



# Pleasant Green *United Methodist Church*

PleasantGreenUMC.org



## ***Roots & Branches***

March 2015

### **The Cost of Discipleship**

*Luke 9:57-62*

**Dr. Jesse Brunson**

Many in the church will insist that salvation is free. And it is, for the word will affirm this truth. In the Old Testament we find this word:

*Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy. (Isaiah 55:1-2)*

The prophet is reminding the people of God that God's love is free. In this text the prophet is reminding us that God offers us his love and it will not cost us anything, except to accept it with our whole heart, soul and mind.

And he repeats this teaching in the New Testament when he says,

*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that whosoever believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

The Bible says he gave his son, it did not say he charged for it. The word said *he gave*. In other words, salvation is free because Jesus gave his life for all people to have a right relationship with our heavenly Father.

Now I believe that we all can agree that salvation is free and it is easy enough to obtain. All we have to do is confess with our lips and believe in our hearts and we can be saved. (Romans 10:8-9)

But the real problem comes in when we are asked to follow Jesus. For it cost something to follow where Jesus is leading us, for we can't go to where he is leading without giving up something and being committed. We have got to put aside selfishness, envy, strife, and jealousy to go with Jesus.

In the hymn *Where He Leads Me* (written by E. W. Blandy) we find these words:

*I can hear my Savior calling, Take thy cross and follow, follow me.  
Where He leads me I will follow, I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way.  
He will give me grace and glory, And go with me, with me all the way.*

It cost something to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and to follow his teachings. Even in a natural sense, I have been asked to follow someone to a destination in my car. I had to buy gas to get there, even if I was following behind them. When I arrived, I sometimes had to spend more money if they were not taking care of the expenses.

Well, the same is true in the spiritual sense. We can't be a disciple of Jesus without counting up the cost, because it will cost something in return. In Luke 9:57-62 Jesus has asked three people to count the cost of discipleship and follow him. The first person made a public declaration to follow Jesus wherever he goes. But Jesus said to him I have no world security and if you go with me you will be subject to the goodness of the people of God. The second one he asked to follow him wanted to go back and bury his father. And the third wanted time to go back and say good bye to his family.

Often in the church we are not willing to follow because we are not sure if the person that we are following is leading us the right way. But in order to be lead, we must be willing to invest some time in becoming a leader ourselves. Often we have the less knowledgeable person trying to lead persons with a stronger relationship with God. Every church leader must be willing to study God's word to become more familiar with it so they can help the pastor lead God's people. Both clergy and laity must be leaders in offering the word of God to God's people. But what happens is that many want to lead where they are not prepared to go themselves.

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Yes discipleship is costly. And we must be willing to go where God is leading us. But when we follow Jesus there are so many blessing we will receive along the way. In his sermon, *The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God*, John Wesley says that “being a disciple is like a child being born into the world. He says that a child born feels that air that sustains him or her all around and it feels its lungs filling up with that air. And the eyes of the child are open to the world around him or her and the ears that could not hear the sounds of life now perceive so many sounds of God’s creation.”

Now if we follow John Wesley’s logic, we can conclude that the more we follow Jesus and study his word the more we grow in his grace. As we follow, the more air we breathe, the more light we see, and the sounds of the presence of God we experience; the more of God’s blessings we will be able to share with others.

When we follow Jesus it is costly and sometimes it requires more sacrifice than we are willing to give. We might have to give up some personal hopes and dreams; sometimes traditions of family; sometimes certain friends are less priority. But the value of our relationship with Jesus Christ is worth the cost.

According to Luke 9, when some people saw Jesus had set his sight on Jerusalem, they decided they would not follow him any longer. People are usually alright to follow as long as God is not making us give up our comfort zones and lets us hang with friends. If God lets us keep our life the same and just worship him on Sunday every now and then, we can live with following him and we are alright.

However, when he wants us to get our hands dirty doing things that we are not accustomed to, he is asking too much. Some believe they are above some things God asks of us. They believe they are special and not suppose to be doing servant type work of any kind. For I am somebody, this is what we say to ourselves.

