

Good News

exchange

AMANDA TRENT

Shaping Justice With Faith and Service

A former law enforcement officer turned academic leader inspires the next generation of criminal justice professionals.

CLASSROOM

LEGACIES

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Get a
good
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Classroom Legacies

A legacy never dies.

A STUDENT IN our community today will walk the halls of Congress with a pinned American flag on their chest. A student in our community today will pray their knees still hold when their nerves get the best of them as they walk the steps to the stage to accept a Grammy. A student in our community today will one day have sweaty palms as they fly across the world to defend our country. Every kindergarten classroom in our community is full of future firefighters, future parents, future doctors, and future happy humans who didn't want a job to define them. A future president may be walking our halls today.

The kids who laugh on the playground today will one day face hard choices where both paths hurt. They may have a moment where they question themselves, but they'll make the right choice in the end. They'll remember their role model. They'll think, "What would Mr. Jean do?" and remember who they are. They'll race across the field during the Su-

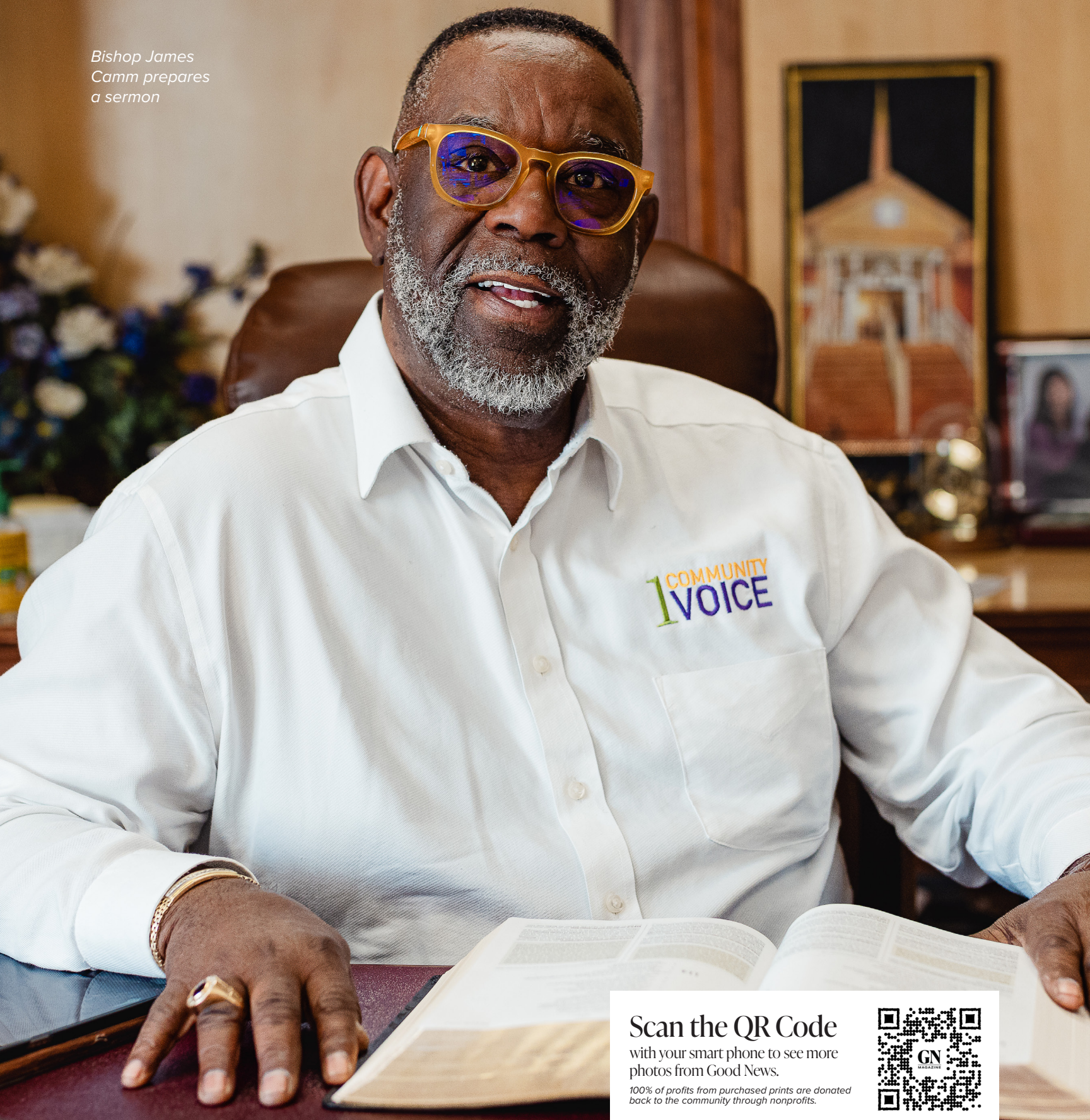
per Bowl, remembering their history teacher — their coach — as they score the winning touchdown. They'll raise kids of their own, repeating the mantras they heard in the 10th grade. Childhood memories will play in their minds when they take the table's order, and their favorite teacher sits with a smile.

