



## A CHRISTMAS TRADITION RETURNING TO ORIGINAL TIME

Lights, Garland, Action! The Christmas Lighting Ceremony at BJU has a new (old) start time!

The BJU Christmas Celebration on Friday, Dec. 6, begins at 4 p.m. with the Alumni Christmas Market and children's activities on front campus. For dinner options, there will be 200 tickets available for Christmas dinner in the dining common — on a first-come, first-serve basis — and The Den will also be open. Even more dinner options will be available in the dining common parking lot including food trucks and the culinary students selling sweet and savory crepes!

The Lighting Ceremony officially begins at 6:30 p.m.

We're thrilled to announce that more alumni vendors than ever before will be on campus for this year's Alumni Christmas Market. Their tables full of carefully hand-crafted wares will be displayed in the student mall, The Den and throughout the Welcome Center. Come rain or shine you are sure to find enough to scratch off your Christmas shopping list! And while you are shopping or after the lighting ceremony, be sure to stop by The Alumni Giving Tree table in the main lobby of the Welcome Center.

Immediately following the Lighting Ceremony, join The Symphonic Wind Band & Choirs for Carols & Classics in Rodeheaver Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. This festive holiday program features the Symphonic Wind Band in collaboration with the BJU Lyric choir, BJA elementary advanced choir, and the Greenville Youth Chorale.

Mark your calendars and join us for an evening of music, lights, fellowship, fun and community at another Upstate tradition — the BJU Christmas Celebration.

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## BJU ALUMNI IN NEED

Each year during the start of the holiday season, the BJU Alumni Relations Department hosts the annual Giving Tree fundraiser, dedicated to helping an alum in need. Last year, your compassion was on full display as you generously gave a record-breaking amount to support a young alumni family!

This year when we requested nominations from the alumni community, one God-ordained event seemed to influence your nominations and certainly guided us in our choice for this year's Giving Tree recipients.

On Friday, Sept. 27, when Hurricane Helene decimated many areas throughout Eastern Tennessee and Western North Carolina, David and Ruth Zellers were among the victims.



David and Ruth graduated from BJU in 1991—he with a degree in criminal justice and she with a degree in elementary education and a minor in music. They were from Florida and never contemplated moving to Cosby, Tennessee after graduation to start a life together. But God had other plans and used a routine chapel request from Dr. Bob III to begin turning their gaze toward the hills of Tennessee. As many alumni remember, Dr. Bob often asked the seniors to consider using their first few years after graduation to serve in a small church or ministry. David and Ruth are among the many graduates who allowed that simple request to be used by the Lord to lead them where they could serve. For thirty-three years, the Zellers have served their mountain community in various roles including Christian school administration, music instructor, community choir and orchestra leaders and faithful church members assisting the ministry in any way needed.



The day Hurricane Helene stalled over their community, David and Ruth were planning a fairly regular, although soggy, day. David headed to work, and Ruth checked on her 91-year-old father before heading to her son's house to care for her grandchild. The next several hours unfolded in a way no

one could have predicted. With a local dam on the verge of breaklife-threatening within minutes. Ruth was alone with her grandchild while David headed to his father-in-law’s house to get him to higher ground. The ability to get information about the immediate threat or to stay connected with loved ones was challenging, leaving the Zellers family like many others – in the dark as to next steps. David determined he needed to get to his wife no matter the risk to his own life. When he finally reached high ground closer to Ruth’s location, he was able to use an emergency crew member’s phone to reach Ruth. Both David and the emergency worker urged her to get out of the house immediately and begin climbing toward the interstate. Shoeless and clinging to her granddaughter, Ruth started climbing. And the Lord spared their lives. Ruth reached high ground and was reunited with her husband. A er some time, David, Ruth and their granddaughter were taken to a rescue center and eventually given shelter by a fellow church member.



The next day, David and Ruth returned to their property to discover their home for over 30 years—the house in which they reared their family—was swept away in the flood. Almost nothing was salvageable. While acknowledging their significant loss, the Zellers are keenly aware of the Lord’s protection. David, Ruth, Ruth’s father, both their sons, their daughter-in-law and their grandchild were all spared. But there is much to do to restore their normal cadence of life. While they work through the details of rebuilding and furnishing a home, they continue to do what they have always done in their Tennessee community—serve. As BJU alumni and friends support David and Ruth through prayer and giving, they will be supporting their community through their local church, through leading the Cocke County Orchestra and community choir as they prepare for Christmas concerts and through their gospel witness as they live and work in a hurting community.

Please pray for their county—specifically for churches to continue to reach out in a loving manner as the community

rebuilt. And please pray for wisdom as David and Ruth have many decisions to make in the rebuilding process.

To financially support the Zellers, you can donate online by clicking the link below. You will also have an opportunity to give during the Christmas Celebration on Friday, Dec. 6. We would love to see you at the Giving Tree exhibit located in the Welcome Center alongside the Alumni Christmas Market booths.



Donations will be accepted through Monday, Jan. 8, 2025.

