



## Ps. 105: 2...Talk of all His Wondrous Works!

I love the Psalms. I find myself there often. It is a

place I get encouragement, truth, insight and many times see what others have gone through and how God is faithful! Ps. 105 talks about the eternal faithfulness of our Lord. One way I see His faithfulness is how He works through Bethel. **This October 6<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating 76 years of ministry.** 76 years of lives changed, men and women set free, families restored, and men and women glorifying God with their lives. The Psalmist tells us in verse 1 to "**give thanks to the Lord!**" If you have been through Bethel or been touched by



His saving grace, that should come naturally without any prompting. We start every day at Bethel by sharing **3 things for which we are thankful**. This helps us make a continuous choice to get our mind off the problem and circumstance and on what God is doing in the midst of the problem. It really helps change your focus and mindset: It doesn't always



change your circumstance but **builds hope** to **focus on His faithfulness**. In the same verse it says, "make known His **deeds**." We give our students many opportunities to share



what the Lord is doing. We want them to not be ashamed of the hand of God actively working in their lives. We also know that it encourages others that are going through some of the same places. Verses 2-3 tell us to "**sing and rejoice.**" We love singing at Bethel! We start every class with song.



We get opportunities to share at churches where we sing as a choir and testify. Hearing the men and women at Bethel sing as a choir is really close to heavenly. Their hearts have been changed and they sing the words with conviction and fresh change. The Holy Spirit seems to minister through them in a way that is unique. As Pastor Loss says, they've stopped singing with the Rolling Stones and now they're singing about The Cornerstone!

The fifth verse says "Remember His marvelous work!" I'm not sure what you think about when you receive this newsletter every couple of months, but I pray it reminds you of the wonderful work He did in your heart while you or your loved one was in the program. I pray it inspires you to get closer to God on a daily basis so your family and others may know the hope that you have. What I hope this newsletter does is encourage you to put on your calendar Oct. 6 for Homecoming Day this year and the Bible Conference Oct. 7-11. We would love to see you again. We are going to do all those things that Ps. 105 says in the first 5 verses. We would like to give thanks with you and give you an opportunity to share what He has been doing in your life since you left Bethel. So please come and let's sing and rejoice together! Homecoming is the most exciting day for us each year. Please contact those you were at Bethel with and have them meet you here. Come catch up with your Bethel family and find out about all that is happening on both campuses.

We look forward to hearing the testimonies of His Eternal Faithfulness!

Pastor Paul and Stacy Pruitt

**Executive Director** 



Express check-in for teams who register and pay (online or via invoice) by Fri., Sept. 20th.

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For more information Contact Stacy Pruitt at 828-754-3781 ext. 224 or bcom@bethelcolony.org

We are privileged and excited to announce that Dr. Ricky D. Cope, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Indian Land, SC will be our 2024 Homecoming speaker and will start our Bible Conference on Monday morning, 10/07/2024 at 9 am. Dr. Cope has too many accolades for us to list in this newsletter so we encourage you to visit his web page *rickycope.com* to discover who this gifted pastor is and how God has mightily used him in many venues. What we want you to know first and foremost about Dr. Cope is that his life's purpose is to reach the world with the message that "Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life." That through Christ there is HOPE for the hopeless, there is HELP for those who cannot help themselves, and there is a HOME in heaven for all who surrender their lives to Him. Dr. Cope is married to the love of his life, Robin; they have two married daughters and seven amazing grandchildren.

## COME & CELEBRATE **Bethel's 76<sup>th</sup> Homecoming** Starting at 9a.m. on Sunday Oct. 6, 2024

Bible Conference





James Wilfong of Highways and Hedges in Lenoir will share his unusual testimony and unique ministry with us.

Matthew Watkins served faithfully as Co-Pastor of Warren Community Church in Somerville, TN for 4 years and has been their Senior Pastor since September of 2023. Pastor Matthew is married to Tiffany & they have seven wonderful children – Davis (Payton), Hayden (Anna Grace), Luke (Chelsea), Emma, Hannah, Jaycee, & Elijah (Trisha). They also have ten awesome grandchildren!

Stan Wilson is the pastor at Pressley Memorial PH Church in Cross, SC. He was called to preach at the age of sixteen, and he has six years of experience in pastoral ministry. He graduated from Emmanuel College in 2015 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education. He and his wife, Abby, of seven years have two children, Kerrigan and Rebekah Wilson.

