts of those entrenched in the local recovery court.

Patterson reported, “We’ve attempted to increase public awareness and acceptance of recovery and addiction through various avenues. We have started the annual recovery fest, which, this year, had approximately 500 in attendance. We are active with the Lincoln County Anti-Drug Coalition and work to promote recovery every chance we get. Additionally, we engage in presentations for organizations when asked.”

The program now has three courts: two of them in Lincoln County and felony

courts in Lawrence and Maury counties. Recovery court proves to be life-changing.

“We have gained more community support as people witness the lives changed by recovery court. People have gotten their lives back. Families have been reunited. Crime has been reduced. Our program is small. We only have about 25 or so participants at a time, and the program can take up to a year or more, so that affects the impact some. But, even if just one life or family is saved, the benefit is immeasurable,” said Myrick.

It has infused hope.

“I also do criminal court, civil court, and juvenile court. Recovery court is the most rewarding aspect of my work. Another judge once told me he would have quit long ago if it were not for recovery court, which gave him hope,” said Myrick. “Few things are more rewarding than to see a person completely turn

their life around, getting their children back, starting careers, opening businesses, and going on to help and counsel others fighting addiction. The last I checked, recovery courts enjoy a 70% non-recidivism rate of their graduates.” The local rate, according to Patterson, is approximately 85%.

The Lincoln County Courthouse, once a revolving door for addiction-related offenses, is a threshold of hope. Through the recovery court, its partners, and the community’s support, a network of resources now extends far beyond the courtroom walls. The program chips away with each graduate at the stigma surrounding addiction, replacing despair with possibility. As former defendants become mentors and advocates, Lincoln County Recovery Court is reshaping the community’s approach to addiction, one person at a time. **GN**

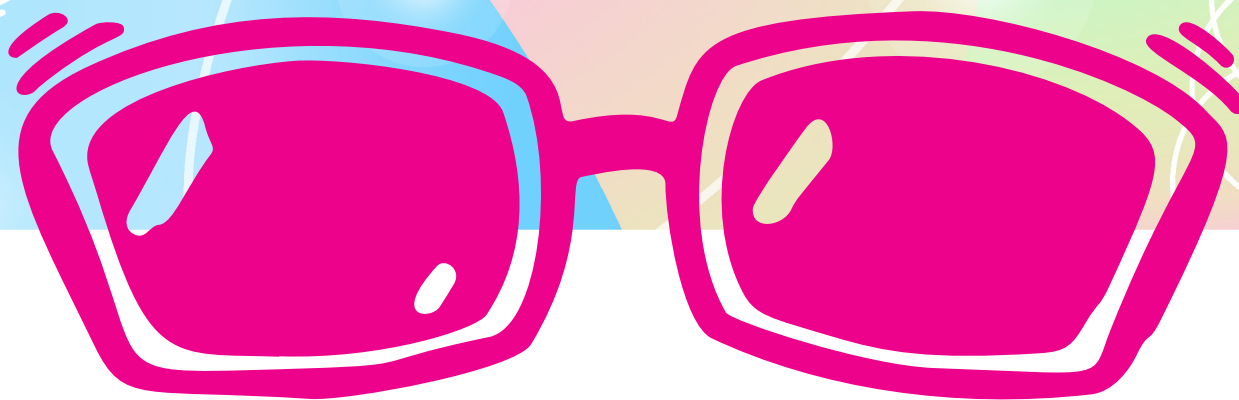


# Fayetteville's **GEM** of CULTURAL EXCHANGE



▲ Korean Jewels Club getting ready see the A.C.E. concert in Nashville as a group. Back row: Destiny Brown, Erica Cox, and Carson Blackwood. Front row: Pongsula Mariano, Lauralee Jacks, Sherie Jacks, and Valorie Brown.





## The local library hosts a thriving community of Korean culture enthusiasts.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Sherie Jacks

**I**N A town that wears its history like a well-loved quilt, a local club adds patches woven of surprising cultural threads. From Camp Blount to our long-standing traditions like the Host of Christmas Past, Fayetteville has always celebrated its heritage. Yet amid the historic buildings and community events, local club members appreciate and experience the many layers of another heritage — Korean culture.

The Korean Jewels Club (KJC) meets at the Fayetteville-Lincoln County Public Library monthly on the second and fourth Tuesday from 5-7 p.m., drawn together by a shared love of K-pop, Korean dramas, and all things Hallyu. The library sponsors and hosts KJC, the library's longest-standing club.

Various K-pop artists ignited the genre, including the global sensation known as BTS. This seven-member South Korean boy band captivated millions worldwide. Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, refers to the global rise in

popularity of South Korean culture, particularly since the late 1990s. It covers various aspects of entertainment, including K-pop music, K-dramas, and films, and has significantly influenced cultural trends worldwide.

