NOVEMBER 2016 Your Community. Your Neighbors. Your Story.

SUR OAKS Journal



SAME GREAT MAG Details on page 4.

First Baptist Church Four Oaks: 125 years

Business profile: Reedy Creek Junior Golf Academy

Community calendar

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Changes coming to your friendly, neighborhood magazine

John F. Kennedy once said, "change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

It's takes a wise man to become the youngest ever elected as president, so we should probably heed his words.



Randy Capps randy@fouroaksjournal.com

Change is a recurring theme in the Capps household these days. We're changing jobs, with Shanna now working for the magazine full-time.

We're changing the way we do business, with an office space near Holts Lake instead of our guest room.

And, we're changing our magazine.

This is the last issue of the Four Oaks Journal, at least the way you've come to know it.

We're not changing the content. We still believe in telling a community's "good news."

What we're doing is taking that mission to the rest of Johnston County.

So, since we're going to be covering Benson, Smithfield and Clayton, a name change is in order.

That's why we're becoming Johnston Now.

Naturally, you have questions. We have a few answers for you (see Page 4).

If you notice the new logo on the cover, you'll see the familiar acorn and leaf. We're still a Four Oaks business, and we're still going to tell the story of our community.

We're just bringing the rest of Johnston County along for the ride.

The spirit of the Four Oaks Journal is alive and well, and I can't wait to see what we can build together.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Volume 2, Number 7

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Next month, the Four Oaks Journal will become **Johnston Now**, a magazine serving all of Johnston County.

Here are some answers to questions you may have:

Q: Why can't it just be about Four Oaks?

A: We want to share the stories of Four Oaks with the rest of Johnston County, and we want to share their stories with you. As the magazine has grown in popularity, we have often been asked to bring that model to other towns. This is a way for us to do that.

Q: When will it publish?

A: Just like now, a new edition will publish on or around the first of each month.

Q: Can I still submit story ideas, calendar items and pictures?

A: We'd be sad if you didn't. Send them to hello@johnstonnow.com.

Q: Is it still free?

A: Yes.

Q: How can I get a copy?

A: Now, we're getting into some new territory. There are around 185,000 people living in Johnston County, so mailing a magazine to each household is a bit too expensive for us. So, we're going to have rack locations around town (The Vine and Branch, Southern Roots Boutique and White Swan — just to name a few). The magazine is still free. You'll just need to grab one while you're out and about in Four Oaks and around the county.

Q: Are you sure you just can't mail one to me?

A: Well, we can. We are going to start offering subscriptions. For \$36, we'll send you the next 12 issues of Johnston Now. To subscribe, drop by our office at 3560 Hwy 301 South (near Holts Lake), call 919-980-5522 or visit johnstonnow.com.

Q: What can I expect from Johnston Now?

A: The same inspiring stories about your friends and neighbors, sure. But also a taste of life in Meadow, Princeton and other places. We're going to have twice as many pages, so there will be plenty of room.

Q: What can businesses expect?

A: As small business owners, we understand the importance of the local economy and supporting one another. For that reason, we can offer the chance to get your message in the hands of new and existing customers.

Q: What else is new?

A: We have an office at 3560 Highway 301 South in Smithfield. It's just on the other side of Holts Lake. Look for the Johnston Now sign.

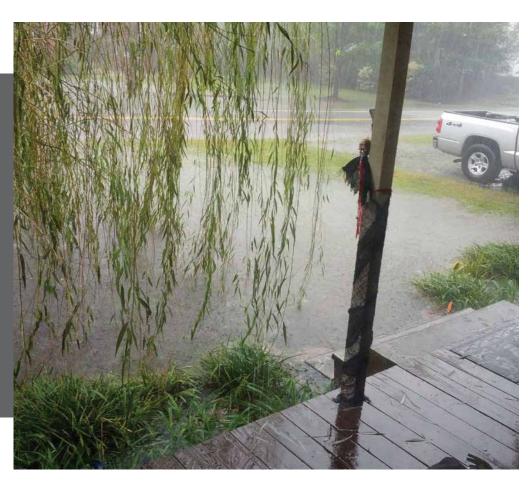
Q: How about online?

A: We've got a website, johnstonnow.com. Drop by, check out the calendar and archived issues of the Four Oaks Journal. We're also on Facebook and Twitter. Please like and follow accordingly.



Hurricane Matthew comes to town

Jessi Marine Sharp sent us this shot of her Baker Street home in the midst of the recent hurricane. It was a storm that dumped nearly a foot of rain on the area, leaving many without power for days after the event.





