

Hendricks Herald

April 2025



Medical Debt Gratitude

by B.J. Hutto, Senior Pastor

Friends,

As you all know, in the last half of last year, HAB partnered with a national organization, Undue Medical Debt (UMD), to buy up and forgive (erase) medical debt in and around Jacksonville. It was an initiative that our mission leadership had been working on and dreaming of for a while, and it was a step out in faith for our church to attempt it, trusting that our members—and our neighbors—would contribute to an effort to erase the debt of strangers.

It was also, by any measure, a resounding success. Instead of raising our goal of \$10,000, we raised over \$21,000, which allowed us to erase (forgive!) just about \$3.5 million of medical debt here in Northeast Florida. Again, hopefully you've seen the stats:

we bought and erased every dollar of medical debt that UMD had access to in Duval County and bought much of what they had in Baker, Nassau, St. Johns, and Clay counties. **In all, over 2,500 families were impacted—truly, lives were changed—because of the generosity of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church!**

All of which is wonderful. But it's also a bit abstract. Statistics are important, but they can be difficult to appreciate because they're inherently impersonal. *Personal notes, however, are not.* So for my *Herald* article this month, I wanted to share a note that we received from one of our neighbors whose life we changed:

"I wanted to take just a moment to thank you for forgiving some of my medical debt. I was sent a letter by Undue Medical Debt, and though it's a small drop in a giant ocean of debt, it's still more than any other has done to help with this debt. I feel like it is the type of good works that we are called to do by Christ and am in tears as I write this message to you because it bothers me every day to be further from Christ than I would like to be. Just the reminder that I needed that God still watches over me... and though I am unable to attend church there because of finances and because I live in Middleburg, I wanted to reach out to the congregation at HAB and if only with a special message of thanks and of Gratitude and a Prayer for you all... GOD BLESS you all!!! Know that your offerings and kindness DO make a difference... I am a testament of how you've touched my broken heart and my soul... personally in MY LIFE. The fact that you all cared the way GOD has commanded us to do for others restores faith for me in God and in people so much right now! I pray that God protects you all and will watch over you and bless you all in your lives so that you may continue helping others with such great faith-restoring hope. May these unspoken deeds and blessings lead us all to his feet!"

My friends, there it is: not just a burden of debt lifted but a life touched. A child of God reminded that they are loved, and that they are neither forgotten nor alone in their struggles. Because of what we have done, someone out in Middleburg—and 2,500 of their neighbors all around us—have been given a tangible expression of God's grace.

So thank you all! Not just for doing this great and good deed, but more importantly for being the kind of people—the kind of Christians—who are willing to truly show love for the stranger.

Kind regards,
B.J.

HOLY WEEK



Please make plans to join us for these special worship services:

Palm Sunday, April 13, Worship at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.—You're invited to celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry and prepare for Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday, April 17, 7:30 p.m.—We will remember Christ's Last Supper with his disciples and his mandate to love one another.

Good Friday, April 18, 7:30 p.m.—Using a dramatic reading from the Gospel of John, we will remember Christ's crucifixion and death.

Easter Sunday, April 20, COMBINED WORSHIP at 11:00 a.m.—Join us to celebrate Christ's resurrection!

**Easter
Eggstravaganza
Saturday, April 19
10:00 a.m.-noon**

**Inflatables, games,
Easter Bunny, egg hunt,
and other fun activities
for the whole family!**

Invite your friends!

**Don't forget your
Easter basket!**

**CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED:
Place in bins in narthex.
No chocolate, please.**

Easter Lilies

We will be using lilies in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. If you would like to order a lily in honor or in memory of a loved one, please contact Laraine at 904-396-7745, ext. 103, or laraine@habchurch.com by Monday, April 14.

Easter lilies are \$23 each and can be picked up following worship on Easter Sunday.





Ambassadors Needed: Support Our Youth and Chaperones This Summer!

by *Britt Hester, Associate Pastor for Youth*

Dear HAB Family,

We are excited to announce that this summer, our youth ministry will be embarking on a mission immersion trip to Passport Camp in Puerto Rico! This experience promises to be a transformative opportunity for our students and chaperones to grow in their faith, engage with another culture, and experience camp from a different vantage point. We invite you to join us in making this journey possible by becoming trip ambassadors for our students.

As with any mission trip, the costs associated with travel and transportation can add up quickly. To ensure that all our students and chaperones can participate, we are seeking 30 dedicated families, individuals, or groups of individuals to support our youth by becoming “ambassadors” for the trip. Each ambassador is asked to contribute a one-time gift of **\$500 or more** to help cover the cost of transportation, which is a significant portion of the trip’s expenses. Your support will directly impact the lives of our students and chaperones, enabling them to have this incredible opportunity to serve and grow spiritually. Whether you have known these students and chaperones for years or are just getting to know them, your contribution will make a lasting difference in their journey.