God has blessed us wonderfully this year with several exciting and passionate men of God who are looking forward to blessing, encouraging, exhorting, and teaching us from the Word of God. It promises to be an exciting week-long experience not unlike tent revivals of old! Make plans now to join us and be renewed in your spirit to serve and honor the Lord Jesus Christ with your life! All services are open to the public.



## Ramah Reflections A Prayer from the Women's Campus. Enlarge Our Territory

'And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.' 1 Chronicles 4:10

Bethel Colony of Mercy Women's Campus has been in a season of growth ever since its inception. In the nearly 3 years I have been blessed to be part of this ministry, I have seen God grow us. We can currently hold 22 women, but we are not satisfied with that. We are excited for the next phase of growth because we want to see the Lord work in the lives of many, many more women to come. Our specific desire for this year is to be able to increase from a capacity of 22 women to a capacity of 28 women. After that, we have even larger goals to pursue, all because we want God's will to be done in people's lives. So with this in mind, we pray like Jabez: *"Oh that You would bless us indeed, and enlarge our territory!"* 

This ambitious prayer of Jabez provides language for the vision God has placed in our hearts. In his prayer, Jabez asks for three specific things: blessing, increased territory, and to be kept from evil. We, like Jabez, need these things. First, we as a ministry want God's blessing and favor on what we do. We pray for God's hand to be upon us, from the staff to the students in the program. From the grounds, to the souls on them, we want God's favor and blessing. Bethel is God's ministry, and the heart's cry of the leadership is for God's will to be done so that His name can be glorified in the earth. So we pray for blessings over the work of our hands. We pray for blessings on every person, group, family, and church that comes alongside of us to see God's kingdom come in this sphere. We also pray for the laborers, the staff and volunteers who pour their hearts into this ministry, that they may be blessed indeed in every area of life, so that they can walk in the joy of ministry for God's kingdom.

Second, we want God to enlarge our territory. We don't just want to be good stewards of a handful of lives. We want to be faithful in the little things, that He might make us able to handle bigger things. We pray for God to expand our spheres of influence so that more people can be reached with the saving, transforming knowledge of Jesus Christ. We pray that our next phase of growth would be smooth and fruitful, that each woman would leave full of the Lord with His praise on her lips and with His hope in her eyes, so that everyone around her sees that God is, indeed, mighty to save. We ask for family members and friends of graduates to be touched and reached by what God is doing now, and that families continue to be restored in greater numbers. That women with their children find their way out of the enemy's chaos and into the Lord's House.

Finally, we want God to keep this ministry and its ministers from evil. We pray for protection and safety; that no plan from the enemy would have room to succeed. We pray for the former and current students to be kept from evil, and for the wicked one to touch them not. We ask for safety and wisdom regarding new plans and endeavors, and for that wisdom to come from God and not from the world.

Looking forward to whatever these next stages have for us, we do so knowing that God is in control and that He watches over His word to perform it.

Blessed beyond measure,

Mrs. Regina Kelly Women's Campus Co-Director



Hi! My name is Allison; I'm 34 years old from Boone NC. I was raised in church but did not have a good childhood. My parents divorced when I was 2 and about 4 years later, they both remarried. My dad married a wonderful woman named Bonnie and my mom married a man named Clay, who turned out to be a pedophile. I was molested when I was 6 years old almost every day for 5 years. When I was 11, I was raped almost every day until I was 16. I started using alcohol and drugs when I was about 12. At first it was just alcohol and marijuana but I started gradually experimenting with pills. I got a DUI when I was 16 and moved to Maine to live with my dad and Bonnie. I had never told anyone about the sexual abuse until 2008 when I told my best friend and she encouraged me to go to the police. In 2010 there was a criminal trial against Clay. He was sentenced to 23 years in prison for what he did to me.

I've struggled with substance abuse most of my life, in and out of jail for various things since 2006. I went to a program called Blessed Hope in 2011 after being arrested for a DUI near Tampa Florida. I was at Blessed Hope for 8 months but relapsed and left. I got into the adult entertainment industry at a young age and started prostituting not long after. While I was a dancer, I was introduced to heroin, crack, and meth.