Mrs. Sherie Jacks, who co-founded the club in 2018 with her daughter, Dr. Lauralee Jacks, said, "In the beginning, BTS was rising in popularity around the globe, and our vision was to allow people who enjoyed Korean — or K-pop — music a chance to meet and enjoy music together. We also wanted to give people who were simply curious about why K-pop and Korean dramas were rising in popularity a place to come and learn about what we loved about the music and the dramas."

With members ranging from teenagers to their 60s, the club welcomes anyone interested in or curious about Korean music, drama, and culture to attend a meeting.

A typical meeting includes sampling authentic Korean fare prepared from ingredients from area Asian





▲ Sherie Jacks

grocers, a responsibility of KJC's co-founders and its co-administrator, Mrs. Valorie Nickels-Brown. It also consists of a watch party with members suggesting their latest favorite songs or something older. Music is followed by an episode of a Korean or Chinese drama, again chosen from among those recommended by members.

"We also discuss events connected to K-pop, such as upcoming concerts or festivals in the area, such as Nashville or even Atlanta," she said.

The club's school administrators were honored to present a program to area homeschooled students.

KJC's reach extends beyond local meetings with its significant online presence. The club's Facebook group boasts over 200 members from around the globe, a connection that proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic. The club's co-founders extended the group's influence by creating the "Dr. L and Super S Musical Gems Show," a K-pop radio program garnering more than 60 regular listeners with continual growth. Before each club meeting, they host this radio show from the library. Interested listeners can tune in through the library's website, making K-pop accessible to an even wider audience.

K-pop is like a colorful mosaic of sound and style, where catchy hooks and infectious beats create an exhilarating musical experience. Imagine a vibrant carnival where each song bursts with energy, intricate choreography dazzles the eyes, and the performers — like skilled acrobats — draw you into their world. It's a blend of pop, hip-hop, and R&B that entertains and connects fans across the globe, turning music into a shared celebration of culture and creativity.

It's no wonder the members look for various outlets to experience it as often as possible.

"Several times a year, we'll have an outing where we meet together and eat at an Asian restaurant. We've been to 88 Buffet, Stone Age Korean BBQ, Garam, and I Love Korea restaurants in Huntsville. We went to the K-pop N More store and then ate at Bon Chon Restaurant in Smyrna," Jacks detailed. "Seven of our members recently went to Nashville to see A.C.E in concert. We had 11 members attend the Mamamoo concert in Nashville. The A.C.E. concert was a highlight because it was the first concert for three of those who went."

While language is an obvious challenge, several members are learning Korean, and many have learned to read the Korean alphabet, the Hangul, to pronounce the performers' names more appropriately. The growth of the entertainment genre brings more avenues for tapping into shows and music.

"When we first started the club, we usually watched Asian movies and TV shows from Viki.com. There was a limited [number] of Korean dramas on the big streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime, but all of these are now creating and streaming their own K-dramas. Korean content seems to be rising worldwide," Jacks noted.

As the availability of and access to K-pop entertainment grows, so does KJC's mission.

Jacks said, "In the upcoming year, we're excited to host and attend more events in order to boost community awareness of Korean music, drama, and culture. Our goal is to grow our membership and spread awareness of Korean culture. We're hopeful that more people will come to the meetings so that we can introduce them to the music and the dramas that we love."

There's your standing invitation to a meeting of the Korean Jewels Club. **GN**

*Connect with the group on Facebook — Korean Jewel's Club Group, or join them at the Fayetteville-Lincoln County Public Library on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 5-7 p.m. For more information, call the library at (931) 433-3286.*



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- Tracey Pollock

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# TRAILS OF FAITH

Pastor Tim Smith finds spiritual renewal  
in nature and ministry.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by the Rev. Tim Smith

**T**HE TRAIL, long-established yet bearing recent footprints, stretched before him, promising breathtaking views and vistas with undergrowth of wildflowers, moss, and ferns. It also presented steep inclines and rocky outcrops that tested his resolve. As he pressed forward, each careful step unveiled traces of recent passage — faint indentations in the soil, grass blades slowly rebounding from the weight of boots that had just moved on.

Tim Smith knew the path well, like his favorite trails in the Great Smoky Mountains. He'd been there before, walking it as a teenager with his family, observing its twists and turns. He resisted its call for years, imagining other paths somewhere distant and different. Yet, as time passed, an inexplicable pull

brought him back to this familiar route. When the choice finally became clear, he stepped onto the path again, finding it both familiar and new. While echoing those before him, each step he took carved out a path that was distinctly his own.