Our educators create legacies that carry on for the rest of time. Not because they make good money that way — just because that's who they are. They wake up early, work long days with less pay than they deserve, and come home to take care of their other responsibilities. They bring extra school supplies for the kids who had to do without. They teach our children how to do math and how to read, yes ... but they also teach our kids how to look inward. They teach our kids how to fight for a better world. But most importantly, they teach our kids how to love.

Teachers, we thank you for the legacies you create and the legacies that you are. This issue of Good News is for you. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Bishop James
Camm prepares
a sermon



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ONE COMMUNITY ONE VOICE:

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY

TOGETHER

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO OPEN DOORS
FOR A FAMILY'S FUTURE.

BY SARA HOOK // PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS MORRIS

WHEN A neighborhood, city, or county works together, aligning themselves with one purpose, amazing things happen. Lynchburg's One Community One Voice (OCOV) is a perfect example of this as the city comes together with one goal: making Lynchburg a better place to live, work, and play.

Pastor, veteran, and community advocate James Camm founded OCOV after returning to Lynchburg following 20 years of military service. He saw some of the same struggles in his community that he had experienced growing up, and began to see how he could make a difference. The community needed

a closer relationship with those who serve them and kids needed more exposure to opportunities, among other things. OCOV has several targeted programs to help, with a vision to "change lives one family at a time."

A portion of the organization is focused on Lynchburg's children, encouraging them to do well in school with programs like Believing In Kids Excelling and exposing them to things they may never have seen, like the District of Columbia and Disney World. Those experiences, Camm said, help them realize that with a little work, they, too, can achieve great things.



BISHOP
JAMES CAMM

1 COMMUNITY
VOICE

"It's so impactful when the policeman's out there shooting basketball with the kids that only used to think that they ... had been against them because that's what they have been exposed to."

- Bishop James Camm



King Reward Fund

Donations are being accepted at any Bank of the James location



www.ocovlynchburg.org

Bishop James Camm with the One Community One Voice van



“I just [go] in on the first day to see their eyes light up,” Camm said. “It was something that they only thought they’d ever see on TV, but now they were there.”

Other OCOV programs target the relationship the community has with police officers, firefighters, and other local heroes. While before, the police may have only been a presence when something is wrong, now they play basketball and kickball during the summertime events and take kids shopping for Shop with a Hero events.

“It’s so impactful when the policeman’s out there shooting basketball with the kids that only used to think that they ... had been against them because that’s what they have been exposed to,” Camm said.

Police are not the only heroes involved with OCOV. The fire department, sheriff’s department, and other community leaders come to connect during events, and Shop with a Hero includes everyone from doctors to mail carriers and news reporters — everyone who serves or leads in the community is welcome.

OCOV also works specifically with local families. They put together Thanksgiving meals, help people understand their insurance, and check up on people when violence has happened nearby. Above all, however, they partner with anyone in the community who is stepping up to make a difference.

“We say, ‘I do not compete, we complete,’” Camm said. “We find an organization doing something; we rally behind them and support them.”

Those community partnerships are critical to OCOV’s success — and Camm has seen that success through families who have overcome addiction, who have found successful careers, and who have children taking advantage of educational opportunities.

“One Community One Voice is just what it says — it’s one community, one voice,” Camm said. “We all want to speak with the same language, ensuring that Lynchburg [is a] better place to live, work, and play, and the only way we can do that is by working together.”

OCOV has great things in its future, as the organization moves into a physical location provided by a local church. Having a brick and mortar community center will allow them to better mentor kids, to better teach important classes like finance and parenting, and to branch out into encouraging the trades. There is much to do, and Camm said everyone has a responsibility in some way.

“Find where you can be a help,” Camm said. “I know that not everybody’s going to be on the forefront that we are, but there can be a place for churches and organizations to be a part to help better our community to be a better place.” **GN**

Find One Community One Voice online at oncommunityonevoice.com or call (804) 994-6268 for more information.

Adam Wilmer: TURNING GRIEF INTO GIVING



A devoted father honors his daughter
by serving the school and community she loved.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Chris Morris



▲ Avonlea's photo remains on her locker as a tribute.

