

## Pastor’s Perspective

What does Jesus want for Christmas?

The Christmas season is upon us! Adults are excited about enjoying time with family and friends and children excited about gifts they will receive. Adults and children alike have a pep in their step when asked, “what do you want for Christmas?” So I ask you, what do you want for Christmas? I’ll tell you something I want. I want ambrosia! I know this sounds simplistic, but my favorite Christmas memories almost always involve ambrosia. Not just any ambrosia, the ambrosia my 90 year old grandfather makes with great care, which is then topped by a ton of sugar. In thinking about what people want for Christmas I found myself asking what Jesus wants. What does Jesus want for Christmas? We can see what he wants in his prayers. In Jesus’ “High Priestly prayer” in John 17: 24, we find the climax of his desire. Jesus prays, “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” That is to say that Jesus wants his people, God’s elect, to believe and be near to him. Christ also desires that believers see the glory of Christ. He wants us to see how beautiful, wonderful, and powerful he is. Jesus desires that we savor him, relish him, delight in him, treasure him, and love him.

However, Jesus does not end there. Jesus continues praying in John 17:26, “I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” John Piper writes, “this is the end of the prayer. What is Jesus’ *final* goal for us? Not that we simply see his glory, but that we love him with the same love that the Father has for him: “that the love with which you [Father] have loved me may be in them.” Jesus’ longing and goal is that we see his glory and then that we be able to love what we see with the same love that the Father has for the Son. And he doesn’t mean that we merely *imitate* the love of the Father for the Son. He means the Father’s very love becomes our love for the Son- that we love the Son with the love of the Father for the Son. That is what the Spirit becomes and bestows in our lives: Love for the Son by the Father through the Spirit.

What Jesus wants most for Christmas is that his elect be gathered in and then get what *they* want most – to see His glory and then *savor* it with the very savoring of the Father for the Son.”

What I want most for Christmas this year is to share in the “savoring” of Christ with family, friends, brothers, and sisters. This is what Jesus prays for us this Christmas! Not that we host the best party, give the best gift, or receive the coolest toy. Jesus prays that this Christmas we may see Christ with the eyes of God and savor Christ with the heart of God.

Again I ask you, what do you want this Christmas? I hope you all enjoy family and friends during this Christmas season. May we celebrate the greatest gift ever given, Jesus Christ!

Savoring Christ with you this Christmas,

Richard

## News from the Mission Field **T. Mac Howard: Delta Streets, Greenwood, MS**

As we approached the hills of Lexington, I began to sweat; not knowing if we would make it up and down the hills that were in front of us. All twelve of us, eleven 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and the bus driver (me) were going to Jackson for a day of education and excitement. The only issue was determining if the bus we were on would climb the hills. It did, and we arrived in Jackson safely. Once in Jackson, we were off to the state capitol, then the state fair. While at the capitol, we had the opportunity to meet the Lt. Governor and our state senator. We toured the building, sat in the senator’s chairs, took pictures with both the Lt. Governor and our state senator, and hit the gavel that quiets those in the senate chamber during sessions.

After our stay at the capitol, it was time for the fun. And lucky for us, it was wrist band night for those looking for a thrill. Lucky for me, I was not the only adult on site! My sister, mom, and dad were there for both the capitol and the fair, and one of my good friends made an appearance at the fair. I think he rode the bumper cars about six times. Four times less than the boys he was following. As we walked by the vendors, it brought back memories of when I was a kid. I never could conquer the ladder that was made of rope. My guys were frustrated with the inability to make the three point shot. (And yes, I told them the rims were bent, but they insisted!) Our last stop before Greenwood was McDonald’s which is always a crowd favorite.

The next day, I flew out of Memphis to Indianapolis for a national conference dealing with Christian community development. The conference was four days of seminars, plenaries, networking sessions, and Bible studies. I roomed with a guy named Bryan Kelly who went through the same internship with me down in New Orleans in 2005. He has started a similar ministry in Montgomery, AL called Common Ground. ([cgmal.org](http://cgmal.org) is the website) By the end of the conference, we had come up with a plan for my guys to travel down to Montgomery to compete against his guys in a basketball tournament. I am probably more excited than my boys!! One practical opportunity I heard about from a speaker was the idea of adopting a public school and loving on the teachers who teach there. While this could take many forms, I am going to challenge the churches here in Greenwood to provide a breakfast at least once every nine weeks for the teachers. As a former teacher, I know how much that would mean to the teachers at each school. We all know how stressful teaching can be, so the speaker mentioned a gift certificate for a massage! Wow, what a perfect gift to let these teachers know we care for them and are thinking of them.