In April of 2023 I found out I was pregnant by a married man who I had been drinking and doing drugs with. I got an abortion shortly after. I knew abortion was wrong but I didn't think I would ever be able to get my life together. I couldn't seem to quit drinking/doing drugs. I was homeless, couldn't pay my bills, and didn't want to be a mother. I was in a dark place, struggling with depression and suicidal tendencies. My mom had told me about Bethel in 2022 but I was apprehensive. I knew it would be tough to kick this addiction but after the abortion, I hit a new all-time low. I told my mom I would go to Bethel and started filling out the application.

I became a student at Bethel Colony of Mercy on June 23rd of 2023 and boy did God start transforming my life! It didn't happen overnight but I begin praying that He would change my heart and my attitude. While at Bethel I rededicated my life to the Lord and surrendered everything to Him. Sure enough, I started to have joy where before I was only depressed. I started to have peace, where before there was only debilitating anxiety. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says; "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" My counselor, Regina, walked me through a forgiveness exercise where I was able to forgive those who had hurt me. This was so liberating. It felt like a physical weight had been lifted and I felt free. I started praying for Clay in prison, that he would be kept safe and that he would have a relationship with Jesus like I had found. I asked God to renew me and He delivered me from addiction, depression, anxiety, homosexuality, anger, fear, and heaviness. I also started coming into

agreement with what God's word says about who I am in Christ and my identity started to change. My confidence started to increase. I realized how valuable I am in God's eyes. The Lord cultivated a passion in me for Him like never before and I desperately wanted to spread the Gospel. I felt compelled to further His Kingdom and was called to serve.

The Lord has put it on my heart to minister to women who struggle with addiction, specifically women who have been victims to sexual abuse. After being called to further my education in ministry, I look forward to being a college student this fall. Over the summer I completed a course through Light University to get my Mental Health Advocate certificate. Now I'm working on completing the Mental Health Coach certificate

affiliated with The American Association of Christian Counselors through Light University as well. God had put it on my heart to get involved in the missionary field over the summer and I can't wait to hit the ground running overseas.

I'm so grateful and blessed to have a family of believers who never gave up on me while I was in my mess. I thank God for their unwavering faith and unending prayers. Without my family I would have never found Bethel where God pulled me out of that pit and placed my feet on solid ground. Thank you to all the staff who serve at Bethel. This ministry is truly anointed and I pray that God continues to bless all the staff and volunteers who are helping save lives. Without Bethel Colony of Mercy, I would not be where I am today.

#### Allison Meggison

Bethel Graduate, August, 2023

My grandmother took me to church when I was just a young lad. I remember the Werther's candy she gave me, climbing and lying on the pews, Sunday School, and learning about Jesus. I accepted Jesus into my heart as a young child and we became best friends. Everyone who sat at my lunch table in elementary school knew we were going to pray before we ate.

I remember long conversations with Him as I would walk through the woods, shoot my BB gun, chip golf balls, or roam around out in the country where I grew up in Salisbury, NC. Everywhere I went and everything I did He was right there with me and at the forefront of my mind.

As dishes would break against walls and obscenities were screamed out. my sister and I would hide in our bedroom, pray and read the Bible, hoping the noise would stop. Praise God! When I was around age 13 my parents gave their hearts to the Lord and began cleaning their lives up. I remember helping them empty and throw out beer cans. I also remember going to meetings with my dad and drinking coffee with everyone else as they would go around the circle and share their stories. Slowly things got better with family life as they began attending church regularly.

When I was around 15 or 16 I began going over to a friend's house to spend the night or sometimes weekends. This is where I was introduced to drugs, alcohol, and just about any other thing you can think of. I'm not sure if it was curiosity, my lack of experience/wisdom, or just the constant peer pressure that ultimately got to me, but eventually I began using and partaking in something that I never set out to partake in. I believe it was a trap from the enemy. Thus set in motion years and years of a battle raging internally as I knew what I was doing was wrong and I wanted to stop but I just couldn't. Each day would come and I so desperately wanted something different but couldn't muster up the strength to change. I simply could not do it on my own.

Here enters Bethel. I told my mom what was going on and that I wanted help. She and the folks at her church found Bethel Colony. (I guess the old saying; "You are who you hang out with is true.")

I came to Bethel as a senior in high school. I knew in my spirit that I needed change and didn't want to live that way. I can still see and hear Momma El (Eldora Ritchie) singing and directing us as we sang our hearts out to Jesus. I remember the many classes and the work-day schedule. To this day, I still utilize the solid foundational things I learned at Bethel so many years ago.