HOW DO you measure the profound impact of a life dedicated to quietly observing, listening, and meeting the needs of others? Avonlea Laurel Ellen Wilmer's life touched countless lives, as reflected in her genuine smile and the smile she put on others' faces.

"She was always smiling. Everyone remembers her smile and the look of joy that was always on her face. She was so thoughtful and kind," said her father, Adam.

When Avonlea entered sixth grade at Brookville Middle School (BMS) in 2015, she carried the love of her parents, Adam and Carrie, with her and a wish for her father to volunteer and help at BMS. Adam connected with the school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) leadership and became its vice president early that school year.

"This was truly the start of building a positive relationship with BMS administration, teachers, students, and parents. All of them had the same goal of making things better for BMS," Adam explained.



Adam Wilmer poses with a plaque dedicated to Avonlea.



“She was always smiling. Everyone remembers her smile and the look of joy that was always on her face. She was so thoughtful and kind.”

- Adam Wilmer



▲ Adam Wilmer beside Avonlea's locker at Brookville Middle School. The locker was “retired” and became a permanent memorial after her death.

But in December, Avonlea's heart failed, leaving the world without her endearing smile. While it seemed dark in the days following her loss, the light of her smile reappeared in the smiles of the many she touched in her brief life. Story after story testified to Avonlea's impact.

Adam shared, “It was really after her passing, as we would hear stories (even still as the years go by), that it reinforced how incredibly special she was and how much influence she had in that short time on students, teachers, and staff.”

Many memorials honor Avonlea's impact today, including:

- Avonlea's permanently retired locker with her color picture, her writings, and favorite images
- Landscaped area near the flagpole with plaque
- BMS' annual character award renamed after Avonlea
- Bench with Avonlea's name and "caring for others" at the school's main entrance
- Chair at 2022 high school graduation, draped in her favorite color and a big blue bow
- Star named after Avonlea, its coordinates on commemorative T-shirts worn by friends
- Walking trail proposed by Avonlea's friend, Maggie, with benches dedicated to Avonlea with a comforting quote — a place for the grieving
- "Avonlea's Angels," the infant/toddler child development center at the church Avonlea attended with friends, with her portrait and life impact
- Bracelets with Avonlea's name and "care for others" still worn by friends and community members
- Christmas ornaments featuring Avonlea's picture still used by many families each year
- Forest Middle School's school club, Avonlea's Angels, whose mission is to "implement community service projects showing kindness & support to others in our school and community"
- Lynchburg Humane Society's special area with Avonlea's name on it and Central Virginia Regional Rescue's Avonlea's Angels donation-funded animal care program

After Avonlea's death, Adam continued his involvement with the BMS PTO. This choice, while emotionally challenging, allowed him to honor his



▲ Adam Wilmer with the bench dedicated to Avonlea

daughter's memory and continue positively impacting the school community.

"It was great to be a part of all the positive strides in helping the school and students but also internally painful to watch the students at ... because I remember vividly Avonlea being right there in front of me, doing those same things ... but now she isn't."

Through his continued involvement, Adam has witnessed positive changes benefiting the students and school community. He believes Avonlea would be proud of her legacy.

"The PTO tries to help in all sorts of areas. It's the smiles on the faces of those impacted that say, without words, we succeeded ... we made someone's day ... we made things better."

How do you measure the profound impact of a life dedicated to quietly observing, listening, and meeting the needs of others? You measure it in smiles. **GN**



▲ Avonlea's locker at Brookville Middle School



*Brandon Gregory
at the D-Day wall
of names*

ES T. HATFULL ♦ JOHN MACKAY
♦ DUNCAN F. WRIGHT
ETH HOLBROOK ♦ NORMAN HAUK
HOWARD S. EASLICK
♦ WILLIAM GREGORY

VID COLQUHOUN
REY CROSSE ♦ JAC
S J. AYRES ♦ BEN
ALAN L. SMITH
HENRY J. MATHER



BRANDON GREGORY

REMEMBERING THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS

A Virginia man honors the people who sacrificed themselves for today's freedom.

By Gabriel Grant Huff // Photography by Chris Morris



FLYING FOR love. Fighting for peace. Dying for freedom. Thirty thousand members of the U.S. Army Air Forces died while taking on this call of duty when flying from Britain during World War II. More than a century of war altered the lives of many people, left tens of millions dead, and bestowed a legacy like no other — one expressed in the American Air Museum in Britain at Imperial War Museum Duxford. It's a tale that Brandon Gregory, who lives right outside of Lynchburg, gets to support every day and share with the younger generation.