Is the cost of discipleship too high? Is following Jesus really worth it? You decide.

Blessings; Pastor Jesse

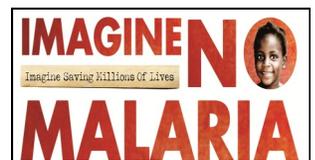
Lenten blessings from Donna Banks, District Superintendent...

**Blow the horn in Zion: give a shout on my holy mountain! Let all the people of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. Joel 2:1**

During this time of the year, I remember growing up on the Gulf Coast and enjoying the season of Mardi Gras—the parades, the beads, saltwater taffy, and moon pies! We looked forward to Fat Tuesday, a day off from school and a day full of celebration with parades until midnight. For most people, Fat Tuesday marked the end of Mardi Gras. For Christians, Fat Tuesday was the day of celebration and eating rich foods before the ritual of fasting during the Lenten season.

During this season of preparation, self-reflection and repentance, we seek to literally “turn around” and re-align our lives to God. We may choose to “give up” things or “take on” new life-giving practices, helping us rid ourselves of distractions and our own selfish desires. In doing so, we seek to grow as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

During the last Annual Conference, the North Carolina Conference established a goal of \$1,000,000 to be raise by June 2015 for **Imagine No Malaria**. The goal for the Corridor District is \$100,000 or \$1,000/church. During the middle of Lent, the Corridor District will host the **Skeeter Run** to support this effort. The season of Lent would be a good time to continue the journey with weekly themes embodying the spirit of Lent:



**Give Up Indifference ~ Give Up Excess ~ Take Up the Charge ~ Take Up the Challenge  
Lift Up the Hurting ~ Lift Up the Healed ~ Look Up to Overcome**

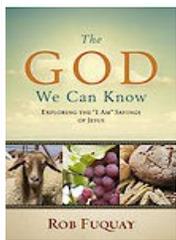


The district Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NCCUMCCorridorDistrict>) will focus on Imagine No Malaria during the Lenten Season and invite you to join our Facebook page to receive those updates. Our church has the opportunity to help eliminate deaths from malaria and save thousands of lives. “It is possible to give without loving,” said John Wesley, “but it is impossible to love without giving.” **Imagine No Malaria** is our opportunity to respond to our calling—to show our love through our generous gifts.

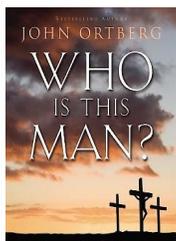
**SKEETER RUN SATURDAY, MARCH 21 ~ 8:00 AM ~ C.M. Herndon Park, Durham  
nccumc.org/skeeterruns \$20 fee to participate**

## Join a Sunday School Class!

### Pastor Jesse's Class and Wednesday Morning Bible Study: *The God We Can Know* by Rob Fuquay



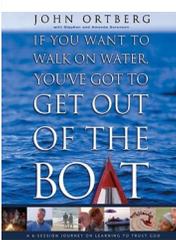
The God We Can Know is a 7week study designed to explore the "I am" sayings of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. Perfect for Lent, this series will help you find and form an answer to the most essential question in the Christian faith, "Who do you say I am?" One by one, Jesus's statements grab our imagination, reveal more about his identity and purpose, and connect us to the God of Moses, who spoke the first "I am." These significant, yet ordinary images (bread, light, shepherd, vine, and more) give us insightful ways to experience Jesus and point us to a God who wants to be known. The DVD, in the Holy Land, allows you to see the places where Jesus stood while disclosing his true identity



### Hearts & Hands Class

#### *Who Is This Man?* by John Ortberg

John Ortberg reveals how Jesus made an inescapable influence on our world and you will learn how you can make one too. Who Is This Man? illustrates how Jesus influence has swept over history, bringing his inspiration to the evolution of art, science, government, medicine, and education. And how his vision for us to lead lives of dignity, compassion, forgiveness, and hope continues to inspire and challenge humanity today.



