

The Westwind

Volume XXXVIII Issue 3 March 2009

Editor: Elaine Leiter

From the pastor's pen...

Oh, what to write? After more than eight-and-a-half years together we are about to go our separate ways. By most any measure it is the norm. Pastors come and go. Many if not most of my student colleagues from seminary are into at least their second and some into third and perhaps fourth calls. Some have moved-on in the natural course of things. Some have been asked to leave. One has died. At least one has changed denominations. I don't know if all are still in parish ministry, but statistics on such things would indicate that at least one and probably more have left the ministry altogether. As a member of a congregation, I have experienced the departure of ministers but have never been the pastor leaving. This is a time of tremendous ambiguity. The sadness of leaving Westminster is mixed with the excitement of the newness of the future. Sadness is by far the greater emotion now. There will be time for the other later.

I am thankful to the members of the 2000 Pulpit Nominating Committee who were willing to call someone directly out of seminary. I came with a good number of years of living under my belt, and those previous life experiences served me well. I did not, however, come as an experienced pastor. Even with the best of intentions, I sometimes erred. I was the cause of some leaving Westminster. To those I hurt along the way, I ask forgiveness. To those who hung around and helped me grow in this calling, I extend a hearty Thank You! I learned early of your forgiving nature and continued to experience it. Your love has never departed and has often overwhelmed Pat and me. God blessed us with you.

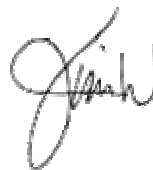
If a pastor's success is measured by increasing membership numbers, I have failed. I pray that there are other criteria. Perhaps above all else, I pray that I

have been there with you when you needed God's presence the most. You have honored me by inviting me into your lives at the most difficult moments of all. You welcomed me into your hospital rooms. I have been there when the doctor told you of your spouse's death. You have allowed me into your homes while the grieving was intense. You've shared stories of love and said it was okay to share them with others during the funeral. You have listened to the promise of the gospel that life with Christ continues, even when this one ends. I have also had the privilege of being there in the happiest of moments when it is far easier to praise God...at the birth of a child, at the child's baptism, at weddings, graduations, big number anniversaries, and all the other mountaintops of life.

In the more normal times, we have been together Sunday after Sunday, Christmas following Christmas, and Easter upon Easter. We have celebrated baptisms and the Lord's Supper, as well as fellowship meals, Christmas caroling, LOGOS for a time, Bible studies, labyrinth walking, Tri-Church Fellowship, Vacation Bible School, Easter Sunrise and Father's Day services at Buffalo Gap, and those are just a few.

As Westminster moves forward (with an emphasis on forward) our prayers will be with you. We can never be sure of where God will take us, but this much we do know, because Christ promised it, "I will be with you always, even to the ends of the earth."

Christ's Shalom,



Dates and Events to Remember!

PANTRY NEEDS FOR MARCH

Jelly, canned meat (Spam-type, tuna, chicken, etc.), bath soap, and money—Thanks!

Your help is very much appreciated!

Please REMEMBER that the FIRST Sunday of every MONTH is PANTRY DAY. Come to worship and bring with you, FOOD (non-perishable items) and/or MONEY (cash or checks) for the PANTRY. The hungry people of Abilene will THANK YOU!!!

Presbyterian Women News

On Tuesday, March 17th Presbyterian Women will meet at 10:00AM in the church library. Lesson #7 *The Oppressed Are Set Free* will be presented.

All women and friends are invited to the Bible Study and business meeting that follows.

EVERY person at Westminster is NEEDED:

- (1) to be THINKING about Evangelism;
- (2) to be COMING-UP with IDEAS for Evangelism;
- (3) to be DOING Evangelism; and that means ALL of us, including YOU!!

Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary!

If you are celebrating your birthday or anniversary this month, please be sure to attend the after-worship coffee time on March 8th. Your Westminster family will celebrate with you as part of this fellowship time!

There will be a SPIRITUAL RENEWAL GATHERING (*Cursillo Ultreya*)

on Thursday, **MARCH 26, 2009,**

from **6:30 pm** – 8:30 pm, at

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
1001 Willis, telephone 325-348-3779,
in SANTA ANNA, Texas.

