

**GREENE COUNTY**

# First Presbyterian bringing Dickens' Christmas to life

As we prepare for Christmas this year, it's not hard at all to think back to Christmases past. Do you remember the 1938 or 1984 film adaptations of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol?" Perhaps you've attended one of the many stage productions based on his book? Or, have you ever wondered what it would be like to experience Christmas in Dickens' time?

Well, on Sunday evening, Dec. 17, you'll have that chance. The First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro is having a special service at 5:30 p.m. that day to bring Christmas in Dickens' time – the 1840s – to life.

Preparations already are underway to transform the church back 180

years. As few as possible electric lights will be used, with atmospheric authenticity lighting being provided by candles. Also, during the service, only hymns and carols known to parishioners in the 1840s will be sung.

Meg Jackson Clark is the First Presbyterian minister, but no female pastors existed in the 1840s, so arrangements have been made to bring in special guest preacher Alex Stevens for this event. Stevens was the church's interim pastor seven years ago.

To add to the realism, Stevens will be dressing the part and preaching a real Christmas sermon from 1843. He said he's excited about the opportunity and looking

forward to being part of the event.

Outside, there will be carolers dressed in early Victorian outfits welcoming attendees with period Christmas carols. Upon entering the church, parishioners will be met by authentically dressed greeters. This will truly be an exciting experience for the entire family. A free-will offering also will be received in support of the Greene County Food Pantry.

We hope to see you Sunday, Dec. 17 at 5:30 p.m., for an authentic Dickens Christmas experience at the First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro, at 117 S. Main St., Greensboro, next to the Post Office.

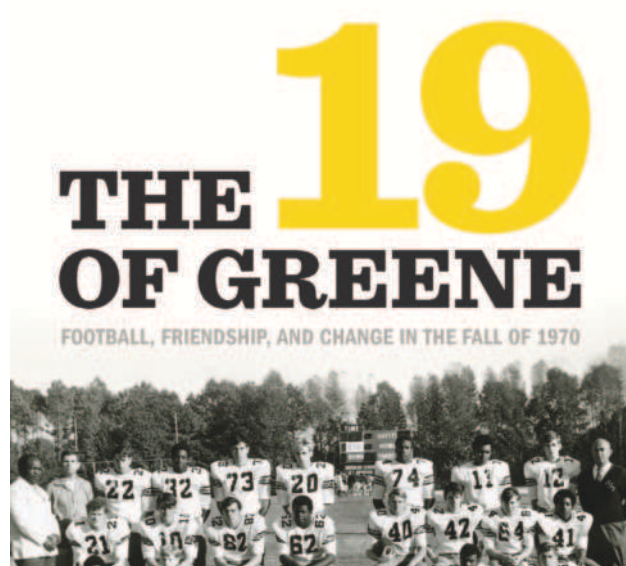
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With both sporting period-correct attire, Rev. Meg Jackson Clark is assisted down the church steps by Spencer Hinds.

CONTRIBUTED

**PUTNAM COUNTY**



## Book review: *The 19 of Greene*

"Transported ... that's the word ... I was utterly transported!"

I found myself repeating those words as I pondered this book review of *The 19 of Greene* by Tony Barnhart. I am not exaggerating. I really was taken back to another world, one that no longer exists.

High school football, for those who have lived and breathed it, is a rite of passage. For many, the only such ritual available today. Players are coached, not only by the designated coach, but by the barber, preacher, music instructor, filling station attendant, waitress, and maybe a cheerleader or two. The team becomes the unconscious symbol of its often-small community. This occurs all over America.

Add the element of earliest racial integration in the South and the plot

thickens in a hurry. Tony and his unusual new buddies were the first integrated team in the history of Greene County, Georgia. The year was 1970.

Embarking on the time travel so cleverly framed and masterfully written by Tony came on me without warning. We had shared an existence more than a half-century ago in the locker rooms and gridirons of middle Georgia, with Tony at Greene County and me at College Park.

Huge difference, I was 11 years ahead of him – we did not integrate. His evocation of every player on that small (19 teammates!) team and each coach is brilliant and becomes a page-turner as the reader becomes a big fan of all concerned.

In the midst of the horror of racism and the collision of societal

forces they could not understand, those 19 kids accomplished the improbable: they mastered the miracle of "team." Regardless of pigmentation, selfish desires were discarded because each player decided he would not let his teammates down.

I was engrossed, wishing we had integrated. I experienced it in the NFL, where men like Vince Lombardi had been the visionaries who would not tolerate racism. In this case, the coaches and teenage males had to make the leap, and we are blessed to have such a beautiful expression of the heroic job they did.

Thank you from our hearts, Tony Barnhart. You gave us a great book, and more importantly, helped us all to be better people.

Tony Barnhart will be the December "Meet

the Author" presenter on his new book, *The 19 of Greene: Football, Friendship, and Change in the Fall of 1970*. The event will be held Tuesday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30) at Georgia Writers Museum (109 S. Jefferson Ave., Eatonton).

Tailgate-style barbecue refreshments will be served at the event. Tickets are \$45, or \$40 each for two or more tickets, with a table for six available for \$200 (saving \$40). Call Georgia Writers Museum at 706-991-5119 or visit online at [georgiawritersmuseum.org](http://georgiawritersmuseum.org) for tickets and to pre-order a copy of Barnhart's new book.

Bill Curry was the head football coach of Georgia Tech, University of Alabama, University of Kentucky, Georgia State, and a football analyst for ESPN.

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**PUTNAM COUNTY**

## EFD Christmas Toy Fund

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Each year, All Angels Episcopal Church in Eatonton is a significant supporter of the Eatonton Fire Department's Christmas Toy Fund. Church members James Marshall (left) and D.J. Prince presented a \$2,090 check Nov. 21 to EFD volunteer firefighter Joey Davis (center) as All Angels' contribution to this year's toy fund to help make Christmas morning just a bit brighter for some less fortunate children in our community.

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