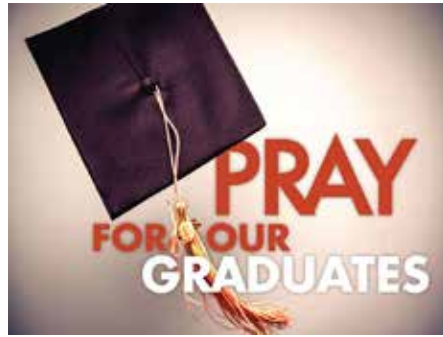


Ardmore
BAPTIST CHURCH
Connecting People with Jesus Christ



Stories are important pieces of experiencing community together. This is especially important when we aren't physically together. We can walk through other's shoes as we read their story and experience life alongside them. This pandemic edition of the *Ardmore Announcer* is built around stories. This month we dive into the experiences of our graduating college

students. College brings an opportunity for students to experience life, develop as a person, and so much more. During this time of life a lot of changes happen, but change is experienced even more strongly when graduating. Graduating from college places students at the threshold of adulthood and another set of unknowns. Graduating during a pandemic brings lots of final experiences being missed, relationships cut off, and a whole set of unknowns for what to do and where to go next. Our college students might not always be visible, but their voices are important ones to hear. We invite you into their world as we share these college graduate stories. We hope this provides perspective, but more than that we hope you better know these students and pray for them each day.

- Dane Martin



Lydia Hudgens is the daughter of Myron and Barbara Hudgens. She graduated from Clemson University with a BS in Accounting.

First and foremost, I feel infinitely privileged to have gotten the chance to go to college in the first place; however, I can't deny certain feelings of melancholy that come with this accomplishment in these times. For such a major life stage, it's had a pretty anti-climactic ending. The past 17 years of my life have been centered around my journey as a student and now, as I'm leaving that behind, nothing and everything feels different. My life feels the same. It feels almost like I'm just on another summer break; I left school for spring break in March and just never went back. I didn't think that would be goodbye for all my friends, classmates, and professors. I suppose it was naive optimism that made me honestly think everything would blow over in 2 weeks, that I would have more time. I feel sadness over the experiences I lost and then, I feel grateful that I don't have bigger problems. The world feels different. It's changing so fast, and yet, it needs to change faster. I'm honored to call myself a college graduate and one day, we'll have that official celebration. One day, it will all feel real. It is great to have something to celebrate, especially today, as I sit and watch the world around me. Today, I pray for those on the front lines. Today, I grieve for those who have been lost, to this virus, and to the senseless violence rampant in our country and our world. This time will never be forgotten by the class of 2020, and should never be forgotten by anyone.

- Lydia Hudgens



Tanner Davis is the son of Branson and Pearl Davis. He graduated from the University of NC - Wilmington with a double major in Finance & Supply Chain Management, and a minor in Leadership.

The weekend of May 9 was lined up to be a special time. Saturday would have been my graduation and Sunday, May 10 was Mother's Day and my sister's 26th birthday. Then we would have been heading to Arizona for a family vacation. Due to the pandemic, a lot of plans changed, including mine. No graduation, no trip, and my sister didn't make it home from Boston. What does a recent unemployed college graduate do in a pandemic? Like most people not much.

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend a great university, was able to be involved in several clubs, lead volunteer events at a homeless shelter, and meet amazing people. Not to mention spending a lot of time at the beach.

The last semester of my senior year I got word classes were being cancelled for an undetermined amount of time. Eventually it was decided classes would be moved online and the campus closed. What just happened? I was looking forward to my last semester of college, spending time at the beach with my friends, and participating in all the different graduation celebrations. Now I find myself at home with my parents. I can't go out to eat, I can't go to the gym, there are no sporting events on TV, and I can't get together with my friends.

I like staying in shape so I go for a run in the morning and then work out with weights at home. It has definitely been a challenge with the gyms being closed. Some of my other activities have been: applying for jobs, preparing for interviews, yard work, cleaning, playing video games, and talking with friends online. The only other time I leave the house is to get an *Icee* with my dad!

I would like to thank my church family. I grew up at Ardmore and the values and lessons I learned from so many people in the church are with me today. Thank you for all the prayers, support, and care packages you have sent me while in college. You have been and always will be a big influence in my life.

Despite all that has happened I feel very blessed to be where I am in my life. I'm healthy, I still stay in touch with my friends and family, and my parents have been feeding me very well. I am looking forward to the quarantine being eased so I can enjoy the rest of my summer in Wilmington. By the way, I just found out I landed a job with Vanguard Investment Group in Charlotte.

- Tanner Davis



Campbell Hutcherson is the daughter of Jim and Elizabeth Hutcherson. She graduated from the University of NC - Chapel Hill with a BS in Exercise and Sport Science and a minor in Coaching.

While I know the end of the road is inevitable for me – that moment when I received the news is still etched in my mind. We were on spring break and just came off of an exciting win in Knoxville over Tennessee and moved on to a devastating loss to Lipscomb in Nashville [Campbell was on the women's softball team at UNC-CH]. Our bus was in transit between Nashville and Charlottesville on our way to a series at the University of Virginia. We could tell something was off because the coaches were constantly on the phone and were acting off. We stopped somewhere in Tennessee and they had us all get off the bus so they could discuss matters privately. When we reboarded the bus, they told us that we would not be headed north, but rather we would be headed back to Chapel Hill – the season was over. It was quite hard to comprehend.