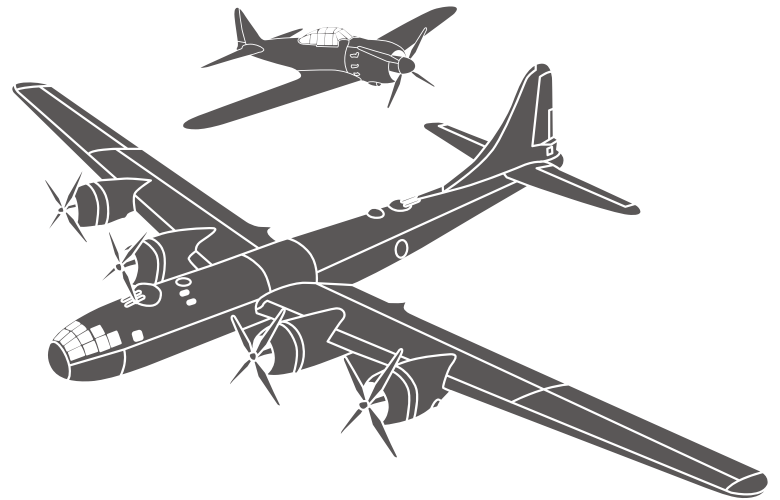
The American Air Museum boasts the largest collection of American military aircraft publicly displayed outside of the United States. More than 850 items — equipment, uniforms, keepsakes, and photographs — showcase 85 lived experiences in over 100 years of Anglo-American history. Whether a private person or a president, these lives impacted the war, or conversely, the fight changed them.

From 1943 to 1945, the 78th Fighter Group claimed the Duxford airfield in Cambridgeshire as home before seeing the place transformed into an air defense fighter station until its closing in 1968. Eight years later, Imperial War Museum officials purchased the site, later reformed to pay homage to America's history in Duxford. No other than Queen Elizabeth II opened the museum to the public in 1977.

That museum personally connected with Gregory when he took the position of executive director in July 2022. His grandfather and two of his great-uncles fought in Europe.

"I had a great uncle who flew out of Europe in the 8th Air Force in the Second World War and was shot down in August of 1943, and so he spent the rest of his time as a prisoner of war with the Germans," Gregory said.

Everyone but the pilot survived the crash, living to share the tale.



Gregory took the story to heart.

He grew up in North Carolina and graduated college with a history degree, later obtaining a position as a development director and chief fundraiser at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia, before working at the American Air Museum seven years later.

He now gets to visit the museum six to eight times a year while working remotely in the United States, often traveling to visit and work with donors — who are mostly situated in the states — to raise funds. Gregory leads his American team in these fundraising efforts, simultaneously supporting curation, conservation, and marketing teams based in the United Kingdom.

"We commemorate the pivotal role of air power preserving freedom by connecting generations to the stories of heroism and aircraft that have shaped history," Gregory said.

Nineteen planes stand on display in the museum, ranging from a B-17 bomber to the fast SR-71 aircraft, showcasing history and its importance.

The lesson exists as one that Gregory loves to pass on to the next generation, starting with his children.

"I think the most important thing that I want them to understand and to get is that we are a free country, but we are a free country because of the service of our military and our service members and our veterans."

Such understanding reaches the minds of those who visit the American Air Museum, replaying the fateful actions of the 30,000, allowing the fighters to take off once again in their hearts. **GN**

People wishing to donate or plan a visit to the American Air Museum in Britain can go to americanairmuseum.com.



Gen Dwight D.
Eisenhower memorial

“

I think the most important thing that I want them to understand and to get is that we are a free country, but we are a free country because of the service of our military and our service members and our veterans.

-Brandon Gregory





PALMERA HOUSE

GOOD NEWS IS COMING TO DINNER!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as they dine in Lynchburg. This month Laura Reed Howell visited Palmera House.

Palmera House

2307 Bedford Ave.
Lynchburg
palmerahouse.com

PALMERA HOUSE, a new deli restaurant, is open daily from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and closed on Sundays.

It is a charming eatery that is only 2 months old. It has been renovated recently from a 1960s dry cleaning business into a light-filled oasis with a garden feel. It is surrounded by luscious green plants, a beautiful shell collection throughout, and a terrace with white umbrellas for outdoor dining.

The whole concept provided here is clean, fresh, made-to-order smoothies, salads, and bowls. It's organic, healthy, colorful food, served on environmentally protected and safe materials.


I enjoyed a glass of Viognier white wine and savored every bite of a generous serving of fresh burrata on arugula with crushed pistachios throughout the salad.

The owner is Erica Kerns. Her staff is very friendly, warm, and extremely attentive.