What’s in It for You?

In appreciation for your generosity, we have a few special offerings for our ambassadors. All who contribute will be invited to join us for a pre-trip dinner where you will meet the team, hear about their excitement for the trip, and learn more about the work they will be doing in Puerto Rico. This gathering will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with the youth and chaperones, share in their enthusiasm, and pray together for the success of the trip.

Upon the team’s return, we will host a post-trip gathering to celebrate and debrief the experience. This event will allow you to hear firsthand stories of what the students and chaperones learned, the impact they made, and how God worked in their lives. It is an occasion for everyone to come together and rejoice in the fruit of the trip.

Additionally, each ambassador will receive a unique gift from Puerto Rico as a token of our gratitude. This small gesture will serve as a reminder of the vital role you played in helping to make this trip possible.

Our Goal: 30 Ambassadors

Our goal is to secure at least 30 ambassadors, one for each of the 30 participants in this year’s trip. With your support, we can meet this goal and ensure that our students and chaperones have the resources they need for a successful and meaningful trip.

If you are willing to be part of this journey and contribute to making a lasting impact on the lives of our youth and chaperones, we would be truly grateful. **To become an ambassador, simply scan the QR code or go to bit.ly/HABGiving to contribute today;** under Fund, choose “Ambassador gift-Puerto Rico” from the drop-down menu. Or you can contact Britt Hester at britt@habchurch.com for more information.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to support our students and chaperones. Your generosity and encouragement will be felt for years to come. We are excited to share this experience with you and look forward to seeing how God will move through this trip!



With gratitude,
Britt



Chelsea Weise, Director of Children and Community Life





Sympathy to...

...P.J. & Leslie Burkhalter in the death of P.J.'s sister, Kathy Walsh, in Aurora, Colorado, on March 1, 2025.
 ...Elaine Galloway in the death of her husband David on Friday, March 14. There will be a family service back home in Virginia.
 ...Roberta Wainscott in the death of her husband, Harry Wainscott, on Friday, March 14, 2025.
 ...Judy Baggett in the death of her sister, Sandra Hurst, on Wednesday, March 19, 2025.
 ...Norma Hagan and family in the death of Cathy Hagan, Norma's daughter-in-law, on Wednesday, March 19, 2025

By Margaret Douglass

HAB welcomes new member **Nicole Smith!** She searched online until she found a church she wanted to visit. After a few visits to HAB, she felt at home.

Nicole is originally from Virginia, lived in Memphis for 19 years, and moved to Jacksonville in 2006. She has three grown children, one of whom lives in Jacksonville. Nicole was a certified nursing assistant for 19 years before a disability ended her career. Her patients benefited from her caring and loving personality.

Bingo and completing adult coloring books pages are her entertainment.



By Lad Daniels

HAB welcomes **Jerry Friar** to our membership. Born in a small community in Eastern Kentucky, Jerry was the middle child of eight brothers and sisters. Leaving home, his first job at 14 was reselling newspapers and pencils door to door at motels. Impressed by his initiative, a guest hired him to work with his horses. Thus began Jerry's career to become a jockey. He rode at racetracks from coast to coast starting at Raceway Park in Detroit and including Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky. He can recount the several broken bones endured during his career.

Jerry served three years in the United States Army as a Military Police officer and fireman. His time included an extended tour in Vietnam. Following service, he followed several trades including electrical and plumbing. He tragically lost both wife and daughter to cancer within one week.

He has resided at Riverside Park Apartments for over five years. Jerry says that the warmth of HAB members at his arrival made him want to be a part of our community.

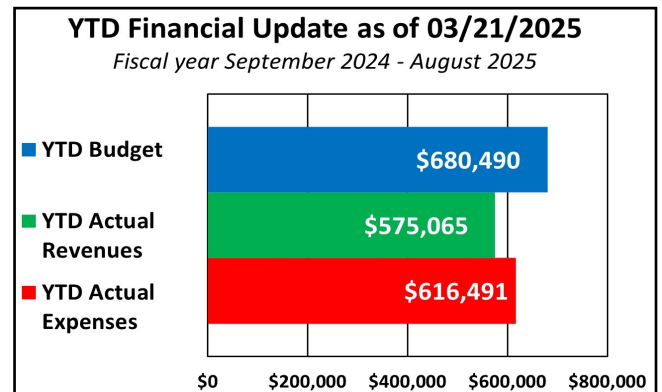


CBF Georgia Senior Adult Retreat May 4-7

By Jon Yost

CBF churches from Georgia and Florida will come together May 4-7 for this wonderful annual event held at FBC St. Simons Island. This year's featured retreat pastor will be none other than our own **Kyle Reese**. This link - cbfga.org/adults-senior-adults/ - includes registration and other retreat info including lodging options. On a personal note, this will be my third year attending, last year with Dee Bumbarger, so I can tell you that it is a laid-back, fun, inspirational, and tremendously uplifting event, so I highly encourage you to participate. Even if you can't make the

