

# Here I stand

"Here I stand, God help me!" These famous words were a declaration of unshakeable faith as Martin Luther stood before the Emperor and the religious elite of his day. For years Martin Luther had struggled with the church's teaching that the church establishment (the Roman Catholic Church) and the Pope possessed unlimited power and authority. This included the belief that the Pope and his instructions surpassed the authority of the Holy Scriptures!

Among the many attempts of the establishment to reinforce this belief was the restricted access to the scriptures. Only the "professionals" of the day were considered worthy or qualified to read them, much less interpret them!

Only after becoming a monk and devoting his life to prayer, service and the study of scripture did Martin Luther come to the realization that salvation of one's soul was an act of grace through faith in the death of Jesus Christ and by that alone! Contrary to the centuries-old teaching that salvation could be granted through good works, which included giving financially to the church, Martin Luther challenged the authority of the church.

The then recent invention of the printing press became a crucial component of Martin Luther's message being spread throughout the known world. Soon the average person had

the information necessary to develop an informed opinion about issues including the ones which Martin Luther was championing.

After he posted his 95 theses (bullet points) on why he questioned the status quo of the day and the unlimited authority of the church, a chain of events was set in motion that for the next three years would challenge and reshape the thought process of how people believed and thus pursued salvation from their sins.

As one might expect, Martin Luther's challenge to the then-corrupt and greedy religious establishment angered many who either held sincerely to the aforementioned practices or who were the participants and the recipients of the manipulative and controlling system. We can gain some valuable insights and learn some very practical lessons from Luther's life.

We should never put our faith and allegiance into a manmade system including a religious one.

We should never take for face value what someone says as truth (even religious leaders) without examining it against the truth of scripture.

We should constantly and sys-

tematically study scripture ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth to us.

We should be willing and able to communicate (written and orally) as to why we believe what we believe based upon scripture.

Martin Luther had been threatened, officially excommunicated from the very church he once was a part of and now possibly faced death if found guilty by the prevailing establishment as being a heretic.

So as he stood before the Emperor and hundreds of others, he staked his name, his reputation, his social status, his faith and his life squarely on the solid foundation of the Word of God. His life's work was a pivotal point in human history and particularly as it relates to how we view scripture.

The movement he began, which was neither intentional nor for personal gain, became known as the Reformation. Like Martin Luther, when we choose to live a quiet dedicated life of service to Christ and to others, we influence far more people than we ever could have imagined.

May we live a life based on the truth of scripture so we to can stand unafraid and unashamed and say, Here I stand, God help me!

*Pastor Jay Rivenbark is Pastor of Open Door Church - Bertie Campus. He can be reached via email at jay@visitopendoor.com.*



PASTOR  
JAY RIVENBARK  
Be  
Still

# Grounded

Okay... I made the move! Yes, I went to the store and bought the plants, potting soil, Miracle Gro and all that is needed to get into the groove with porch pots and garden spots.

It seems I wasn't alone in this feat. The aisles of the greenhouse area were flooded with guys and gals making their picks of the popular plants - Gerber Daisies, Geraniums and the like.

Next, I made my way to the vegetable packs and chose my favorites; red bell pepper, sweet banana pepper, grape tomatoes, Better Boy's, and so on. Then it was off to the house to get these tender plants into the ground.

My first move was to clear the garden of weeds that had made their way up through my pine straw covering for the winter. After weed removal I spread a little fertilizer and mixed it all in leaving a nice base of turned black Rocky Hock sand in which to plan these hopefuls.

I gently removed them one by one and placed them in my garden and in the designated spots and pots. When it was all done I set the water hose to mist and made sure all of them had an ample supply of water to get started on their journey.

I couldn't help but notice the tabs on each one, telling me the number of days in which I could expect delicious fruits from my labor. We shall see.

With the right sun, water, weed removal and the like we should be in fine business especially since we juice them with a little Miracle Gro along the way.

My plants in the garden and in the pots are grounded well. That makes me think of the importance of myself being grounded in the Word of God as I walk out this journey as a Christian. Paul prayed for this very thing for the Ephesian believers and for us as well.

Ephesians 3:14-19 ESV  
14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

17 so that Christ may dwell in

your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Paul fully expected the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen the believers. And because they were "rooted and grounded" they would exceed anyone's expectation of walking in the fullness of God. They would grow. They would produce fruit.

Like them, let us make every effort to be grounded in the Word and nurtured through connection with other believers in fellowship. Have a great week, and consider planting your own little garden.