Our after school program is exploding with newcomers every day. Just this last week, we had 18 young men underneath our roof. And that number could double in a week or so. Word is out about the two new basketball goals we have just acquired. They are too nice for our building, but we will definitely use and enjoy them! Bryan Kelly and Common Ground beware! Our biggest prayer request outside of the daily happenings of the young men involved with Delta Streets would be for the all boys academy. We are hoping to start with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade next August, and for that to happen, multiple things will have to fall into place which include a building (preferably the one we are in now), renovating the building, recruiting teachers, coming up with a curriculum, and school policies. And the biggest hurdle we will have to cross is the fund raising aspect. Our goal is for 1,000 individuals to give \$1,000. After three years of living here in the delta, this could be monumental for the whole community ten or fifteen years from now. It so often can be overwhelming but I am so often reminded that at that point God will have to move. So we are waiting eagerly and with much anticipation to see God use Delta Streets to revitalize Greenwood for His Glory!!

**Women in the Church News (WIC)** - We have some great additions to the church web site. Please go to [www.wpcgreenwood.org](http://www.wpcgreenwood.org) and highlight ministries and click on Women's ministries. This will give you an overview of our current ministry efforts. We ask that all women complete the WIC survey by clicking on the WIC Survey option. Then just click submit when you are finished. Another technological addition is a WIC Google group. This will provide a way for all of the women in our church to communicate with one another via email. To sign up for this group, go to the website [groups.google.com/group/WestminsterWIC](http://groups.google.com/group/WestminsterWIC) (a link to this page can also be found on our Women's Ministries page of the church website). If you already have a Google account, click "sign in and apply for group membership" on the left side of the page. If you do not have a Google account, click "apply for group membership" on the right side of the page and follow the directions. If you need any assistance with this process, please contact Kathryn Dyksterhouse (458-0998).

The WIC committee includes the following: Cathy Adams (Chairperson); Lorie Guenther (Discipleship Committee Chairperson); Sister Kosko (Mercy Ministry Committee Chairperson); Vicki Patridge (Special Events Chairperson); Kathryn Dyksterhouse (Organizational Committee Chairperson).

The Women's Bible study continues to meet on Tuesday mornings 9:30-11:00. We are studying Nancy Guthrie's book, [Hoping For Something Better: a study through Hebrews](#). All are welcome. This study does not require that you attend every week. You can step into this study at any time.

Selena Nause will be heading up our Christmas Decoration Committee. Please contact her if you are interested in assisting in this fulfilling ministry.

Please respond to the WIC survey so we can start to plan events for 2012 twill nourish the Women of our church.

### **A Christian Christmas Book Review** by Amy Coleman

Every year the Christmas season seems to bring the inevitable onslaught of shopping and spending, wrapping and writing, and hustle and bustle. This year, why not slow down and try something different with your family?

“How is that possible?” one might ask. The answer is simple: a storybook.

Jotham’s Journey by Arnold Ytreeide is a wonderful story that takes you through the Advent season with a short chapter to read each night. The story follows a ten-year-old boy named Jotham and his journey to find his family after he gets angry at his father and runs away. He has many exciting, cliff-hanger adventures that will leave your children begging you to read the next day’s section. Jotham ultimately ends up in Bethlehem and (spoiler alert) his life intersects the lives of Mary, Joseph, and the newborn Christ child in such a lovely way that will help both young and old see a clearer picture of Christ as fully human and yet still fully God.

Our family discovered the joy of this little book four years ago after a dear friend recommended it as a new family tradition. Since then, it has been a highlight of our Advent celebration, and a great way for our family to keep our focus on Christ in what can easily become a season of extreme busyness and stress. If you have children, please consider starting this tradition with them. I promise you will all be thankful you did. If you don’t have children in your home, but are a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or just a good friend, this book makes a wonderful gift.



Westminster will be the host church for the Annual GriefShare ministry in Greenwood, beginning 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 10, 2012. GriefShare is a grief recovery group that meets for 13 weeks. It is a non-denominational, Biblically based and Christ centered ministry, for anyone who has dealt with the loss of a loved one. A nursery is provided. For more information visit the website at [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). To register, email Kim Pillow at [khpillow@yahoo.com](mailto:khpillow@yahoo.com) or call the church office at 453-7608. Workbooks are \$15.00.

