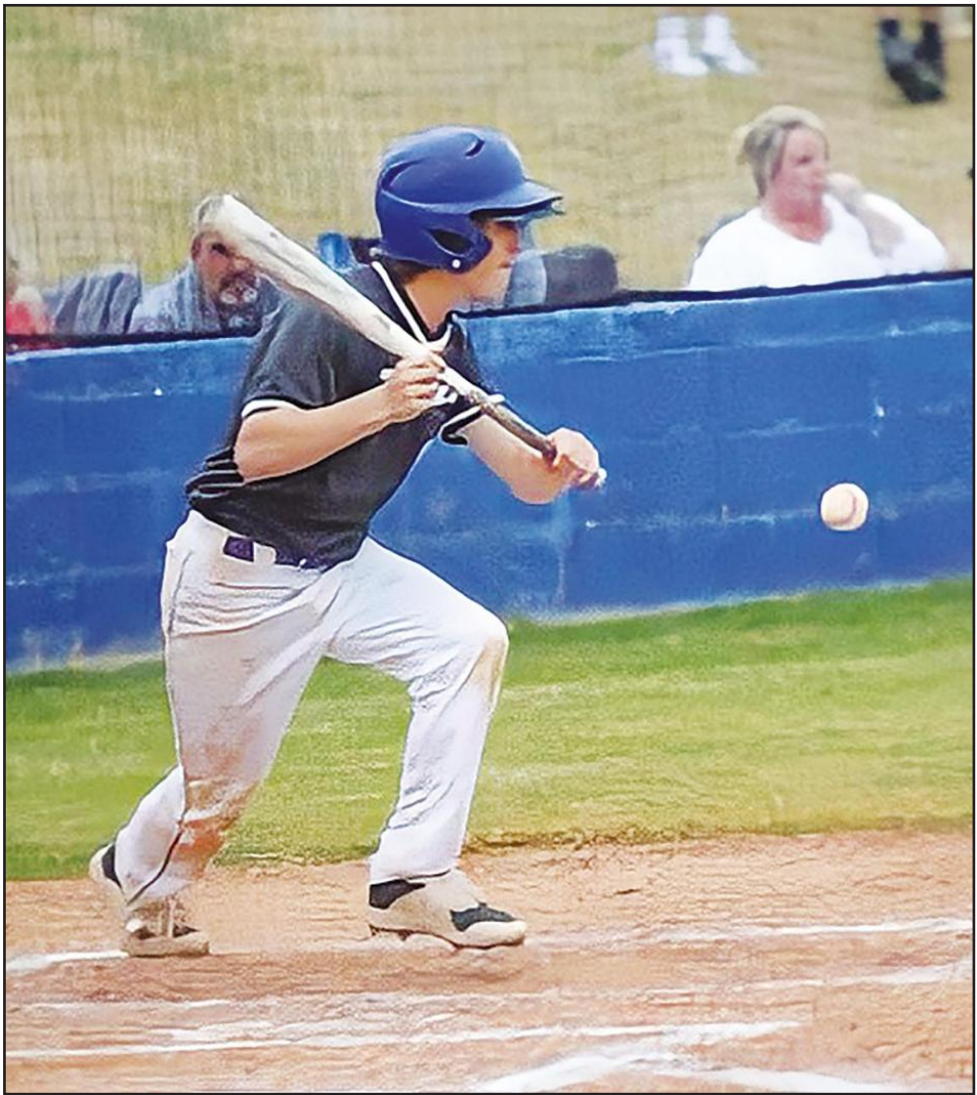


Trojans back on the diamond



Noah Steen sliding home.

(Photo by Kevin Brunt.)



Mason Wiysel bunting.

(Photo by Kevin Brunt.)



Barrett Fondren pitching.

(Photo by Kevin Brunt.)

Central Holmes Christian School played a doubleheader against JZ George at home Friday, March 12. Central Holmes won both games, 11-8 and 5-0.



Why Jesus Came: He Is Greater Than the Ashes

By Debbie McDaniel

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” Isaiah 61:1-3

Throughout the Bible and ancient practices, ashes have often been the symbol of deep repentance and grief. As the days of Lent are acknowledged each year, we see all around us the visual reminders of ashes on foreheads, and are reminded of this one Truth, “...for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Genesis 3:19

Not exactly a nice thought to get your day going. But the reality of it all sinks in deep. Because, as many of us know, life is not always “happy.” Sometimes, it’s difficult. We feel pain, loneliness, even deep grief and despair. You may understand if... - You’ve ever lost a loved one or had to say good-bye too soon, left to journey through dark days of grief, wondering if you’d ever be able to carry on without them at your side... - You’ve ever received a hard diagnosis, faced the fear of the unknown, and felt the effects of disease and pain... - You’ve ever set at the bedside of a dying friend, and held a hand that once was strong, whose life had been cut short from the ravages of cancer... - You’ve ever been to a funeral for a sweet baby,

or a precious child, and watched endless tears flow from hurting souls of a Mama and Daddy.... - You’ve ever been deeply wounded, betrayed, abused, or mistreated...

It’s true, life is not always easy. It deals harshly sometimes, it seems unfair, and we may wonder where God is, or why He didn’t stop that difficult event or illness from happening.

Job was there too. This righteous man who loved and honored God. Yet he lost everything. It crumbled around him, all he held dear. And he knew without God, he was nothing. And we find him in the beginning of the book of Job, “...he sat in the ashes.” Job 2:8

Daniel was there. He and the people had suffered under captivity, he prayed to God on behalf of his people, that God would have mercy. He repented, and confessed his own sin, his deep need for Him. He knew where true strength and help came from, “Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.” Daniel 9:3

Tamar was there. She had trusted and yet was betrayed. David’s own daughter had been taken advantage of, then was left on her own, alone, with no hope for her future, to pick up the broken pieces of shattered life. “And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away,

crying aloud as she went.” 2 Samuel 13:19 And in their times of ashes, they may have wondered too...

Where was God in it all? Deep grief, crime, captivity, illness, death of loved ones, shattered hope, and broken dreams?

His Truth says this: He was there, in the midst of it.

And though we may not always see it, or feel it, or even understand it, we can know beyond a doubt, that He is with us now too. Always.

Jesus came to bring life, freedom, restoration, redemption, healing, favor, goodness, joy, and so much more. He came to trade our brokenness and ashes for hope and beauty. He will never waste our pain, but will bring His greater purposes from it all. We can trust Him even in the most difficult of days and know that the ashes on our lives will fade away, as His beauty within us shines brightly through.

Intersecting Faith & Life: Have you sometimes felt as if your life has been marked by ashes, pain, or difficulty? Choose to thank God today, that even in the hard times, He’s with you and has greater purpose and hope in store. Remember, there’s beauty ahead, straight out of ashes. Christ redeems and is greater than anything we may face in this world.

Further Reading: Matthew 28:20 1 John 4:4 Jeremiah 29:11 John 16:33

IN AND
AROUND

LEXINGTON

BY
LEONA (LENA) FIELDS



Betty Levy is in or has been in a hospital. Pray that she is or will be okay. Lately I’ve had all kinds of household problems. When we had the ice storm, my refrigerator went out. It goes off whenever the electricity

goes off for a few days. Last week my telephone played out. I won’t complain. I’ve had the same phone every since 1996 or 1997, but AT&T sent someone to fix my phone. One of my TV’s is acting up. The cable com-