106 West Wellons St., Four Oaks **919.963.2112**

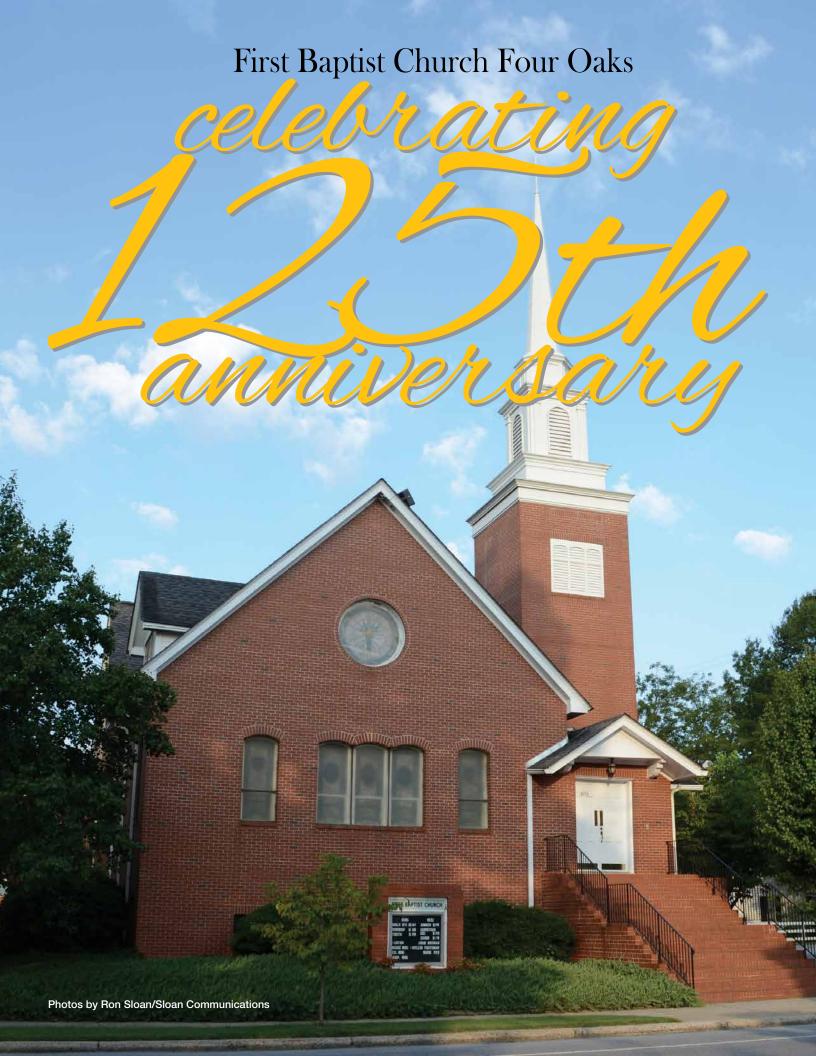
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Melissa Eakin Melissa Fakin.com

I was early for once and nobody was there. Pastor John Norman of First Baptist Church Four Oaks had kindly agreed to meet with me at the church office at 2 p.m. to talk about the church's upcoming 125th anniversary homecoming and, no matter how many times I knocked, nobody came to the door.

I looked at my watch: 1:55 pm. Preachers never stand people up! Isn't that in the church by-laws somewhere? In King James English?

I tried to look purposefully nonplussed in the usual ways — doodling around on my phone, striding confidently back to my car and doodling around on my phone — but the minutes continued to tick by and there was no sign of anybody in the building or the parking lot.

Finally, at five after, I gave up on looking coolly nonchalant and called the church office. John's cheerful voice answered after the first ring.

Turns out, if you don't keep up with certain aspects of the old neighborhood, things have a way of changing.

Though I had been to church at First Baptist many times since marrying and moving to Raleigh five years earlier, it had somehow eluded my notice that the church offices had moved into a house on Church street across from the fellowship hall, and what had been the church office in the main building was now a classroom in the church's bustling preschool every day from 8 a.m. to noon.