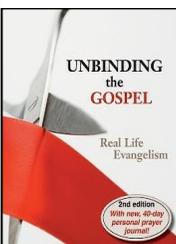
### Clyde Walker Class

#### *If You Want to Walk on Water, You Have to Get Out of the Boat* by John Ortberg

You're One Step Away from the Adventure of Your Life

"Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water." - Simon Peter

Peter may have been the first one out of the boat, but Jesus' invitation to walk on water is for us all. But walk on water? What does that mean? Walking on water means facing our fears and choosing not to let fear have the last word discovering and embracing the unique calling of God on our lives, experiencing the power of God to accomplish what we would not be capable of doing on our own.



### *Unbinding the Gospel* - All are invited to join this class!

Beginning March 1, the Seekers & The Green Room Classes meet in the Chapel at 9:45am.

*Unbinding the Gospel* is a book for church groups to study. It's a book for pastors who want the truth about the state of our churches. Reese presents a clear-spoken, hopeful vision for a future and gives us a way to get there without gimmicky formulas, but hand in hand with God.

Readers describe *Unbinding the Gospel* as "a powerpack," "witty," "realistic and hopeful," "humble and genuinely spiritual." "It's so fun and easy to read, but I've been thinking about these ideas all week!" *Unbinding the Gospel* is based on a four-year research project on superb evangelism. Martha Grace Reese, author, pastor, and lawyer, interviewed more than 1,000 people in some of the most successful evangelistic congregations in the country.



### Kids Connect Food Bank Day ~ April 11<sup>th</sup>

Mission: "To help all grow in knowing and loving God."

9:00 - Bible Story

9:25 - Board Church Van for Food Bank

10-12:00 - Kid's Day at Food Bank\*

12:05 - Board van for return trip

12:30 - 1:15 - Lunch at PGUMC

-Sub sandwich bar / Fruits & Veggies

1:30 - Parent pick-up

\* CLOSED-TOED shoes required/ bring at least 2 cans of food



### *Children will experience service in the community.*

Our goal is to incorporate fun faith-based activities with service to our community. For this event, we will visit the Durham Food Bank. This is a wonderful way for them to learn about the Food Bank and the issue of hunger in our community.

### *Children will learn to interact with others.*

During our visit, the children will tour the Food Bank and participate in an age-appropriate food sorting project. They will work with others to help repackage bulk food items into family-size portions.

### *Parents will get a few hours of free time!*

Enjoy a quiet morning, take a nap, or just relax while we have your children!!

From the Prayer Team...



## Love for those who Live Chaotic Lives

*Matthew 11:29 Take My Yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Many of us believe we lead chaotic lives; way too busy for our own good. We end up feeling tired and frantic, not knowing how to finish all we have promised to do. There is little energy left over for thought and problem solving when the flat tire happens on our way to work, our child has a fever and can't go to school, or the furnace goes out in the middle of freezing weather. Thankfully, these overwhelming periods come and go, giving us a reprieve from time to time. However, some individuals and families live continuously on the edge, going from crisis to crisis. There is never a reprieve, as money is always short; family members are in trouble with the law, drugs or health; tempers are high and support for family and friends is short. Living in crisis becomes a way of life; the normal and expected. It seems hard to find a way to the peace and contentment promised by God.

Whether we are in a temporary period of crisis or it is ongoing and unrelenting, we may need others to pray for us. If you are in a frantic state now, take in the prayer below. Let the words wash over you and know that others are praying for you. Also know that God answers prayers. He is listening. In Him, there is peace, comfort and guidance.

*Heavenly Father, We lift up everyone who is struggling with trouble in their lives; and, everyone who is living in crisis and chaos. Help them know that you want other things for them. You want for them the gentle yoke of your Son; with peace and contentment. Open their hearts, minds and souls to your compassion and guidance. Help them know that your people here on earth are willing to help. Fill their hearts with the knowledge that they are not alone. And guide them to the place where you are first in their lives. We love them, Lord; and, know that you love them, too. Let these requests be, in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

### **March Prayer Ministry Meeting**

The March meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm; back to its usual time. Come join us as we prepare our hearts for the Lenten Season through prayer; anticipating Jesus' ultimate display of love through his sacrifice on the cross. We are also planning an exciting workshop and other activities to strengthen our prayer lives.

