

TCHS Class of 2025 shines at graduation

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County High School Class of 2025 has done it! On Friday, May 23, 66 students walked in the procession, shook hands with school leadership, received their diplomas, turned their tassels and threw their caps, commemorating one of life's watershed moments.

Class President Loftin Turpin opened the ceremony inside Frank McClure Memorial Stadium, thanking family and friends, teachers, the School Board, Dr. and Mrs. Berrong and High School Principal Bryan Thomason for all their help and support during their journeys to the big stage.

"Know that this is not the end – this is just the beginning," Turpin said. "This is our moment. Before we turn our tassels, let's take a moment to

appreciate the importance of tonight, possibly the last time we will all be together as the Class of 2025.

"Graduates, it has been an honor to serve as your class president. May God bless you and always keep you in His grace."

Class Historian Jada Reynolds spoke to the memories the class had created together and the significance of growing up as a cohesive group collectively experiencing change that has been at once frightening and inevitable, anticipated and dreaded.

"Now, I remember more than ever how once we were those kids watching the seniors walking through the halls and thinking how far away that seemed," Reynolds said. "But look at us now. Some of these memories are embarrassing, some are hurtful and some are heartwarming, but beyond the surface they all teach us some-

thing.

"They remind us to dance, even on rainy days. They teach us to persevere and to keep being excited over the little things. Most importantly, they teach us to keep creating memories, because one day you may look back, and those memories may be what pushes you to keep going."

Salutatorian Ansleigh Hardin centered her message on the importance of living in the moment, noting first that "there aren't many other schools in the state of Georgia where everyone works hard to touch the lives of their students."

"We've been blessed to be here," Hardin said. "As we move forward through this uncertain time in our lives not knowing really where we are headed or what life really has in store for us, I pray we will appreciate the 'now,' instead

It was a beautiful night Friday – perfect for celebrating the Towns County High Class of 2025 graduation.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Congressmen write TVA with concerns over plans

Seniors prepare to enter world faithful of heart

News Special

GAINESVILLE, Ga. – On Wednesday, May 21, Reps. Andrew Clyde (GA-09) and Chuck Edwards (NC-11) sent a letter to Tennessee Valley Authority President and CEO Don Moul advocating for a sensible approach to address Chatuge Dam spillway safety concerns.

Additionally, the lawmakers requested critical information central to the modifications, including the TVA's completed risk assessment and a comprehensive economic impact analysis of each proposal.

Reps. Clyde and Edwards highlighted the potential economic impacts that TVA's current proposals would have on their communities:

"We are writing to express our grave concern regarding the proposed Chatuge Dam Spillway Safety Modifications at Lake Chatuge, which is located in both of our districts. While we recognize the critical importance of ensuring the safe operation of Chatuge Dam – and safeguarding the many residents living in the valleys below – we urge you to carefully consider



**U.S. Rep Andrew Clyde
Georgia's 9th District**

the potential economic impacts that any lake drawdowns would have on the residents and small business owners of the mountain communities of Hiawassee, Georgia, and Hayesville, North Carolina. These towns and surrounding mountain communities rely heavily on Lake Chatuge's recreational tourism during the summer months to sustain their rural economies."

The lawmakers detailed how devastating a potential lake drawdown would be for North Georgia and Western North Carolina:

"...the proposals out-

lined by the TVA for potential repairs include lake drawdowns to an elevation as low as 1,908 feet – 10 feet below the normal winter pool – for the entire duration of the construction project, with some proposals expected to last as long as eight years. Such drawdowns would devastate the rural, mountain economies of surrounding towns, including Hiawassee, Georgia, and Hayesville, North Carolina – leading to the shuttering of small businesses, the displacement of rural workers, and the upending of these communities for decades to come. For example, a 2021 assessment by the University of Georgia found that Towns County's tourism-related output was \$117.4 million, supporting 1,362 jobs or approximately 24% of county employment, and generated \$30.8 million in wages."

Additionally, the lawmakers shared their constituents' serious concerns about the TVA's proposals:

"Residents across Towns County, Georgia, and Clay County, North Carolina, have contacted our offices to

Macedonia Baptist Church welcomed seniors the Sunday before graduation to inspire them in faith ahead of their upcoming travels in life.

