



# The Westminster Standard

NEWSLETTER OF WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HATTIESBURG



## A Parting Benediction From Your Pastor

"Steve, what are you going to DO when you retire?" Truthfully, I don't know. That makes me a little nervous. I'm trying to take comfort in Oswald Chambers' advice: "I must learn that the purpose of my life belongs to God, not me. God is using me from His great personal perspective, and all He asks of me is that I trust Him. He can crush me, exalt me, or do anything else He chooses. He simply asks me to have absolute faith in Him and His goodness." Leaving is never easy, but this is the right time for a changing of the guard.

Thank you for the wonderful retirement celebration and gifts and love that made December 11 such a special day for our family. And, thank you for the privilege of being your partner in ministry for 14 great years. This was a marriage blessed by God over and over again, and we are grateful.

On my watch God has shown that He is faithful and able to perform miracles when Jesus' followers actually Trust God, Love people, and Carry Christ into the world. What God has accomplished through us is far beyond what any of us could ever do (or even imagine) in our own strength. Westminster has become a leader in this community and, Lord willing, this will continue.

Ellen and I will follow our Presbytery's protocols for retirement that wisely call for a period of separation in order to help congregations close one chapter before opening a new one. We trust this distance, while painful in the short run, will prove mutually beneficial in the long run. Meanwhile, you will be in very good hands with Mike Anderson as your interim.

Westminster and her people are near and dear to us, and that will not change. We will be cheering you on and praying for the search committee. Thank you for your love and support and trust. Together, we accomplished a lot for the glory of God. Well done, good and faithful servants!

*Steve*



### DECEMBER ATTENDANCE

DECEMBER 4	118
DECEMBER 11	138
DECEMBER 18	107
DECEMBER 24	163
DECEMBER 25	96



**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER**  
By ALTHEA JEROME

# YOUTH

Presbyterian Women both in our local church and our national denomination are concerned with social issues and how to extend compassion to some of society's most vulnerable individuals. This month, we will take a brief look at the topic of human trafficking – something we occasionally hear about in the news, yet we typically think it happens somewhere else. The United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, or coercion) for an improper purpose including forced labor or sexual exploitation. According to an article published in *Presbyterians Today*, categories of human trafficking include: forced labor, sex trafficking, trafficking for tissue cells and organs, and child soldiers. While we think that crimes such as these happen in faraway places, law enforcement agencies would tell another story.

In A Brief Statement of Faith, we utter these challenging words: "In a broken

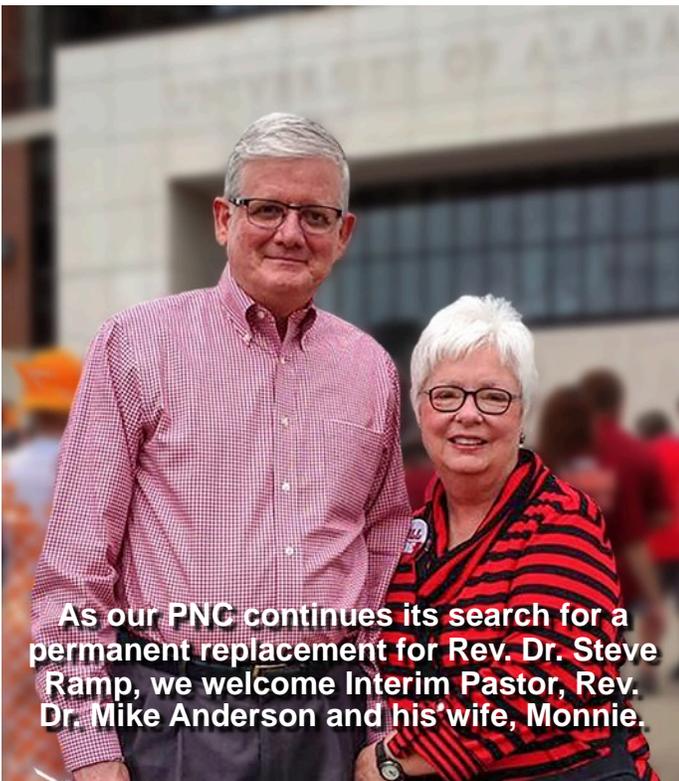
and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage...to hear the voices of peoples long silenced." There are many vulnerable people in the world, and they are not hard to find within our own community. In her article in *Presbyterians Today*, Krin Van Tatenhove writes about Christians' responsibility to vulnerable people. "We are called into the world as partners and advocates, and often as healers. The river of God's justice and reconciliation invites us to go deeper into our responsibility as global Christians, and deeper into the joy we can experience when we jump into that river together." Our God is constantly welcoming and providing for us. Let us remember to do the same for the people we encounter, and to pray for the peace and safety of those who seem to be invisible.

Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed on January 11, 2017.