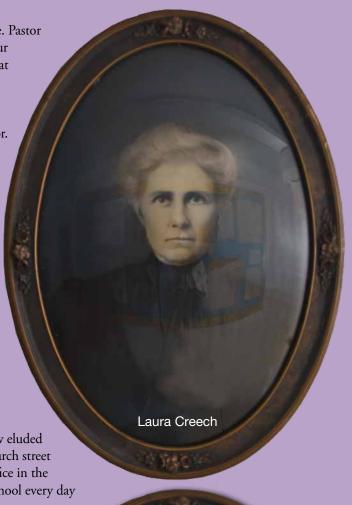
Feeling somewhat embarrassed, I walked down the block and crossed Church Street where John stepped out the front door to meet me on the porch of the house. We chatted outside for a bit, enjoying the bright fall sunshine and the cool breeze before I followed him inside.

We passed through a cheerful reception area containing the secretary's desk and a fireplace and stepped into a cozy room filled with sunshine and a door to the outside.

A large bookcase filled with books dominated the wall across from John's desk and two comfortable looking chairs flanked a small table in front of the window. Classical music played softly from a radio in one corner and I would've been happy to sit and read in that atmosphere for a couple hours.

We settled into the chairs and, as is easy to do with John, started chatting comfortably about what life was up to for each of us, what had changed, and what changes were likely coming. John has been my pastor for fourteen years and knew just what to ask about in my life, as usual, despite my living 40 minutes away.

I'd been coming to First Baptist Four Oaks with my parents since childhood and, like churches often do after years lived in and just outside of its walls, it feels like the house of a close relative. All the nooks and crannies, hallways and doors are well known and the setting for lots of past memories.







For instance, I know that if you get there late, there's almost always a seat in the balcony, and if you push the swinging door into the sanctuary too fast as you go in, it'll squeak.

The stairs from the vestibule into the basement are carpeted, but they squeak too, so it's tough to pass up or down them unnoticed. The sanctuary is always a little chilly for me so I never fail to bring a sweater, and I can bet on a smile from my dad, who sits in the back row of the choir.

Whether or not you know everyone by name, count on your hand being shaken and people welcoming you with a smile and sometimes a wink. This place is a home. It's home to a large family who's always happy to welcome newcomers because they won't be newcomers long.

Enjoying the genial sunshine in the chairs in the pastor's study, we talked about how John came to be a member of the First Baptist Four Oaks family. At the time, Michelle had been working at the divinity school at Gardner-Webb and John had

started a degree program at Duke.

"Michelle and I ended up moving to Cary in 1997," he said. "The day that we moved, we rolled up with the moving truck, unloaded boxes and a couple that we knew called to welcome us to the area and offered to take us out to eat. Before we went out, we hooked up our answering machine and when we came back, we had two messages.

"One was from some friends just checking on us and making sure the move went okay, and the other was from a gentleman by the name of Russell Lee who was chair of the Search Committee at First Baptist Church in Four Oaks."

John smiled at the memory.

"He said he had gotten my name or resume and was wondering if we would be interested in talking to them about the possibility of coming to the church," he recalled. "So we said, 'Okay, we're not going to unload anymore boxes, we're just going to kind of leave them tucked in the corner.

"That was in the late summer of 1997. In November, we came and I gave a trial sermon and the church voted on us. The first Sunday in November that year is when they voted on us coming in and I was installed the next Sunday."

Coincidentally, First Baptist Church of Four Oaks will celebrate its 125th anniversary Homecoming the first Sunday of this month (Nov. 6). On the same day, John and Michelle Norman will celebrate 19 years with the church. With two such anniversaries on the same day, I was interested in how they planned to celebrate.

"The history committee has been working on some things to present that day and we're going to dedicate the new elevator wing," he said. "We've invited back former members of the choir so we'll have a reunion choir, and our youth will be singing as well."

His expression grew more earnest as he continued.



"What we're trying to do is blend together this idea of past, present, and future: acknowledging the past, celebrating the present, and living into the future and knowing that God's not done with us yet," he said. "It's going to be a good day."

I was 11 years old when the church celebrated its centennial in 1991. As I recall, there was a short play written by Mrs. Dorothy Parker about the church's history, and the town's history as well, since the two are entwined and their centennials fell within two years of each other (Four Oaks celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 1989). I had a starring role as "townsperson" and wore a long skirt and white blouse of my mother's, feeling very grown up.

Homecoming that year was a day of great celebration. Jeff Clark was pastor then and there was singing, the play, lots of visitors and a ton of food at a potluck lunch on the lawn between the church and the parsonage.

Kids ran through the grass, dodging

the adults, and the picnic tables of food seemed to stretch for miles. It was a beautiful, sunny day and even though we kids might not have fully understood what the big deal was, we were happy to celebrate with our church family.