Smith, a Lincoln County native, was no stranger to a life in ministry. His father, Kirk Smith, became a pastor in Smith's teenage years, framing his childhood with the routines and rhythms of his father's pastoral work and traditional vocation. When adult life stretched before him along with its career choices, Smith stood at a crossroads.

"I just had other things that I wanted to do. I actually thought I wanted to pursue a career working with the government or politics," Smith recalled. "But





*The Rev. Tim Smith atop Mount Whitney in California. Mount Whitney is the highest mountain in the U.S. outside of Alaska.*







I just kept feeling that call over and over again. Finally, I told the Lord that if I had the opportunity to go preach somewhere, I'd go preach. I put that out there, I guess, as a test to the Lord because who's going to call me if I'm not a preacher? I've not even said that I'm a preacher."

He didn't have to wait long for an answer.

"It wasn't a week until the Boonshill Cumberland Presbyterian Church called me. Their pastor had left, and they asked me to come and preach for them for a month until they could get somebody else. I wound up staying there four years, and it was during that time that I really accepted the full call to the ministry and started my seminary work," Smith conceded.

In 2004, Fayetteville Cumberland Presbyterian Church (FCPC) called Smith to pastor their congregation. This year, they celebrated his 20th year in their pulpit.

He said, "I couldn't ask the people to be any more supportive than they've been. They treated me like family; they took me in. We have a very loving church, and I think that's something you sense there. You know they have a lot of love for me, and I have a lot of love for them."



A few years after entering the ministry full time at FCPC, declining health prompted Smith to exercise at the gym. Before long, he took his fitness routine outdoors, finding joy in hiking trails near home, like the Cumberland Plateau and the Smoky Mountains.

"I love hiking and being in nature. It's physically challenging to hike a mountain or go on a 12-mile hike, and I like the challenge. There's a sense of satisfaction after a tough hike that feels good," Smith shared. "Hiking seems to renew my soul and spirit. There's something about being outside in nature and experiencing God. By looking at His creation and reflecting on God, He's renewed my spirit many times and revealed things to me. It's an opportunity to have some quiet and peaceful time with God and to think and reflect."

He said, "In the last few years, I've climbed Mount Elbert in Colorado, the highest mountain in the Rockies, and Mount Whitney in California, the highest in the continental United States."

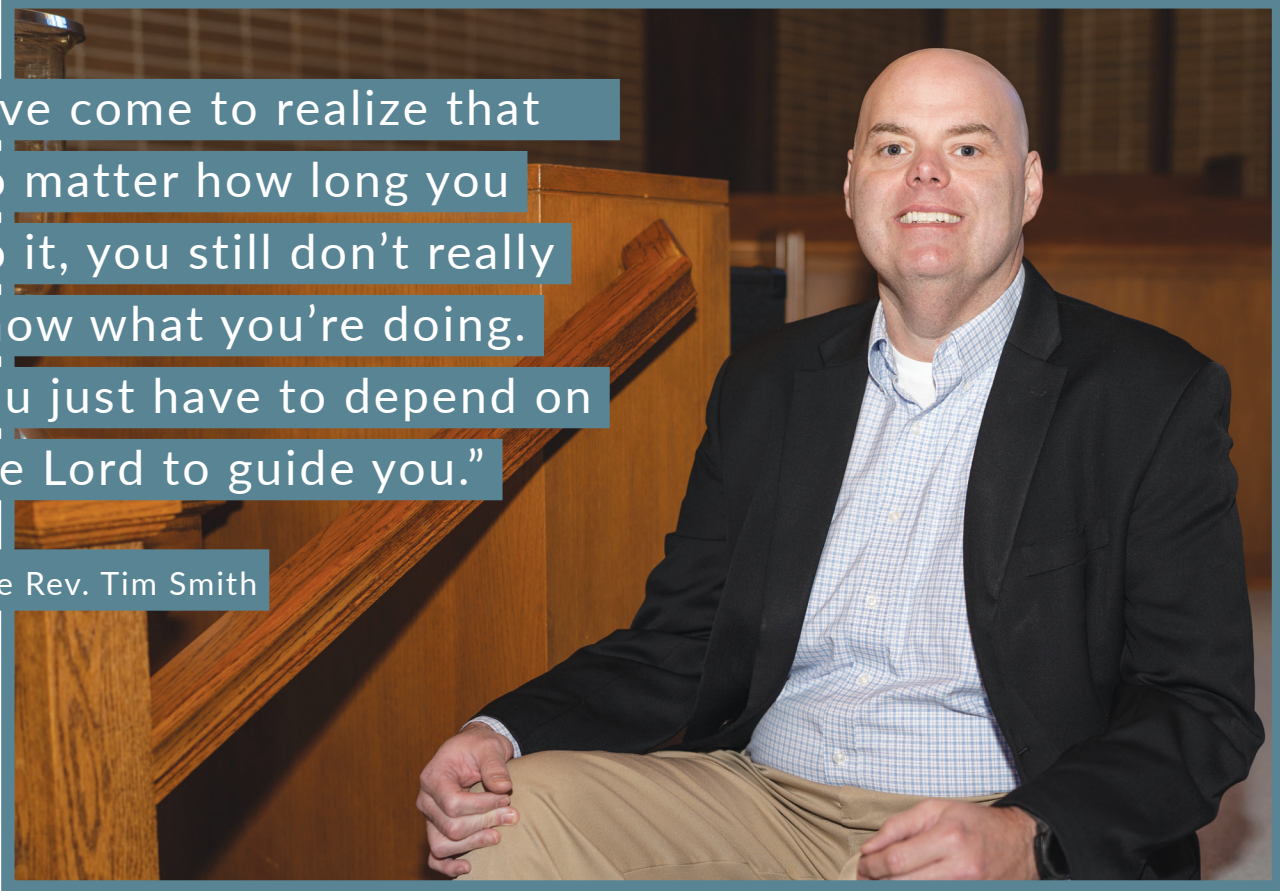
Smith's greatest challenge to date, personally and professionally, was a 2022 mountain-top experience. He was struck by lightning atop a Colorado mountain.

