

# INMISSION

A PUBLICATION OF PARKWAY HEIGHTS UMC

FEBRUARY 2025

## A Message from Keith



Lead Pastor Keith Keeton

I heard a scientist explain how time is relative. If you want to argue, I get it; it doesn't seem logical to think that time can be different for different people. But as the scientist explained, one year of life to a 7-year-old boy is 14% of his existence, while one year to an 80-year-old man is just 1.25% of his. What does that mean? It simply means that time feels like it

speeds up as we get older because each year occupies a smaller percentage of our life. I won't argue with that; the older I get, the more time seems to slip by unnoticed.

It's February, and I'm still writing 2024 on my checks. Where did January go? Time gets lost so easily, and that's a problem in the life of the church. When we fail to grasp the urgency of every moment, we miss opportunities to engage in life-giving activities.

As we move through 2025 (I'm using the right year now!), my prayer is that we'll make a conscious effort to utilize every moment. What might God be calling you to accomplish in 2025? Maybe your goal is personal, like strengthening your spiritual disciplines — prayer, scripture reading or connecting with a small group. Or perhaps it's communal, such as starting a new mission project or ministry.

One thing I know for sure: if we don't plan to use our time, it will pass anyway. The choice is ours — it can either be productive or wasted. Let's choose to use it to the fullest. As a revival preacher once said, "You never know when your final moment will be." So, how are you going to spend your time? It only speeds up from here. Make a plan to grow closer to God and contribute to God's work in this fast-moving year.

- Keith Keeton

## Pillars of Parkway Heights: Series & Studies

Our February sermon series, "The Pillars of Parkway Heights," is exploring what makes our church tick. Keith Keeton began this series on January 26 by talking about how our church is "weird" in that we are diverse in our opinions and beliefs, yet we don't let our differences tear us apart.

From February 2-16, we will hear about each of the three foundational principles which articulate our culture and

framework for living in the present and moving into the future.

Our A15 Committee crafted these; Church Council affirmed them; and now we pray that the entire congregation will seek to grow more faithful with them as our guideposts for ministry and identity. Join us to delve more deeply into these core foundations as we dive into scripture to see how God might lead and guide us into a fruitful and impactful future.

Following this sermon series, several Bible studies based on these pillars will be offered by our different pastors. Keith will begin a six-week study on February 23 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 315. David Sellers will also begin a six-week study on February 23 at 9:40 a.m. in Room 302A. Julie Collins will offer a study in March, and Susan Eaton will offer one in the fall. Sign up for David's or Keith's studies now ([parkwayheights@parkwayheights.org](mailto:parkwayheights@parkwayheights.org)).

## Wednesday Night Live Fundraiser

Our annual Youth Ministry fundraiser, Wednesday Night Live, will take place Wednesday, Feb. 26, 5-7 p.m., in Founders Hall. We encourage you to come to this entertaining night that features a silent auction, a variety show and a potato/salad bar for the meal.

If you can help by providing an item for the silent auction or showcasing your talent in the variety show, please email [alexdoeac@parkwayheights.org](mailto:alexdoeac@parkwayheights.org).



Tickets are on sale now for \$10 each, with a family maximum cost of \$40. Pizza will also be available for children for \$1 per slice. Buy your tickets on Sunday morning in the Atrium or online at [parkwayheights.org/calendar](http://parkwayheights.org/calendar).

Proceeds help our youth attend spiritual retreats and mission trips. Thank you!



## "Living with Purpose" Bible Study

Join Randy Pope, co-author of *Living with Purpose in a Polarizing World*, for an eight-week study, which begins Sunday, Feb. 2, at 5:30 p.m. in Room 305. Together, we'll explore practical takeaways and biblical lessons for thriving today. Through the lives of 12 biblical characters, you'll uncover lessons on resilience, joy and faith. Even if you have not registered, you are welcome to participate!

## North of 70 Directories

North of 70 Ministry member directories are now available in the Church Office. They will also be available for pickup at the February First Wednesday Lunch on February 5.

## First Wednesday Lunch

Wednesday, Feb. 5  
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Founders Hall

This month we resume our First Wednesday Lunches at Parkway Heights with guest speaker, Dr. Joe Paul, USM president. Seasoned with Love will provide a meal of lemon pepper chicken, wild rice, green beans, salad, roll and pretzel crusted brownies. We're excited to partner again in 2025 with Main St. UMC in downtown Hattiesburg to rotate monthly gatherings!

Note: Cost for lunch has increased to \$12/person. Register by February 2 in the worship bulletin or online.