I wish I could say that at this point I went off in the sunset and lived happily ever after, but as a 19 year old, not even old enough to legally purchase alcohol, I still had much to learn. It really is crazy to think at any point you really are just one or two bad decisions away to going back to an old lifestyle or pattern. You can easily be sucked back in...our culture, radio,

TV, music, etc. are so heavily polluted and lyrics unconsciously steer you in the wrong direction. You have to be on guard of your heart and mind and really control what you allow to go in. As a young man, trying to find love, trying to find my place in life and making many bad decisions, I would always end up at the end of my own rope and there was Jesus, with His arms wide open.

There is no peace and no love like the love that comes from the Father. He loves us so much that He would give His only Son to set us free. Once your heart and mind are awakened to this awe-awakening truth, you will never be the same. Regardless of everything else, His love will always prevail. I thank God that He never gave up on me and despite the detour of me trying to go my own way and years of chasing after the wrong things, He never once gave up on me. In fact, for many years, I was miserable on the inside because there was an internal battle taking place. I even tried using responsibly and that did not work either. It never did sit

well with me. I felt it was a slap in His face after all He had brought me through.

I didn't find true peace until I totally gave up everything and held nothing back. Now, as a 43 year old, I look back with such an appreciation of what God does through Bethel. I still put my armor on and thank God for 3 things (most mornings even more than 3) and pray regularly for the men, women, and the staff at Bethel. God has blessed me with running one of the biggest antique festivals in NC, The Carolina Pickers Festival, and He has blessed me with a lawn care business. I'm able to regularly give to Bethel and what a true blessing that is for me!

*Shane Benfield* Bethel Graduate October, 2000



Shane's intake photo year 2000



Associate Director/Pastor Zac Starnes -

# The Proof is in the Pudding

I can confidently say that there is no place like Bethel Colony of Mercy. Bethel is a special place and holds a special place in many hearts. God has used faithful followers since 1948 to establish this ministry and to fulfill the mission of helping those afflicted with the bondage of addiction. The primary way that His people are capable to work and toil in this unique mission field of ministry is by being rooted in Christ. You can step foot on this property and observe that BCOM is all about Jesus. No one must tell you that it is a faith-based program. It is evident, through the years of success and growth, that Jesus is the focal point of BCOM. It is through God's providence and the empowering of the Holy Spirit that the laborers of BCOM can effectively minister; but do not take my word for it, the proof is in the pudding.

"The proof is in the pudding" is an expression that we all have said or heard at some point in our lives. This expression means that the merit, value, or actuality of something can only be assessed from direct experience or in its results. Bethel Colony of Mercy is celebrating 76 years of God delivering, restoring, and transforming the lives of the people that enter His program. Seventy-six years is the average life expectancy in the United States and it's safe to say that God has been changing lives for a lifetime here at BCOM and is still going strong.

When I think about the phrase "the proof is in the pudding" I think about the Scripture where Jesus teaches about the vine and branches in John 15. Jesus states. "Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me." (John 15:4,5 HCSB). Followers of Jesus Christ are to remain in Him, the Vine. To remain in Jesus is not a life of passivity but rather a life of activity. We must be persistent and consistent in seeking Jesus. It is a decision that must be made daily. When we seek Him and remain in Him, we will produce much fruit but apart from Him we can do nothing. A grapevine branch that has been cut off can survive and produce leaves for a time but is unable to produce fruit of the vine because it has been detached from its life source. Our very lives are dependent on the life-giving Vine.

A question we need to ask ourselves is "am I attached to the vine or not?" There should be evidence either way to let us know where we stand in our communion with Christ. There are many alluring philosophies and new age religious teachings that are contrary to God in the world today. There is this idea that if I am a good person I am in good standing with Jesus. The apostle Paul writes to Timothy about the perils of the last days, and he says that many will hold a form of godliness or religion but that they deny the power of Christ in their lives and that we are to avoid or turn away from such people (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Jesus teaches about fruit in people's lives in Matthew 7 and He states "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you'll recognize them by their fruit" (HCSB).