*Dr. Wallace Phillips is Sr. Pastor at Carpenter's Shop International Church in Ahoskie. Join them for worship this Sunday at 10 a.m. at 903 South Catherine Creek Road in Ahoskie, or join them on the web at csicministries.com for a livestream event.*



THE REV.  
WALLACE  
PHILLIPS  
Carpenter's Tools

**THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE**

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance. The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.*

PSALM 33: 12-15

MEDIEVAL WOODCUT FROM "THE STORY OF MELUSINE: THE EARL OF POITIERS' FEAST"

**BIBLE TRIVIA**  
by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Luke in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. What just and devout man held the baby Jesus when Mary and Joseph presented Him at the temple? Cyrenius, Ham, Simeon, Zara
3. Which of these books comes before the other three in the Old Testament (KJV)? Nahum, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Daniel
4. What sign sealed God's promise not to destroy the earth ever again by a flood? Solar eclipse, Rainbow, Full moon, Ocean wave
5. From Proverbs 29 what does the fear of man bring? A snare, Redemption, Love of life, Death
6. Whose daughter found the infant Moses in the river? David, Pharaoh, Solomon, Timothy

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Simeon; 3) Ecclesiastes; 4) Rainbow; 5) A snare; 6) Pharaoh

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's book "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in stores and online.

# Special Events

Church announcements are published each week in the Bertie Ledger-Advance. The deadline to submit news items for this listing is 10 a.m. each Monday. Submissions may be emailed to [twhite@ncweeklies.com](mailto:twhite@ncweeklies.com).

## May 8-9

**Revival Services Planned**  
**AHOSKIE** - Revival Services are continuing May 8-9 at Calvary Missionary Baptist Church.

Services begin nightly at 7 p.m. On Wednesday and Thursday the guest speaker will be the Rev. Taurean Walston of Oxley Hill Baptist Church in Merry Hill.

Special music includes the Calvary Male Chorus (Wednesday) and Oxley Hill Choir (Thursday).

The church is located at 600 Catherine St. in Ahoskie.

The Pastor, Dr. Jerryl V. Moody and the congregation invite the public to attend.

## May 11

**Rescheduled Concert**

**WINDSOR** - The Four Stars of Ahoskie and The Gospel Five of Oak City will be in concert at 6 p.m. Saturday, May 11 at St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church.

The Pastor, the Rev. Kennedy L. Barber, and congregation invite the public to attend.

**Youth Fundraiser**

**AHOSKIE** - The youth of Carpenter's Shop International Church will host a fine arts fundraiser Saturday, May 11 at Hwy 55.

Tickets for a pancake and sausage breakfast are available online at [www.csicministries.com](http://www.csicministries.com). They are \$7 each.

Breakfast will be served by the youth from 7:30-10 a.m.

## May 12

**Mother's Day Service**

**HAMILTON** - Mother's Day will be observed at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, May 12 at Sycamore Missionary Baptist Church of Hamilton.

Elders Shirley Ebron of New Fellowship Missionary Baptist in Robersonville will be the guest speaker. The John Andrews Baptist Church Choir of Oak City will provide music.

The church is located at 310 East Main St. in Hamilton.

The Pastor, Alvin Rawlings Sr., and congregation invite the public to attend.

## May 15-17, 19

**Usher Anniversary**

**JAMESVILLE** - The Usher Board Anniversary will be observed May 15-17 and May 19 at Mt. Carmel Church of Christ.

Services begin nightly at 7:30 p.m. The guest speakers include: Eldress Maggie Mensah (Wednesday), Minister Neil Lilley (Thursday) and Eldress Maggie Mensah (Friday).

The services will end at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 19 with Bishop William T. Collins closing the anniversary.

The church is located at 1185 South Stewart St. in Jamesville. The congregation invites the public to attend.

## May 18

**Gospel Concert**

**BEAR GRASS** - Curtis Hyler and Jubilation will present a gospel concert at 6 p.m. Saturday, May 18 at Sweet Home Church of Christ.

A love offering will be taken.

The church is located at 2475 Sweet Home Rd. in Bear Grass. The congregation invites the public to attend.

## May 19

**Church Anniversary**

**WINDSOR** - The 79th Church Anniversary will be celebrated at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 19 at St. James Church of Christ (DOC).

The guest speaker will be Pastor Ronald Spruill Sr. of Speller's Chapel Church of Christ. His choir and congregation will accompany him. Dinner will be served after the 11 a.m. service. The Pastor, Maggie Mensah, and congregation invite the public to attend.

## Ongoing

**Women's Ministry**

**WINDSOR** - The Women's Ministry meets from 6-8 p.m. on the second Friday of each month at Cedar Landing Missionary Baptist Church.

The meetings include fun activities, free food, door prizes and lots of love.

*You're Invited*

**RIBBON CUTTING CERIMONY**

Light refreshments

**RECOVERY JOURNEY SERVICES**  
WALKING BESIDE YOU TOWARDS YOUR JOURNEY OF SUCCESS

May 11th @ 11:00am  
126 E Granville street  
Windsor NC