JANUARY	1	NO ACTIVITIES
JANUARY	8	GRADES 3-5 & YOUTH
JANUARY	15	YOUTH
JANUARY	18	JOINT CMT & YMT MEETING
JANUARY	22	GRADES 3-5 & YOUTH
JANUARY	29	YOUTH

January 8 is Blanket Sunday and there will be a special collection. From disaster response to comforting the homeless, this collection can make an impact in lives across the U.S. and the world.

A special thanks to Erik and Ginny Graham for opening their home to Grades 3-5 and the Youth for their Christmas Party. A good time was had by all!



**As our PNC continues its search for a permanent replacement for Rev. Dr. Steve Ramp, we welcome Interim Pastor, Rev. Dr. Mike Anderson and his wife, Monnie.**



## From the Clerk of the Session

This month the Session meet with the Diaconate for our yearly joint meeting. As part of the Deacon's meeting we heard a report concerning the Buildings and Grounds. We now have a new security camera system and an additional handicap accessible stall in each of our downstairs restrooms.

We heard a report from the Inviting Committee concerning the recently completed greeter training and further ideas to continue the momentum in our outreach programs.

Our Mission committee reported that the December trip to El Salvador was delayed until mid-January with a planned follow up trip in March for 2 installations.

Finally, preparations were made to ensure Westminster representation at the February Presbytery meeting in Long Beach.



For more than 25 years our congregation has enjoyed a special relationship with the clients at Boswell Regional Center. Since Boswell is an important mission for WPC, the Mission Committee wants to make sure that you understand WHY we support Boswell and what they are doing at Boswell that changes lives.

Boswell's web page says it well: "Boswell Regional Center offers specialized program options to Mississippians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. These programs are designed to identify the necessary supports for successful community transition. With collaboration between the individual, family and community, dreams can become reality."

Boswell is one of five regional facilities in Mississippi that serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. (Ellisville State School is another).

We know that the Christmas season is a busy time for everyone, but every year Westminster comes through to support our friends at Boswell. This year was no exception. We helped 141 Boswell clients' dreams become their realities by providing Christmas gifts for them. The staff and the clients they serve are truly our brothers and sisters in Christ...what an important and humbling mission of which we are a part.

Thanks to each of you for your Christmas gifts and for your gift of caring for our friends at Boswell.

Cindy Womack, Assistant Director, sent us this thank you note:

*Attached are a few pics of the clients receiving their Christmas gifts last week. We are ever so thankful for the generosity and love you show to us each year. The clients are always so thrilled to receive them. May you all have a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!*

*Much love,*

*Cindy*

For more information on Boswell Regional Center facilities and programs, please go to <http://www.brc.ms.gov>

In His service,

*Karen Reidenbach, Missions Committee*



**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

1 Reagan Nelson	4 Howard Keever	14 Gary West	25 Nancy Johnson	31 Gene Owens
2 Arlandra Harvey	5 Michael Brooks	15 Andrew Gaudet	29 Richard Potin	31 Connie Raggio
2 Geraldine Jones	7 Mae Westbrook	15 Lavon Smith	30 Campbell Brooks	31 Hayes Trexler
2 Margaret Lochhead	9 Ann Arlidge	19 Sheila Gaudet	30 Betty Garraway	
2 Sam Ruff	10 Brenda Owens	19 John W. S. West	30 Margaret Pearson	
4 Anthony Cafalone	13 Mary Hannah Ruff	24 Dean Cromartie	31 Chloe Cain	

**JANUARY**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship  WELCOME INTERIM PASTOR REV. DR. MIKE ANDERSON	2 <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b>	3 9:30 AM PW Coordinating Team	4 No Wednesday Night Supper	5 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's 12:00 PM ShareCare	6	7
8 BLANKET SUNDAY 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Diaconate 12:30 PM Session 4:15 PM Grades 3-5 5:00 PM Youth	9	10 9:30 AM Circle 1 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 PM Circle 2	11 5:30 PM Wednesday Night suppers resume 7:00 PM Chancel Choir rehearsal	12 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's	13  <b>PW Winter Retreat</b>	14 8:00 AM Men of the Church Breakfast
15 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 5:00 PM Youth	16 12:00 PM New Beginnings	17 11:00 AM PW Prayer Ministry 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study	18 5:30 PM Wednesday Night Supper 7:00 PM Chancel Choir rehearsal	19 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's	20	21
22 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 4:15 PM Grades 3-5 5:00 PM Youth	23	24 11:00 AM PW Prayer Ministry 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study	25 1:00 PM Breadbasket 5:30 PM Potluck 7:00 PM Chancel Choir	26 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's	27	28
29 9:30 AM NO SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY 10:30 AM Worship 5:00 PM Youth	30	31 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study	<b>SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 SUMMER MISSION TRIP DEPOSITS DUE!!</b>			