**PGUMC Kid's  
Worship  
Volunteers Are  
Needed!**



**Sign up in the Narthex.**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**A Walk for Hunger  
April 26**

**Sponsor sheets  
are available in  
the Narthex.**



From the Membership and Hospitality Committee....

### **Membership and Hospitality Committee**

An exciting new ministry has started, focusing on our church family. Here is the charge to the committee from the Connectional Table: *This team's focus is to keep membership records, communicate with active and non-active members and to develop avenues to invite others into the mission and ministries of Pleasant Green UMC.* Members of the committee include Pastor Jesse, Jo Anna, Terri Leonard, Crandall Anderson, Megan Stocking, Lyle Miller and Susan Adams, Membership Secretary; with Kathy DuLaney and Gail Pruett, Co-chairs. The group started with two strategies; one is to invite the youth group to brainstorm ways to invite and involve other youth to participate; the other is to reach out to members we have not seen in a while, after reviewing our membership roster.

If you know of friends and neighbors you haven't seen at church, take a moment to invite them back. Saying, "We miss you" or "I hope to see you next Sunday" will go a long way to show that you care.

# pleasant green youth group



## March Youth Calendar

Friends, Fellowship, Games and Lessons

Sunday School 10 am

**ELEVATE at 5:00 - 7:30 pm ~ March 1, 8, 15, 22**

**Upcoming Mission Trip to Birmingham, AL - June 14 - 19... for current 6-12 graders**

100% free! All you need is spending money. Details forthcoming... contact Richard Cassidy.

The members of the youth group are searching for yards to rake, windows to clean, gutters to clean, and all kinds of outdoor work. We will also do tasks around the church, if needed. Sign up on the youth web page or check out the Youth Yard Work box in the Narthex at Pleasant Green United Methodist Church. All jobs are free and done with love. We do accept donations to the Youth Group for other service projects and youth trips. Sign up: [www.pg youthwork.org](http://www.pg youthwork.org)



## Elevate Food Drive for OCIM!

There is a collection box in the youth room. We love your donations!

from Richard Cassidy...

In the spirit of the incredible milestone Coach K reached today (hurt to say that), PGUMC Elevate sort of did tonight as well. At least during all of my time being associated with the youth program, we have never eclipsed 20+... we had 21 in attendance tonight!



Thank you for your continued support of our youth program.

from SPRC...

## Education & Youth Minister Coordinator

The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is seeking applications for the position of Education and Youth Ministry Coordinator. If you are interested in applying for this position, please contact Van McCay (SPRC Chair) at [vmccay@nc.rr.com](mailto:vmccay@nc.rr.com) or Dr. Jesse Brunson at [drjbrunson@aol.com](mailto:drjbrunson@aol.com)



## 30 Hour Famine Event Rescheduled for March 20 - 21

Our youth will raise money for the 30 Hour Famine as well as be educating themselves about the world outside of their own in which more than 870 million people are hungry. The youth will end their fundraising time by actually going hungry themselves for 30 hours and during that time also participate in a service project.

**The Pleasant Green Youth have raised \$24,900 for 30 Hour Famine from 2003—2014!**

Please join with the youth in this great cause. Let's help make the world different!

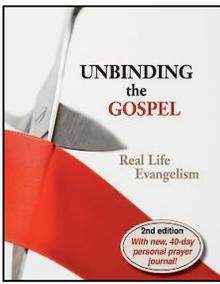
The Youth collected \$ 314.00 on Sunday, February 1 for OCIM at the Souper Bowl of Caring fundraiser!



Methodist Home for Children Sunday Offering \$343

To donate you may see a youth or go to the church website: [www.pleasantgreenumc.org](http://www.pleasantgreenumc.org) and click on 30 Hour Famine.





## Pleasant Green is *Unbinding the Gospel!*

The theme of the first 2015 Connectional Table meeting on January 24th, was “Connecting in Ministry”. At this meeting, Pastor Brunson brought *Unbinding the Gospel* to the group, and we decided to embark on an 8-week study, to learn how to better connect with one another (as members of PGUMC), how to better connect with the community and how to better reach those who do not yet know Jesus Christ. We are really talking about effective “faith sharing” or “evangelism”.