"At the time, I didn't realize I had been hit that bad. I walked out and was able to get back to my car. I just had a burn on my face. But I noticed after that, I started having trouble with my memory," Smith said. "After a lot of doctors examined me and looked at everything, they said they believed that some of the lightning went through part of my brain. My brain doesn't work as well as it used to. The doctors all tell me that I shouldn't be alive, so I'm fortunate there. I'm blessed that the Lord saw fit to spare me."

Following the accident, sermon preparation became more challenging, but his congregation remained patient.


"I knew the Lord was giving me the words to say, but it came very easily to me. Now, it comes a lot harder, but He still gives me the words to say," Smith believes.





“I’ve come to realize that no matter how long you do it, you still don’t really know what you’re doing. You just have to depend on the Lord to guide you.”

-The Rev. Tim Smith



Whether pastoring the church, navigating life, or hiking along his favorite trails, he understands the value of consulting the proper resources.

He said of his faith journey, “It’s become a lot stronger, and I’ve become a lot more dependent on the Lord. Anytime you start out, you think you know what you’re doing; you don’t, but you think you do. I’ve come to realize that no matter how long you do it, you still don’t really know what you’re doing. You just have to depend on the Lord to guide you.”

Smith’s journey through ministry mirrors the trails he loves to hike — filled with breathtaking views, unexpected challenges, and moments of profound reflection. After two decades at FCPC, he continues navigat-

ing the intricate landscape of faith and community, carrying forward the lessons learned from his father and his own experiences. With each new step, Smith remains committed to his calling, finding strength in vulnerability and connection with those he serves. In every sermon delivered and every trail conquered, he discovers that the path of faith is not just about the destination but the journey itself. **GN**

*Fayetteville Cumberland Presbyterian Church is located at 1015 Lewisburg Hwy. in Fayetteville. For more information, follow the church on Facebook or call (931) 433-5441.*



# Love your neighbor

**I**N CHALLENGING times, one of the first ways we often think of to show we care is through food. For some, it's a go-to dish of Southern comfort food. Soups come to mind when we hear of someone under the weather, and freezer meals for the family of a newborn are a welcomed sight. And nothing says I'm thinking of you more than your favorite dessert – the kind you never make for yourself.

No matter what's prompting you to love your neighbor, these recipes are sure to spread love and comfort. Each bite serves as a reminder that someone's thinking of us. GN

## Brenda's Beef Stew

Submitted by Brenda Hamilton

1 1/2 lbs. stew beef  
1 1/2 c. potatoes, cubed  
1/2 c. carrots, sliced  
1/2 c. celery, chopped  
1/2 c. onion, chopped  
1/2 c. green peas  
3 T. Worcestershire sauce  
3 T. vinegar  
3 T. brown sugar  
salt, to taste  
pepper, to taste  
ketchup, to cover  
water, to cover

Combine stew beef, potatoes, carrots, celery, onions, green peas, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, brown sugar, salt, and pepper in large saucepan or slow cooker. Add equal amounts of ketchup and water to cover meat and vegetables. Cook until meat and vegetables are tender.



