

Grace Baptist Welco

By Mark Byrum

The Messenger

There will be a new resident in the old parsonage come the first of the year.

Following the retirement of longtime minister, the Reverend Calvin W. Freeman effective December 31, the members of the Grace Baptist Church on Route 4, Madison will be receiving their new pastor as of January 1.

That new minister is the Reverend Ralph Edward Jett. He is married, his wife's name is Sherry, and they have two children, Carrie age 10 and Ashley age 6.

The Reverend Jett comes to the area from the Browns Chapel Baptist Church in Pacolet, S.C. He has been an ordained minister since 1975 and has served at six churches since that time.

Jett is a graduate of Gardner-Webb College with a BA degree. He also attended the Southeastern Theological Seminary. He is originally from Spartanburg, S.C.

Reverend Jett and his family will be moving into a totally refurbished parsonage. The men and the women of the church along with the youth have been working for the last month trying to get the parsonage cleaned and painted in time for the Jett's to move into their new home.

"The church has worked steadily, both day and night, to get the house done," said Carson Haizlip, Jr., chairman of the Pastor Search Committee. "We have been very lucky in getting all of this work done by volunteers. We had the ladies and the older folks coming during the day with the youth groups and the men coming to work at night."

The parsonage is immaculate now. There is new paint on all of the walls and all of the ceilings have been redone. The basement has been repainted and everywhere there is the smell of a brand, spanking, new house.

Larry Case, one of the volunteers for the refurbishment, commented, "We have put about as much money into fixing up this house as it probably took to build it. If the full retail amount of the donated fixtures, the time and the labor of all of the volunteers who have worked on the house were calculated, it would probably cost more than the original house cost to build."

There has been a total of four weeks of work that have gone into the house. Ever since the Freemans moved into their new home, the church has been working hard. Estimates have ranged as high as 95 percent of the work was done by the members.

Only two items were left to others. The new carpet that was laid and the new countertops in the kitchen were the only things the church members did not tackle.

The Jett's feel very fortunate to be coming to the Madison area. The church members feel fortunate that he came and took the appointment for Grace Baptist.

"We have been very fortunate to get him," said Pamela Case of the Pastor Search Committee. "He has had four churches to call him about being their minister. There were three others besides us and he felt that he was called to come here."

"I feel that the Lord has opened a lot of doors for us. When we called his home, Rev. Jett was there to take our calls. When we went to visit him and hear him preach, everybody in our group, on the Pastor Search Committee, could go at the same time. Timewise, everything just clicked, one thing right after the other," Case continued.

In that search for the new minister, the church was indeed lucky. When the church advertised for their open position, the North Carolina State Baptist Association had several resumes to send to them. The church was also lucky to



omes New Preacher

attend the State Convention in Greensboro and meet the Rev. Jett for the first time.

Following the resumes, the church narrowed the list of possible candidates to the top five, then the top three. The final two selections were visited and the committee heard the top choice, Rev. Jett preach.

Jett is a very active minister. He has worked with Senior Citizens and with a Hospice during his different pastorates. He also includes the time for enjoying sports. He plays softball and basketball. His wife jogs with him and they both like to get outdoors for most any type of sport or any other outside activity. They do a lot of activities as a family.

They are also a very musical family. Both of the parents and the children sing in choirs and they play the piano. Rev. Jett is a former

Minister of Music from the Franklinton Baptist Church, a previous pastorate.

In coming to the Grace Baptist Church, Rev. Jett and his family have already been accepted into the congregation. An open church meeting was held to meet the Jett's on November 28. He preached to the church on November 29 and was voted on the same day. He received a 99.2 percent approval rating for his confirmation from the church. The job was offered and he accepted.

Reverend Jett and his family will be moving into their new home as of the 28th of December. The family will be ready for their first official Sunday on January 3rd when the Rev. Jett will conduct his first service from the pulpit at Grace Baptist Church.



ynette Easter, Pansy Carter, Patsy Tilley, Marie Wagoner, and Pamela ase have stopped to see the living room of the refurbished parsonage at Grace Baptist Church.

SARAH'S CLASS SCHEDULE

Sweatshirt		
Painting	Jan. 5th	6:30 p.m.
Bowmaking	Jan. 7th	7:00 p.m.
Painting Resin		
Figures	Jan. 12th	6:30 p.m.
Scherenschnitte/ Lampshades	Jan. 14th	6:30 p.m.