GOD’S MIRACLE AT MONTREAT COLLEGE

God has been at work at Montreat College for over 100 years. So it should be no surprise that during an especially difficult time in the college’s history, God made clear that He was not finished using Montreat College for His own glory.

In early 2014, Montreat College faced two options: continue to decline and face potential closure, or have God show up in a big way. The latter happened.

Perhaps you’ve heard the story: In February 2014, after a full year of exploration with Point University regarding a potential merger, those discussions ended with no agreement. With no good options for moving forward with viability, and a high likelihood the college could close in the near term, the situation was dire. Jerry Lewis, senior pastor of nearby Grace Community Church in Marion, reached out to a couple who had attended his church occasionally over several months in 2012 while temporarily living in North Carolina.

Jerry serves as an adjunct professor at Montreat, and his love of Montreat’s students and mission runs deep. Jerry took a risk. He contacted the couple via email, letting them know of the college’s desperate state. Over the next several weeks, the emails became a serious interaction of potential help. After about six weeks of back-and-forth, the couple made a pledge of $6 million to Montreat College.

The gift was stunning. Perhaps even more remarkable than the gift itself was the fact that the couple had never set foot on Montreat College’s campus. They had never spoken to a Montreat student, or an alumnus, or a trustee. They had no prior connection to Montreat College. None.

To date, they have chosen to remain anonymous. Should that change, it will be their choice.

I have come to know this couple. They are humble Christ-followers. Truly amazing human beings. They made the initial pledge in part because Montreat is the only governing member of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) in North Carolina. They also gave because someone they trusted and loved asked them to consider it. But most importantly, they gave because they sensed God leading them to do so. Because they believe in the power of prayer, they point to the many (including students) who pled with God to save the school. They are convinced that the prayers of the Montreat community drove their involvement. They want our students and community to know that prayer moves mountains.

Since March 1, 2014, the couple has given over $10 million to Montreat College.

Their giving has catalyzed the turnaround of the college. New leadership was led to Montreat. Donors were inspired to give at record levels. The college clarified its Christ-centered identity. The college became entrepreneurial and externally focused. Twenty renovation or new construction projects have been completed. We’ve experienced record levels of traditional enrollment for the past three years.

Talented, hard-working, and mission-centric employees labor every day in a new reality for Montreat College. They are some of the best I’ve ever worked with.

But at the core of this story, one reality stands out above all others: Montreat College is beginning to thrive because God has chosen life. A miracle is something only God can do. But at the core of this story, one reality stands out above all others: Montreat College is beginning to thrive because God has chosen life. A miracle is something only God can do.

*Montreat is staking a leadership position with innovative programs. They are connecting with organizations that will give them a leading edge so that their students will bring that faith and expertise into their workplace as they become excellent contributors. But the kind of communal experience for Montreat happens because of outstanding leadership. Leadership matters and Montreat has the right leader at this time in their history.*

- Shirley Hogstet, President of The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

In the pages that follow, we’ve laid out a time-line of the unfolding story. Join us in giving thanks to God.

Soli Deo Gloria,
“As a 1978 Montreat graduate, I am pleased to see the wonderful turnaround at Montreat that has occurred since early 2014. Paul Maurer stepped in and with God’s blessings and guidance has turned Montreat around and the community now is once again excited about Montreat and its long term prosperity. Paul has done a tremendous job and will continue to forge ahead in years to come to make Montreat a wonderful place for getting a great Christian education. The numbers speak for themselves with all time high enrollments.”

-Rusty Pulliam ’78, President/CEO of Pulliam Properties
MONKREAT COLLEGE announces a $6 million pledge from an anonymous donor couple. The gift is catalytic, inspiring record levels of gift income and allowing the college to pursue ambitious turnaround goals, including campus-wide facility renovation and expansion and the launch of a presidential search. To date, the anonymous donor couple has given over $10 million to Montreat College.

JUNE 20, 2014
Dr. Paul J. Maurer is named 8th president of Montreat College. Dr. Maurer brings a wealth of experience as a visionary and results-driven Christian leader who believes deeply in the value of Christ-centered higher education. He brings over 25 years of leadership in nonprofit and higher education administration in governance, organizational development, marketing and communications, adult and graduate studies, and government relations.

AUGUST 21, 2014
Montreat College hosts “Renovation Celebration” for completion of $2 million Anderson Residence Hall renovations, funded by a large group of donors. Improvements include a new roof, new high-endurance interior paint, improved internal piping, new hallway lighting and carpets, building-wide ventilation improvements, new wood-grain laminate flooring, new windows, new sinks and vanities, new bathroom floors, and all-new shower fixtures.

