

Faith's

ROADTRIP



Say Cheese!

Everyone knows the classic saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” For Tisha Gruel, photos are more than images — they are a way to hold on to a specific moment in time and remember it forever.

Seventeen years ago, Tisha was gifted a camera from her grandmother. As a stay-at-home mom, she began taking pictures of her children. Before long, a friend asked if she would take their family pictures. Then another asked, and then another. Through word of mouth, her hobby grew into a flourishing business known today as Priceless Images by Tisha.

“When I started, I didn’t have any type of photography training,” she shared. “Growing up, my mom did a lot of woodworking and painting. She was always up to something,” Tisha laughed. “I think being raised in that creative atmosphere helped me dive headfirst into this adventure.” Since then, Tisha has taken online courses and earned her degree in photography.

Photography comes with plenty of behind-the-scenes work, from editing and organizing to all the little details in between. Still, Tisha’s favorite part of her job is the part that happens in front of the camera: the sessions. “I love being around people and building



The Gruel family, left to right: Tanor Pemberton, Tisha, Taylor, Tyler (husband), Zoey, and Sophi Gruel.

relationships with my clients,” she shared. “I come from a large family, so I thrive in the chaos of organizing and photographing big groups — the bigger the better!”

Photography Services Offered by Tisha:

- 📷 Newborn
- 📷 Children
- 📷 Adults
- 📷 Seniors
- 📷 Maternity
- 📷 Couples
- 📷 Generational & Immediate Family
- 📷 Engagement Sessions

“Newborn photos are my favorite sessions to photograph,” she noted. “The secret to newborn photography is knowing how to read the baby — and having patience!” One of her first newborn sessions shaped both her photography style and the way she built her business. “A sweet family came in with their newborn daughter, and I was snapping photos,” she shared. “The session was supposed to be of just the daughter, but at one point I literally forced the mom to be in some pictures. She had no makeup on and a messy bun. I placed the baby in her arms and took a couple of pictures.” A few days later, the baby passed

Continued on 18D ►



AGE 6
ELLIE GOLDING



AGE 8
SARA PRUEMER



AGE 11
ANNA PRUEMER

Creative kids light up summer coloring contest

This summer, young artists across the community put their imagination to work for our annual youth coloring contest. A total of 31 children, ages 4 to 12, showcased their unique styles on a coloring page featuring an electric lineman working safely on a utility pole.

Every single child who participated walked away a winner, receiving a \$5 gift certificate to Simply Yours, Your

Happy Place for sharing their talent. However, three exceptional entries stood out from the crowd: 6-year-old Ellie Golding from Cowden, 8-year-old Sara Pruemer, and 11-year-old Anna Pruemer, both from Stonington, were named winners of the Shelby Electric Cooperative's 2026 coloring contest.

"Our three winners took home an assortment of fun items from Simply Yours and a \$20 gift certificate from GameOn," noted Jill George, who has coordinated this contest for the

cooperative for the past seven years. "It was an absolute joy to provide local kids with a creative outlet this summer. The highlight for me was seeing the pride on the winners' faces as they walked in with their families to claim their prizes and have their pictures taken. Can't wait to do this all over again in 2027," concluded George.

For more information about Shelby Electric Cooperative's youth programs, visit the "Community" tab on www.shelbyelectric.coop.

SHELBY News

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**Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

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Lake Shelbyville Balloonfest



Join us over Columbus Day Weekend for Shelbyville's biggest family event of the year! This action-packed weekend features colorful balloons, family activities, and community fun as Balloonfest once again partners with Scarecrow Daze October 9-11.

Here is what you can't miss*

- 🎈 **Friday:** Weekend kickoff balloon launch from Dam West Recreation Area. Pilots will start arriving around 4:30pm.
- 🎈 **Saturday morning:** Sunrise balloon flight over Shelby County Airport.
- 🎈 **Saturday morning:** Downtown Scarecrow Daze Parade at 10 a.m., followed by crafters, food trucks, entertainment, and other family fun.
- 🎈 **Saturday night:** At the Shelby County Airport, enjoy paid helicopter and tethered hot air balloon rides, a free kids' area, skydivers, meals prepared by the Shelbyville Volunteer Fire Department, Strasburg Lions Club's spiral spuds, and view the spectacular evening Balloon Glow!
- 🎈 **Sunday morning:** Sunrise balloon flight over the 9th Street Beach area.

Volunteers needed! Want to be on a hot air balloon chase crew and win prizes? Call the tourism office at 217-774-2244.

To learn more about ballooning, see a detailed events schedule, and check out all the great sponsors, SCAN the QR code. See you in Shelbyville on Columbus Day weekend!

**All ballooning activities are weather permitted and at pilots' discretion.*



Employee Spotlight

We recently introduced Bridgette Lockhart as our newest Broadband Member Engagement Specialist! A lifelong Shelbyville resident, Bridgette holds an associate's degree in human services—criminal justice from Lake Land College. She previously served as the LIHEAP Program Manager at CEFS Economic Opportunity Corporation. Her passion for helping others perfectly aligns with cooperative values.

Bridgette was drawn to ShelbyFiber for the great work-life balance and the opportunity to serve the community she loves, close to home. "I am really looking forward to collaborating with the team and working with our members," she said.

Off the clock, Bridgette loves walking trails, exploring new places, and spending time with her husband Devin, their two children (Wyatt, 11, and Evelyn, 7) and their two cats, Smokey and Raya. Welcome to the ShelbyFiber team, Bridgette!



Bridgette Lockhart

Faith's ROADTRIP continued from 18A

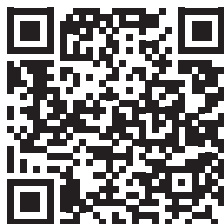
away. “I didn’t know I wanted to be a newborn photographer until that point,” Tisha shared. “There was something pulling at me during that session to make the family take pictures with their daughter — it has taken me a long time to realize that was God.” The pictures Tisha took on that day are the only professional photos they have of their daughter.

Reflecting on 17 years of business, Tisha shares that success is not about saying “yes” to everything. “When I first started, it was a struggle to book sessions. I poured every part of myself into the business,” she explained. “I had to learn when to say no so I could give each and every client my very best and still be present for myself and my family.”

Tisha and her husband Tyler have been married for 19 years, and together they have four children. In her free time, Tisha loves to read a good book and is an avid Dr. Pepper drinker. She recently learned how to quilt and is already on her 15th quilt of the year!

For Tisha, photography has grown from a hobby into a way of preserving the moments families never want to lose. After 17 years behind the camera, she continues to approach each session with patience, care, and a deep appreciation for the memories entrusted to her.

Interested in booking a session with Priceless Images by Tisha? Scan the QR code or reach out to her at 217-821-8965. Tisha serves Stewardson, Effingham, and surrounding areas.



Thanks for riding along. I'll see you down the road!

