



Family News

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“A Bad Night for Atheists”

I was in my study one night a few weeks ago doing some reading when I received a call from my son Stewart who asked, “Dad, are you watching the home run derby at the all-star game?” I told him I was not. He said, “Turn it on. My boy Josh is getting ready to hit.”

I knew of whom he was speaking. Stewart had drafted Texas Ranger outfielder Josh Hamilton for his fantasy baseball team and has been following his progress all season. So I put down my book, turned on the tube, thinking, “This won’t take long.” Boy, was I wrong.

First of all, in these home run derbys, the hitter is allowed to pick his own pitcher. Hamilton had chosen a 71-year-old man. Years ago, he had promised Clay Council, his old American Legion coach back in Cary, North Carolina, that if he ever made a major league all-star game, he would invite him to be his pitcher. Now, before fifty-five thousand screaming New Yorkers in the last All-Star game in Yankee stadium, Hamilton and Council put on a stunning performance.

The old man put fastball after fastball over the plate perfectly and the left-handed Josh Hamilton hit homerun after homerun to all parts of Yankee stadium. Some of Hamilton’s homers traveled over 500 feet, magnificent moon shots arcing improbably into the stadium’s upper deck. The frenzied crowd screamed Hamilton’s name as he proceeded to hit an amazing twenty-eight homers, a record for the competition. The feat was so astonishing that the other major leaguers were standing on the sidelines applauding Hamilton’s performance, gaping at his hits like oversized, delighted children. His peers were like everyone else, awed by this young man’s talent. I have to say, though this is, at best, a pseudo-sports event, I found a tear of tribute coming to my eye. It was an unlooked-for moment of transcendence.

Why? you might ask. Very simple, really. Josh Hamilton’s story is one of dramatic redemption. This Raleigh high school phenom was the first baseball player taken in the 1999 draft. After a traffic accident sidelined him for an extended time, Hamilton started dabbling in alcohol and cocaine. Soon drink and drugs completely ruled his life. After repeatedly failing drug tests and flunking out of rehab facilities, he was banned from major league baseball in 2004. He spent his entire four million dollar bonus on drugs. His body wasted away. His wife kicked him out of their home, and his father told him that he was no longer welcome at their residence. Many a night he crashed among other addicts in a crack house. Hamilton finally found a place to sleep at his grandmother’s home, and it was there he began to encounter the reality of God. His grandmother convinced him that only a relationship with God would give him the power to break his dependency. She proved a prophet. Now, when asked to explain his remarkable recovery, Hamilton says simply, “It is a God thing.”

After Hamilton recorded his final out in the home run derby, ESPN baseball commentator John Kruk, generally an irreverent, free-spirited, soul was asked to

comment on what he had just witnessed. Kruk answered in almost reverential tones. He said, “Here is a kid who three years ago was strung out on drugs, banned from the game he loved. His life appeared headed for the dumpster. Then he finds God and through God’s power gains the strength to put his life on the right path and somehow, though he doesn’t swing a bat in a professional game for three years, manages to maintain his amazing talent and puts on a show like nothing I’ve ever seen.” Then Kruk added these words, “I gotta tell you, it’s a bad night for atheists.”

I’m sure his producer was screaming in Kruk’s earpiece, “You can’t say that on TV!” But he already had.

Josh Hamilton’s life stands as a testament to the reality of the power of God. His life stands as proof that truly God’s work is to resurrect life and dreams. A couple of years ago, just as he was beginning to reassemble his life, Josh Hamilton had a vivid dream that he was standing at the plate in Yankee Stadium, participating in the home run derby at the All-Star game. He had no idea that Yankee Stadium would be hosting the All Star game. He had no idea that he would be allowed back in baseball. But on July 14, 2008, that dream not only came true, it came true in such spectacular fashion that none who witnessed it will ever forget it.

Kruk was right. It was a bad night for atheists. But for those of us who cherish the redemptive strength of God’s grace, it was a night of celebration and a reminder that truly our Lord is a God of resurrection power.

A word from your pastor, Richard

Spinning Words into Gold

Have you ever wished that you could thread words together and construct a work that reflected a little of you and that spoke something of truth to others? On Wednesday evenings, this fall, you could have your chance! Beginning on September 10th and running through December 10th (with the exception of November 26th), you are invited to a writing class that will allow you to artfully play with words. The class meets from 6:45pm to 7:45 pm and the cost is \$15 per person. We ask that you call the church office to sign up (704.333.5428) or email Peggy@stjohnsbaptistchurch.org.

Our teacher for this class is Maureen Ryan Griffin author of several books but most notably, *Spinning Words into Gold: A Hands On Guide to the Craft of Writing*. Maureen “considers sharing her knowledge of and passion for writing both a joy and a privilege, believing, as author Julia Cameron says, that ‘we are meant to midwife dreams for one another.’” Maureen is an award-winning poet and non-fiction writer who has been featured on WFAE and in a number of publications around the country. She is the owner of Wordplay, a business that offers retreats, workshops and classes around writing. You can learn more about Maureen and her business at www.maureenryangriffin.com.