The restaurant sells wines by the glass and also offers an extensive selection of wines, craft beers, an interesting assortment of fig sausages, sundry items, and an array of Italian and French housewares — perfect for gifts!

Palmera House has an extremely fine website where you can browse the restaurant and the variety of beverages and dishes offered.

Treat yourself to a genuinely nice meal in an ethereal, comforting atmosphere! **GN**



Mom, I'm hungry!

After-school snack time issues are solved with these delicious and nutritious recipes.

KIDS ARE barreling through the door after school, complaining that they are starving! It's the age-old gripe of children, no matter how old. We all know that kiddos often get hungry between meals. Unfortunately, many packaged snacks for kids are very unhealthy. They're often full of refined flour, added sugars, and artificial ingredients. Snack time is a great opportunity to sneak some extra nutrients into your child's diet. Instead of highly processed snack foods, fill your child's tummy with whole foods that provide energy and nutrition. Check out the following kid-friendly snacks that are both healthy and delicious. **GN**

Veggie Dip

Submitted by Sherry Bell

- 1 c. sour cream
- 1 pkg. cream cheese, 8 oz., softened
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 c. parsley, chopped
- 1 c. salad dressing
- 1/2 c. green onion, chopped

In a blender, combine sour cream, cream cheese, garlic, parsley, salad dressing, and green onions. Blend until mixed. Refrigerate until chilled.



Yogurt Parfaits

Submitted by Rosina Eicher

1 pkg. cream cheese, 8 oz., softened
1/2 c. powdered sugar
1 box white chocolate pudding mix, 4 oz.
1 c. milk
32 oz. plain yogurt
1 tub whipped topping, 8 oz.
fresh fruit
granola

In a bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar. Add pudding and milk; mix well. Add yogurt and whipped topping. Layer with fresh fruit and granola in individual clear cups.



Grandma Womack's Oatmeal Cookies

Submitted by Pat Barr

1 c. butter or margarine
1 c. sugar
2 eggs
2 c. AP flour
1 1/2 t. salt
2 t. cinnamon
1 1/2 c. raisins
1/3 c. buttermilk with 1/2 teaspoon salt added to it
2 c. oatmeal
1 c. nuts, optional

In a bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, mixing well. In a separate bowl, mix flour, salt, and cinnamon together. Add alternately with buttermilk to creamed mixture. Stir in raisins, oatmeal, and nuts. Bake at 375° on cookie sheet, not greased, for 12-15 minutes.



Shaping Justice With Faith and Service

A former law enforcement officer turned academic leader inspires the next generation of criminal justice professionals.

By Tina Neeley
Photography by Chris Morris



I remember that everyone is a child of God, and I want to ensure that I treat the people I come in contact with as such.

- AMANDA K. TREN



AT LIBERTY University's (LU) Helms School of Government, Amanda K. Trent's office buzzes with activity. Criminal justice students filter in and out, seeking guidance on internships, future employment, and volunteer opportunities. It's a far cry but a short step from the halls of the Roanoke City Sheriff's Office, where Trent spent 11 years, and the Western Virginia Regional Jail, where she spent 15 years. Still, the transition from law enforcement to academia has only amplified her impact on the criminal justice system and those it serves.

Trent is no stranger to acts of service. Her father, a career law enforcement officer, set the example that led to her own career with the Roanoke City Sheriff's Office.

"Watching him work faithfully at serving others was impactful. I knew I wanted to do the same," Trent shared.

Today, she's a faculty member and associate dean of the Helms School of Government.

Protecting and serving is in her DNA. She feels it's her calling, too, one guided by biblical direction.

"I have always been drawn to Micah 6:8, where we are told what the Lord expects of us: 'Seek justice, love



**AMANDA K.
TRENT**

*Dr. Amanda Trent
teaches a class at
Liberty University.*



mercy, walk humbly with your God,” said Trent. “It’s not His expectation for us to save the world.”

Nonetheless, Trent instructs others in meeting the ever-changing needs of those on both sides of criminal justice.

“I remember that everyone is a child of God, and I want to ensure that I treat the people I come in contact with as such,” stated Trent.

It’s important to her, too, that her husband and two daughters are proud of the way she uses the gifts God has given her.

Trent’s experience in law enforcement has proven invaluable in her academic role. Her specialized training as a hostage negotiator, death investigator, and defensive tactics instructor allows her to bring real-world insights into the classroom.

But her impact extends beyond the classroom. She’s leading an inmate reentry study, collaborating with the Jack Brewer Foundation to examine the effectiveness of faith-based programs in reducing recidivism. This research provides valuable data and offers students hands-on experience in the field.