entire event, it's so close that coming up just for the day will be worthwhile. If you would like any other personal insight, please shoot me a note or give me a call (Jon Yost, 904-728-3123).



Small Things with Great Love

by *Britt Hester,*
Associate Pastor for Youth

“Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”—Mother Teresa

On Saturday, March 8, a group of students and adults from HAB gathered in the St. Nicholas area of our city to paint a house. The house belongs to the Moh Loh family, who recently relocated to Jacksonville from Myanmar. We learned about the family from our ministry partner, Safe Havens Ministries—a ministry devoted to helping the poorest of the poor families and individuals settle into a home that will be a “Safe Haven.”

After hearing about the need, members of our Mission Team—particularly Melanie Wilson and Debbie Crumb—began exploring ways our church could serve. Lynn Bledsoe, Executive Director of Safe Havens Ministries, coordinated with Melanie and Debbie to set up a project that would benefit the family and be physically and economically feasible for our church. Following multiple conversations, it was decided that painting the house fit the bill.

Perhaps what was not accounted for in our planning was how difficult it would be to gather a group of volunteers! After all, Saturdays are protected days for most people. Plus, many of our students are involved with sports, theater, Scouts, and more on weekends. Yet, despite the challenge, a small but mighty team showed up to offer their time and energy to serve their neighbors.

Admittedly, as our team examined the house and size of our group, we wondered if we would be able to complete the project. Prior to our arrival, the home was pressure washed by Byers Machine Power Clean. As you can see in the before and after photos, there was quite a bit of mildew that had formed on the exterior of the home. If the



exterior had not been washed, we might not have completed the task!

Despite the inevitable obstacles that come with any endeavor, though, our team got to work. Over the course of six hours, our students and adults worked together to paint the entirety of this home. We did not possess fancy

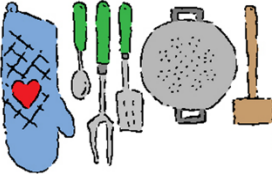
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(Small Things with Great Love, *continued*)

tools or much experience, but we did have time and a heart full of love. And sometimes that is all that is needed to make a difference.

The great temptation of our times is believing we must do something remarkable to make a difference. Yet, Jesus consistently instructed his disciples to perform humble, menial tasks, because in these simple acts there is blessing for both giver and recipient. It turns out that doing “small things with great love” is, in fact, the work of God’s kingdom here on earth.

So, in the words of the Apostle Paul, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9, NIV). Might a harvest be on the horizon for HAB and Jacksonville? Through faithful witness to the will and way of God and humble action in the name of Jesus, may it be so.



JOIN US FOR WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPER!

You’re invited to join us each Wednesday for a wonderful meal (that you don’t have to cook!) and great fellowship. Please make reservations by Monday each week by contacting Laraine at laraine@habchurch.com or 904-396-7745, ext. 103. Adults are \$12, children \$8, and immediate family maximum \$30. Children’s menu is chicken nuggets and fries. Please specify adult or

children’s meal when making reservations. If you’d like a permanent reservation, let us know; then we’d just ask you to cancel on weeks when you can’t be there. Meal is served beginning at 5:15 p.m.

April 2

Meatloaf with special sauce
Mashed potatoes, lima beans
Carrot cake w/cream cheese icing

April 9

Eye of round
Loaded potato casserole, broccoli
Chocolate marble cake

April 16

NO MEAL OR OTHER ACTIVITIES
DUE TO HOLY WEEK SERVICES

April 23

Fried chicken
Mashed potatoes
Green beans
Banana pudding

April 30: YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!

Joharen’s special chicken
White rice, black beans
Pico de gallo, plantains, fried cheese
Tres leches cake

All meals include a dinner roll and salad, plus tea, peach tea, lemonade, coffee, or water.