## Stephen Ministry: We Are Here for You

Read what Bettie Ross, one of our Stephen Ministers, has to say about this meaningful ministry:

*"How are you?" is a familiar greeting.*

*Do you ever reply, "I'm doing just fine," when you're not? I know that I have. Most Sundays at Parkway Heights as I am walking across the Atrium or going up or down in the elevator, someone will greet me and ask, "How are you?" In the process of going from one place to another, I usually pause and quickly respond, "I'm good." To those whom I know well, I may more accurately reply, "I'm trying to be good." Longtime friends who are more familiar with my distractions and activities may hear me say, "I'm either good or haven't been caught." I appreciate the greeting and interest, but I have a gut feeling the question is not an invitation for a comprehensive inventory of my current status.*

*If my life is any measure of reality, we all experience ups and downs. There are times when we are dealing with a challenge that is more than we feel equipped to manage. Stephen Ministry is a service for those times when you are not doing "just fine." I can recall times when I might have requested a Stephen Minister, if such a service had been available.*

*Parkway Heights now has Stephen Ministers available. These individuals have received extensive training to serve people who are experiencing challenging situations. Stephen Ministers are available to support, encourage, listen, comfort and care with confidentiality and with the help of God. Stephen Ministers will be individually assigned by our supervising minister, Julie Collins.*

If you are interested in learning more or have questions about Stephen Ministry, please complete the form found at [parkwayheights.org/ministries/stephen-ministry](http://parkwayheights.org/ministries/stephen-ministry) or talk with one of our Stephen Minister Leaders: Carolyn Karlovich and Julie Collins ([juliecollins@parkwayheights.org](mailto:juliecollins@parkwayheights.org)).

# SERVING OTHERS

## Communion Offering for Congregation Benevolence Fund

The communion offering collected in February will go to our Congregational Benevolence Fund. This fund provides support to members of our congregation who are facing a crisis and could use financial assistance. To give to this offering, designate it on your check or select "communion offering" as the fund if you give online at [parkwayheights.org/give](http://parkwayheights.org/give). Thanks!

## Opportunities to Serve

### **\*NEW\* BEREAVEMENT TEAM:**

We are creating Bereavement Teams to assist with visitation and funerals. Bereavement Team members will greet guests in the parking lot (if needed) and at Atrium doors, provide direction inside the Atrium, assist with bulletins and clean up in the Sanctuary or Founders Hall following a funeral. Six teams of five-seven people will serve for two months out of the year. The months will change year to year, so no team has Thanksgiving or Christmas every year. When a death occurs, team leaders will be contacted. Team leaders will then contact their team to secure enough people to assist with the visitation and funeral.

### **AGAPE TEAM:**

The Agape Team assists with providing meals for families in times of need.

Please sign up in Sunday's bulletin or email Julie Collins ([juliecollins@parkwayheights.org](mailto:juliecollins@parkwayheights.org)) if you'd like to serve on the Bereavement and/or Agape Teams.

## Can You Donate Blood on February 16?

All of us are likely to know someone who has received a blood transfusion or will need one in the future. Despite this, only three percent of all Americans donate blood. Please help ensure blood is ready and waiting at our local hospitals when your loved ones need it. Have you scheduled your blood drive appointment yet?

The next church blood drive will be held Sunday, Feb. 16, from 8 a.m. until noon. To support both blood centers in our area, the fall blood drive was hosted by the Blood Center, and this drive will be hosted by Vitalant. We need YOU to be a hero and donate. Use the QR code or the link on our website to book your appointment. Thank you!



Our own Julie Collins said, "After Sid's accident, he received four units of life-saving blood in the ICU and during his skin graft surgeries. We donated regularly never anticipating that we would need it. What a gift to be able to donate. You never know whose life you might save."

## Scout Sunday & Chili Fundraiser

Parkway Heights has a long-standing relationship with the Boy Scouts. We have been sponsors of a Scout troop and Cub Scout pack since the 1950s. On Scout Sunday, Feb. 9, we will celebrate this partnership, which benefits our church, the Scouts, the leaders and our community.

Each year, Scout Sunday is celebrated on a Sunday close to Feb. 8, which is the anniversary of the founding of BSA. The Scouts will be serving our congregation on Scout Sunday. Please thank them for their service! That same day, the Scouts will hold their annual chili fundraiser, selling containers of chili for \$15 each that you can enjoy during the Super Bowl that night. Please have cash or check ready.

