

# Comic Inspires Via Faith, Laughter On April 30

By Mike Woody  
Gazette Writer

On his journey through the world of comedy, Jeff Allen has traveled two very different paths, the only parallel being his desire to make people laugh.

Saved from a self-destructive track, he now travels a much smoother highway, with an upcoming stop at The Avenue at Ginghamburg United Methodist Church, April 30.

Allen, a professional comedian for over 30 years, travels the country entertaining audiences with his observational humor. He abandoned the comedy club circuit in favor of churches, presenting an act that not only tickles the funny bone but moves the heart through its inspirational message of faith.

## Drugs And Alcohol

When the Chicago native first began touring the clubs, he was abusing drugs and alcohol. His addictions reached the point where they threatened his marriage, leading him to seek help. It was in Alcoholics Anonymous that Allen first felt the hand of God.

"I was raised by atheists and was a non-believer, but I've been following the path now for 13 years," the comic said.

Faith not only saved his personal relationships, it also detoured his career. Allen cleaned up his act and targeted a new audience as he grew

less comfortable with the club scene.

"I got older, and the club audiences didn't. I felt like I wanted to lecture them (and) say 'why are you out so late? You should be eating better,'" laughed Allen.

But the club circuit had its benefits, and Allen is thankful the late-night venues and unforgiving audiences forced him to sharpen his comedic skills. Today, those skills are directed primarily at church crowds. Allen appreciates the longer attention span of those audiences and having the time to truly be a story-teller, as compared to the clubs, where laughs must be constant.

"Audiences at church are used to having a person speak to them. They also understand the English language, and they don't heckle me."

Allen's describes his act as observational humor, with his family as a major source of material.

"People ask, 'What did you do before your wife and kids?' I starved," he jokes.

Though more effort is required to create a family-friendly routine, Allen feels the rewards are also greater, based on the positive response. Highlights from his career include performing for the troops in Bah-



**Christian comedian Jeff Allen**

rain, at the National Day of Prayer breakfast, and at the 2005 Presidential Inaugural festivities.

## Tonight Show Goal

One goal that he continues to chase is performing on the Tonight Show. He was close before Conan O'Brien was ousted as the host.

Allen takes great joy in his comedic career, but true fulfillment comes from his relationship with God and inspiring others to follow in his footsteps. "My faith has given me a purpose. Prior to knowing Christ I didn't have a meaning in life."

At The Avenue, Allen will be joined by comedian/magician Chris Linn. Their appearance is being sponsored by the Ginghamburg Baker Boys, and all proceeds go to the New Path Food Pantry. Tickets are \$10 pre-sale (\$13 at the door). Doors open at 7 p.m., and the show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the Ginghamburg Church bookstore, at the e-store at [www.Ginghamburg.org](http://www.Ginghamburg.org), or call Terry Hawk at 937-667-5610.