



SUBMITTED PHOTO

PASTOR CHRIS GRAVNING AND WIFE BETHANY

## Rev. Gravning leads Macedonia Baptist

BY MILES LAYTON  
Staff writer

Let's offer a warm welcome to the new pastor at Macedonia Baptist Church along with his wife and young family.

Sure, Chris Gravning has been at the church's pulpit since January, but he's a fresh face at the storied Macedonia Baptist Church, one of the premier houses of worship near Rocky Hock.

Don't believe me about how prominent this church is? An ordained deacon, NC Representative Ed Goodwin, R-Chowan, is an active church member at Macedonia Baptist Church.

Worth noting, Gravning has big shoes to fill after taking the reigns from pastor Bob Young, who served the Lord for 32 years in the pulpit at Macedonia Baptist Church before retiring late last summer.

A few weeks back, Gravning offered a prayer for the media at the National Day of Prayer service held at the 1767 Courthouse. That's not fake news either.

Gravning is married to wife Bethany Gravning, who is originally from Sissonville, West Virginia, a small town outside the state's capital. By God's grace, they are raising two daughters - 6-year-old Lily and Riley, who will be three on June 19.

**Question: Who is this young whippersnapper leading the church in God's country?**

**Answer:** Gravning, 32, hails from Ringgold, GA, where he was a youth and children's pastor for six years at New Liberty Baptist Church. He finished his master's of divinity degree while serving there at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. Gravning said he has moved around quite a bit in his life, but he often says his home state is New Mexico, in the Albuquerque area. Also, somehow he ended up in Chattanooga, TN, to attend a small Christian college called Tennessee Temple University where he met his wife of almost 11 years there. They were married in the summer of 2008.

**Q: What inspired you to become a pastor?**

**A:** At the age of 14, I felt a distinct calling from the God to be a pastor. In that same summer, I understood my need for Jesus Christ alone to save me from my sins and to follow Him with my life. It was at the summer camp where I both surrendered my life to the Lord through faith and trust in Him for salvation and I also surrendered my life to make the Gospel that I had just heard and accepted known through preaching and pastoring.

**Q: Have you ever felt a oneness or close feeling of being one with the Lord?**

**A:** Personally, I can say that throughout my Christian life that there have been times of great joy and

exuberance in following Christ, but that there have also been dry days, weeks, and even months spiritually. I account this to my own sin and feebleness at times where I don't spend time with Him in prayer and in His Word, the Bible. I also know that I have defined my faith by those feelings at points, and am learning daily to rest in the fact that my faith is not determined by how I feel, but rather, it is found in my identity in Christ.

Regardless of the circumstances that I am in, whether brought on by myself or of no fault of my own, I am learning to be content in knowing that Jesus, the Son of God, died for me and rose again to give me the forgiveness of sin and a new life. I am His.

**Q: What is the best part about being a pastor?**

**A:** The best part of being a pastor is the distinct privilege of preaching Jesus by means of God's Word, the Bible, to the people of God every single week. I get to do that through preaching on Sunday mornings, but I also love worshipping Jesus alongside the church in our services and through every event and endeavor we do at Macedonia. Shepherding the people of Macedonia is privilege and joy.

**Q: Is there any one piece of Scripture that speaks to you?**

**A:** Ephesians 2:1-10 is on that always reminds me of the grace of God towards me. It always brings me exactly to where I need to focus, the grace of God through His Son Jesus Christ.

**Q: What is your favorite movie and book?**

**A:** My favorite movie series is Star Wars, with "The Empire Strikes Back" being my favorite of the whole saga. My favorite book is "Long Obedience in the Same Direction" by Eugene Peterson.

**Q: So far, what is it you like most about your church and Chowan County?**

**A:** What I like most about the church at Macedonia is the warmth, friendliness, love, and respect they have shown to me and my family. We have been immediately made a part of the family there at Macedonia. In regards to Chowan County and Edenton, I absolutely love the downtown area of Edenton with its quaint small-town feel. I love the restaurants there, especially the Coffee House.

Great coffee and a nice place to study when I want to get out of the office. The family and I also love the waterfront area with the nice park there for the kids to play. And finally, the people of Chowan County are some of the friendliest and most welcoming people I have met in my life. Many have recognized that we are new to the area and that I'm the new pastor and have been nothing but kind and excited that we are here.