Pickleball in the Gym *By Suzanne Bass*

Pickleball, one of the fastest growing sports in the U.S., has found its way to the HAB campus. The gym now has two courts and two rolling nets. The floor is all taped and ready for immediate play. Whether you are a seasoned player or a beginner looking for a way to stay active, now is the perfect time to grab a paddle and give pickleball a try. The gym affords a welcoming and cooler place to play when the summer temps creep northward.

Pickleball is suited for all ages. It has historically been enjoyed by seniors, but the millennials and GenZers have discovered the game. Pickleball



is played typically by four players on a court similar to a tennis court but half the size. It is played with a ball similar to a wiffle ball and a paddle somewhat larger than a ping pong paddle. Imagine a wedding of badminton and ping pong and you have something close to pickleball. The game comprises physical activity wired for competition but fun is guaranteed. Find YouTube and put pickleball in the search bar to discover a gazillion videos with pointers and advice on how to play the game. The biggest bonus pickleball offers is connection and social interaction between the players. You will be introduced to a diverse family of players, and before you know it friendships are formed and the next outing is planned.

I am looking for like-minded folks willing to volunteer to help manage the schedule. (Contact Suzanne at suzbass01@gmail.com.) The fun of volunteering is that you can jump into a game or sit and visit with whoever shows up. The current schedule is every Monday at 5:30. On Monday, April 7, at 4:00 p.m. a lesson is offered for newbies. In less than an hour you will be introduced to the rudiments of the game and the rules. Then you will be ready to play. Don't bother buying equipment. We have all you will need. Wear shorts or yoga pants and a t-shirt, but don't forget the comfy tennis shoes. Protective eyewear is recommended; eye glasses will work great. Pickleball is a fabulously fun way to exercise...and make friends!





From the Church Mouse

Hi there! This is your friendly Church Mouse with the news for this month. HAB Members have been getting around and having a great time, so I hear! Let's get started with the news.

Martha Douberly has a new great-grandson, **Micah Edward Wilson**, born February 2, 2025, in Atlanta. He is pictured here with his older sisters, **Remi** and **Reese**. Congratulations, Martha, we know you are a proud great-grandmother!



We hear from **Dawn Gray** that daughter **Hannah**, a first-year pharmacy student at the University of Florida, is a member of the Policy Committee for the UF chapter of the American Pharmacists Association. During the recent Special Session in Tallahassee she and other pharmacy students in Florida went to the Capitol to speak to legislators. In the meetings with four or five legislators, Hannah was the only first-year student to speak to a legislator! She was also recently elected as the vice chair for the policy committee for next year!



Congratulations to our very own **Dr. Michael Mayo, DHA, FACHE**, President and CEO of Baptist Health, for being named on Becker's Hospital Review's Great Leader's List! With over 30 years of experience in health care leadership, Dr. Mayo oversees six acute-care hospitals—including the region's only children's hospital, a dedicated heart hospital, Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center, and a neurological institute—along with five satellite emergency centers and more than 100 primary and specialty care offices. Under his leadership, Baptist Health's 15,000+ team members and 2,000 physicians continue to provide exceptional care across the region. Beyond his executive leadership, Dr. Mayo is deeply committed to community health. He played a key role in launching the Blue Zones Project Jacksonville, he mentors future health care leaders, and he is an adjunct professor at the University of North Florida. Congratulations,

Michael!



Our **Hendricks Avenue Baseball League** celebrated the 2025 spring season opening day in grand style on Saturday, March 1. In front of several hundred players, parents, family, fans, coaches, and volunteers, our own **Bella Smith-Sosa** beautifully sang our National Anthem, and Boy Scout Troop 35, represented by HAB's **Jonah** and **Henry Wilson**, along with six other Scouts, presented the colors. The ceremony also included participation by all ball players



who were in attendance, comments from the **Baseball Commissioner Josh Franklin**, and the ceremonial opening pitch by former Commissioner **Cameron Foster**. **This is the 79th year of baseball at HAB**, with 356 players participating on 30 teams! If you would like to get involved, contact **Jon Yost** at 904-728-3123.

Whew! That's a lot of good stuff going on around here! This poor little Church Mouse is tuckered out from telling you about this good news! Maybe I should go out to the ball field and see if Jon can find something a poor little mouse like me could do. Maybe I could take care of the crumbs that might be left in the concession stand. YUM! Bye for this month. **Keep those emails coming to churchmouse@habchurch.com.**



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As we travel throughout the year, let's remember that the work of HAB continues. Please take advantage of online giving to continue supporting our ministries. Or, **before you go, set up a recurring gift** so that you won't have to remember! It's easy!

Go to bit.ly/HABGiving or scan this QR code:



VISIT habchurch.com

for more information.

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