

Halloween

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from the church itself.

"It really began as a way in which the Medieval church affirmed that good was stronger than evil," said Leonard, the founding dean of the WFU School of Divinity and an ordained Baptist minister. "Often in the Medieval church, All Hallows Eve was a way of recognizing that ... there were forces of darkness in the universe and they were to be confronted with mockery and sort of staring the devil down."

In the early days, people burned effigies of Satan and dressed up like evil spirits on All Hallows Eve, the night before All Saints Day, an important holiday in the church calendar that was widely observed in that time, Leonard explained.

"It was, early on, a day of reflection and a day of confronting evil," he stated. "It was sort of a package deal with All Saints Day."

All Saints Day, officially the Solemnity of All Saints in the Roman Catholic church, is sometimes also called All Hallows. The Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant traditions still mark the holiday with reverent services today, said Leonard, a native of Fort Worth, Texas.

The tradition of trick-or-treating also has Christian roots, Leonard said.

"In the Middle Ages, people would go door to door - often in costume - and beg for alms (religiously-motivated acts of goodwill). That was a way of celebrating goodness," he explained. "Sometimes, they would receive the food and then the people that got the 'treats' would promise to pray for the giver's dead relatives."

Leonard has fond memories of going trick-or-treating in homemade costumes as a kid, armed with grocery sacks to "grab all the candy we could." But somewhere along the way, Halloween has lost its innocence, he says.

Bishop James Hash Sr., the longtime pastor of St. Peter's Church and World Outreach Center, agrees. St. Peter's is one of several churches in the local area that offer Fall Festivals as an alternative to traditional Halloween celebrations. The Family Fall Festival and Children's Trunk or Treat, which was held yesterday at the church's massive campus on Old Lexington Road, has been a tradition at St. Peter's for more than a decade. Hash sees it as a way of keeping children and youth grounded in the Christian tradition while still allowing them to enjoy the positive aspects of the holiday, such as candy and costumes.

"I like it because the kids enjoy it," said the father of



Rev. Joseph Nance is president of the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity.

four. "We are a family-oriented church, meeting the needs of the whole man ... therefore, the children play a major part in our success."

While he doesn't specifically discourage his members from participating in other Halloween activities, Hash said he always cautions his flock to be on the lookout for unbenevolent forces in the world.

"I continually ask my people to oppose evil," he said.

Hash's son and pastoral assistant, James Hash Jr., said the goodness of the holiday can sometimes be overshadowed by the negative things that also take place on that day.

"There are sacrifices that take place on Halloween, which we don't agree with, but at the same time, you've got kids going door to door, getting candy," Hash Jr. stated. "That's what we embrace - the fun and the good part of it."

Rev. Joseph Nance, president of the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity, said the Conference itself does not have an official position on celebrating Halloween, but instead leaves the decision to its individual members and their congregations.

Nance says he and his wife look forward to getting trick-or-treaters at their door and even trick-or-treating

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Car assistance program hits the \$1 million mark

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Family Services' Ways to Work program has reached \$1 million in auto loans closed. Ways to Work provides families with challenging credit histories access to small, low-interest loans - the vast majority of which are used to purchase or repair a used car. Family Services, with support from United Way of Forsyth County and other funders, has been offering the Ways to Work program to families in Forsyth County for nearly a decade.

Family Services has connected more than 250 families with loans that provide transportation and other essentials for holding down a job and moving forward. Nationwide, Ways to Work has helped more than 30,000 families move toward financial stability and an improved quality of life. Family Services hosts one of 53 loan offices in Ways to Work's nationwide network. Rapidly expanding, Ways to Work has added 25 new loan offices since 2010.



