



# The Westminster Standard

NEWSLETTER OF WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HATTIESBURG



## From the Pastor's Desk

**Rend your heart, and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God. —Joel 2:13**

Real, genuine repentance is hard work. That is why we tend to do it superficially. It is so much easier to have the trappings of repentance and rend our clothes that everyone can see, rather than our hearts. Jesus spoke to this problem at length in the Sermon on the Mount. Genuine piety, giving, praying, fasting, like genuine repentance can be easily faked. The truth is we are masters at it.

Good ole John the Baptist often starts us off in the first week of Lent with his proclamation of "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4). John did not suffer fools or fakers. He called the people to task for going through the motions of repentance (rending their clothing) and not showing the fruits of repentance (rending their hearts). William Willimon writes, "Like the prophets of old, John's words strike abrasively against the easy certainties of the religious Establishment. He will let us take no comfort in our rites, tradition, or ancestry."

Repentance requires us to undergo a complete makeover and that is hard work. We resist it with our whole being. We prefer to whitewash, not to scrub deep. We would rather gloss over and avoid the deep cleaning our souls require.

Yet, Lent is about deep cleaning. It is a time of profound soul searching. It requires us to stand before our Lord with hearts exposed.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139).*

Blessings,

Mike

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## From the Clerk of Session

February's session meeting saw your session back in the groove, hearing and approving committee reports and passing motions to continue God's work at Westminster. The Worship Committee reported they have planned out the elements of worship for the foreseeable future in coordination with Reverend Anderson and the Belonging Committee (Deacons) is busy as ever planning for all of our spring events. Growing Spiritually Committee has our lenten course of study well in hand and they also reported on and were approved for a new format of Vacation Bible School coming this summer (more details to follow soon from Tommy). Serving Christ through mission presented the wonderful news that the Presbytery of Mississippi had granted \$25,000 towards tornado relief with the discharge of those funds to be handled by Westminster. After due consideration and conversation we moved forward with a plan to dispense those funds through two worthy charities, R3SM and the Oseolo McCarthy Youth Center.

Finally, we approved three requests for use of our facility by outside groups and heard a report about our newly hired Executive Presbyter, who will be starting in March!

Thanks,



*A Word From the Director of Discipleship*

Lent is the forty day period of reflection, meditation, and prayer before Easter. It is a chance for us to take the time to reflect on and to prepare for the work of ministry and service to God and to all of creation. Lent is a time to exercise the disciplines of mind, body, and spirit through prayer, studying, sometimes fasting, and worship. It is a time for us all to reflect upon our sinfulness and our desperate need for a Savior—a time for soul-searching and true repentance.

To this end, beginning with a joint Ash Wednesday service with our friends from Parkway Heights, Wednesday, March 1st, Westminster will be offering a couple of opportunities following the Wednesday evening meals to assist you on your Lenten journey. Mike Anderson will be leading a Bible study entitled "Wind in the Wilderness: A Lenten Study from the Prophets" that will meet in the sanctuary. I will be leading a Bible study based on the "I Am" statements of Jesus found in the Gospel of John that will meet in Montague Hall. We encourage you to join us on Wednesday nights during lent! Both studies will begin on March 8th and will meet each Wednesday through April 5th.

**ASH WEDNESDAY**

The Ash Wednesday service will be at Parkway Heights this year, Wednesday, March 1st, at 6 p.m. in their sanctuary. Our own Mike Anderson will deliver the sermon during worship. We have also been invited to eat dinner with them prior to the service. Dinner will be Baked Italian Ziti, veggies, salad, and dessert. Pizza will also be available for children. Dinner is served between 5:15 and 5:40. Cost will be \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. Everyone will have the opportunity to fill out a reservation slip Sunday morning.

**ANNUAL WESTMINSTER FISH FRY**

The Diaconate of Westminster has scheduled the annual fish fry for Sunday, March 26th, directly following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Dress casually for church that day and plan to join your church family in Montague Hall for a great lunch of fried fish, boiled shrimp, french fries, hushpuppies, and all the fixings!



**Music Notes**

*By Connie Roberts*

As we enter Lent, the music from the choir loft reflects the more contemplative season. We will begin with "Jesus Walked that Lonesome Valley" and follow the scriptures as we move through Lent toward Holy Week.

We have some lovely anthems in store for you and I hope, as always, that our musical offerings will reinforce the scriptures and add to the depth of experience in the worship service. We have some wonderful things to offer, some really beautiful anthems.

