



www.WPCHattiesburg.com

April 2010

Our Mission: **TLC**

Trust God, **L**ove People, and **C**arry Christ into the World

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY:

Sometimes life can seem so complex and out of control that we feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the world's problems. If you spend any time thinking about poverty, addictions, cancer, budget deficits, gasoline prices, not to mention terrorism, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, it's tempting to throw up your hands and say "Stop the world, I want to get off." The Bible proposes a much simpler and wiser solution.

At the heart of the Christian faith is a paradox. Jesus said, "For those who want to save their life will lose it and those who lose their life for my sake will save it." (Luke 9:24) Paul adds: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) If that sounds too abstract or too theological, let me put it in very practical terms. The great need for most Christians is to *get over ourselves*. We are constantly worrying about how this or that affects me. When you live as if YOU are the center of the universe, you set yourself up for frustration, fear, and failure. The truth is, YOU and I are not the center of anything. God is. When we give up our false claims to sovereignty and recognize God's absolute right over everything - including our lives - we die to self and become alive to God. We are liberated from so many false gods and false hope. This Easter I encourage you to claim what happens in Baptism: something dies and something is born anew. What dies is your old nature, your sin nature, your natural self. What is born is Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory. With this new identity, this new self-understanding, we can cope with life's complexities and challenges. We can even pour ourselves into loving our neighbor. The message of Easter is that God does not and will not allow sin, Satan, or even death to defeat God's love and plan to redeem the world. You and I are part of this! Hallelujah!

WORSHIP NEWS:

HOLY WEEK: During Holy Week there will be no **Wednesday night supper or service**. There will be a **Maundy Thursday** service at 6 pm on April 1, and we will have an informal **Stations of the Cross** service at noon on Good Friday. Please join us. In addition to the 11 am worship service on April 4, we will have a brief, informal, joyful **Easter Sunrise Service** at 6:30 am in the outdoor chapel.



The organ transplant was successful! To celebrate, come join us on Sunday, April 18 at 3 pm. This will be an important milestone for us as we publically re-dedicate our magnificent Kilgen-Reuter Organ. We are inviting the Hattiesburg community to attend, so please come and extend hospitality and share our joy with many visitors who love this organ and are pleased that it has found a good home. Our featured musician will be **Dr. Graham Purkerson**, former organist at Westminster and now organist at St Jude the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Atlanta. Also appearing will be **Kathy Vail, Randall Harris**, and our organ builder, **David Finch**. If, perchance, we have standing room only, that will be a wonderful sign of God's favor. Members of Westminster can cede their pews to visitors and gather in the fellowship hall to prepare for the reception! Come, join us. Let this be a day to remember in the life and growth of Westminster!

The Youth and interested adults will lead worship at **Boswell Regional Center** on **Tuesday, April 13**. We will meet at the church and leave at 4:30 pm. Come join us!

March attendance:	March 7 - 121	March 21 - 98
	March 14 - 112	March 28 - 138

BELONGING:

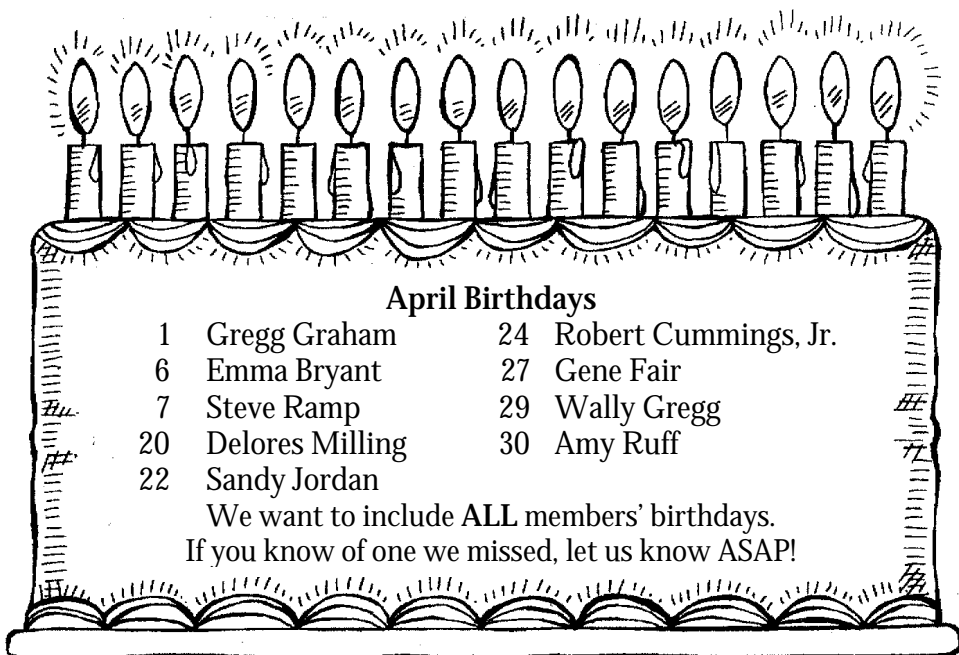
Please join us at 9:45 am Easter morning for **brunch** and an **Easter egg hunt**. The **Diaconate** and **Generations** and **Seekers Sunday School Classes** are responsible for the great food. Please participate. A signup sheet will be in the Sunday School rooms.