### **Book: *Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism***

This book discusses the research of Martha Grace Reese, MDiv, JD, and her colleagues-- they found churches that are growing despite the majority of mainline churches seeing declines in membership. These churches are doing effective evangelism. Researchers looked at what motivates their faith sharing (evangelism), as well as the honest, loving relationships that exist within these churches (relationships with God, within the congregation, and with people outside of the church). Lastly, this book will help us to implement these learned strategies at our own church, and help Pleasant Green grow in its faith and in its membership by further reaching out to the community and those who do not yet know Jesus Christ.

Contact Anna LaBarre ([annalabarre@gmail.com](mailto:annalabarre@gmail.com) / (919) 619-4652) or Jo Anna if you're interested in participating and if you'd like to order a book (\$10).

**When and Where:** We will meet in small groups during each of the 8 weeks to discuss the assigned chapter(s), beginning **March 1st**. There are three opportunities to participate in the small group discussions:

**Sundays:** 9:45 am ~ Chapel **Tuesdays:** 6:30 pm ~ Parlor **Thursdays:** 10:00 am ~ Parlor

\*You are welcome to attend whichever group meeting best suits your schedule each week; however, we ask that you sign up for the group that you think you'll attend most often for us to gauge participation.

**The sign-up sheet is in the narthex.**

*We will meet as a whole group at the end to discuss our small group findings and talk about moving forward, implementing the strategies in the book (date TBA).*

**Palm Sunday - March 29**

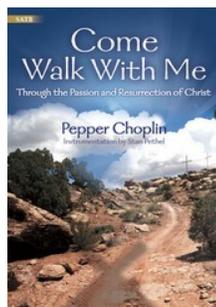
**The Chancel Choir**

**11:00 Worship**

***Come Walk With Me***

***Through the Passion & Resurrection of Christ***

**by Pepper Choplin**



**Fundraisers for the  
El Salvador Mission Trip**

**~ July 22 - 30 ~**



*The El Salvador Mission Team appreciates your generosity! Please take an envelope from the tree in the Narthex, donate the amount on the envelope and place in the offering plate.*

**The Mission Team thanks everyone for their support of the Valentine bake sale held on Feb. 8th.**

**We raised \$616.00 for the mission trip.**

**Please join us on Sunday, March 22 for a**

**Taco Salad Lunch**

**after 11:00 Worship Service**

**\$8.00 per person**

**Includes all toppings (chicken & beef) & drink.**

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**Saturday, April 18 ~ BBQ Chicken Dinner**

**take-out only - 4:00pm pick-up**

**For more information contact:**

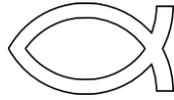
**Jim Perry [jperryiii@frontier.com](mailto:jperryiii@frontier.com)**

**Kathryn Dempsey: [missionkat@gmail.com](mailto:missionkat@gmail.com)**

***Raise an Eco-Palm branch Palm Sunday at Pleasant Green to support this UMCOR social and environmental justice project.***

United States palm sales total more than \$4.5 million every year. Through the Eco-Palm Project, harvesters in Guatemala and Mexico are receiving fair wages for their labor. The work empowers women in the cooperatives by providing jobs, increased income to help send their children to school, and opportunities for leadership positions. Palm harvesters also incorporate environmentally sound harvesting techniques for a better ecosystem.





### Chrismon Workshops

Thanks to all the ladies who participated.

More workshops will be planned...



### Common Thread Ministry

22 Pillow Cases were completed on February 21!



## “Be There” on March 15 The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Each year United Methodists worldwide join together on the fourth Sunday of Lent in observing the One Great Hour of Sharing. This special offering is vital to the **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)** and its humanitarian ministries. It enables United Methodists to respond immediately to disasters.