Though it was over for the entire team, the underclassmen rallied around the seniors and were amazingly supportive. Although our season was cut short, I am extremely blessed to be able to stay a 5th year to play and experience a true senior season. Upon completing a 5th year, I plan to pursue a career in working with children with special needs.

- Campbell Hutcherson



Caroline Hartley is the daughter of Chris and Laurie Hartley. She graduated from High Point University with a Master in Education in Intellectual Disabilities.

This past year has been an extremely busy year for me. I graduated from High Point University in May of 2019 with a degree in Special Education Adapted Curriculum. The week after I graduated, I began a 5th year Master's in Education program at HPU, specializing in Intellectual Disabilities. While completing my Master's at HPU this school year, I have also been a first year teacher at Meadowlark Elementary School. Teaching all day and then going to school in High Point at night was definitely a challenge, but it has been completely worth it. Completing my Master's degree at home was a very different experience than what I expected, but my professors at HPU did an amazing job making it an easy transition. As far as my teaching job, I can honestly say that I never expected my first year of teaching to end the way it did. My classroom is made up of a group of diverse tiny humans that have taught me so much. Many of my students have disabilities that impact their ability to meaningfully participate in learning through a computer, which has made the shift to online learning very difficult for us. However, watching my students and parents rise to the occasion and overcome all of their obstacles has been so inspiring for me. This year, I have learned that much like the church, school is not just about being in a building. A school is defined by the people who are in it and the learning that takes place. No matter where students are, they are still capable of learning and growing as humans. I have truly been able to see just how true this statement is, being both a student and a teacher during this pandemic. I pray for continued health and for my second year of teaching to end in a much less eventful way.

- Caroline Hartley



Emily Brooks is the daughter of Steve and Donna Brooks. She graduated from Appalachian State University with a BS in Exercise Science.

If someone had told me in March that when I left for spring break I would never be returning to Appalachian State as a student again, I would've said they were lying. I surely never expected that the last four years would come to such a lackluster and unceremonious end via Zoom as I took my last final while sitting in my bedroom. At first I was shocked but I was also hopeful that maybe after Easter I would be able to return to campus and my days would once again be spent hanging out on campus with my classmates, discussing our future plans and my nights would be spent studying and hanging out with my best friends. However, as the coronavirus rapidly spread through our nation, I came to the difficult realization that we would not be returning to normal anytime soon. As time went on I couldn't help but think all of the things I should be doing and all of the memories I was missing out on. I was so angry when I found out my graduation would be cancelled because that was the pinnacle of what I had been working towards for the last four years. I was sad that my family wouldn't get to see me walk across the stage and celebrate the milestone and accomplishment I had worked so hard for.

I also felt a sense of guilt mixed with a little bit of selfishness. I knew there were way bigger problems afflicting our world and I wasn't blind to the fact that there were more important things happening around me. However, I came to realize that it was okay to take time to process everything that I was feeling while also being sad for those who were suffering in ways that were different and more significant than me.

Despite the things that coronavirus took away from me, nothing can take away my hard work, experiences, friendships, and memories from the last four years. Even though it may have been hard to see at first, I trust that God's plan is perfect and He is good no matter what and I have come to find a lot of peace in the recent days.

- Emily Brooks

ARDMORE ANNOUNCER is published monthly by Ardmore Baptist Church, Inc., 501 Miller Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27103. Publication Number USPS 545780.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Ardmore Announcer, 501 Miller Street, W-S, NC 27103-3610.
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Sarah Katherine Todd is the daughter of David and Margaret Todd. She graduated from Mississippi State University with a BS in Accounting.



Victor Brown is the grandson of Geraldine Yancey and the godson of Carol Polk and Sylvia Pickett. He graduated from University of NC - Chapel Hill with a major in Political Science and minors in Business and Biology.



Grace Elizabeth Cain is the granddaughter of Richard and Karen Cain. She graduated from Davidson College with a major in English and minor in Religious Studies. Grace will attend Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA in the fall for a MDiv.

Gifts Have Been Given

March 1 - June 14

In Memory of:

Carolyn Carter
Brooke Crist
James Hagaman
Marian Hampton
Marvin Henderson
Ruby Henderson
Edith Hicks
Louise Jones
Henry Mize
Lois Ragsdale
Phyllis Shek
Bill Springer
LaVon Thomas
Jane Tilson

In Honor of:

Helen Baker
Reg Banner
Evalyn & Richard Bell
Sandra Bovender
Charlie Bumgarner
Catie Cash
Courtney Cash
Glendora Epperson
Ray & Vicki Freeman
Amy Gallaher
Jean Phillips Group
Maryan Lather
Bea McRae
Barbara Mowery

Jan Overman
Dottie Petree
Carol Polk
Colon Putnam
Sandy Simmons
Patty Stockner
Matthew & Kelly Trenchard
Christy Van Nostrand
Carolyn & Barry Tilley;
and Elizabeth Tilley
Alice Wilson
Handicrafters Ministry
The Class of 2020
Ministers & Support Staff