

# THE SAMPSON INDEPENDENT

## FAITH & FAMILY

### Going where God leads

*With a new school, and now a new principal, Mintz Baptist working to reach children in both the spiritual and academic realms*

**By Doug Clark**

Published:

Friday, October 17, 2008 1:35 PM US/eastern

ROSEBORO — Mintz Baptist Church has officially named Joy McDowell as the principal of their soon-to-be built Mintz Christian Academy school.

Although the school is not built yet, (K-5) classes will begin next fall with temporary classes set up inside the church building. Once the building is complete, the school will add additional grades (6-8) next year and will evaluate the high school during the school's third year of operation.



Photo by Doug Clark Joy McDowell will be the new principal of the soon-to-be built Mintz Christian Academy school. The school will start K-5 classes next fall.

McDowell is the former kindergarten principal at Village Christian Academy in Fayetteville and has been involved with Christian education for over 20 years.

"I am very excited about all of it," McDowell said during a recent afternoon discussion. "I was interviewed twice in July. I think the second interview was the confirmation where they believed that this is where God wanted us to be put together — it was a good match."

Mintz Baptist Church pastor Dr. John McBride said choosing McDowell made perfect sense.

"We had a lot of applicants," he said. "But basically, it was her background in education. In her entire career, she has taught Christian education. She was strongly recommended and everything was very positive as we pursued her ... Everything just sort of worked."

Over the next few months, McDowell would quickly become part of Mintz's family.

"You never know what is going to happen when the Lord calls you," she said. "It was bittersweet to leave Village Christian Academy. But I have not been, in a long time, able to be part of a congregation that has been so warm and welcoming as Mintz has been to the new kid on the block. I have been so impressed in the unity among that fellowship. It is really refreshing."

McDowell said she was also impressed with the plans McBride and the board had for the school.

"They have been very diligent in their process about making plans for the school and really thinking things through very carefully," she said. "They were also very excited about this venture that God has placed before them. It is a step of faith on their part because sometimes it doesn't always make logical sense when God calls us to do something, but they definitely feel and believe that God has a plan here to offer to the Sampson County area, a chance for Christian education. It is going to be a real school, not just a Sunday School extension type of thing. It will have a Christian-based curriculum and the whole child approach, knowing that we all need to learn and grow in our walk with the Lord and in by doing that, it is in an environment in which teaches us to read, learn math, or to study history — it is a complete package."

Coming from a big family, McDowell was born in Roxboro and raised in a Baptist church. Her first teaching experience was in the same town.

"I think that the Lord has been very gracious in allowing me to have that kind of a background (in church)," she said. "He has also been able to grow me up a little bit as I have moved along past the hometown area. My first teaching experience was at Roxboro Christian Academy, and it really set me in the right direction because I am a fairly structured, organized type of person, so that type of program (Christian curriculum) fit me best ..."

McDowell said working in that type of curriculum is a blessing.

"It is phenomenal experience to be able to work with a child, of course, no teacher is able to work with a child and not be endeared to them — you grow to love them and appreciate them as individuals, but when that child goes through difficulties ... there is a real beauty to be able to stop and pray and let that child know that you care about them, more about the subject," she said. "That is a real gift. That is the gift of Christian education, you just don't get to explore that when you are in public education."

Only months into it, McDowell says she can already feel that the new school is going to be a first-class endeavor and she is proud to be part of it.

"I hope that we can establish a school that has some strong academic standing and that is seen in the community as a place of excellence in the academics," she said. "But beyond that, we want to reach the whole child, the heart and soul of a child. And in so doing that, it extends to the family. It becomes an opportunity for God to grow all of us. In knowing Him and being able to see what He is doing and to not take for granted the gifts and the blessings and hopes that he has available for us."

Right now, the plans are to host an open house in January.

"We want parents to come in and see what we will have to offer," said McBride. "They are going to be able to come in and ask any questions they want and take some time to look at our curriculum."

"We are going to have rooms inside the church facility set up and ready for a school classroom so families in the area can come out and see what it is going to be like," said McDowell. "Parents will also have a chance to talk with us— me, Dr. McBride and the school committee— and ask any questions they might have. We will also have some application packets and at point, we hope to see how many staff members we are going to need. I am thinking that it will be in the late January/February time frame that we can start thinking about teachers."

And McDowell admits that she has received some teaching résumés already.

"It is exciting," she said. "I am very encouraged."

For now, plans are still being worked through.

"We are meeting with contractors, and going through the process," McDowell said. "It is an everyday thing and it is so exciting."

Classes at Mintz Christian Academy will begin next fall.

For more information on the school call (910) 564-6500 or click on to <http://www.mintzbaptist.com/>.

[Mintz Baptist](#)