Trent’s commitment to rehabilitation and justice isn’t limited to domestic efforts. She’s conducted training missions in Belize and Ecuador, working with prison systems and trafficking victims. These international experiences have deepened her understanding of global criminal justice issues.

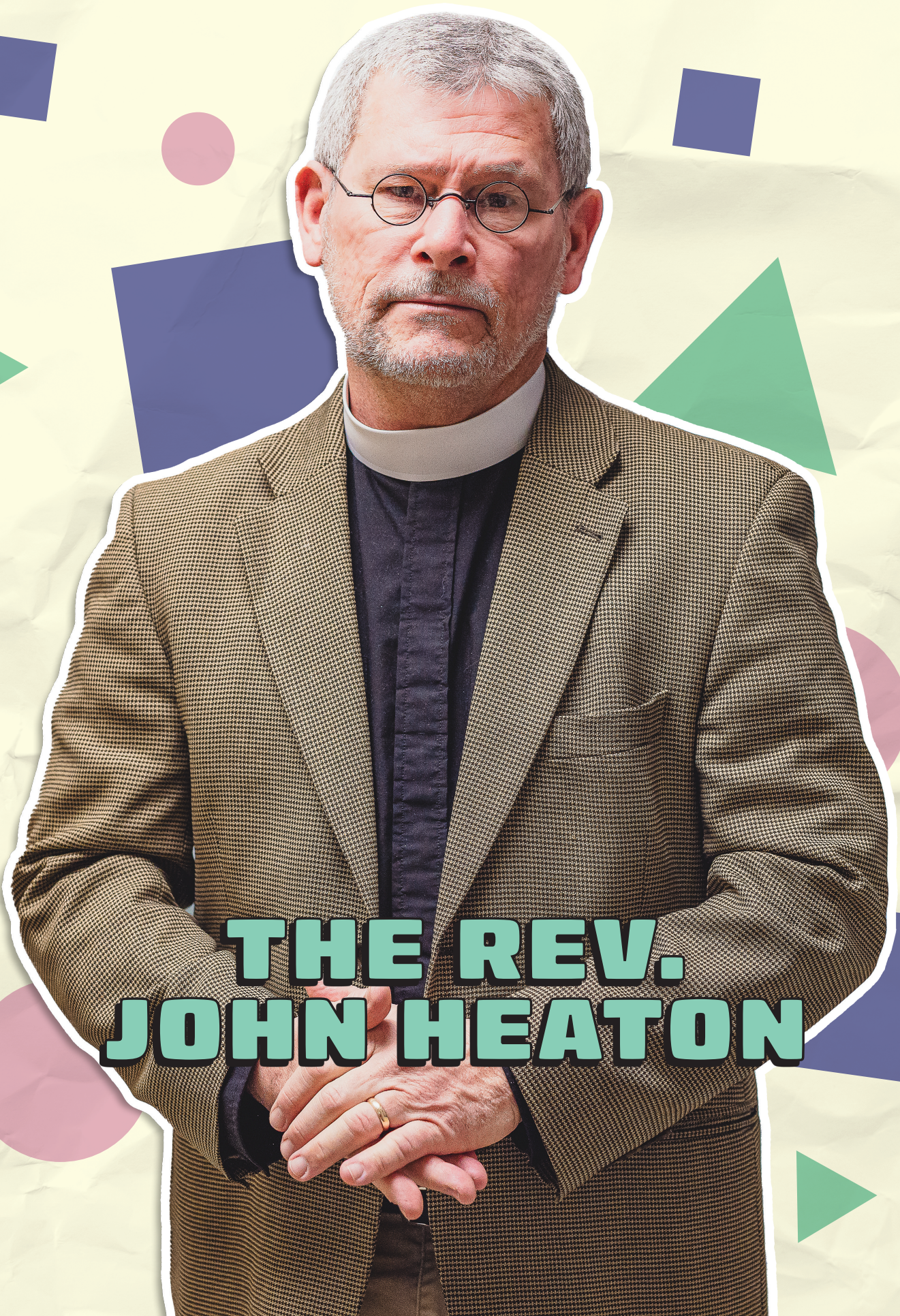
“I had the opportunities to work with former traffickers that have given their lives over to Christ and provided some unique insight into how victims are recruited and maintained,” Trent explained.

Despite the challenges of transitioning careers, Trent finds her work at LU deeply rewarding. The impact she can have on students’ lives moves her.

“There is no denying that the Lord is working on this campus and with the student body,” Trent said. “It gives me so much joy to be involved in the lives of these young people.”