Sunday, August 10, 2008
Budget Receipts: \$11,113.00

Calendar - August 17-23

Sunday, August 17
 9:15..... Sunday School
 10:30..... Worship
Monday, August 18
 6:30..... Joy Class
Tuesday, August 19
 11:00..... Women on Mission Group
 7:00..... Personnel Committee
Wednesday, August 20
 6:00.... Global Missions Committee
 7:30..... Recreation Committee
Thursday, August 21
 11:00..... Uptown Ladies
 7:30..... Choir Rehearsal
Friday, August 22
 9:30..... Craft Class
Saturday, August 23

Recent Illnesses

At home: Pete Hopkins,
 Mary Jyachosky, Henry Engle
 Lake Park Rehab: Virginia Thompson
 Pineville Rehab: Kathleen Owens

Remember in Prayer

Dianne Green's mother (Michigan)
 Lisa Cook's mother (Charleston)

Sympathy

We extend sincere sympathy to Beth and Bob Warren and family in the death of Beth's father, Bob Utz, August 2, in Ohio.

State Missions Offering Goal \$3500

Supporting NC Baptist Men

The purpose of the NC Baptist Men is to share the love of Jesus by praying, giving, going and becoming actively involved in missions with their time and talents. They strive to make Christians aware of human needs and to provide opportunities to help meet those needs wherever they exist. Some of their ministries include: Disaster Relief, Medical / Dental, Baptist Builders and Agriculture. They support local projects as well as NC, USA and some outside the USA. They also support camps for youth in the state. They are currently building Red Springs Missions Camp which will house supplies for their projects and provide a meeting place for local residents and their missions. Visit their website, www.ncmissions.org, for more information. Envelopes for this offering are dated September 7.

Jane Winn

Financial Report July 31, 2008

	Current	Year to Date
Budget Required	\$ 87,895	\$659,214
Budget Received	\$ 87,298	\$551,835
Expenses	\$ 97,832	\$628,243
Surplus (Deficit)	\$(10,534)	\$(76,408)

It's Almost Time for Children's Choirs!

Beginning September 3

Join the Adventure!

5:30 pm

Wednesdays

Music Explorers (3's & 4's)

Music Makers (K & 1st Grade)

Young Musicians (2nd-5th Grade)

In Service

Sunday, August 17

Deacons: Don Hinson, Tom Injaychock, Ruth Jackson, Dale Johnson, Fredda Kimball, David Lewis, Kevin Lynch, Mike Miller, Melissa Millette, Jane Newman

Ushers: Mary Carnes, Marvin Carter, Arnold Philemon

Tellers: James Laney, Don Millsaps

Childcare Workers: Joy Jarrett, Carol Gargagliano, Kim Ray, Heather & Marty White, Shannon Rodden, Judy Godsey

Nurse on Duty: Monette Gossett



School Uniform Collection

School uniforms for Highland Renaissance Academy are now being collected. A rack has been provided in the gym foyer for the following items - khaki and navy pants, skirts and jumpers, white and navy shirts (with collars), for boys and girls, sizes 4-16.



Backpack Needs

The following items are needed for the backpacks that are prepared each week for the Highland Renaissance School program for needy children - juice boxes/pouches, pasta bowls, Vienna sausage, pudding cups, fruit cups, apple sauce, raisins, and snack crackers. A collection box is provided in the Collection Room in Lasater Hall.

Family Night Helpers

We are looking for three more people who would be willing to help in the kitchen at Family Night on a rotational basis. This would be a one time per month responsibility from about 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm during the months of September to May. If you are willing to help out, please contact the church office! Many thanks!

Volunteer Opportunity

Dove's Nest Continuing Care Division (at St. John's) is looking for volunteers! For more information, please contact Cerita Lindo at 704/332-3999, ext. 10.

The Wild Women of Bible Study

The wild women of Bible Study will be resuming their studies after a summer hiatus and invite you to join them for the fun. They will resume their studies on Thursday, September 11th at 11am in the church lounge. All women are invited to attend! The group will be discussing the book of II Samuel and you are asked to read the first chapter before coming. We hope to see you there!



Recycling the good stuff!

We are collecting new and used Sunday School literature, devotional books, Bibles, Christian magazines and books, cassettes, and video tapes to be shipped (at no charge to St. John's) to churches and ministries overseas.

A box has been placed in the Collection Area off of Lasater Hall.

Family Night

Begins September 3!



2008-2009 Family Night Dinner Reservation

Beginning September 3, 2008

Name(s) _____

Telephone _____

Please reserve:

_____ Adults _____ Children

Adults: \$6.75

Children 10 & under: \$3.75

Family Maximum: \$24

Permanent reservation _____

This date only _____

Signature _____

I will pay weekly. I agree to pay for this reservation if it is not cancelled by Monday at 2:00 p.m. each week.

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