## Woodley Supply Drive

Parkway Heights and the Woodley Elementary School PTO are holding a supply drive to provide cleaning supplies to Woodley's teachers. If you'd like to help, please bring donations to the Atrium by February 16. Needed items are:

- Clorox wipes
- Kleenex
- Lysol spray
- Hand sanitizer

**HONDURAS MISSION REMINDER:** Men's, women's and children's clothing donations will be accepted until February 9.



# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

*Over the past year, we have been spotlighting our church staff. We have saved our fearless leader, Lead Pastor Keith Keeton, for last.*



Most everyone already knows about Keith. You're probably aware that he is originally from Morton; he is an identical twin to Kevin; and his motto is: "People equal problems." You probably know that he and his wife, Emily, have three children: Ava, Kate Rivers and Asher. You may even know that he only likes to eat hamburgers. So this month's Staff Spotlight will attempt to inform you of some lesser-known facts about Keith.

**PHUMC: Everyone knows you enjoy photography and have a talent for music. Do you have any other hobbies or things you enjoy?**

Keith: I have always loved baseball. I played it a lot. Now that I'm old, my body would revolt if I tried to play nine innings. Now I just watch the Braves religiously. It really affects my mood.



*Keith Keeton with his family over Thanksgiving 2024 - wife, Emily, and children Asher, Ava and Kate Rivers*

**PHUMC: Where is one of your favorite places you've traveled? Is there a destination on your bucket list?**

Keith: I always wanted to see the Pacific Ocean. On a trip to see Kevin, the family and I traveled to Olympic National Park in Washington state. It didn't fail

to meet expectations. If I could travel anywhere in the world now, I'd want to visit Japan. It's a camera-lover type place.

**PHUMC: You announced on Facebook recently about your pastor portrait project. In case someone missed that, can you explain this please?**

Keith: The recent split in the Methodist church hit me like a ton of bricks. I never cared about denominations, but I do care about relationships. Watching folks choose sides and obliterate friendships was very discouraging. I have tried my best to maintain all of mine.

As a spiritual exercise, my discipleship band suggested I do a portrait project. [Side note: Keith's discipleship band is a group of four pastor friends who talk every week to provide encouragement and accountability to each other.] I'm going to travel and visit with all of the Mississippi Methodist pastors who meant something to me. I will take their portraits and enjoy time spent with them. It will be very helpful to nurture my soul after this unfortunate season.

**PHUMC: Everyone knows you think people equal problems. However, if you could go back in time, is there a historical figure or someone who has passed away whom you wish you could spend 30 minutes with?**

Keith: They aren't dead, but I think I'd like to do the "Back to the Future" thing (minus the weird relationship the mom tries to kindle with Calvin Klein). I'd like to talk to my parents before kids affected their lives (I guess you could say before children killed their former selves).

**PHUMC: Do you have any favorite TV shows you watch?**

Keith: My favorite show is "Quantum Leap," but a close second is a show from the late 90s/early 2000s called "Ed." It's about a bowling alley lawyer. It probably has the best wedding speech ever put on the big or small screen.

**PHUMC: Do you have any other little-known facts you want to share?**

Keith: My name is included as a contributor in the human genome project. I spent one summer sequencing DNA at a summer internship. I told you that I was the smart twin on the family. Ask me how to make an incredible acrylamide gel.



*Emily and Keith Keeton hosted "The Price Is Right" at Trunk or Treat in 2023. If you haven't seen Keith's infamous sparkly jacket, be sure to ask him about it.*

# PH HAPPENINGS



## UWF RECOGNITION

In January, United Women in Faith presented a pin to Patsy Register in appreciation of her dedicated service to the PHUMC unit of United Women in Faith. Patsy served as UWF president, and Jennifer James is incoming president.



## A MATTER OF BALANCE

Our senior adults have been meeting for a fall prevention class on Wednesdays.

## MEN'S MINISTRY

On Thursday, Jan. 23, our Men's Ministry enjoyed a meal together at J's Tavern.



## FLEUR-DE-LIS FEAST

THANK YOU to our Hospitality Team (*at right*) for hosting our monthly fellowship dinners. We enjoyed Cajun food and music on January 29.



# YOUTH

## Kidnap Retreat 2025

Believe it or not, it's time to talk Kidnap 2025! Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 31, through Tuesday, June 3, for this year's Kidnap trip to Gulf Shores, AL! But, shh...let's try to keep the dates a secret from the current sixth graders.



If you're unfamiliar, this trip is where we "kidnap" our upcoming seventh graders into the youth group with a fun-filled trip with our entire youth group in tow. Registration for Kidnap will open on Monday, March 3, for all students and adults, and we will need a large number of adult chaperones to join us! If you are a parent or an adult interested in joining us for this Parkway Heights tradition, please let Alex Doleac know ASAP by reaching out by text at 601.522.6164 or by email at [alexdoleac@parkwayheights.org](mailto:alexdoleac@parkwayheights.org).