Photo by Shelly Knight

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County High School seniors attended the annual Baccalaureate Service on Sunday, May 18, at Macedonia Baptist Church. Family and friends packed the pews to proudly observe their young loved ones participate in the

spiritual rite of passage ahead of graduation on Friday.

Macedonia Youth Pastor Donnie Jarrard opened by thanking God for the opportunity to watch the students grow and mature before turning the event over to Zane Floyd and Laura Mauldin to "give you some words of wisdom for your first year in college or technical school."

"For those of you who don't know us, we both graduated from Towns County at this time last year and sat exactly where you are now," Floyd said. "I went to the University of North Georgia to pursue a degree in middle grades education. I changed

Paul Smith swears in as next Hiawassee PD Chief

GBI concludes twins died from self-inflicted injuries

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, May 21, Hiawassee Mayor Jay Chastain Jr. swore in new Police Chief Paul Smith at City Hall.

Smith is returning as Top Cop of Hiawassee after departing for various reasons in December 2022. His son Jacob held a copy of the U.S. Constitution as he took his oath of office, with his wife Michelle looking on proudly.

"I am ecstatic," Smith said of his return. "I have always had the desire to serve the community. That started when I was in Boy Scouts. My whole life has been in servitude to the greater good.



Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith, center, was delighted to have his wife Michelle and son Jacob attend his swearing-in last week.

Photo by Shelly Knight

When I heard that Chief (Jeremy) Parker was resigning, I talked about it with my wife and son and decided this was the correct choice for me, and so I applied for the job."

See *Police Chief Smith*, Page 5

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation will soon be closing its case involving 19-year-old twin brothers found shot to death atop Bell Mountain in March, with an official determination that their fatal injuries were self-inflicted.

On Wednesday, May 21, GBI announced the conclusion of its "comprehensive investigation" into the tragic deaths of Qadir Malik Lewis and Naazir Rahim Lewis, both of Gwinnett County.

"Based on the results of the medical examiner's autopsy and other investigative findings, their deaths have been ruled suicide-suicide. GBI agents have met with the Lewis family to share the findings," GBI said.

As background, family members believed the brothers had taken an out-of-state flight on March 7, but hikers found the men deceased on Bell Mountain in Hiawassee – about 90 miles north of their

Lawrenceville home – on Saturday, March 8.

Initially, the GBI said it was investigating the situation as a "murder-suicide," but the evidence in the case brought investigators to the conclusion that "the injuries causing their deaths were self-inflicted." GBI shared some of this evidence last week.

"Cellular location data has established a timeline of their location from their home in Gwinnett County to Bell Mountain," GBI said. "In the video that corresponds to those locations, the Lewis brothers are seen alone.

"Only one brother (Naazir) went to the airport on March 7, 2025. He never caught the flight and returned home. Records show Naazir is the only person that had an airline ticket.

"Records show Naazir purchased ammunition used in the gun. The ammunition was delivered to his home on March 5, 2025.

"Internet history from their phones showed searches

for how to load a gun, suicide rates in 2024, and other related searches.

"Forensic evidence showed that the Lewis brothers fired a gun."

Once the investigation is formally ended in the coming weeks, GBI will be releasing a copy of the investigative file via its Records Request Center at <https://gbi.georgia.gov>.

EDITOR'S NOTE – In the U.S., the national suicide and crisis lifeline is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org. The Georgia Crisis & Access Line is available as well 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 800-715-4225.

14 Pages



Vol. 96 No. 31

Arrests - 2
Chamber - 11
Church - 8
Classifieds - 13

Opinion - 4
Legals - 13
Obits - 9

Lake Levels

Blue Ridge 1,687.22
Chatuge 1,926.32
Nottely 1,777.53

Tax Commissioner to Speak May 30 See Page 2

Hiawassee Budget Adoption June 3 See Page 5

Early Voting Continues Thru June 13 See Page 6



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**United
Community**

Police Chief Smith...from Page 1

And the feeling on his return is mutual.

“We are blessed to have Paul back as a part of what I look at as our family,” Chastain said. “I could not be happier.”

Speaking of family, Smith said he has known Chastain since he was himself a small boy.

“I grew up on the same street he lives on,” Smith said. “His father was the sheriff, and his son is a deputy. I watched his son grow up. Jay’s a paramedic. There is a long history of public service in that family. I know that Jay and I will work really well together. It’s a moral and ethical match.