The story of First Baptist Church Four Oaks starts with Mr. and Mrs. Ezekiel Creech, who lived in the countryside and were members of Oliver's Grove Baptist Church. Mr. Creech wanted to move to town to open a store. His wife, Laura, as legend has it, agreed to go only if her husband would build her a church. And he did.

In 1890, the land for the church was purchased on the west side of Main Street, two blocks from the railroad tracks.

"When you look at the original deed, it doesn't say it was deeded or sold to First Baptist Church Four Oaks because that name didn't come along until around the 100th anniversary when they incorporated the church and changed the name from Four Oaks Baptist Church to The First

Baptist Church of Four Oaks, Inc.," John told me.

"The deed also does not say Four Oaks Baptist Church. It says the land is deeded to the Missionary Baptist Church in Four Oaks, which at that time distinguished us from the Primitive Baptists in the area."

Noting my raised eyebrows at this new-tome information, he explained: "Primitive Baptists don't theologically support missions in the same way that Missionary Baptists do. So the church was originally referred to as the Missionary Baptist Church in Four Oaks."

His expression turned thoughtful.

"That idea of missions, even in the early naming of the church, has followed the church all the way through — trying to live that identity as a Missionary Baptist Church."

Construction on the church building began in 1891. Ezekiel Creech contributed most of the lumber for the church, though he was never a member.



I learned through resources in the church's history room that he operated a sawmill in Elevation Township at the time and hauled lumber to town to sell, as well as to build the church, and his own home next to the church lot on the site where the parsonage now stands.

The original church was a one-story wooden structure under a pointed roof, with a wide doorway in the front flanked by two windows and four windows down each side.

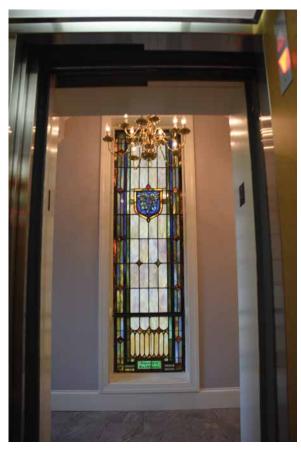
"The brick sanctuary we have now was built in the late nineteen-tens," John continued. "The story behind that is that they dug the foundation and basement for the church and about the time they were doing that, the United States entered World War I.

"All building resources were cut off because everything was going to the war effort. So somehow, they put a covering over the basement and met there until the war was over and they could complete the structure."

The completion of the church building started in May 1917 and was finished and ready for services within eight months. I learned in my reading in the history room that "when the Armistice came November 11, 1918, the bell was ready to help proclaim it from the tower of the new church."

This knowledge impressed me and made me proud. What a great story to have as a part of church, and Four Oaks, history.

I also read that, "The basement of the church was used by the public school for a few years before a new school was built at the north end of Main Street in 1923."



The tradition of education continues today in the church's preschool, which opened in 2007 and currently serves around 60 kids.

"We felt that it was a ministry we were being called to as a congregation, and there was a need in the community," John said. "It has, in some sense, become the face of the church to the community because a lot of people that maybe don't have a relationship with our church, or with a church at all — the preschool becomes the face of First Baptist Church to them. Their kids go there or their grandkids go there."

He described trips the kids took to the Police Department, the fire station, Town Hall, strawberry picking, the pumpkin farm... I found myself volunteering to tag along some time.

"We're very pleased with where the preschool is right now and with their leadership," John said. "They're doing some really neat things."

The preschool reinforced my thoughts of the church as a big family, one with lots of kids and adults who had fun keeping them busy. That's how families and churches both seem to work best.

People take interest in each others' lives; the older and the younger, grandmothers and teenagers, teenagers and toddlers, fathers and sons.

"The idea of family is important to our congregation as a whole. Now, just like a family, we don't necessarily all think the same way. We're not always on the same page and we may even have disagreements sometimes," He paused with a knowing smile and a raise of his eyebrows. "But we're still a family."

Our conversation was winding down and I knew I'd soon be heading home — my other home, in Raleigh. But I was reluctant to leave such a cheerful place on such a beautiful day as John continued

with a closing thought.