We will be known by our fruit and false teachers will be known by their fruit. Fruit is referring to the true character and conduct of a person. Self-examination is something that we should be doing daily to inspect our fruit. How are we doing with our conduct and character? Am I holding a form of religion but denying the power of God? Do I base my relationship with Christ from my works? Works are not a terrible thing, but they cannot bring about salvation. Godly fruit and works are the byproduct of salvation and being in Christ. The work that God is doing at BCOM is evident in the fruit. Few people or even businesses make it 76 years and it is even rarer for 76 years of consistent growth in our human lives or businesses. God is on the move at BCOM, and the proof is in the pudding. As we look at ourselves can we say that we are rooted in Christ, that we are avoiding religion, can others see the proof of Christ in our lives, and are we bearing fruit?

Pastor Zac Starnes

Associate Director





Contemporary culture wars deny the truth of the message of the cross. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (I Corinthians 1:1) They are ashamed of and shun the power of the gospel. But not so for the Christian. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)

All the religious longings that are not pursuing Christ are empty. They are anchored in evil. *"This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil: madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead."* (Ecclesiastes 9:3) Gilbert K. Chesterton, (Illustrated London news on October 23, 1909) wrote concerning the evil of his day. *"Men do not differ much about what things they will call evil; they differ enormously about what evils they will call excusable."* 

Carl R. Trueman, (Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies at Grove City College in Grove City, Pennsylvania, Touchstone, A Journal of Mere Christianity) wrote the following in answer to why the Christian life threatens modern progress. "There is a modern conflict between Christianity and the values of our contemporary culture and it can be understood in a number of ways. There is an obvious moral conflict between biblical sexual morality and that of our permissive and pornified age. There is a religious conflict between a faith in divine revelation and a world that denies the existence of anything transcendent or immaterial and those who think in utilitarian terms." (A theory of morality that advocates actions that foster happiness or pleasure and opposes actions that cause unhappiness or harm). He goes on to share the importance of self-denial; a Christian doctrine. Jesus speaking to His disciples said, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will gain it" (Matthew 16:24-25)

Many in addiction of various sorts are looking for ways to escape suffering, a principle of Christian truth. Carl R. Trueman writes a profound explanation of the contemporary culture. *"Numerous thinkers have characterized the present age in which personal satisfaction --- understood as* PG 8 |BETHELCOLONY.ORG psychological contentment or well-being --- is the central concern. Philip Reiff dubbed it the "Therapeutic Society," but I'm shifting my language slightly, moving towards Leszek Kolakowski's preferred term, the Analgesic Society." (medications that relieve pain emotionally and physically) Both terms depict a society characterized by an increasing intolerance of suffering, on the grounds that suffering can fulfill no useful purpose."

Consider how far God's people in the Old Testament went with their futile religious longings. *"Saying to a tree, you are my father. And to a stone, you gave birth to me. For they have turned their back to me, and not their face."* (Jeremiah 2:27) Believing in "the God of your understanding" is still confessed today. Charles Spurgeon called this *"the wagon of modern thought."* 

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7) Consider further those who are naïve. "How long you naïve ones, will you love naiveté? For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. Turn at My rebuke. Surely, I will pour out My Spirit on you; I will make My words known to you." (Proverbs 1:22-23)

We read in the scriptures. "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also." (I John 2:22-23)

Have you lost your way in this life? Are you looking for a way out of your turmoil? Are you looking for truth? Jesus gives you the answer. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* (John 14:6) God loves you. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16) Now is the day of salvation. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God who went to the cross to die for your sins. Confess that you are a sinner. Ask Him to save you from your sins. He will.

Where the grace blows,

Pastor Don Loss

**Director of Counseling** 



Name	
Address	
City	StateZip
Phone	"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves,
II Chronicles 7:14	and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."
Prayer Request:	

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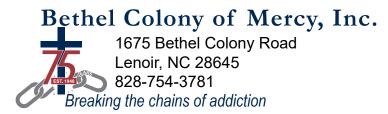
## **Bethel Lawn Care**

Bethel's Lawn Care service is part of our ongoing program and coincides with our mission statement - **teaching the deliverance message of Jesus Christ**. Part of our approach is daily work assignments. Work assignments are designed to teach men responsibility and stewardship. As we help more folks in our community the Lawn Care Service not only helps men with responsibility and stewardship but instills a Christian work ethic, provides a skill they can use to get a job, and teaches them to give back to their community and to Bethel.

To schedule your lawn care service, and to check prices, contact Zach Davis, Bethel Lawn Care Manager at 828-754-3781 ext.245 or opt.3 for lawncare







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