

**Hinton Rural Life Center**  
*Celebrating 60: Embracing Our Roots & Sharing the Fruits*

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**Reflections . . .**

**May 8, 2021**



**HINTON  
RURAL LIFE  
CENTER**

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*In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. . . .*

*Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths.*

*Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long.*

*Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.*

*Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;  
according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good.*

-- Psalm 25:1, 4-7, NIV

I first learned about Hinton Rural Life Center from my adopted grandmother, Dr. Gladys Campbell, who worked for Hinton Center for many years. She loved her work and shared many memories of her time at Hinton. So I felt that I already had roots there when I came for my summer internship as a Duke Divinity Student in 2013.

Rev. Amy Spivey was my supervisor that summer. I learned so much about ministry from her, and we had wonderful talks about theology and ministry in rural areas.

However, my favorite part was the work we did with the families, and especially the youth groups that came to serve. Hinton was a time to connect to groups from all over the country and be witness to young Christians and even questioning Christians. It was a chance to plant seeds from which you would later see the fruits bloom and prosper in the world.

In my own spiritual formation, I was able to have moments of guidance from the Spirit that came from leaders of the visiting mission groups. One of those more important relationships for me was Jeff from Warner Robins, Georgia. I worked with Jeff and Bill for an amazing week, with a great group of youth. It was definitely the best week of that summer. But for me, Jeff was someone on the outside that you'd think, "Oh gosh, this looks like a tough guy, retired military, better be on your best game, Rebekah." He

was the kindest, most loving, spiritual man, I met all that summer. And Jeff really helped me, not only that summer but for many years after. One year I even left annual conference at Lake Junaluska to come to see him at Hinton -- don't tell the Bishop.

So, like the Psalm says, "Show me your ways and teach me your paths." Hinton provides those ways and paths, because it is a place where not only physically but spiritually you are given those ways and paths. Hinton Center is an amazing place where you can come to just *be*. Be in God's glory and grace. You can plant seed. You can grow roots of faith. You can bloom into your true self. Or, you can help young Christians begin to learn about their own journeys.

Hinton is more than a place to come a do a summer internship, or a week-long mission trip, or a spiritual retreat. Hinton is a place where relationships are built, where Jesus is met -- maybe for the first time -- maybe for the one-millionth time. Hinton is a place where you can put roots down and no one will ever ask you to uproot them and move to a new town or new church or new community. Hinton will always be Hinton and it is beautiful.



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