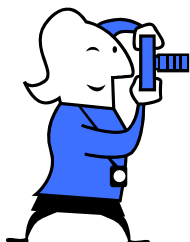
Men of the Church will have their monthly breakfast on April 10 at 8 am. Anyone that breathes is invited: men, women, and children, because we need every able-bodied member to help out with the **church-wide workday**. Child care will be provided for the ones too small to work, but they will have to be pretty small to be exempt!

BELONGING: (continued)

Adult co-ed softball games start up the first week in April. Erik Graham and Mary Clare Shaw have “stepped up to the plate” as co-captains. This year, the team will be sporting new jerseys, so come out to the games at Tatum Park and cheer them to victory. Game dates and times will be listed in the bulletin announcements and on the website calendar.



Last chance . . . to have your picture taken for the 2010 church directory is Sunday, April 11. We encourage all members AND regular visitors to pause for a quick pic as you enter the church so we can have a complete record of all our folks. The directory aids both the newcomer as well as the long-term member as we get to know each other in the family bonds of Westminster.



Say "cheese"!

BELONGING: (continued)

Sunday Greeters: Please help us greet visitors and members at the front entrance on Sunday mornings. Please **switch** with someone if you cannot serve on a specific date, and notify Kay at 601-584-7574 of the change so she can prepare the nametags.

Apr. 4	Betty Garraway & Ellen Ramp	18	Charles Brown & Margaret Buckley
11	Robert & Audra Cummings	25	Bobbye Bryant & Lori Burnham
May 2	Claude & Susan Sanders	23	J. T. & Nancy Johnson
9	Amy & Mary Hannah Ruff	30	Ed & Glenda Brown
16	Ray & Maggie Scheetz		

GROWING SPIRITUALLY:

Wednesdays

We will be treated to two special Wednesday night programs this month. On April 7, **Mary Kathryn Nobles** will give instructions on safety while traveling abroad as a part of her senior **Exhibition of Achievement** project. This will include an informative PowerPoint presentation and free brochures about safety when traveling. On April 28, the **Young Disciples (K-2)** will present *Fruit of the Spirit*, a short program highlighting some of what they have learned about love, joy, peace, etc. Please make plans to join us!

In 2007 the Presbytery of South Alabama invited some pastors on the Gulf Coast in Mississippi to attend a Cursillo (spiritual retreat). In November 2007, **Steve and Ellen Ramp, Mary Cromartie, Mary Clare Shaw, and Kathryn Smith** attended from Westminster. Since then over 25 members of Westminster have attended. **Kathryn Smith** was the Moderator of Mississippi Presbyterian Cursillo #3. Steve has served as Head Spiritual Advisor for several of these retreats. April 22-25 is the MPC #5. Five of our members are serving on staff (**Butch Nobles, Gene and Brenda Owens, Steve Ramp, and Larry Royals**) and five members from Westminster will attend as pilgrims: **Audra Cummings, Christopher Napier, Richard Potin, Eric Reidenbach, and Claude Sanders.** **Lavon Smith** is on the waiting list. Please pray that this retreat will be a blessing to all who participate. If you are interested in growing spiritually, Cursillo is something you should pray about. Talk with **Mary Clare Shaw, Butch Nobles** or **Steve** if you want more information.



INVITING:

New members **Dudley and Alicia Westbrook** joined Westminster on March 14. You may recall from March's newsletter that they are the new parents of daughter **Mae** born January 7. Dudley currently works for Cellular South in land acquisition, and Alicia is working on her doctorate and is employed at U.S.M. in the Institute for Disability Studies.

INVITING: (continued)

Also joining on March 14 were **Wes and Shane Brooks**. They have a 7 year-old son named **Campbell**. **Steve Ramp** is good friends with Wes' parents, **Mike and Margaret Brooks**, who are members of First-Trinity in Laurel. Mike and Margaret may visit here when it's their turn to entertain Cam. Wes works in public relations and development for the Dubard School at U.S.M. Shane is a nurse at Forrest General in the cardiology department.

SERVING CHRIST IN MISSION:

BreadBasket volunteers are needed the week of April 12-16. Don't know how to do it? If it's your first time to volunteer for BreadBasket we'll be happy to give you quick and easy instructions - even on-the-job training if you like. It takes only about 1½ hours of your time and is a great way to help those less fortunate in our community. You can pick a time and day that best fits your schedule, so see Margaret Lochhead to sign up.



Men of the Church Mini Maintenance Program. Are you having trouble changing your ceiling light bulbs? Need something heavy moved? Have leaky faucets or toilets? The Men of the Church are now offering their handy-men services on each second Saturday after their monthly breakfast. If you are frustrated by small repair problems, email Robert Cummings (email4rc@megagate.com) or Eric Reidenbach (eric@marketvaluesolutions.com) to place your name on their to-do list.