*Submit your recipes to be included in Good News Magazine and the Exchange Cookbook: [www.southernaprons.com](http://www.southernaprons.com)*



## Friendship Bread

Submitted by Cindy Crosslin

- 1 c. vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 3 lg. eggs
- 1/2 t. salt
- 2 t. cinnamon
- 2 1/2 c. flour
- 1 1/4 c. milk
- 1/2 t. baking soda
- 1 box vanilla instant pudding, 3.4 oz.
- 1 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1/3 c. black walnuts, chopped, optional

Preheat oven to 325°. Combine oil, sugar, vanilla, eggs, salt, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Add flour, milk, soda, pudding, baking powder, and walnuts. Mix well. Grease 2 large loaf pans and sprinkle with a mixture of sugar and cinnamon. Pour in bread mixture and sprinkle any leftover sugar mixture on top. Bake for 1 hour. Makes 2 loaves.



## Jumbo Gift Cookies

Submitted by Jo Liggett

- 3/4 c. butter
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 t. vanilla
- 3 c. AP flour
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 3/4 c. butter

In a large mixing bowl, combine butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla, flour, baking powder, and salt. For each cookie, measure and pat approximately 3/4 cup of dough into a greased and floured 8-9" cake pan. You can use any shape pan. Bake for 9-10 minutes at 400°. Cool and frost or decorate cookies as you like.





# love your neighbor

Kathleen "Kat"  
Coffey, owner of  
the Good Shepherd  
Coffee House.





# COFFEY, COMMUNITY, AND CALLING

Discover Kat Coffey's mission to create a gathering space at the Good Shepherd Coffee House.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**A**T FIRST glance, it's a small coffee shop in a revitalized rural community, its tall glass windows and stone foundation reminding you of a greenhouse. Flower-topped tables and conversation nooks invite a pause from the world outside, and the aroma of ground coffee beans and fresh baked goods envelops you. Sure, you can grab your latest favorite coffee and a scone and be on your way, but you might miss it. You might miss "the third place."

Kathleen "Kat" Coffey, owner of the Good Shepherd Coffee House on Petersburg's square, explained.

"I had a customer come in a few weeks ago and told me about a concept called 'the third place.' We each need three places in our lives: home, work, and then a third place for gathering, relaxing, exhaling, and refilling. After explaining the concept, she said, 'This is my third place.' It was the greatest compliment and my ultimate prayer for the shop."

Coffey, a Shelbyville native, understands our hurry and knows firsthand the

*Coffey prepares a caramel iced coffee for one of her customers.*





# love your neighbor

benefits of slowing down, even if it's just for a few minutes. She has an ingrained life of service inspired by her faith and the examples set by her family.

"My family taught me about service from a young age — its importance, the blessings that come from it, and the long-lasting effects it can have on a community and individual people. From as far back as I can remember, my parents and grandparents were always very active in serving the community, so it came as a natural passion of mine, too," Coffey shared. "I accepted Jesus when I was 14 on a mission trip in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. I met the Lord during a time of service, and I think He instilled service deep into my heart. I go where He leads me, and I am just lucky He has led me in a lot of different places."

But a life of service doesn't always come with a road map.

She said, "From the time I graduated college, I had been wandering into different passions and professions, attempting to find my purpose."

Coffey's earliest college experience was at the University of Tennessee, where she was a Lady Volunteer basketball manager. Her time at Rocky Top sharpened her leadership skills, and she completed an entrepreneurship degree at Belmont University while working with various nonprofits.

She co-founded Kagavu with Adam Feldbruegge, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that equips and educates people to live sustainable lives, providing basic necessities, education, and medical support in the Kagavu village in Uganda.

An avid athlete, Coffey pursued endurance racing, competing in numerous 70.3 Ironman events and qualifying for the world championship in New Zealand. When an injury sidelined her athletic aspirations, she discovered a new calling. For over five years, Coffey has devoted herself to daily Bible study, sharing her insights through journaling, social media, podcasting, and now, a published book titled "The Word Account: A Poetic Devotion."







Throughout her diverse experiences, Coffey's faith has continued to guide her to use her talents to uplift and inspire others. Most recently, she offers encouragement and rest to others at her Petersburg coffee shop.

"Right before I opened Good Shepherd Coffee, I had been out West guiding hiking and biking trips, and when I came back home, I prayed that the Lord would give me a reason to stay in Petersburg. I drove through town and saw that the coffee shop was up for sale, so I spent the next month praying about it," Coffey recalled. "I graduated with a degree in entrepreneurship and had worked in the food service industry since graduating, so I knew that it was something I was passionate about. I stepped out in faith, and the Lord opened every door."

But before He opened the coffee shop's door, He closed others.

"I would not be where I am today without my injury and my recovery period. It was over a year and a half of hardship and deep depression. I was so lost, but the Lord slowed me down and taught

me so much during that time. I realized I was following my own pursuits without including Him in the process. He brought me home."