“I grew up here in Hiawassee. I met my wife in high school, and we both went to Kennesaw State University, where I studied criminal justice. I graduated at the top of my class.

“In 2006, a mentor at

the college suggested I apply to the Cobb County Police Department, and I worked there for three years. About that time, my wife and I decided to move back to Hiawassee, so I applied at the Towns County Sheriff’s Office and worked there for a year.

“But my ultimate goal was to work for my hometown police department. In 2010, I joined the force and advanced through the ranks over the years as there were openings. I stepped into the chief’s role in 2017 and held that position until December of 2022.

“At that time, I was having moral and ethical disagreements with the previous mayor and decided to make a change. I opened my own business called Chatuge Woodsmith Company.

“I’ve always been a woodworker – word carving, whittling, totem poles and laser woodcutting. I started doing computer woodwork, de-

signing my own maps. I do all the work from start to finish.

“So, for the past two years while I’ve been away from law enforcement, I’ve been growing my business. That business has grown very well and is mostly self-sufficient now, so that will allow me to be more present here for the city.”

Smith outlined the current state of the department, which has four full-time officers and several part-time individuals, “but the goal is to have five full-time officers.”

“Initially, I will be doing shift work along with everyone else,” Smith said. “Our new communication system is up and running. We’re still learning it, but it is in place. We have new laptops in all the cars that Chief Parker had purchased, and the software is running on them great. It’s going to be a very beneficial tool.

“It has features that will

ensure more safety for the officers, and it will speed up the traffic stop process so we’re not on the side of the road so long. Officers can be tracked by GPS so the other officers know everyone’s location at all times and can respond immediately if another officer needs assistance.”

The new chief reiterated his excitement to be returning to lead Hiawassee PD as “a part of this family again.”

“Since what occurred in Ferguson and the George Floyd incident, I’ve seen that, in general, there is less trust in the police – sometimes deservedly so,” Smith said. “We are all human, and we all mess up, but it is our job to ensure that we earn the public’s trust.

“We serve the public. We are here at their will. Without that trust, we can’t do our job. While we live in an area where people have great respect for the police, not everyone feels that way. I just want to see Hiawassee be the leader in professionalism and in servitude to our community.”

Local Lions Look Forward To New Scottish Festival



Georgia Mountain Manager Hilda Thomason, Wendy Beyer, Lions Program Director Kathy Carlson, and Greg Beyer

During the May 13 meeting, the Towns County Lions hosted the husband and wife team of Greg and Wendy Beyer who updated the club on the changes and improvements they’re excited about as the directors of the former 18 year old annual Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games held previously at Meeks Park and its move this June 7–8 to its new home location at the Fairgrounds in Hiawassee to become the new Georgia Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games.

The Beyers are enthused about how the additional room and space that the Fairgrounds provide will allow the Festival to grow and offer a more diverse, expanded, and larger event for years to come.

Plans for this year’s edition include 44 registered Clans, 65 athletes, 39 artisans, and 7 bagpipe and drum groups, to name just a few of the new developments. It promises to be one of the most authentic and interesting events on the Fairgrounds annual entertainment calendar as “a wee bit of Scotland in the North Georgia mountains”.

The Georgia Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, and for more information, the phone number is 833-272-6884 and the website is GaMtnScottishFestival.org. Please look for the activities schedule on both the Fair and Festival websites.

TVA Repair Plans...from Page 1

express serious concerns about the potential economic impacts of the TVA’s proposed lake drawdowns on their small businesses and financial futures.

“One constituent shared how the proposed drawdown would diminish the time they cherish with friends and family on the lake. A local business owner, whose livelihood depends on Lake Chatuge’s seasonal tourism, wrote about the devastating economic consequences an eight-year drawdown would have for Towns County: ‘Implementing a drawdown of this magnitude and duration threatens to eliminate thousands of jobs... bankrupt numerous businesses... [and] erode the tax base.’”

In closing, Reps. Clyde and Edwards requested critical information central to the TVA’s spillway modification proposals:

“Specifically, we request that the Tennessee Valley Authority: Publish the TVA’s completed risk assessment of the Chatuge Dam; Commission a comprehensive economic impact analysis for

each proposal outlined in the April 2025 Notice of Intent (NOI); Explore mitigation measures that would minimize economic harm, such as restricting drawdowns to recreation off-seasons.