## FAITH AND SERVICE ON DISPLAY



A few weeks ago, BJU alumni, Dr. Ken and Sorya Casillas traveled overseas to visit fellow alums actively serving on the mission field. The following is an excerpt from the BJU Seminary newsletter outlining their trip:

*Their travels first took them to the Central African Republic, one of the poorest countries in the world, where they joined Biblical Ministries Worldwide missionary Donna Bixby (1996 grad), who serves as the international director of Jonathan’s House in the town of Sibut.*

*Jonathan’s House is a vital ministry that includes an orphanage caring for over 50 children, a clinic and a school serving 550 children. The Casillases’ time there involved ministering in all three areas, as well as at a church in the bush. They also had*

*the pleasure of getting to know 2024 BJU Seminary grad Priscilla Smith, who is currently interning at Jonathan’s House under Gospel Fellowship Association. The work being done to rescue, provide for and evangelize children in such dire circumstances is nothing short of amazing.*



*The next part of the trip took the Casillases to France, where they spent a few days with Donna’s brother – BJU Seminary grad Tim Bixby (2000 grad) and his wife Ruth (1998 grad). Tim and Ruth are missionaries with Evangelical Mission to the Unreached International, working to plant a church in Sarcelles – a city just north of Paris known for its ethnic diversity. On Sunday, Dr. Casillas had the joy of preaching a mini conference on the identity of the Christian.*

*Witnessing the dedication and faithfulness of these missionaries in such diverse and challenging environments was both thrilling and humbling. God is empowering them as they make disciples and extend Christ’s love to those in need. The Casillases feel truly privileged to partner with them in their significant gospel efforts!*



# HURRICANE HELENE PROVIDES CATALYST FOR GROWTH

Following the recent devastation in Western North Carolina from Hurricane Helene, Bob Jones University students are partnering with ARCH Ministries to provide help, supplies and relief to impacted areas.

First, the BJU student body raised \$10,300 to be used by BJU alum Tim Potter—founder of ARCH Ministries—to directly serve recovery efforts in North Carolina.

Second, BJU students began taking weekly trips to Barnardsville, North Carolina, to provide labor and encouragement to the local population who face the daunting task of rebuilding businesses, homes and public spaces.



The students have made a difference already through their presence and spirit. Jon Daulton, Acting Chief Student Development Officer, said that it gives students a perspective they wouldn't have otherwise. "The hurricane has been a catalyst for our student body coming together and uniting around a common cause." When people inquire how the semester is going, Jon assures them the "students reaching out [has] produced in them more of an awareness of how God can use them."

ARCH Ministries has officially "adopted" the town of Barnardsville and is coordinating relief efforts through Matt and Angela Nichols—parents of a current BJU student—to bring workers and supplies to the area every weekend throughout the winter and into the spring.

Josiah Sherill, a senior who is double majoring in Business and Biblical Studies said, "the centrality of the local church really became clear to me in this time of need, because people knew where to find help. ARCH Ministries connected us with two different churches who were full of people who dropped everything they were doing to help others. It's clear how Christian joy is different, because we were able to not only offer help, but [also] hope to the people we interacted with."

The testimony of these students has not gone unnoticed by those in this hurting community. According to Jon Daulton, "one person in North Carolina gave me \$150 and told me to take our students out to eat because he was so impressed with their spirit and their work ethic."



Click [here to read more](#) about ARCH Ministries.

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## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### BJU FACULTY POSITIONS

[Engineering Faculty](#)  
[Faculty: Application of General Interest](#)  
[Dean of Fine Arts & Communication](#)

[View all open faculty positions here.](#)

### BJA POSITIONS

[Varsity Girls Basketball Coach](#)  
[Elementary Substitute Teacher](#)  
[Middle School/High School Substitute Teacher](#)

[View all open BJA positions here.](#)

### BJU PRESS POSITIONS

[Maintenance Electrician](#)  
[Manager of Supply Chain](#)  
[Front End Developer](#)

[View all job opportunities at BJU Press.](#)

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## ALUMNI UPDATES

### FUTURE BRUINS

**Woody,** Brandon and Lauren (Charbono) '16, Ezra James, May 27, 2024

### MARRIAGES

**Hilton:** Haley Speight '23 to Drew '23, February 3, 2024

**McAllen:** Marianne Morrissey '95 to Ryan '00, June 22, 2024

## DEATHS

**Alexander, Joyce** (Sibbersen) '57, **RFS**, November 3, 2024

**Behn, Cindy** (MacDonald) '79, October 14, 2024

**Case, Earle** '59, October 13, 2024

**Conner, Gordon** '76, October 8, 2024

**Dusing, Daniel** '72, **FE**, October 17, 2024

**Elshout, Myra** (Thomas) '64, July 6, 2024

**Hutton, Roger** '62, October 1, 2024

**Kaspar, Mary Ann** (Watkins) '60, November 12, 2024

**Little, Charlotte** (Wilson) '08, October 9, 2024

**Moran, Patricia** (Foreacre) '67, October 7, 2024

**Richards, Gloria** (Nestberg) '66, October 7, 2024

**Sjoberg, Carl** '60, October 18, 2024

**Sparkman, Ashley** '76, July 17, 2024

**Williams, Roland** "Dwight" '75, October 12, 2024

**Wilson, Margaret** (Johnston) '58, November 3, 2024

*\*FE indicates a long-time former employee of BJU.*

*\*RFS indicates a Retired Faculty or Staff of BJU.*

## CLASS NOTES

**Joshua Briggs '97** finished medical school and is currently an OBGYN resident at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center – Amarillo.

**Stephen Huebscher '94** recently had his first book published and he completed six years as a US Navy Chaplain and will be beginning a tour with the U.S. Marine Corps soon.

**Matthew Hughes '16** recently joined Fox Rothschild in Greenville, SC as an Associate in the Litigation Department.

Chef and BJU faculty member, **David Miller '93**, was selected as the Hospitality Educator of the year by the Upstate chapter of the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association.

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