Her recovery time taught her the gifts to be found in slowing down, quickly connecting her to the idea of a "third place." Where better to slow down than a coffee shop? It's her latest mission field.

Coffey said, "As dramatic as it might sound, making people coffee is a ministry. It's an avenue to talk with people, serve them, and make them feel loved and cared for. I've made dear friends, prayed with hurting people, and hugged grieving parents. I enjoy being a familiar face that people feel like they can share their life with. It's an honor."

At the heart of it all is community.

*"My ultimate prayer for Good Shepherd is that it would be a gathering place. I think the sky is the limit for events, gatherings, and community partnerships. I am here for whatever the town and people desire."*

To others still searching for their purpose and passion, Coffey offers, "Look around and look within. Slow down, pay attention to your surroundings, and look at people as individual gifts from God. Then, look within and spend time with the Lord. Pursue your passions and use the unique gifts that He has given you. Don't wait around for other people or for the right time; now is the right time, and you are the right person."

Stop by Good Shepherd Coffee House anytime. You're welcome to make it your "third place." GN

*The Good Shepherd Coffee House is located at 106 Northside Square in Petersburg. For more information, follow the shop on Facebook, call (615) 785-3146, or visit [goodshepherdpetersburg.com](http://goodshepherdpetersburg.com). To learn*

*more about the Uganda ministry Kagavu, visit [Kagavu.org](http://Kagavu.org).*



◀ One of Good Shepherd's coffee drinks paired with a pecan cinnamon roll.



love your neighbor



▲ Scott Blackwell



# NO KID GOES HUNGRY ON SCOTT BLACKWELL'S WATCH.

Local businessman's initiatives support Lincoln County students and residents

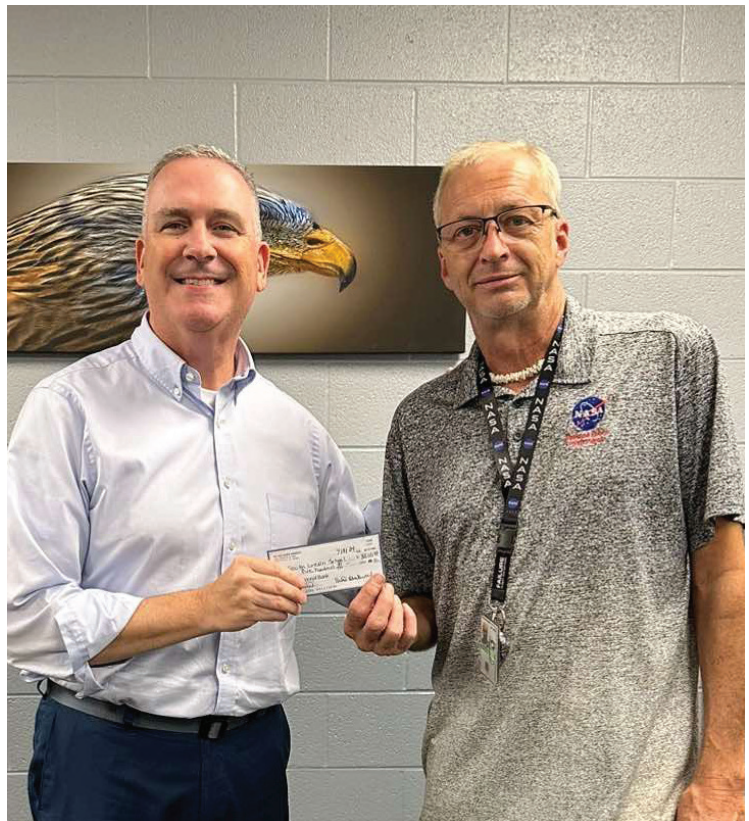
By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Scott Blackwell

**“I’M HUNGRY”** echoes in homes everywhere, often before backpacks even hit the floor and students kick off their school shoes. It’s a refrain as common as the afternoon sun, often met with the rustle of snack bags or the hum of microwaves. But in some households, that simple declaration hangs in the air, unanswered. Some see a minor inconvenience easily solved, while others face a stark reminder of empty pantry shelves and refrigerators.

When Scott Blackwell learned about his granddaughter’s surprising after-school hunger one day, his reaction sparked an initiative.

“One day, she’d come home and told her mom she was hungry. Her mom said, ‘Well, you had your lunch,’” Blackwell shared. “No, I gave it away. There was some little kid who didn’t have the money. He wasn’t going to be able to eat, so I gave him my money where he could eat.’ I decided maybe we need to do something because a lot of these kids eat at school, and that’s all. A lot of us don’t think about that.”