“We further ask that the TVA maintain full transparency in its communications with our offices and with the residents of surrounding communities throughout the Lake Chatuge dam modification process. We look forward to working with local officials, stakeholders, and TVA to reach the best solution that effectively balances the safety of spillway operations and the continued economic prosperity of our mountain communities.”

BACKGROUND

A recent TVA study identified a key vulnerability in the spillway of Chatuge Dam. While the conditions of the current spillway are not an emergency, the TVA is aiming to improve the safety of the spillway to reduce the risk of the dam’s long-term operations. The TVA study

has judged the spillway at Chatuge Dam exhibits some of the vulnerabilities that led to the damage and failure of the Oroville Dam spillway in California. To address the issue, the agency announced four potential alternatives for a long-term solution.

Last month, Rep. Clyde visited the Chatuge Dam with Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, Towns County EMA Director Marty Roberts, and members of Rep. Chuck Edwards’ staff to meet with Tennessee Valley Authority officials and discuss the TVA’s proposed plans to address spillway safety concerns.

Additional information on the Tennessee Valley Authority receiving public input on Chatuge Dam safety modifications can be found at <https://www.tva.com/chatuge>.

Details on the TVA’s notice of intent, including proposed plans, is available in the Federal Register at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/21/2025-06830/chatuge-dam-safety-modifications>.

3rd Annual Georgia State Fiddlers Convention returns to Union County Fine Arts Center June 21



We are excited to announce that the Georgia State Fiddlers Convention will return to the Union County Fine Arts Center in Blairsville, GA June 21, 2025. Admission is \$5.

The event will begin with registration at 8 AM and competition starting at 9 AM. There is no entry fee for con-

testants. In addition to junior and senior fiddler, other categories include banjo, mandolin, flat picking guitar, finger style guitar, old time banjo, bluegrass band, dulcimer, dobro, twelve and under beginning fiddle, and twelve and under beginner musician other than fiddle. Over \$7,000 in prize money will be awarded. We expect participants from around the southeastern region and the competition to be exciting and entertaining! In addition to the music competition there will also be crafts and food vendors.

The event’s purpose is to showcase musical talent and preserve the rich cultural

heritage of the region while providing economic benefit to the community. As a tax exempt 501c3 the event is dependent on sponsorships for prize money and operating expenses. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution it can be mailed to Georgia State Fiddlers Convention P.O. Box 370 Hiawassee, GA 30546. If you are interested in volunteering email Georgiafiddlersconvention@gmail.com.

For additional information including rules and judges as well as advance contestant registration visit: <https://georgiastatefiddlersconvention.org>.

TCHS Class of 2025...from Page 1



Frank McClure Memorial Stadium filled up May 23 to witness 66 graduates receive their hard-earned diplomas.

of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

“The present can be challenging because it looks different for each of us as we travel our own paths. Today is not just about chasing dreams; it’s about spending time with friends and families, building bonds and making connections within the moment.

“These moments are where life happens. They are

more than just steps into our future. They are the times to connect with each other, right here, right now.

“Rather than focusing solely on the transition into college, I intend to prioritize time with friends and families this summer and embrace opportunities for spontaneous experiences. Taking in a late-night movie, hiking with friends, swimming after dark,

one last time before we all head off to college.

“I encourage you all to do the same. Make time with the people that matter and leave room for fun and unexpected experiences this summer. If we’re too focused on what the future has in store, we’re going to miss these moments together. Today is a gift. Allow yourself to live within it fully.”

Finally, Valedictorian

Drew Livingston rounded out the graduation speeches with a forward-looking focus.

“It is an honor to speak to you all tonight,” she said. “I’ve grown up loved and supported not only by my family but by my community as well. I came to Hiawassee when I was 9 years old, and I was immediately accepted within the school system and the recreational sports.

“This town has shaped me as a student, an athlete and an individual. This is true for all of us. This is where we’ve grown. This is where we complained when we had to take three-hour bus rides for soccer games, but now we wish we could play one more time.

“Tonight, I feel the weight of all we’ve shared – the lessons, the laughter and the moments that made us. But I also feel the pull of what’s ahead.

“What if we stop fearing failure? Find what gives you purpose and what will make you happy, not just for a fleeting moment but for the long term. Determine the life you want and go after it. I’ve learned that in order to achieve success you must be willing to step out of your comfort zone, and you must also be willing to ask for help.

