

## Calendar of Ministries

✠ Friday, January 23

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Saturday, January 24

Evening Prayers at 8

✠ Sunday, January 25

Sunday School at 9:45

Morning Worship at 11

Session meets for lunch and planning

Teen Group Ski Day after worship

✠ Monday, January 26

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Tuesday, January 27

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Wednesday, January 28

Morning Prayers at 8

Bible Club at the High School at 8:08

Choir at 7 p.m.

✠ Thursday, January 29

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Friday, January 30

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Saturday, January 31

Evening Prayers at 8

✠ Sunday, February 1

Sunday School at 9:45

Super Bowl Party at the Old Dairy

**Our Fellowship and Service Ministry Team is helping Food Pantry this month by soliciting cans of mixed vegetables and tomato juice for February's Pantry. You can help by donating these targeted items prior to the next Pantry which meets on Tuesday, February 10. Bring your donations to the church and put them in the vestibule.**



# The Weekly Word

**Windy Cove Presbyterian Church  
January 22, 2015**

## Romans 12:1-2

For the past three Sundays in worship, Windy Covians have been studying Romans 12:1-2.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (2) Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

On January 4 the congregation focused on one word: **therefore**. Paul is referring back to the earlier part of his letter where he describes the good news of Jesus. He begins in the early chapters by reminding his Roman readers that **all people** who live without a relationship to Jesus are sinners. Not only do people do sinful acts; but at the core of their being without Jesus, they exist as sinners separated from God. His shorthand phrase is: “. . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

However, the gospel is that God has provided a way in Jesus that people can be made righteous. God

brings people back into a right relationship with God by the sacrifice of Jesus, not for himself but for others.

“Therefore” reminds Paul's readers that what he writes next is dependent on what he has written before. In other words, Paul's exhortation to live a Christian life relies on a person's having heard and received the good news of the new life in Christ.

After a person has been forgiven and come into that relationship with Jesus, then that person should offer herself as “a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. . .” This idea was the center of our study on January 11.

Paul reminds his readers that we are no longer obligated to offer dead animal sacrifices as people did in

*(Continued Inside)*

### Take Note!

**Jan 25—Session meets for lunch following Morning Worship**

**Teen Skiing at Snowshoe in the afternoon**

**Feb 1—Prepare your hearts for Communion at Morning Worship. Mr. Sherrard will finish the current series on Romans 12:1-2.**

**Have you volunteered for a ministry yet during our month of discipleship and stewardship? Now's the time to respond.**

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## Romans (Cont.)

Old Testament times. That sacrificial system is no longer necessary because Jesus' sacrificial death was the once-and-for-all-time sacrifice needed to put people right with God. Realizing that our relationship with God has been restored through Jesus encourages us to offer ourselves in service to God.

Our service to God is "holy" because we have been set apart for the purpose of serving God. And, our service is well "pleasing" to God as a response to what God has done for us through Jesus. Now, people who trust in Jesus are on the right track. They have been made right with God, and they have the chance to serve God with their whole lives.

Finally, on January 18 the congregation examined the phrase, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world . . ." Here, Paul reminds his readers and us that many ways or patterns of the world in which we live are contrary to the purposes of God. A few examples might include our culture's emphasis on self-promotion versus God's emphasis on humility or the world's lack of patience versus God's infinite patience or the current emphasis on convenience in relationships versus God's emphasis on commitment.

We will continue our study on Sunday, January 25, as we look at Paul's expression, ". . . but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Hope to see you there!

## Do You Remember?

Some of you will perhaps remember when Windy Cove sponsored its first refugee family. It's quite a tale, and we are reminded of it now because Fran Hobbs recently received a Christmas letter from the Lavongs. To refresh your recollection, here's how the story unfolded.

In May of 1980 Fran Hobbs and Karen Kessinger attended a meeting of the Synod (one of the higher councils of our Presbyterian Church) of the Virginias. There was much discussion at the meeting about the plight of displaced refugees in Southeast Asia and the need for sponsors in the United States to help relocate these folks. Over the next few months, Windy Cove decided to sponsor a refugee family.

By the fall of 1980, all the details were in place and Elders Fran Hobbs, Karen Kessinger, and Pastor Rob Sherrard went to the airport in Roanoke to pick up Somsith (the husband) and Chomsy (the wife) Lavong. Roanoke was their last stop on the long airline journey from a refugee camp in Thailand to a new life in Bath County. Mr. Sherrard declared later that he had never seen three more nervous people than were Karen, Fran, and he that evening.

These Windy Covians had good reason to be nervous since the Lavongs did not speak one word of English, had absolutely no idea of where they were going, and had only

months before experienced a harrowing escape from Laos to the refugee camp in Thailand. As they later told the story, Laotian soldiers were shooting at them as they swam across the river to what they hoped would be a better life.

The Lavongs originally stayed with Fran at Peaceful River. However, after they began work at the Homestead, Fran found them an upstairs apartment in the home of Ann Fry. Many people in the congregation and community helped to provide food, clothes, transportation, and beginning instruction in English.

The Lavongs learned rudimentary English through repetition. Rob remembers that he taught them one lesson on a dinner table place setting. He laid out the setting with cup and saucer, plate, silverware, and a glass. He would pick up an item like a fork and say, "This is a fork." The Lavongs would repeat the phrase as best they could. Rob would say the phrase several more times until their repetition had most of the sound of the phrase. Then, they moved on to another item like a cup or spoon. Each of these simple lessons was about an hour long.

While staying in Hot Springs, Somsith and Chomsy lived frugally and saved money. They ate lots of rice which had been their staple in Laos. Unlike most Americans, the Lavongs bought rice in 20 or 30 pound bags. They put much of their savings, not in a local bank, but in gold jewelry which to them seemed

more tangible and transferable than paper money.

In about a year, they had made contact with relatives who were living in the Seattle area and left Bath County for the West Coast. They currently still live in Seattle and have been very prosperous there. Over the years, they raised four children, and they now have four grandchildren with another on the way.

Somsith and Chomsy both work at Conagra Foods as does their son Leland. Somsith hopes that he can retire next year. Their Christmas letter was dictated by Somsith and written by his daughter Jaime. Jaime says that Somsith wants Fran to call so that she can hear how well he now speaks English. Also, Somsith hopes that he will be able to visit his friends in Virginia when he retires.

What an incredible life journey and story of success for a couple. We appreciate all those folks who in the early 1980s helped the Lavongs get a new start of life. We are grateful for the way God has blessed them and us in this journey.

## Mike's Home!

We are glad to welcome Mike Tenant home this week from the Bland Correctional Center. Mike came home to Bath County on Tuesday. He is temporarily residing in Mitchelltown, but he hopes to relocate to the senior apartments behind the high school. Mike expects to be in worship at Windy Cove on Sunday where you can greet him in person.