*Matt Scott, principal at South Lincoln School, accepts a donation for school lunches from Blackwell.*





# love your neighbor



◀ Blackwell with his granddaughter, Lyric Adams, who was the inspiration for NOKIDGOESHUNGRY.

Now, Blackwell thinks about it daily. He's not just thinking about it, though. He began immediately searching for ways to cover lunch at local schools for any child unable to pay for a standard lunch. His lunch assistance program, NOKIDGOESHUNGRY, settles local students' unpaid lunch accounts.

When the logistics weren't as straightforward as expected, Blackwell didn't give up. It seemed it could be as easy as taking a lump sum check to area schools that they would debit for students' lunches. It wasn't. He can, however, pay a school's outstanding student lunch balance at the end of the school year.

So far, the program has benefited Highland Rim and South Lincoln schools, but the program doesn't exclude any city or county school wishing to participate.

NOKIDGOESHUNGRY is funded entirely by donations. Like many initiatives, spreading the word is often the first and most significant hurdle.

**"Getting people to trust this is legit was probably the toughest thing. Everything that's donated goes straight to the schools. Nobody's being paid out of this for doing it. No money comes out of the account unless it's rolled to a school," Blackwell said.**

But as word has spread, the community's support is growing.

"The community is what makes it happen. They've been outstanding. Palatec and their employees jumped in and gave us a hand, and Voodoo Customs started helping us. They're actually now doing fundraisers at car shows to [raise money]. Carter's Towing usually helps with everything I do," Blackwell explained.

His motivation isn't from a personal experience with hunger but an overall desire to make a difference in children's lives.

Blackwell said, "It's just something I've always wanted to do. I hate seeing any kid go without, or anybody in general. I just want to make sure there's somebody out there watching out for them."

He watches out for our community in other ways, too.

Blackwell, an employee of NASA in Huntsville, owns Blackwell Towing. The towing company sponsors free skate nights for local kids at Star Wheels, pet adoptions from the local humane society, and the Kids Fishing Rodeo. The company provided funding for the Lincoln County High School boys soccer team to reseed the field and purchase uniforms.

Last year's trunk-or-treat event was such a success that the company repeated the event this year.

"I think our biggest thing is our location. It's easy to get in and out. Several people called after I posted it on Facebook last year and said, 'Hey, do you care if I come set up there?' You worry [with new events] if this thing is going to fly, then I think we had four or five people who ended up setting up on their own, and it was a pretty big deal. We were packed for about two hours straight."

In addition to supporting local youth, Blackwell looks out for all of his neighbors. One way he does this is by offering free transportation on New Year's Eve to prevent drunk driving. Another is to assist at no charge during extreme winter weather.





Blackwell credits the community for the success of all his endeavors.

“They support anything we’ve ever done. They’ve been awesome,” he stated. “Anything that we do, they’re right there. I don’t think you can find a better community.”

Blackwell’s various initiatives demonstrate the profound impact one person can have when addressing community needs, from ensuring local students have a standard lunch to ensuring safe roads on holidays. The growing support from local businesses and residents alike turns individual acts of kind-

ness into a community-wide movement of caring and support. It’s a powerful reminder that the strength of a community lies not just in the actions of one but in the collective response of many. GN

*You can make donations to NOKIDGOESHUNGRY at any First National Bank or contact Scott Blackwell at (931) 993-3016. You can also follow Scott Blackwell on Facebook for information on upcoming events and fundraising efforts.*



love your neighbor



▲ Keidrick Williams



# A STROKE OF FATE

A quick-thinking officer turns a potential ticket into a lifesaving moment.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**O**N THURSDAY morning, June 20, 2024, the steady flow of vehicles in front of Walmart on Huntsville Highway was like every weekday. Many were headed to and from work in Huntsville. Some needed to stop at day care first, then step on it to make it to work on time. Delivery trucks passed through with their loads headed to other zip codes while law enforcement kept an eye on it all.

Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Keidrick Williams was in the area watching for routine traffic violations when he spotted a driver without his seatbelt. Although it appeared to be a routine stop, something was off.

Charles Adam Key sat behind the wheel, his mirror reflecting the patrol car's flashing blue lights, seized by fear as he waited for the approaching officer. Williams observed Key as he drew nearer.

"One of the first things I look at when I approach a vehicle is the person's hands and what they are doing. I recognized Mr. Key's hands were safely placed, but I noticed his face looked droopy in one area. As I was speaking





# love your neighbor



with Mr. Key, it appeared that his fine motor skills on one side of his body weren't functioning well also," Williams recalled.

Key added, "I was terrified. I could barely talk, and I had no feeling on my entire right side."

Williams' focus was no longer on a seat-belt violation; it was on saving Key's life.