“But be kind to yourself. You will drop the ball, you will fail, you will fall down. You have to learn how to forgive yourself or you’ll never recover. The key is to forgive yourself when you fall short of your expectations.

“So, Class of 2025, no



Drew Livingston delivered an inspired Valedictory Address urging her fellow graduates to embrace their futures and be ready to forgive themselves for mistakes.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

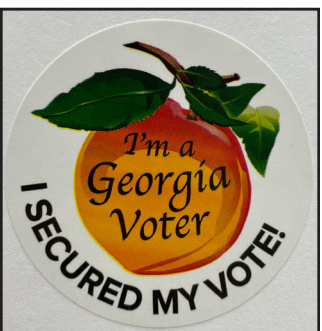
matter what it is that you envision for yourself, I hope you make it happen. Congratulations!”

As made clear by Principal Thomason, the Class of 2025 was exceptional by many standards, including in the realm of scholarships, with 58 awarded for a total of

\$774,035.

“That was \$70,000 above what was awarded last year,” Thomason said. “This is the best school system in the state of Georgia – anywhere, really – and these remarkable students are a product of it, of loving parents and a loving community.”

Early in-person voting running now thru June 13 for Special Election



By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Tuesday marked the first day of in-person early voting for the Special Primary Election set for June 17.

The Special Primary is a statewide contest to decide which political party candidates for the Georgia Public

Service Commission will advance as nominees for the follow-up Special General Election in November.

Republican and Democratic candidates are vying for two seats on the five-member commission, which regulates certain utilities in Georgia.

According to psc.ga.gov, the Public Service Commission regulates rates for electricity, natural gas and telecommunications, with “exclusive power to decide what are fair and reasonable rates for services under its jurisdiction.”

As to the question of jurisdiction, the PSC does not regulate rates for electric membership co-ops like the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, but it does exercise responsibility over some EMC matters

involving territorial disputes and financing.

Excluded from regulation by the PSC are butane gas, cable television, cellular telephones, long-distance telephone service, propane gas, sewer services, water services and interstate transportation.

Because this is an off-year special election, officials across the state are concerned about voter turnout. In recent years, Towns County has enjoyed one of the highest turnout rates in the state – if not the highest – and local election officials are hopeful that people will turn up to vote.

Election Day is Tuesday, June 17, and there will be three weeks of early in-person voting running weekdays between Tuesday, May 27, and Friday,

June 13. Early voting will also include two weekend voting opportunities: Saturday, May 31, and Saturday, June 7.

All in-person early voting takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. inside the Towns County Civic Center, located in the same building as the Elections Office at 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee.

Primary voters who decide to wait until Election Day to cast their ballots will need to head to their predetermined voting precincts between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Tuesday, June 17.

Towns County has two voting precincts: the Hiawassee Precinct at the Civic Center and the Young Harris Precinct in the Stephens Lodge Hall Building at 135 Murphy

Street.

For people voting absentee-by-mail, ballots may be requested at the Elections Office now through Friday, June 6. Absentee ballot applications can be returned by mail, fax, as an email attachment, or in person at the Elections Office.

Absentee ballots began mailing to households on May 27. They can be returned using the official Elections Office drop box during early voting hours; mailed back in plenty of time to be counted after polls close on Election Day; or dropped off at the Elections Office through 7 p.m. Election Day.

The deadline to register to vote in this election was Monday, May 19.

Residents may visit

<https://mvp.sos.ga.gov> for mail-in application and ballot status, poll location, registration information on file with the county, sample ballots for upcoming elections, provisional ballot status and more.

The Special General Election to follow the primary will be Tuesday, Nov. 4, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Also Nov. 4 is the regularly scheduled Municipal General Election to fill two seats on the Hiawassee City Council as well as the Hiawassee mayoral position. This municipal election will only be available to residents of Hiawassee.

People with election-related questions may call the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration at 706-896-4353.

Journeys in Faith...from Page 1

my mind about that, and now I don't know what I am going to do.

"In this next chapter, you'll meet lots of new people, some good, some not. It's important that you choose who you surround yourself with. I found a Christian ministry and intramurals, and that helped me make good friends."

Floyd encouraged his younger peers to find a group to belong to, because "it is critical to have a support system," but he advised them to make

sure that group "aligns with your values and your faith."