## CHURCH BRIEFS

### BISHOP PRESIDES OVER CONFIRMATION



MILES LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

Bishop Robert Skirving of the Diocese of East Carolina presided over a confirmation ceremony Sunday afternoon at the historic St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Those confirmed were Cameron Hope, Keaton Hurdle, Bryson Perry, Sarah Ann Powell, Lee and Mary Margaret Snipes, Charlie Spruill and Lucy Spruill while those who reaffirmed their vows were Margot Filipowicz and Robin Held. Special mention was made of Peggy Anne Vaughan, who taught the confirmation classes to these Christian souls and many others throughout the years.

Submit church items to Miles Layton at [m Layton@ncweeklies.com](mailto:m Layton@ncweeklies.com). The deadline for submissions is noon on Friday for Wednesday publication.

#### Edenton United Methodist Church

Edenton United Methodist Church, 225 Virginia Road, has Sunday services at 8:45-10 a.m. in the Family Life Center and 11 a.m. in the sanctuary. Sunday School for all ages is at 10 a.m. each week. Nursery is available for all services. For information, call 482-3269.

#### First Baptist Church

A Fundraiser for Missions concert will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, May 31, at First Baptist Church, 300 W. Main St., Elizabeth City. The concert will feature Step of Faith and the First Baptist Church Choir with Cody Brinkley as emcee. A spaghetti supper will be held prior to the concert from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Eat in or take out. Concert tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door, while combo tickets for the meal and concert at \$15. Tickets for just the spaghetti supper are \$8. Tickets can be purchased at Christian Book Seller, Edenton; Family Care Pharmacy, Hertford; and Footprints Christian Resources, George's Optical, Kenyon Baily and First Baptist Church, all in Elizabeth City. For information, call 252-435-7722.

#### Faith Pentecostal Holiness Church

Join us for services at 10:45 a.m. Sundays and 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Faith Pentecostal Holiness Church is at 1614 Virginia Road.

#### Happy Home Church

Pastor Walter Byrum and the congregation of Happy Home Church invite you to join us in worship and fellowship on Sunday and Wednesday at 534 Happy Home Road in Tyner. For information, visit our website, [www.hhchurch.me](http://www.hhchurch.me).

#### Liberty in Yahweh Worship Center

Liberty in Yahweh Worship Center, 2862 Virginia Road, Tyner, invites you to join us for Saturday services, starting at 10 a.m. Call 214-629-9540 for information.

#### Macedonia Baptist Church

Come join us at Macedonia Baptist Church, 1004 Macedonia Road, Edenton. Services are scheduled as follows: Sunday - Sunday School, 10 a.m., Worship Service, 11 a.m., Evening Bible Study, 6:30 p.m., Youth, 5:45 p.m., and Children in Action, 6 p.m.; Wednesday - Prayer Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Youth, 7 p.m.

#### Matthew 25:35-36 Ministries

Meal, box food, clothing, diapers, formula, new children's coats are offered the second Saturday of each month starting at 2 p.m. at 1211 Beech Spring Road, Tyner. Bring picture ID and WIC card (for diapers and formula).

#### Shalom International Church

Shalom International Church at 701 A. North Broad St., hosts Sunday prayer from 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Sunday morning prayer service starts at 10:30 a.m.; Wednesday intercessory prayer from 6:30-7:30 p.m.; Wednesday midweek empowerment starts at 7:30 p.m.

#### St. Anne Catholic Church

Weekend Mass Schedule - Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m. (Church Hall) - Sunday: 8:30 a.m. (Church Hall); 10 a.m. (Church); 12:30 p.m., Spanish (Church). Weekday Mass Schedule - Monday: 8:30 a.m., Communion Service (Church); Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 5:30 p.m., Mass (Church); Wed-

nesday: 5 p.m., Rosary (Church); Friday: 8:30 a.m., Mass (Church). All Souls Mission Mass Schedule (Columbia) - Tuesday and Saturday: 7 p.m., bilingual Mass. All are welcome! For additional information, call the parish office (482-2617).

#### St. Luke Disciples of Christ

In remembrance of our loved ones, St. Luke Disciples Church, 1215 Vann St., (Paradise Road) Edenton, will have a Memorial Day Service at 1:30 p.m. May 26. Also, come and enjoy fellowship with us each second and fourth Sunday. The church's pastor is Elder Ronnie Young.

#### St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Please join us this summer for Sunday morning worship at 8 a.m. or 10 a.m. Nursery is provided at the 10 o'clock service. Breakfast is served in the parish hall at 9 a.m. St. Paul's is at 101 W. Gale St. in Edenton. For information, call 482-3522 or visit [www.stpauls-edenton.org](http://www.stpauls-edenton.org). All are welcome.

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