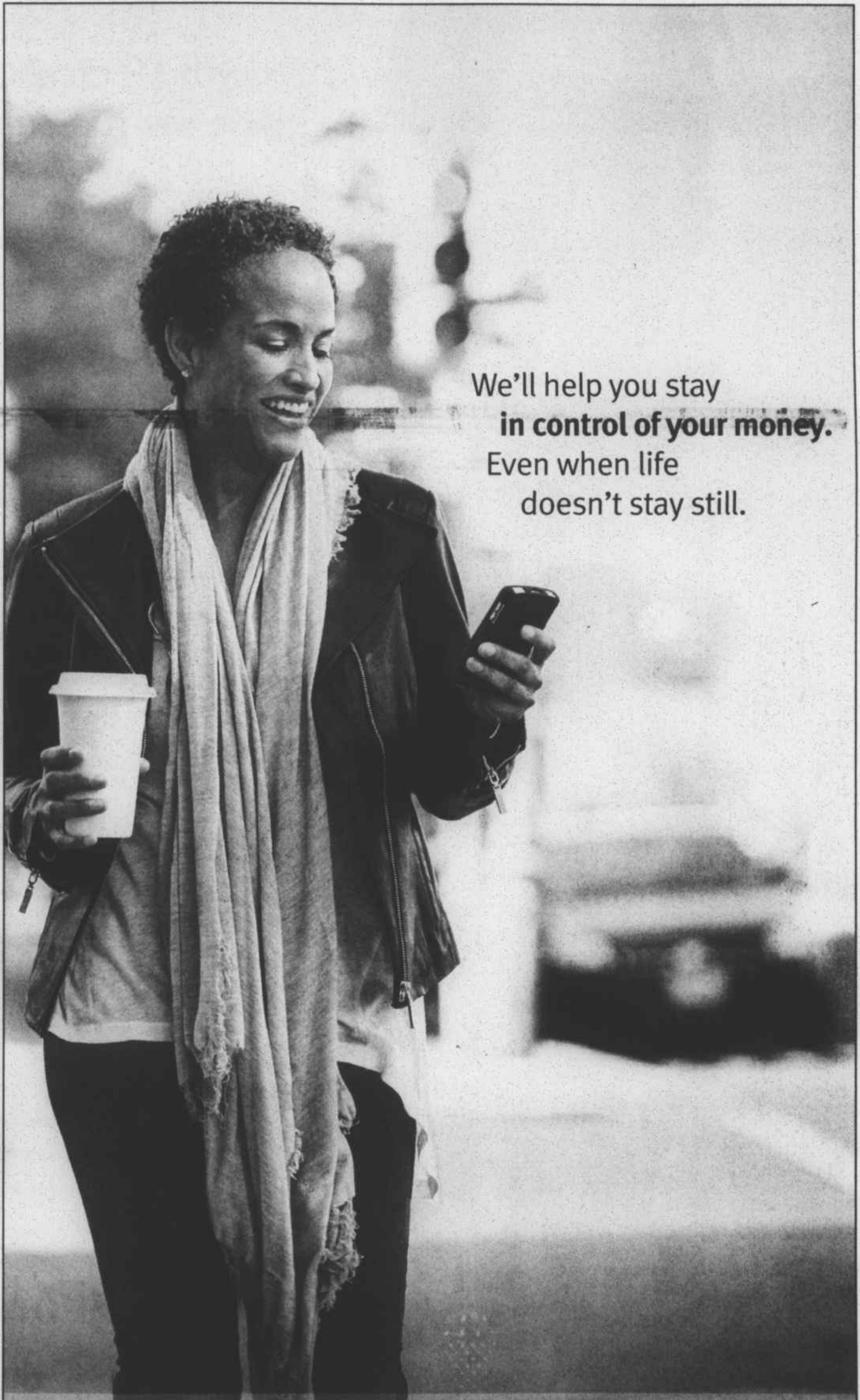
To be considered for a Ways to Work loan through Family Services, individuals must reside in Forsyth County, be at least 18, have been employed for the previous six months at a minimum of 20 hours per week and have a dependent under the age of 17 in their custody.

"Ways to Work is a program we believe in and one that is filling a vital need in our community," said Al Renna, president and chief executive officer of Family Services, Inc. "It's exciting to witness the impact of this program on the lives of so many in our community. We are truly helping families achieve their dreams."

In addition to reaching the \$1 million milestone, Family Services received national recognition in the Most Improved program and Premier program categories at Ways to Work's annual conference. Family Services received a \$5,000 grant in recognition of these accomplishments.

with their grandchildren. He believes celebrating the holiday at the church presents a good opportunity to reach the younger generation.

"We've got to be supportive of our kids," he commented. "...We ought to have programs and stuff centered around the community. If we don't do that, they'll go somewhere else."



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