As she continues to shape the next generation of criminal justice professionals, Trent remains guided by her faith and commitment to service. Her journey from law enforcement to academia is a powerful example of how one can seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly in any field. **GN**





**THE REV.
JOHN HEATON**

Classical Education, Timeless Care

The Rev. John Heaton brings a pastoral tone to students' lives at New Covenant Schools.

By Tina Neeley
Photography by Chris Morris



Being a parish priest is one side of the coin. The other side is education because the education of the young is part of the church's mission.

- THE REV. JOHN HEATON



IN THE halls of New Covenant Schools in Lynchburg, Virginia, the Rev. John Heaton moves with the measured pace of a man accustomed to both pulpit and classroom. For 27 years, he has served as headmaster, blending his background as a parish priest with his passion for classical Christian education.

“Being a parish priest is one side of the coin. The other side is education because the education of the young is part of the church’s mission,” Heaton explained, his voice carrying the warmth of a pastor and the authority of an educator.

This unique combination has shaped New Covenant into a place where pastoral care and rigorous learning intertwine, creating an atmosphere that students and parents feel, even if they can’t always articulate it.

“I think a pastoral tone percolates all the way down to our teachers. We talk about it a lot. I’ve stayed long enough to where that approach is woven into the culture, and people who encounter it can’t necessarily articulate it, but they feel it. It’s just what good pastoral care of children should be.”

Heaton’s approach to education goes beyond mere academics. He emphasizes the formation of the whole person, focusing on critical thinking, character development, and shaping students’ desires.



▲ John Heaton and Luna with an excited first grade class

“We’re trying to teach students not just what to know but how to learn, which is a skill,” he said.

This philosophy is rooted in classical methodologies, including extensive reading, writing, and memorization. The pastoral element is also evident in how Heaton approaches discipline at New Covenant.

“There’s discipline, which is really discipleship over a long period of time,” Heaton explained. “It’s long obedience in one direction and the care and keeping of a child’s whole person

and dignity intact, even when you have to correct them.”

Heaton’s educational philosophy is deeply rooted in his own experiences. Raised by a single mother in the 1960s, he attended a small Christian school that, despite its flaws, left an indelible mark on him. Early exposure to rigorous memorization and good literature laid the foundation for his current approach.

At New Covenant, Heaton emphasizes the importance of shaping students’ desires. This formation happens through

what Heaton calls “small liturgies” — daily habits and routines that create deep impressions on students’ souls over time.

He acknowledges that the fruits of this approach aren’t always immediately apparent.

“I think that the fruit of what we’re doing isn’t always evident in the moment, but it comes much later down the road,” he reflected.

It’s often years later, sometimes not until college or beyond, that students fully realize how their education has shaped them.



▲ John Heaton and Luna



We're trying to teach students not just what to know but how to learn, which is a skill.

- THE REV. JOHN HEATON



As Heaton nears three decades at New Covenant, he sees the fruits of this pastoral approach in the lives of his students, some of whom are now sending their own children to the school. This continuity bears witness to the enduring value of an education that nurtures both mind and spirit, preparing students not just to make a living but to live well and pursue wisdom throughout their lives. GN

For more information, visit newcovenantschools.org.



▲ Rock Tryall and John Heaton

Beyond The Call

A Lynchburg
sergeant advocates
for the mental health
of first responders.

By Becca Roberts
Photography by Chris Morris



It helps when I can say, 'I've been through this, you are normal, it's fine — but here's what I can do to help you and the services we provide.'

- SYDNEY OLIVIER



SGT. SYDNEY Olivier smiles, overhearing one of her officers mention that he is “in the green.” He’s using emotional awareness terminology taught through Impact First Responders in Lynchburg, where Olivier volunteers. This program helps first responders connect to mental health services whether the need arises on or off the job. It is a facet of a larger organization, Impact Living Services (ILS), a nonprofit that offers various assistance programs needed in the community.

Impact First Responders was added to ILS’ programs in Lynchburg in 2022 by a local counselor, Kristen Sharrett, who says many of her favorite clients were first responders. Impact First Responders assists police, fire, and dispatch. The program was in demand right away in Lynchburg, with all three departments interested in its services. It was clear that mental health education and resources were needed for these brave men and women who put themselves on the front lines daily.

When Impact First Responders began here, Olivier signed on as a volunteer peer support specialist on top of working full time for the Lynchburg Police Department. While Sharrett is the program director



**KRISTEN
SHARRETT**

*Kristen Sharrett
leads the team
that takes care of
first responders'
mental health
needs.*



and offers the counseling side of things, she says peer support team members like Olivier are crucial. First responders are well-positioned to have a pulse on their co-workers' emotional health, and officers trust other first responders like family.