AUGUST 29, 2015
Montreat College ranked 5th among the 48 North Carolina-based schools included and 9th among the 103 schools included from the Council of Christian Colleges & Universities in The Economist magazine’s inaugural college rankings. Overall, Montreat College was ranked ahead of 89% of the 1267 American colleges and universities included in the rankings.

OCTOBER 29, 2015
Montreat College hosts its inaugural RETR3AT Cybersecurity Conference. RETR3AT is designed to engage, educate, and raise awareness about cybersecurity, going beyond the “1s and 0s” approach to cybersecurity training, challenging attendees to think about how to be cybersecurity leaders within an ethical framework. The conference attracts 77 conferees and hosts speakers from throughout the cybersecurity industry.

OCTOBER 31, 2015
Montreat College dedicates the Louan Gideon Theatre, a new black box theatre in Belk Student Center, funded by an anonymous donor.
Montreat College observes its 100th year with a Grand Centennial Celebration Dinner at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, N.C. The keynote speaker is Dr. Sandy Shugart, president of Valencia College. Donors give over $260,000 towards Montreat College’s Keystone Scholarship fund, which provides vital financial assistance to over 450 Montreat students.

Montreat College achieves highest enrollment on its traditional campus in the college’s 100-year history. Overall degree-seeking enrollment on Montreat’s traditional campus is 497, up from 461 the previous year. The college welcomes 167 first-time freshmen, also the highest number on record.

Montreat College hosts 232 conferences at its and annual RETREAT Cybersecurity Conference, featuring speakers from the National Security Agency (NSA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Symantec, CounterHack, and keynote speaker Senator Richard Burr (NC), chair of the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Montreat College receives a $1.5 million endowed scholarship, a $1.5 million endowed fund given by Margaret Finley and Cynthia and Stephen Anderson.

As part of an ongoing process of clarifying Montreat College’s Christ-centered identity, the Montreat College Board of Trustees approves a revised Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Statement of Faith.

A SandEdu report demonstrates that Montreat College has the 12th-lowest student debt among North Carolina colleges and universities, and the 11th lowest graduate debt among schools in the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU).

Montreat College celebrates the opening of its new Cybersecurity Operations Teaching Lab in the Belk Student Center, funded by lead donor Mission Health and a group of other donors.

Dr. David Bruce, longtime personal assistant to Rev. Billy Graham, becomes Board of Trustees chair.

Montreat College completes the installation of a new Howerton Dining Hall deck and seating area, Phase I renovation of the Caudell Commons atrium in the Belk Student Center, and the renovation of the Morgan 300 classroom.

Montreat College launches four new undergraduate academic majors: Health Sciences, Educational Studies, Bible and Theology, and Christian Ministries.

Montreat College is designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education by the National Security Agency (NSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Montreat College is the first member of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) to receive this designation and just the 4th four-year school in North Carolina.

Montreat College is ranked 8th among North Carolina’s 48 colleges, ahead of several well-known public universities. Montreat College is ranked 18th among the 177 schools in the Council of Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU).

Montreat College is named a Gold-level Five-Star Institution for Character Champions of Character (NAIA). This is the first time the college has achieved gold-level status, ranking among the top 66 NAIA schools in the country.

Montreat College welcomes 226 freshmen and transfers to its traditional campus program, the largest incoming class in the college’s 101-year history. The new influx of students helps the college achieve traditional campus enrollment of 520, the first time in school history that traditional campus enrollment has topped 500 students.

Money magazine names Montreat College one of America’s “Best Colleges for Your Money 2017.” Colleges are ranked according to 27 measures of educational quality, affordability, and alumni success. Montreat is ranked 8th among North Carolina’s 48 colleges, ahead of several well-known public universities. Montreat College is ranked 18th among the 177 schools in the Council of Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU).

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"We give because of the joy we find in honoring Christ, loving our college and helping students in need."

- Chuck Hood ’75 & Susan Hood

Please support the Keystone Scholarship Fund.
www.montreat.edu/keystone

NEW FACULTY
As part of its commitment to academic excellence, Montreat College hired seven new full-time faculty in 2016-17.

BILL BURNHAM — ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS
Professor Burnham earned his M.B.A. and bachelor’s degree from the University of Alabama and has extensive executive leadership experience in marketing for a Fortune 500 company. Prior to coming to Montreat, he was vice president of market intelligence for Corning Optical Communications.

DR. PAUL GRATTON — ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS PROGRAM, ADULT AND GRADUATE STUDIES
Dr. Gratton earned his D.B.A. from George Fox University, his M.P.A. from Drake University, and his bachelor’s degree from Iowa State University. Prior to coming to Montreat, he was the executive director for Central Oregon Youth Development, Inc.