There will be great **fellowship**, good **food**, grand **music**, sincere **praise**, joyous **singing**, wonderful **inspiration**, thoughtful **prayer**, genuine **renewal**, and much **fun**.

The hosts will be **Pat & RC Smith**.

ALL persons are **welcome** at Ultreyas, whether or **not** they have been to *Cursillo*, **or** even are Presbyterians; **so** **COME YOURSELF**, **invite a friend**, and bring a **covered dish** to share!

March Birthdays:

- 1 - Rob Leiter
- 2 - Bobbie Core, Randy Serrault
- 4 - Terry Carpenter; James Sullivan
- 7 - Jake Armstrong
- 9 - Pat Gaines
- 11 - Gordon Obert
- 13 - Andy Cleveland
- 16 - Ray Gill
- 18 - Rebekah Chenevert
- 21 - Tracy Pierce
- 23 - Kristi Lee
- 24 - Dorothy Murtha
- 25 - Mike Brehm
- 26 - Rev. Dr. Fane Downs
- 27 - Katy Presswood
- 29 - De Nicklas

March Anniversaries:

- 9 - Luther/Beverly Hollowell
- 10 - Tom/Laurie Giddings
- 31 - Ray/Connie Gill

Thanks to You and Miscellaneous, too!

Many Thanks for your prayers, cards and calls during my illness. A Special Thanks to those who drove me to various places as I was given orders not to drive. Thanks again for your concerns.

Gratefully,
Wanda Garson

Aluminum Cans

Please save your aluminum cans for Jim Sullivan. Money raised will go to benefit the Encampment. You may drop them off at the church office at any time.

Thanks!

PRAYER FOR WESTMINSTER

Father, let your plan for Westminster unfold. Thank you that we can be sure that you do have a plan, as you promised. "I know the plans I have for you, plans for prosperity, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Lord, I pray that you have a provision for each member of Westminster. I know that you do because the church is your bride and the groom provides for His bride.

Bless Jim and Pat as they move to Amarillo. Bless their new church and their ministry there.

I pray especially for Westminster that Your will be done. Let the sun (Son) shine on them.

In Christ's glorious and loving name.

Amen

(Ray and Martha King's daughter sent them this prayer for Westminster)

From the Stewardship Committee

First, the Stewardship committee would like to thank the members and friends of Westminster for supporting our new, more visible, way of giving to missions. As you are probably aware by now, each month we are emphasizing a different mission each month, through the Minute for Mission during the worship service, through bulletin inserts, and through information in this publication. We encourage you to give to these missions by designating the mission on the memo line of your check made out to Westminster Presbyterian Church. The monies so designated will be collected together and sent as one check to the appropriate agency. It should be understood that giving to these monthly missions is above what you may have pledged for the support of the operation of our own programs and maintenance of our own property.

With that in mind, I encourage you to read the letter from Scott Serrault found elsewhere in this newsletter. Scott is the President of the Board of Buffalo Gap Ministries. In it, Scott explains what Buffalo Gap Ministries is and what its current needs are. This ministry is our mission emphasis for the month of March. You will also be hearing about it during several Sunday worship services throughout the month.

In case you are wondering what other missions we are supporting this year, the list of monthly emphases is given below. The order of the missions is slightly different from the one that appeared in the January Westwind, due to new information about an activity supporting NOROC.

January	Presbyterian Medical Care Mission
February	Palo Duro Presbytery
March	Buffalo Gap Ministries
April	One Great Hour of Sharing
May	NOROC
June	PMCM-Dental
July	Meals on Wheels
August	Buffalo Gap Ministries
September	Presbyterian Children's Homes
October	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
November	Presbyterian Food Pantry
December	Joy Gift Offering

A Special Thank You!

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank you for supporting our church's monthly mission emphasis. The total giving in February for Palo Duro Presbytery was \$390.

Thank you for your generosity.