**FEBRUARY ATTENDANCE**

FEBRUARY 5	127
FEBRUARY 12	130
FEBRUARY 19	106
FEBRUARY 26	118

**Children & Youth**

MARCH 5	5:00 P.M. GRADES 3-5 & YOUTH
MARCH 12	NO ACTIVITIES (Spring Break)
MARCH 19	5:00 P.M. GRADES 3-5 & YOUTH
MARCH 26	NO ACTIVITIES (Fish Fry)



## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER

By ALTHEA JEROME

Westminster's Presbyterian Women, are you ready for a road trip? Westminster's Presbyterian Women are invited to the Presbytery of Mississippi Annual Gathering on Saturday, March 11th at Vernal Presbyterian Church. This historic church in our Presbytery, located in rural Green County, is known far and wide for its hospitality and great food. We will carpool to the church, leaving from Westminster at 8:30 a.m. The gathering adjourns after lunch.

Westminster's PW ladies always seem to be hard at work for some good cause. Every month, Ann Johnson, the Together in Service team leader, reports on donations of clothing items to the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter, and donations of heart monitor bags and cancer caps to Forrest General Hospital. Our Circle leaders do much more than convene the monthly circle meetings and Bible study. They also secure volunteers to help with Wednesday night suppers and send cards or make calls to members of the circles, whether those members participate in regular meetings or not. I like to think of Presbyterian Women like glue that helps us stick together to support one another, to serve our church family, and to reach out to those in need within the community. Together we can do much more than any one of us acting alone. In March PW ladies will be providing lunches for the Christian Women's Job Corps, and they will also prepare an evening meal for men who have begun a program there. Thanks to all PW members who volunteered to prepare food for this worthwhile ministry. In the next few weeks PW will nominate individuals to begin serving on the Coordinating Team next September. If you would like to become more actively involved in the fellowship and activities of PW, please speak to Althea Jerome or Mary Dayne Gregg.

### *Welcome!*

The joint search committee of the Presbyteries of Mississippi and South Alabama is very pleased to announce Rev. Dr. Rachel Knoll as our next Regional Presbyter beginning March 15, 2017. Dr. Knoll comes very highly recommended and we feel she is the right person to lead us forward.

Rachel's primary responsibilities will be to the congregations within the bounds of the two presbyteries. An additional responsibility will be to participate with colleagues in the larger church. Functions of the Regional Presbyter will include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ providing vision for congregations and the presbyteries,
- ▶ being a Pastor to the Pastors and leadership of the presbyteries,
- ▶ providing training to presbytery leadership,
- ▶ participating in denominational responsibilities.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

<b>4</b> Mary Dayne Gregg	<b>16</b> Jane Rayborn	<b>24</b> Charles Dennis
<b>5</b> Jessica Howell	<b>17</b> Peggy Langnecker	<b>26</b> Charlotte Hill (?)
<b>9</b> Don McLelland	<b>20</b> Mike Anderson	<b>27</b> Faren Raborn
<b>10</b> Dave Daves	<b>22</b> Dutchie Bryant	<b>28</b> Joseph Raggio
<b>11</b> Iola Cannedy	<b>24</b> Robert Cummings, Sr.	<b>28</b> Mary Catherine Edmondson

MARCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 ASH WEDNESDAY SUPPER & SERVICE AT PARKWAY HEIGHTS UMC 5:00 PM Supper 6:00 PM Service 7:00 PM NO CHOIR	2 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's 12:00 PM ShareCare	3 1:30 PM Living With Cancer—Generations Room	4
5 1st Sunday of Lent 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 5:00 PM Grades 3-5 & Youth	6	7 9:30 AM PW Coordinating Team 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study	8 5:30 PM Wednesday Night Supper 6:30 PM Lenten Bible Study 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	9 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's	10	11 8:00 AM Men of the Church Breakfast in Montague Hall  PW 29th ANNUAL MEETING IN LUCEDALE
12 2nd Sunday of Lent 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Diaconate 12:30 PM Session 5:00 PM NO YOUTH DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME	13	14 9:30 AM Circle 1 at the church 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 PM Circle 2 at the church	15 5:30 PM Wednesday Night Supper 6:30 PM Lenten Bible Study 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	16 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's	17 1:30 PM Living With Cancer—Generations Room	18
19 3rd Sunday of Lent 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 5:00 PM Grades 3-5 & Youth	20 12:00 PM New Beginnings	21 11:00 AM PW Prayer Ministry 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study	22 5:30 PM Wednesday Night Supper 6:30 PM Lenten Bible Study 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	23 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's	24	25
26 4th Sunday of Lent 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 5:00 PM NO YOUTH (Fish Fry)	27	28 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study	29 5:30 PM Wednesday Night Supper 6:30 PM Lenten Bible Study 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal	30 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's	31	