PW is very active in local and international service projects. Here is an update on three current ones:

Westminster PW members have made and donated over 200 turbans for use by cancer patients. A special "Thank You" to **Florence Myers** for her tireless work in making more than 180 of these turbans for this project.

Making bags to hold heart monitors is a newer undertaking. A special "Thank You" to **Rachel Owens** for her many contributions. More volunteers are needed to supply the additional bags that Forrest General has requested. (It's nice to know our efforts are appreciated!) Contact **Ann Johnson** for more information.

Perhaps our oldest project is collecting used eyeglasses which we send to Green Eye Clinic who, in turn, works with the Lions' Club to distribute them overseas. Any used eyeglasses are welcome. Just place those you no longer need in the basket marked "Eyeglasses" in the fellowship hall.

Be on the lookout for the upcoming **Mothers' Day project**, formerly known as **NetWorkers**. This is a great chance to help mothers and children in third world countries.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP:

The church office will be closed April 22-23 while Steve attends Cursillo and Kay takes a short hiatus.

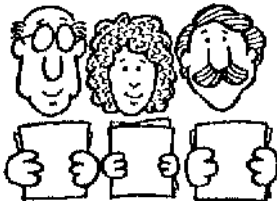


Carolyn McLarnan was recently elected as vice-chair of the General Assembly Mission Council, one of governing bodies of PCUSA, and will be installed at the May meeting. Her term of office runs after the close of General Assembly in July through the next General Assembly in 2012.

Milestone: On March 1, 2010, Steve and Ellen Ramp began their 8th year of ministry at Westminster. Steve says “When you’re having a good time, time flies!” It certainly has. When we came to Westminster, I was the trailing spouse. Ellen had begun a strenuous doctoral program at USM and was commuting to Laurel, getting home late every night. I asked the Presbytery if I could talk with the Pastoral Nominating Committee at Westminster, and they said yes. When I started I was absolutely determined to be low key, make no changes, and get to know people. Westminster was blessed with strong leaders like



T. B. Little, Rodney Little, Ralph Stallcup, and many others who are still with us, so changes just seemed to happen naturally. For a small church, we get a lot accomplished! We have upgraded and expanded our facilities. We have retired nearly \$1 million in debt. We have boosted our commitment to mission, both locally and abroad. We are growing spiritually, musically, financially, and visibly in this community. When someone asks where I work, I’m proud to say I’m the pastor of **Westminster Presbyterian Church**.



Presbyterians are governed by lay persons who are elected to provide spiritual leadership. We elect Deacons and Elders to three-year terms. This year three elders will complete their term of service: **Charles Brown, Althea Jerome, Wilson Ruff**. On the Diaconate, **Robert Cummings, Pam Dossett, and Cindy Nobles** will complete their terms as Deacons. These leaders have provided TREMENDOUS service to the church. Althea Jerome is our Clerk of Session. Charles Brown anchors fellowship and Men of the Church. Wilson Ruff brings financial and administrative wisdom. Robert Cummings moderates the Diaconate. Cindy Nobles keeps the Deacons organized. Pam Dossett is an awesome flower lady. Please thank them for their work on behalf of the congregation. On April 18 we will elect an **officer nominating committee** to develop a slate of candidates for the congregation to consider as elders and deacons. Please be thinking about who God is preparing to serve in leadership at Westminster.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP: (continued)

www.WPCHattiesburg.com: Westminster is ONLINE. You may not know this, but Westminster has a g-r-o-w-i-n-g online presence.

Randall Harris got us started, and for over three years Raoul Jerome has been our behind the scenes web meister. Check it out. You can listen to sermons (but this does not get you out of attending on Sundays!). The calendar, newsletters, and bulletins are posted. So are wedding, baptism, and columbarium policies. It's a work of art and a font of information. Thank you, Raoul!



HEAVEN'S ENTRANCE EXAM

A man dies and goes to Heaven. Saint Peter meets him at the Pearly Gates and says, "Ok, here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into Heaven.

You tell me all the good things you've done, and I'll award you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in."

"Okay," the man says. "I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never once cheated on her, even in my heart."

"That's wonderful," says Saint Peter, "That's worth three points!"

"Three points?" he asks.

Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithes and service."

"Terrific!" says Saint Peter, "That's certainly worth a point."

"One point?! Hey, I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans!"

"Fantastic, that's good for two more points," Saint Peter says.

"Two points?!!" the man cries. "At this rate, the only way I'm going to get into Heaven is by the Grace of God!"

"BINGO, 100 points! Come on in!"





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| April 4 | No Youth meeting (Easter) |
| April 11 | Youth meeting at 6 pm |
| April 13 | Go to Boswell for supper and worship;
leave church at 4:30 pm |
| April 14 | registration deadline for Presbytery Lock-In
(\$30.00) |
| April 18 | Youth meeting at 6 pm |
| April 23-24 | Presbytery Lock-in @ First-Trinity in Laurel |
| April 25 | Youth meeting at 6 pm |

With gratitude and much appreciation . . .

“Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.” Colossians 3:12, 14
(NASV)

Thank you very much for all that you've given me – your words of encouragement and prayer during my time of transition from Eve's House. Love, Geraldine Jones

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