"This next chapter comes with a lot of freedom that you haven't experienced before," Floyd said. "Don't feel pressure to change what you stand for. Don't fall for temptations that don't align with your faith and beliefs. Remember, it's always OK to say no."

Above all, Floyd urged the soon-to-be graduates to trust in God as they journey forth into the unknown – just

as he did the year before.

"This is a special time in your life," Floyd said. "You'll make memories and friendships and maybe even find a passion. Take it seriously, but don't forget to laugh and explore and enjoy the journey."

"Know that God will always love you, even when you do fail. Deuteronomy 31:8 says, 'And the Lord is the one that will go before you. He will not leave you nor forsake you. Do not fear, do not be dismayed.'"



TCHS Class of 2024 members Laura Mauldin and Zane Floyd spoke in the baccalaureate to put the Class of 2025's minds at ease about life after graduation and to instill in them the importance of continuing to follow Jesus. Photo by Shelly Knight

Complaint leads to drug investigation, meth arrest

News Special

YOUNG HARRIS – Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Investigators conducted a monthlong surveillance and concentrated patrol in a drug complaint area, which led to a traffic stop on Wednesday, May 21.

Information was obtained that resulted in probable cause to search a residence on Woods Grove Road. During the search, an amount of sub-

stance that field-tested positive for meth was confiscated.

James Harrell Moore III, 44, of Young Harris, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine, felony possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, and misdemeanor possession and use of drug-related objects.

All subjects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



James Harrell Moore III

Like Floyd, Class of 2024 graduate Laura Mauldin hit the ground running a year ago with a plan – to attend Piedmont University to pursue a degree in nursing. And also like Floyd, she quickly learned that plans have a tendency to change.

"I have changed my major three times," Mauldin said. "I'm now going to attend Young Harris in the fall, and neither one of us know what we want to study or even what we want to do after college."

"But that's OK. That's what college is for. It's a place to explore, learn and figure out what you want to do and who you want to do it alongside."

Mauldin shared other lessons she has learned since graduating high school, such as failure being an important part of learning, and that growing comfortable in a routine or course of action means "you are not changing, learning or growing."

"Exactly one year ago I was sitting where you are, and I was comfortable," Mauldin said. "I would have said that I had the next five years of my life all planned out. I was content that the people I love the most would still be here tomorrow. My Bible was on my bedside gathering dust."

"Man was I humbled. Now I'm eager to read my Bible each day, and I'm missing people I would dearly love to call just one more time. I may not know what I'm going to do, but I am growing, learning and changing."

"I encourage you to take the opportunities that scare you the most. Do the things that you never thought you could. Tell the people you love that you love them. Stay strong and true to your faith and don't become content where you stand. Change is a blessing in disguise."

She left the seniors with the message of Philippians 4:19, "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

"Remember that God is always with you, and He loves you," Mauldin said. "If it's big enough to worry about, pray about it. Congratulations, graduates."

McConnell Baptist Youth Pastor Andrew Rogers, himself a Towns County graduate of 10 years prior, also spoke words of encouragement to the students, impart-

ing a similar message that faith in God can be the unchanging constant in uncertain times.

"The deal is that when you think you've got it all figured out, you don't, and you come to learn even more," Rogers said. "I changed my major as a junior. I thought I'd be an actor, and then I switched to ministry."

"Then I moved to Atlanta, and then I moved to Peachtree City, and in between there I moved like nine times. And now I moved back here, which I said I would never do. Life moves so fast. It feels like yesterday that I was sitting here where you are."

"Reading a book recently, I picked up some important advice I want to share with you. I can't, He can, and I think I'll let Him. That's one of the most important things I want you to hold on to. The author listed many examples – I can't cure my cancer, I can't fix my family, I can't find a job, I can't run the show. You

can't. But He can. All you have to do is let Him."

Jarrard returned to conclude the service, and he reiterated that the seniors were about to be leaving the protection of their caring community to enter a world full of temptations. Sometimes they will feel alone on their journeys, but he wanted them to know that is never truly the case.

"You're never alone if you've got Christ," Jarrard said. "God loves you. Psalms 139 says God knows you intimately – your every thought and hope and dream so that you can face any trial. He always loves you."

"No matter where you go, God loves you. When you make a bad decision, God loves you. And so do we. You can always call us, and we will always be there."

Pastor Jarrard ended the heartfelt event by asking the congregation to pray for the futures of the Towns County High School Class of 2025.