**UMCOR is all of us. UMCOR brings relief when a catastrophe strikes.**

**Your gifts answer Jesus’ call to “be there” for others.**

**UMCOR Mission Statement:** *Compelled by Christ to be a voice of conscience on behalf of the people called Methodist, UMCOR works globally to alleviate human suffering and advance hope and healing.*

The Central Orange Senior Center will set the backdrop for the Faith and Aging Symposium:

### “Aging Well Together: What the Faith Community Can Do.”

*The symposium will bring together the Orange County faith community, showcase aging-related services and encourage a dialogue around new possibilities.*

**Representatives from all faith groups are encouraged to attend.**

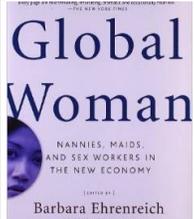
**Thursday, March 5 2:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

**If you are interested in attending, please call the church office.**



Pleasant Green is now hosting a **toddler play group** (and Mommy conversation time)!

The group is meeting on **Wednesdays, 9:45 - 11:00 am** ... or until lunchtime! For more information, please contact Anna LaBarre (919) 619-4652 or [annalabarre@gmail.com](mailto:annalabarre@gmail.com)



**The Orange County Human Relations Commission is hosting a Community READ**  
**Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy**  
by **Barbara Ehrenreich.**

The Community READ will take place on Monday, March 23, from 6 - 8 pm at the Orange County Main Library in Hillsborough

**Contact: Human Relations Commission at 919.245.2487**

### Lenten Preaching Series: “The Cost and Value of Christian Discipleship” by Pastor Jesse

- February 22, 2015: **Obedience**
- March 1, 2015: **Take Up Your Cross**
- March 8, 2015: **Boldness**
- March 15, 2015: **Believe or Faith**
- March 22, 2015: **Agony**



Pleasant Green United Methodist Church  
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 (919) 383-5764

**Non-Profit Org.**  
**US POSTAGE PAID**  
**Durham, NC 27705**  
**Permit No. 5**

**Website:** [PleasantGreenUMC.org](http://PleasantGreenUMC.org)

Rev. Dr. Jesse Brunson (919) 383-2339

Church E-mail: [pgumc@ncrrbiz.com](mailto:pgumc@ncrrbiz.com)

Address Service Requested

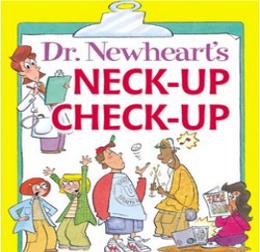
 Please recycle this newsletter. 



**PINE STRAW SALE**  
**\$5.50 per bale**  
**Pine Straw will be available for pick-up at church or delivery March 21.**  
*Order forms are available at church or call 919-383-5764.*

**BRUNSWICK STEW & CHICKEN DUMPLINGS DINNER**  
**Saturday, March 7 4 - 7 pm at Pleasant Green UMC**  
*This dinner is sponsored by the United Methodist Women but help is needed from all our church family so please mark your calendar!*  
 Proceeds from this fundraiser and fellowship event are used for local & district missions.  
 *Dough Rolling: Monday, March 2 at 7pm / Tuesday, March 3 at 6:30 pm*  
**YOU can help make this a successful fundraiser - Please sign up in the Narthex to help!**

Mark Your Calendar

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| <p><b><u>VBS</u></b><br/> <b>July 13—17</b></p>  | <p><b><u>Musical</u></b><br/> <b>July 27- 31</b></p>  | <p><b><u>PGUMC</u></b><br/> <b><u>Summer</u></b><br/> <b><u>Camp</u></b><br/> <b>June 22-</b><br/> <b>- August 7</b></p> |
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**FREE TAX HELP**  
**February 2 - April 15**  
[www.orangecountyvita.org](http://www.orangecountyvita.org)  
 You can now make your appointment online.  
*VITA is a free tax service for clients of any age or county of residence with low to moderate income. Free tax preparation and e-filing are provided by trained IRS-certified tax volunteers.*



Thanks to Dave Strausfeld, a professional family historian, for his presentation demonstrating how searches are done on websites such as Ancestry.com. You may contact Dave at [www.familyhistoryscribe.com](http://www.familyhistoryscribe.com)