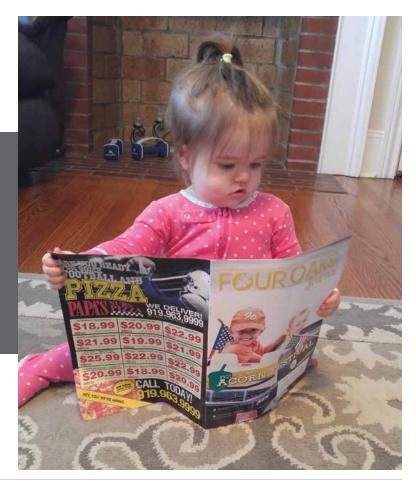
"The church, our past, our history is very important to us," he seemed to look through the wall of books behind me to the church building itself. "We're probably not very different than the church was a hundred years ago. Technology has changed, the building has changed — a lot of things have changed. But the family aspect has remained."

He paused in thought for a moment before continuing.

"Not just the family of Four Oaks, but as a part of God's family — being sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters of Christ and of each other — and what exactly that means, how it looks, and how we live that out together. We don't have anybody that is part of the church now that was here originally, of course, yet still the dream that they had in starting a Missionary Baptist Church still lives on through our members."

We love our young readers!

Heather and Sean Carr sent us this adorable picture of their daughter, Madison, checking out the October edition.



BUSINESS PROFILE - REEDY CREEK JUNIOR GOLF ACADEMY



Building a community of golfers

It's early on a cloudy, late-summer morning at Reedy Creek Golf Course, but the cart area is alive with activity.

Players are preparing for a round by changing shoes and retrieving clubs from the trunk of their car. Thanks to the earliness of the day, it's mostly older men waiting for their spot on the first tee.

Inside the pro shop, a much younger man is charged with making sure that a new generation of golfers is ready to take those dew-sweeping tee times in the future.

Seth Thompson is a Campbell graduate and the director of the Reedy Creek Junior Golf Academy. It's part of the Operation 36 initiative, designed to develop junior players. As the name of the program implies, Thompson's aim is to grow the game by introducing it to young people.

"The Reedy Creek Junior Academy is a junior golf development program," he said. "We offer affordable, long-term programming to families in the Four Oaks area."

The official mission statement for the program, designed for kids ages 3-18, is "building communities of golfers working towards shooting par or better for 9 holes."

"Our model takes a junior from a beginner," Thompson said. "We have a six-level curriculum that we go through. We start at level one and they work their way up through different challenges. The goal is for them to start as a beginner, and once they finish level six, they should be able to shoot par or better."

Not surprisingly, Thompson's background in the game dates back to his own childhood.

"I've been playing golf my whole life," he said. "I started when I was about two. There are home videos of me hitting plastic clubs in the yard. I was a competitive junior golfer in West Virginia, where I grew up."

His own struggles as a junior golfer forged his desire to teach the game — the right way — to today's young players.

"My story, getting into instruction, was that I had a lot of bad information when I was a junior golfer," he said. "At the beginning of my career, I was pretty competitive. And then I started to do things that would get my swing better and my game better.

"I was from a very rural town. We didn't have any instructors in the area, so I got information from anywhere I could. I actually became



worse over the course of my high school career."

He wound up at Campbell, and that's where he found his game again, and learned how to share what he learned with others.

"I came to Campbell University for the PGA Golf Management program," he said. "There, I was introduced to some really great instructors and some really good information. I started working on my game, and it got a lot better again.

"Just seeing the difference in what you can do with good information, and even though I practiced all the time in high school, seeing what bad information can do to your game. I've always had a passion for coaching juniors, and I knew that I didn't want a junior golfer to go through the same trials that I went through."

Thompson's program, a model of the original at Keith Hills Golf Club in Buies Creek, now has 32 students. He's sensitive to golf's built-in expenses, and tries to make the sport accessible.

"Unfortunately, the game is a pretty expensive hobby to have," he said. "The way that we try to handle that is, through our base package, we charge \$100 a month. That includes an hour-long golf class each week. That's a pretty good price. If you take a class from a private PGA instructor, that's going to be at least \$100 an hour."

The trick to keeping the cost down, according to Thompson, is



teaching juniors in a group.

"We like group lessons with juniors," he said. "Not only are they getting good information, they're training in a social environment — which most juniors do better with anyway. And that allows us not to charge as much money, because we can see multiple juniors at a time."

There are other obstacles as well. Golf is a difficult game, played at places with which non-golfers aren't familiar.

"A lot of times, people are afraid to come to the golf course," he said. "Just hesitant because of the price, or the fact that golf is a difficult game. They don't know how they're going to be looked at, and they feel that they need to know everything about golf before they come out.