2009 Monthly Financial Report

RECEIVED	Jan. 2009	Year to Date	2009 BUDGET
2009 Pledges	\$8,782.00	\$8,782.00	\$91,000.00
SS Offering	\$26.05	\$26.05	\$250.00
Plate Offering	\$1,552.00	\$1,552.00	\$6,000.00
Endowment Withdrawal		\$0.00	\$68,510.00
Interest Income		\$0.00	
Other Income		\$0.00	
Utility Reimbursement	\$128.19	\$128.19	\$3,125.00
INCOME	\$10,488.24	\$10,488.24	\$178,089.00
EXPENSE		\$11,672.77	\$178,089.00
NET INCOME/LOSS		(\$1,184.53)	\$1,800.00

Hello from Buffalo Gap Presbyterian Ministries:

We have seen a lot of changes over the years in what we have done with our great camp in Buffalo Gap. If you don't know, Buffalo Gap Ministries is owned by 12 congregations in Palo Duro Presbytery, of which we are one. Over the years, all the churches have worked hard with shrinking budgets and memberships, and yet we have been able to hold on to one of the greatest things that bind us together in friendship and fellowship: our Buffalo Gap Church Camp.

I would like you to think about the camp for a moment. Think about all the youth summer camps and retreats and the Friday night swim nights. Where else could we have done this as conveniently? Many people have enjoyed good times at our camp in Buffalo Gap.

Buffalo Gap Ministries is currently facing a crisis. Over the past few years, the operating costs have kept going up, such that it has been more and more difficult to keep our camp running and in working order. The camp board members and I are running out of ideas, since we have cut everything down to the bone in the last few years. Recently we hired a new Camp Manager after Jim Sullivan retired. Jim provided over twenty years of service to our camp; it was a place he and his family called home. Some members have asked why we hired a new manager! Some have voiced the thought that we could just run the camp without a manager and work on a volunteer basis to keep it up. However, the reality is that over 80 percent of the twelve church congregations have members who are mostly in their mid-70s or older. Many of the younger members have children in school and are working one or two jobs to pay the bills at home. This makes it difficult for many people to volunteer at the camp. If you have worked the last two years on the scheduled work day at camp, you will know what I am talking about. We average only eight to twelve people to try to clean the whole camp and get it ready for the summer programs. At the last work day, my family was the youngest ones there; the next youngest volunteer was sixty-seven years old. It takes more than one weekend and more than a dozen volunteers to get things ready and keep things working.

So the big issue is that we need funding from our member churches to keep our camp running or otherwise we will have to let the camp go. Are you ready to do that? I believe that our mission is to those who are served by the programs of our Camp. Please remember Buffalo Gap Presbyterian Ministries in your offering at church services during the month of March, as well keep it in your prayers always.

Sincerely,
Scott A Serrault
Board President Buffalo Gap Presbyterian Ministries

Please SAY the following words to people YOU know and meet:

***I really would like for you to **WORSHIP**
with me at Westminster on next Sunday!***

Please also always remember that it really is true that:

**“The law of any church is, and always will be,
evangelize or fossilize.”**

George E. Sweazy in *Let's March Abreast*

Westminster Prayer List for March 2009

Each week we will be praying specifically for several of our WPC families. We invite you to join us as we ask God's blessings upon our sisters and brothers in Christ.

March 1st - 7th: Tom & Bonnie Walters; and James & Janice Sullivan, Evelyn and Amber.

Mar. 8th - 14th: Catherine Cathey; Ruth Cranor; Lexi Cruce; and Bob Prentice.

Mar. 15th - 21st: Rett Fuller; Kirk Garson; Frances Barnes; and Rob Leiter.

Mar. 22nd - 28th: Scott & Janice Serrault, and Victoria; and Farren & Grace Sadler.

Mar. 29th - Apr. 4th: Jim & Pat Wallace; Cary & Mary Alice Headstream; and Wanda Gray.

Have you never seen your name here? Remember that this list is open to members and regulars. Contact the church office at 692-3544 and we'll get you on the list!

From the Session ~ ~ ~ ~

The session had a brief retreat following worship on Feb. 8, followed by the regular stated meeting. Rich Schempp, Executive Presbyter of Palo Duro Presbytery, attended the retreat.

