

PSK Youth Council Westminster Woods Work Weekend 2016 (W4)

is in the books! Eighty Presbytery of Southern Kansas folks converged on the Woods on the weekend of November 18-20 for a time of food, games, worship, and WORK! We cleared branches (and logs!), we worked trail maintenance by moving rock and gravel, clearing debris, and digging drainage channels, we painted signs, we cleaned cabins and chapels, AND we raked leaves! Lots and LOTS of leaves! It was a weekend of love and caring for the camp and for each other.



If you have never been to W4 or if it has been a few years since you supported your PSK

Youth Council events, please consider bringing your young people or even just attending as an adult! Many of the churches that have embraced Youth Council events have found themselves in the wonderful position of actually having TOO MANY adults and volunteers who want to go along with the youth! (Actually, you can never have too many adults...or youth!) W4 is just one of TWO events conceived, planned, and executed by the PSK Youth Council!

The other incredible event is **Sleep "Less" in Sterling** which is March 10 - 12 in 2017! Rev. Dr. Perryn Rice of Lake Highland Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas will be our speaker for the weekend. If you went to Triennium this last summer you may recognize his name! He was the animated and passionate pastor who sent us back into the world at the closing worship service at Triennium! Mark your calendars, assemble your adults and youth, and be looking for more information on Sleep "Less" 2017!

(Thanks Joe Wiseman)

Westminster Woods Camp Winter Retreats 2017

Young Adult Jan 6 - 8; High School Jan 20 - 22;
Middle School Feb 3 - 5

Presbytery of Southern Kansas
Saturday, February 11th
First Presbyterian Church, Winfield

On The Wind

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First Presbyterian Church, Winfield, created "Turkey Boxes" during the month of November. The turkey boxes were decorated on Nov 22nd by the small hands of the younger youth (with volunteer assistance). The boxes were assembled by the high school youth during a lock-in and then were distributed the following day. FPC, Winfield, helped a record breaking fifteen families in need of a meal this Thanksgiving!



(Thanks to Michelle Shelton)



On Sunday, Dec. 11th, the children and youth of **First Presbyterian Church, Arkansas City**, presented a musical entitled "A Very Extraordinary, Merry Christmas Mission" for their church family and friends. Pictured left: (left to right) Beth, Tristan, and Moriah)

(Thanks Melodie Parman)

Advent Devotional

My Brothers and Sisters:

I've always used the Advent season to engage in a regular spiritual discipline, like reading an Advent devotional. The ones provided through a variety of denominational publishers are always excellent and my journey to Christmas is enriched by them. I have been especially partial to those written by Henri Nouwen, whose thoughts are profound and yet accessible. I feel like he knew the God that I know. In one of this year's Advent devotionals, *Unto Us a Child is Born*, Nouwen talks about spiritual reading:

The purpose of spiritual reading is not to master knowledge or information, but to let God's Spirit master us. Strange as it may sound, spiritual reading means to let ourselves be read by God!

What a wonderful description of our spiritual journey through Advent! In Advent, we start retelling the story of darkness turning into light, of despair turning into hope, of separation becoming incarnation, and of scarcity becoming generous abundance. We've heard this story before, and enough times that there is little we don't already know of it. But Advent is not about mastering knowledge or information, but of allowing space in our lives and in our hearts for God's Spirit to master us. Advent invites us to become open books to God, to allow ourselves to be read by God, and transformed for new life by God's

amazing love. That's easier said than done though, because when God reads us, we get to see ourselves through God's eyes, and that's never pretty.

My hunch about the judgment, when we meet God face to face, is that the punishment is self-inflicted. When we stand in the presence of God's perfect love and eternal light, we will become painfully conscious of our shortcomings, of our failure to live as God invited us to live, and beat ourselves up over it. But the good news of the gospel, is that God's perfect love for us never wavers, and the eternal light of God's presence always prevails over the darkness, even the ugly shadows that lurk in our own minds and hearts.

We rehearse this judgment and hear this good news each Sunday when we confess our sin and are reminded of God's never-ending forgiveness. Knowing how God reads us, and how God loves us anyway, gives us the courage to live into our resurrection hope, into our Advent hope, and into our Christmas hope. "Do not be afraid" said the angel, "for I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."

This year I invite you to allow yourself to be an open book to God. Let God read you. If you do, God's Spirit will master you. Your knowledge will be surpassed by joy, and your understanding by gratitude. And joy and gratitude make for a very merry Christmas.

In Peace and Joy,

Mike K

When McPherson senior, Emma Ellet, watched a presentation by missionaries Heather and Habtom Kebede (daughter and son-in-law to John & Gwen Haspels) about their work in Ethiopia, she knew she wanted to help. With the aid of other members in her **youth group at FPC McPherson** she came up with an idea to donate old McPherson jerseys to the young adults the Kebede's were sponsoring.

"After hearing about the work they were doing, I immediately asked them what I could do to contribute to their efforts," Ellet said, "They gave me a few options, but the most feasible option for me and the group was to donate unused or old sports jerseys to their athletic mission cause."

The Kebede's partner with Beza International Ministries to run a sports outreach program in the country. The organization gives teens and young adults the opportunity to play sports like volleyball and soccer, and compete in matches around their community. The goal of the ministry is to work on gathering people together to have fun and learn about God in the process. The Kebede's are always in need for more sports equipment and jerseys for their players, so when they heard about the jerseys the youth group wanted to donate they were easily on board.

Ellet contacted multiple coaches who could have old jerseys they were willing to donate. Three McPherson coaches were more than willing to help the cause and each donated a large box full of jerseys.

Before long the jerseys were on their way to Ethiopia. The next update Ellet and the youth group received about the fate of the jerseys were two pictures sent by Heather and Habtom.

"When I first saw the pictures of these people wearing the jerseys that I had a part in giving to them, my heart became so happy. It is one thing to simply gather and send items to a place around the world, but I got to see the results of this project in a light that I could only imagine before."

This experience has increased Ellet's passion for mission work & she plans on continuing to contribute to this project, and hopefully be able to take a trip to Ethiopia in the future.

"These are real people that I got the opportunity to give a little bit of happiness to and also spread the Lord to. Giving and doing work for others gives you a happiness that I cannot describe other than as extraordinary. It is a happiness you can never obtain by doing things for yourself, only for others," Ellet said.



(Thanks Pastor. H. Dick Reynolds)