"I called a good friend, Logan Weaver, an advanced emergency medical technician, to possibly determine Mr. Key's medical condition. Throughout our conversation, we came to the decision that it was important for Mr. Key to have further medical evaluation," said Williams.

Key immediately placed his trust and safety in the trooper's hands, and Williams took immediate steps to see that Key received the needed care, dispatching an ambulance.

Doctors later confirmed Williams' suspicion — it was a stroke. A routine traffic stop saved at least one life, if not more.

If the story ended there, it would be a good story. But this isn't just a story about the mutual trust and respect during the stop; it's about the care and compassion that followed.

**"I believe it's important to follow up with individuals to show them that we're also human. We're not here only to protect but to serve as well," Williams said.**

His follow-up impacted Key as much as his care on the scene.

Key shared, "He has checked on me several times and showed me there are still good-hearted individuals. In the world today, there is so much hatred for our officers. There's good and bad in every profession, and I feel this community is blessed with some of the best."

Williams said, "It's very heartwarming to me to receive welcoming hugs and firm handshakes from different members of his family."

It validated Key's positive beliefs about local law enforcement and impacted his life in other ways.

"I have changed my whole perspective on my health and life," Key said. "My hopes are to live a healthier lifestyle, to never take anything for granted, and to know that life can change in the blink of an eye."

Williams hopes that by sharing the story, others will trust those charged with their protection and care more easily.

"Trust the police. This job is not for everyone; it's a calling for the men and women who do this job."

And the incident taught Williams some things, too.

"This experience influenced my view of my role as a law enforcement officer in a positive

way because it has taught me to not only walk up to the vehicle and deal with the violation at bay but to dig a little and figure out possible reasons behind the violation," Williams said. "I have been in law enforcement for 5 1/2 years, and you'll never see the same thing daily throughout the job. It's very easy to become complacent, but it has shaped me and reminded me daily to slow down and look at the small things to ensure a mistake isn't made."

Williams made a lasting impression on Key. **"Officer Williams is someone I will never forget. My family and I can't thank him enough. If it wasn't for Officer Williams, I might not be here today. He kept me calm, assured me I would be ok, and made sure I got the help I needed. He did this all with a smile, and the times he's checked on me, he always has that smile."**

Williams agrees about the danger. "I'm blessed to have been in the area because I believe Mr. Key wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the good Lord allowing us to meet that day."

Despite the difficulties of his work, Williams finds strength in his support system and faith. "This job is very hard on my family and me. If it weren't for my mother, girlfriend, and beautiful daughter, I don't believe I'd be able to do this job," he reflected. "It is truly an honor, and I tell a lot of people that working in the small town you were born and raised in makes it even more rewarding."

Drawing inspiration from scripture, Williams concluded, "I like to think of a verse out of the Bible that says 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God' (Matthew 5:9)."

In the end, what began as a simple traffic stop sheds light on the profound effects of kindness, understanding, and a genuine concern for others' well-being. It encourages us to recognize the impact we can have through our actions and the importance of extending grace and care beyond the boundaries of our expected roles, reminding us that every interaction holds the potential to alter lives and strengthen the bonds that unite us as a community. **GN**





*Charles Adam Key with Keidrick Williams, the state trooper whose quick thinking saved Key's life.*



# Halloween - Oct. 31



Photos submitted by folks in our community

The eagerly awaited night of Halloween finally arrived, bringing excitement to children everywhere. People of all ages donned creative costumes, joined local events, went trick-or-treating, and scored plenty of candy treasures.



1. Elias Marsh 2. Boston, Banks, and Baylor Hill 3. Ada Kate Croft 4. Ellie and Jace Barcsansky  
5. Addy and Ada Tate 6. Henry and Evelyn Wisner



# Host of Christmas Past - Nov. 8-9



Photos submitted by Velva Walker

The annual Host of Christmas Past attracted people from all around to enjoy the festivities. Santa was there and so were the reindeer. This event happened on Nov. 8-9. Food trucks, vendors, and a kids zone were just a few participants.



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1. Ave Bonner, Hannah Bolden, Teresa Gentry, Karen Barnes, Ashley Bolden, and Andie Faith Barnes 2. Gabby Maus and Aliyah McElroy  
3. Bella Buckner 4. Amira Congo



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Facebook: Fayetteville Lincoln  
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Preserves history, promotes patriotism, and secures America's future through education. The DAR is a genealogical women's organization and invites any woman 18 years or older who can prove lineal descent from a patriot of the American Revolution to active membership.

[kingsmountainmessenger@tndar.org](mailto:kingsmountainmessenger@tndar.org)  
[www.tndar.org/~kingsmountain](http://www.tndar.org/~kingsmountain)

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