"This program starts them at a place that's based on their skill level. They're going to start out with the basics, and as they learn, the parents will as well. We have plenty of opportunities for parents and juniors to come out and play together here. Golf is a sport that, maybe they don't become the best in the world. But, if we could get them to a spot where they play golf their entire life and they play with their parents, then that's a huge win in my book."

For more information on the program, or the summer camps coming up in June and August, contact Seth Thompson at seth@igrowgolf.com or call 304-257-3710.





SAVE THE DATE



Every Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.

Story Time

James Bryan Creech Library, Four Oaks. Come out for story time at the library each Wednesday morning. For more information, call 919-963-6013.

Every Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.

N.C. Pesticide License Certification Preparation Johnston Community College Arboretum This series of classes is intended for landscaping professionals seeking pesticide licensing in North Carolina. Upon completion of this series, participants will be prepared to register for the N.C. Pesticide License Exam. Instruction will focus on the Core Exam and Ornamental and Turf classifications. To register, call Brenda Harris at (919) 209-2522 or email bkharris1@johnstoncc.edu. The cost is \$70.

Every Wednesday, 10 a.m to noon

Smithfield Tadpoles

Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center - Bring your little "tadpoles" to SRAC Splash Park. The cost is \$3 for adult Smithfield residents, and \$2 for residents ages 3-12. The non-resident fee is \$5.50 for adults, and \$4 per child. Each additional child is \$3. For more information, call 919-934-1408.

Friday, Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m.

High School Football Smithfield-Selma at South Johnston

Saturday, Nov. 5, 10 a.m.

Whooooo is That?

Howell Woods, Four Oaks

Learn about the various owl species found in Eastern North Carolina. Participants will dissect owl pellets, learn to identify owl calls and uncover their super senses. The cost is \$15, and preregistration is encouraged. For more information, call 919-938-0115.

Monday, November 7, 6-8 p.m.

Class: Exempt vs. Nonexempt: Hours and Wages Johnston Community College Workforce Development Center Best Wood Drive, Clayton Small business owners can learn to navigate the new rules on exempt and nonexempt employees in this free class. For more information, call Patricia Killette at 919-209-2015 or email her at pwkillette@johnstoncc.edu.

Monday, November 14, 1:30-6 p.m.

Four Oaks Blood Drive

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive at the American Legion Post 346 in Four Oaks. To schedule your appointment visit redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code: "Four Oaks"







MMUNITY CALENDAR

Tuesday, November 15, 4 to 8 p.m.

Explore, Sip & Shop Downtown Four Oaks

Take a tour of downtown businesses and discover what shopping locally in Four Oaks has to offer. For more information, call the Four Oaks Area Chamber of Commerce at (919) 963-4004 or email info@fouroaksareachamber.com.

Saturday, Nov. 19, 4 p.m.

Intro to Camping — cold weather series Howell Woods.

This is the perfect opportunity to introduce our younger generation to their natural environment while enjoying a recreational experience. Staff will be on site demonstrating how to use camping equipment and set up an efficient camp site for winter. Participants are also welcome to camp in one of our group camp sites and enjoy a camp fire supper followed with S'mores. Please bring your own camp gear. Cost is \$10 per family, and registration is requested. For more information, call 919-938-0115.

Friday, Nov. 25, 11 a.m.

Food pantry, Lighthouse Christian Fellowship, Hwy. 210

For details, call John Jernigan at 919-320-7387.

Saturday, Dec. 3, 10 a.m.

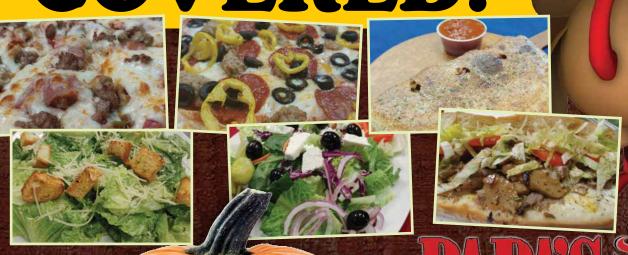
A Walk through the Exhibit Room Howell Woods

This is a guided tour through the Howell Woods museum. Get to know our favorite critters by attending this special program where they will discuss animal names, habitat, diet, and personalities. Also, there is the celebrity star "Elvis" who loves to meet new guests! Cost is \$10 per family, and registration is requested. For more information, call 919-938-0115.

Add your organization's events to the community calendar at JohnstonNow.com or email us at calendar@JohnstonNow.com.



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