JOSHUA HOLBROOK — INSTRUCTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
Professor Holbrook earned his master’s degree from Florida Atlantic University and his bachelor’s degree in biology from Palm Beach Atlantic University. He is a herpetologist and has appeared on National Geographic, the Weather Channel, the Travel Channel, and more. Prior to coming to Montreat, he was a technology instructor for Equip International.

DR. PHOEBE MAA — ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, REFERENCE AND INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN
Dr. Maa earned her Master of Library and Information Science from Wayne State University and her Ph.D. in French Literature from the University of Paris Diderot. Prior to coming to Montreat, she was the head librarian at Tianjin International School.

DR. JARED SPENCER — ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY
Dr. Spencer earned his Ph.D. from Virginia Tech, and his B.S. from Campbell University. Prior to coming to Montreat, he was an instructor of record in general chemistry for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

JAMES TIPPEY — ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CYBERSECURITY
Professor Tippey earned his Master of Science in Information Assurance from Norwich University, his Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary, and his bachelor’s degree from Greenville College. Prior to coming to Montreat, he was the director of information technology for the St. Louis Symphony.

DR. MARIE WISNER — ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR CALLING AND CAREER
Dr. Wisner earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership and Organizational Leadership from Azusa Pacific University, and her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Bethel University. Prior to coming to Montreat, she was the co-director of the Bethel Experience at Bethel University.
With gifts of $1,000 or above annually, President’s Circle members provide the substantial financial support necessary to fund the Keystone Scholarship, as well as other significant projects that advance Montreat College’s Christ-centered mission. We are thankful for all of those who continue to support the school. Below is a list of the recipients:

**SPECIAL THANKS**

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Anna M. Abdullah
Steven T. Aceto & Frances Conger Aceto ’75
Stephen G. Anderson & Cynthia Finley Anderson
Monroe Maston Ashley Jr. & Ann Knight Ashley
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Paul J. Maurer & Jollen Maurer
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Larder C. Moore & Mollie Moore
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Linda Neuzil
Eric Oelschlaeger
Linwood A. Orenduff ’66 & Susan Orenduff
Kemp Otto & Nickie Otto
Isaac B. Owolabi & Abigail M. Owolabi
Roger A. Orendale & Diane Orendale
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Neil Watt
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N. Ronaldson White & Margaret White
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Chuck Worrell & Anne Worrell
Robert W. Wynne III
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Charles M. Zeiser & Joanne Zeiser
John Zeiser & Anita Zeiser
Johnnie Zorn

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Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
The Biltmore Company
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Trans Solutions

“Montreat College was recently designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education (CAE-CD) by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security. The goal of the CAE-CD program is to reduce vulnerability in our national information infrastructure by promoting higher education and training in cyber defense and producing professionals with cyber defense expertise for our country. I’m pleased that another North Carolina school has joined this important program that includes more than 200 top colleges.”

- U. S. Senator Richard Burr (NC)
A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

Tuition & Fees $9,525,960
Private Gifts and Grants $5,546,963
Auxiliary enterprises $3,585,160
Investment & other $813,646
Government grants $179,420

TOTAL REVENUE $19,651,149

Instructional $5,166,449
Public service $82,103
Student services $4,628,679
Academic support $1,349,506
Institutional support $4,436,385
Auxiliary enterprises $3,011,522

TOTAL EXPENSES $18,674,644

“In a time so pleasured and excited to see the turnaround underway at Montreat College. In just a few short years, one of the last standing faith-based schools in the state has gone from life-support to a thriving and innovative institution with record enrollment. This proves their value proposition holds merit for young adults who want to attend a school where character and ethics are the key focus.”
- U.S. Senator Thom Tillis (NC)
Joe and Janet Caudell have devoted their lives to ministry, supporting children’s homes, colleges, their church, and individuals in need. Residents of Charlotte, N.C., Janet taught school for decades while Joe entered the banking field and invested in real estate. Joe’s college fraternity brother married a Montreat College alum who shared about her experience. At the invitation of a Montreat College trustee, they attended a college event in Charlotte, more than sixty years after both Caudells had graduated college themselves. Six months later, they came to another similar Charlotte event and began to hear a message that they liked about Christ-centered education. “There aren’t that many Christian colleges left, and we want to do our part to help strengthen Montreat College for young people seeking Christian education.” What they heard led them to make their first gift to Montreat College, by establishing a Charitable Gift Annuity. Now they receive income for life.

The Galax Society is a group of special friends and alumni of Montreat College who make a planned giving decision to include the college in their estate settlements. This society is named after the evergreen perennial native to the mountains of North Carolina, the galax. Just as the Galax plant flourishes in every season of the year in the Appalachian forest, so has its vitality come to symbolize the enduring gift made to the college by members of the Galax Society.

For more information about the Galax Society, contact Joe Kirkland by phone at 828.419.2045 or by email at joe.kirkland@montreat.edu.