**Prayer List** – Please pray for the following: Becky Coleman, Neil, Allison and Cole Pillow and family, Betty Morgan (at Indywood), Bettye Jim Morgan, the Pastor Search Committee, Gene Stansel, Guy Robertson (Keith’s father), Jane Morgan, Mary Lou Robertson (Mary Elizabeth Makamson’s mother), Louise Fraiser (Johnny Smith’s aunt), Mary Nell Downs, McKee Guenther, Georgia Seale (Georgeanne Smith’s mother), John Sharp Pillow, MEM and Bobby Morton, Bettye and Bill Montgomery, JoAnn Woody, Harris Coleman and family and our expectant mother Amber Joiner.

**Ushers** – We want to thank all who diligently and faithfully serve the congregation each month when on the usher team. The usher team for December is Walter and Stevie Pillow (Head), Mike Watkins, Chase and Crystal Downing, Ben and Kay Downing and Channing and Michelle Hodges.

**Activities for DECEMBER**

Sunday, December 4	Communion
	Lessons and Carols Christmas program (6 p.m.)
Tuesday, December 6	Ladies Bible Study (9:30 a.m. at the church)
Wednesday, December 7	Jr. and Sr. High Bible Study (6:00 p.m.)
	Adult Bible Study, Children Bible Study
Sunday, December 11	COVERED DISH LUNCHEON (11:15 a.m.)
	Youth Progressive Dinner (5:00 p.m.)
Tuesday, December 13	Ladies Bible Study (9:30 a.m. at the church)
Wednesday, December 14	Youth and Children Christmas Caroling and Supper (4 – 7 p.m.)
	Adult Bible Study (6:00 p.m.)
Tuesday, December 20	Ladies Bible Study (9:30 a.m. at the church)
Wednesday, December 21	Jr. and Sr. High Bible Study (6:00 p.m.)
	Adult Bible Study, Children’s Bible Study
Sunday, December 25	CHRISTMAS DAY
Tuesday, December 27	NO Ladies Bible Study
Wednesday, December 28	Jr. and Sr. High Bible Study (6:00 p.m.)
	Adult Bible Study, Children Bible Study

**Happy Birthday Wishes**

December 3 – Garrison Barger	December 21 – Robin O’Bryant
December 3 – Wally Montgomery	December 22 – Mark Barger
December 3 – Isabelle O’Brien	December 23 – Sadie O’Bryant
December 8 – Claire Coleman	December 24 – Abbott Moses
December 11 –Walt Montgomery	December 26 – Karen Archer
December 12 –Lillie Smith	December 27 – William Patridge
December 16 –Mark Kosko	December 30 – Kirk Kimes
December 16 –Peggy Henry	December 31 – LaNelle Tollison
December 19 –Luke Uithoven	December 31 – Kathryn Lee Ware
December 20 –Walter Pillow	

**Happy Anniversary**

December 11 – Chase and Crystal Downing  
 December 13 – Joey and Lori Smith  
 December 21 – David and Ellen Hey  
 December 28 – Kim and Mary Elizabeth Makamson  
 December 29 – Clint and Lorie Guenther

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
 804 East Park Avenue  
 Greenwood, MS 38930



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**December, 2011**

**Introduction of New Members at Westminster**

Our new members are Derek Hinckley, Reid and Lindsey Kelly, Alicia Morse, and Elizabeth Myers.

**Friday, Dec. 2, Parade Party**

Johnny and Georgeanne Smith will be hosting the annual Parade Party at their home, 304 Grand Blvd., Friday at 4:00. Bring your chairs and favorite parade food to share. Hot chocolate and drinks will be provided.

**Sunday, December 4, Service of Lessons and Carols**

The Music of Christmas: A Service of Lessons and Carols, December 4, at 6:00 p.m.

There will be a reception in the fellowship hall immediately following the service.

**Tuesday, December 6, Youth Girls Christmas Cookie Decorating Party**

Cookie decorating party will be December 6 at 6:30 at the home of Kathryn Lee Ware, 304 E. Adams.

**Sunday, December 11, Youth Progressive Dinner and Christmas Party**

The Youth will be having a Progressive Dinner on December 11. The Dinner will begin at 5:00 p.m. at the home of Michael and Cathy Adams.

The Youth will also have its Christmas Party immediately following the Progressive Dinner at the home of Stephen and Kim Pillow. If you have any questions, call Richard at 662-299-3313.