"The honest truth is there has always been a mental health stigma within the first responder community. If we can equip people within the department who do the job and work together, then it becomes a groundswell effect," Sharrett said. "I have the mental health training, but Sydney has far more credibility with her peers and trainees, and I don't ever try to get in front of a group of first responders without a peer team member up there with me."

Olivier has experienced critical incidents in her career, and her personal story offers validation and comfort to others.

"Years ago, I was involved in an officer-involved shooting, so just being a part of that helps me relate to officers going through a critical incident," Olivier said. "Back when my incident happened, peer support wasn't what it is today ... I volunteered because I didn't have what we offer now."

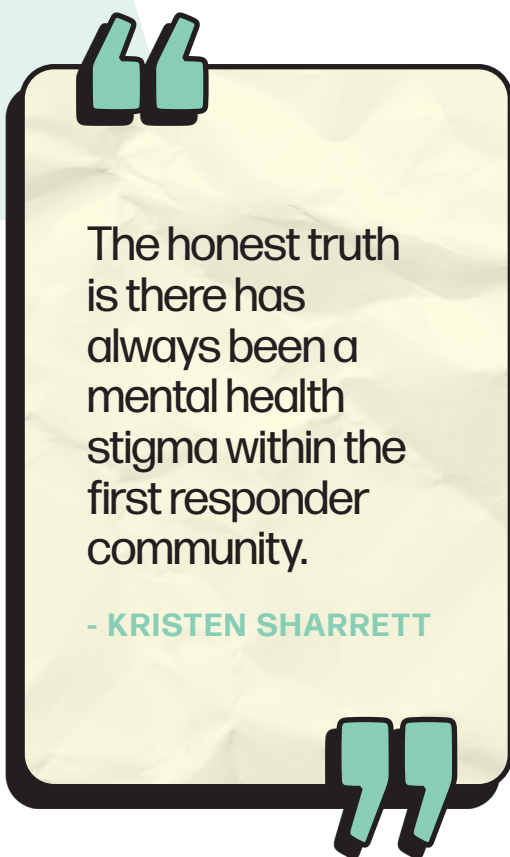
Credibility and trust are key.

"It helps when I can say, 'I've been through this, you are normal, it's fine — but here's what I can do to help you and the services we provide,'" Olivier said.

There are three parts of the program: peer team, clinicians, and first responders. Officers undergo resiliency training to recognize signs of burnout from long-term, cumulative stress or post-traumatic stress disorder, and the program normalizes these trauma responses. They use specific language around how first responders are feeling: if they are "in the green," they are calm, but if they are "in the red," they are struggling with a stressor. First responders become accustomed to discussing mental health and are familiar with the lingo, which reduces the mental health stigma.

Olivier is a lifeline to her fellow first responders after a critical incident or in times of daily stress and fatigue. They know she and the other peer support members are there for them and will connect them to counseling resources as needed.

Charles Shealy, another first responder, did not realize how much this program would help until he went on vacation and noticed that even at the beach, he was still unhappy. His training through Impact



The honest truth is there has always been a mental health stigma within the first responder community.

- KRISTEN SHARRETT

First Responders helped him recognize his symptoms and reach out for help.

"From the first time I contacted them, they were attentive to my needs and ensured the most productive experience possible. Having this program available for first responders is a vital piece in the mental wellness puzzle for us, and their value cannot be overstated," Shealy shared.

Olivier says teaching people to remember their "why" is important when dealing with trauma or long-term burnout. Being a police officer has been her lifelong goal, and Impact First Responders has allowed her to be a voice for her peers and advocate for their mental health needs.

"It's opened my eyes to paying more attention to my co-workers. First responders, [we] tend to joke about things a lot," Olivier said, "and sometimes ... there is really something there, so just being more mindful ... and having the training and experience to be able to say, 'Hey would you be interested in these services?'"

Olivier's compassion for her officers is evident in everything she does, and her advocacy for mental health and wellness continues to positively impact her community. GN

Annual Celtic Festival and Highland Games - March 29



Photography by Chris Morris

On March 29, 2025, the annual Celtic Festival and Highland Games was held at the Sedalia Center. Clans and fans from all over came to watch the favored Highland Games, hear great Celtic music, and sample classic Celtic fare. The Celtic Festival is always a time for friends and family to come together and celebrate a shared heritage.



1. A performer plays for the crowd 2. The caber toss 3. Kinnfolk, a traditional Celtic duo 4. Happy Bee Apiary provided local honey samples 5. The stone toss tests the strength and accuracy of competitors



6. A competitor launches a caber 7. Celtic clans from all over came to visit and catch up 8. Food and fun were the order of the day