Totals were given for several recently received special offerings – Joy Gift, \$751.00 – Medical Care Mission, \$555.00 – Souper Bowl Sunday, \$146.00 and several cans of soup.

It was approved to relocate the Father's Day worship service from Buffalo Gap Encampment to the church building.

A work day will be coming in the spring, so be ready to dig in and help. The building, grounds, and especially the kitchen need attention.



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

4515 SOUTH 14TH STREET

ABILENE, TX 79605-4736



Presbyterian CURSILLO

PRESBYTERIAN **CURSILLO** is a purposefully designed method for renewing the faith of individuals and, through these individuals, the environments in which they live and work. "**CURSILLO**" means a short course in living the Christian faith and is designed to provide a framework for the development of Christians in their local Presbyterian churches and in the world.

During the three days of a **CURSILLO** weekend participants form a small Christian community, worship and study together, and communicate with one another in order to gain a personal living awareness of their faith and of the joys and responsibilities that such faith brings. The weekend itself is centered around talks given by lay people and pastors. In small groups after each talk the participants and staff discuss the presentation.

The **CURSILLO** weekend is intended for Presbyterians who already have faith and who seek continued growth in that faith and its commitments. The goals of **CURSILLO** are to guide participants into an ever closer and more personal relationship with Christ, to heighten their joy, to deepen their faith, and to invigorate their lives for Christ.

CURSILLO intends for participants to return to all of the environments in which they have influence and to affect those environments in a Christian manner. Singles and married couples are welcome; and, because **CURSILLO** seeks to enrich family life, married couples are encouraged to attend together. Staff members are lay-persons and pastors who previously have attended a weekend and who have been trained to serve in their leadership roles.

The **CURSILLO** weekend is only a beginning. It is intended that what is learned and shared during the weekend will be taken back and put into practice in local congregations and communities. In the Abilene area former participants and other interested persons meet weekly in small groups to share the Christian life and to support and reinforce each other. They also meet once a month as a larger group to share the joy and to inspire, challenge, and equip each local church member for Christian action in the church, home, place of work, and community.

www.paloduropresbytery.org ("Camps & Retreats")

A **CURSILLO** weekend is **ONLY** three days long, but it lasts a **LIFETIME!**

LIBRARY NOTES

As many of you are aware, the CE committee has been working diligently in our church library. Soon, we are going to have a “give-away” of some of our collected books. As an assistance to those of you who have considered donating books from your own collections or purchasing books for us, we thought it might be timely to share some of the guidelines adopted by this committee several years ago. These are the criteria we are using at this time as we update our circulation.

“Westminster Presbyterian Church Library exists to provide materials which will under-gird, enlarge, and enrich the total program of the church. It is a goal of the church to encourage its members to grow individually and collectively as Christian participants in the home, community, state, nation and world. To this end, selected materials included shall be of a variety in content, in format, and for all age groups.

In general, materials included will be on such topics as Bible (translations, commentaries, dictionaries, concordances, atlases); church history; worship and devotional materials; sacraments; ethics and morals; religious poetry, drama, music; other religions; biographies (Biblical characters, church leaders, world figures); fiction (religious, social conditions).

Due to limitations of space, materials which are not related to the purpose and program of the church will generally not be included. Such materials would be mysteries; westerns; romances; science (real or applied) except as it pertains to ethics; science fiction, fine or applied arts other than religious; history (secular or profane). Occasional exception will be made to include a title either because it is a best seller of high interest or on a topic of current concern.

Materials no longer in date or appropriate to the purpose of the library will be given to other agencies or discarded as deemed fit.”

As always, the CE committee welcomes any suggestions that might enhance our service to our members and within the library itself.

“Words are vehicles that can transport us from the drab sands to the dazzling stars.”
M. Robert Syme

FREEBIES

During the March Fellowship Lunch the C.E. Committee will have a cart of “freebies” (free books) in the Youth and Family Building. These are books that are either duplicates of books already in the Library or books outside of the Library’s guidelines. Please feel free to take any of these books that you might want.