YOUTH PARENTS, WE NEED **YOU** TO SECURE ITEMS FOR THE **WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE SILENT AUCTION!** AND ENCOURAGE YOUR KIDS TO BE IN THE VARIETY SHOW! THE MONEY YOU RAISE HELPS **YOUR CHILDREN ATTEND RETREATS!**

## Rise Against Hunger Experience

Led by our PHUMC Senior Carley Gilbert, our youth group will spend the afternoon of February 2 in mission with Rise Against Hunger! Under Carley's leadership, we will pack food for people all around the globe. The event will take place at University Baptist Church and is open to all students — and adults! Everyone is asked to please register ahead of time by using this QR code.





# YOUTH

## Super Bowl Party on February 9

It's that time again! On Sunday, Feb. 9, we encourage our youth to wear your favorite team colors, bring your favorite tailgate food and come have some fun with us at our Youth Super Bowl Party starting at 5:30 p.m.! Prepare for a smorgasbord of good food, fun games and great times as we close out football season together.



### OTHER DATES TO NOTE

- **Saturday, Feb. 15, 10 a.m.-** Neal Bryan's Eagle Project - All youth are invited to play in the video game tournament and pack hygiene kits.
- **Sunday, Feb. 16, 5:30 p.m.-** SN@P "All the Feels" series, session 2
- **Wednesday, Feb. 19-** Regular D-Groups
- **Sunday, Feb. 23, 5:30 p.m.-** SN@P "All the Feels" series, session 3

## D-Group Supermarket Sweep: V-Day Edition

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, our D-Groups are coming together for another D-Group competition. On Wednesday, Feb. 12, all students will meet at church at 5:30 p.m. Then we'll divide into "Supermarket Sweep" teams to shop at Dollar Tree and assemble gift baskets. We'll eat dinner at 6:30 p.m. at church before judging the best basket competition. Let's have fun together!



*Our students slow-started the new year with a laid-back movie night in the Youth Chapel on January 5. With a giant inflatable screen and movie theater-worthy snacks, our teenagers enjoyed a night of watching "School of Rock." Here's to a great new year of SN@P!*

### JANUARY RECAP

*Our D-groups took on Time Will Tell Escape Rooms on January 15 to see whose detective skills were best. Congrats to Lee Anne Venable and Nellie Arrington's D-group for winning the escape race and scoring themselves a free dinner!*



*On January 12, we carved out time and space for our junior high and high school students to provide feedback on their youth group experience. Students were invited to share ideas about schedules, programming and structure.*



*After a crazy busy January full of events, our youth enjoyed a night of worship, led by our friends at the USM Wesley Foundation on January 26. We also began a new series, "All the Feels."*



*All of our students enjoyed a long weekend at Breakthru 2025 at Timber Creek Camp over MLK weekend. We dove into scripture to better understand standing on TRUTH.*



# CHILDREN

## Sunday School Highlight

Children's Sunday School is held from 9:40 to 10:30 a.m. each Sunday morning! Three- and four-year-old preschoolers meet on the first floor (Early Encounters wing). Kindergartners through sixth graders meet on the second floor in the Children's Wing.

We have an awesome group of volunteer teachers eager to meet your children each Sunday morning! Adult Sunday School classes meet at the same time; bring your child to Sunday School and find fellowship in one of our adult Sunday School classes this week!



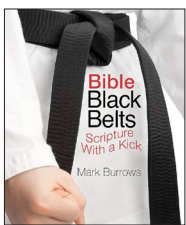
*At left, Melissa Thompson taught the Preschool Sunday School class in December.*



*At right, Madelyn Godbold and Rivers Robertson showed off their crafts back in the fall.*

## Kids, Join Us for Bible Black Belts!

Bible Black Belts is back for another round! Kindergarten through sixth grade children will meet at 5:30 p.m. on Sundays, February 16 through March 23, in the "big room" at the end of the hall on the second floor (Children's Wing). We will take a "spring break" on March 9. Bible Black Belts runs for approximately 45 minutes each week. Pizza will be available following class in the Loft for \$3/child.



In Bible Black Belts, children learn about the books of the Bible and memorize select scriptures. Activities incorporate physical motion to help children memorize Words of Celebration (Psalms), Words of Comfort, Words of Wisdom (Proverbs) and Words of Jesus from scripture. Children can attend even if they did not participate in earlier sessions. Sign up now!

## Preschool Valentine Traditions

Our Preschool Sunday School class will make valentines on February 9 during the Sunday School hour and deliver them to adult Sunday School classes the following Sunday (February 16). Don't miss out on this sweet tradition!

## LOFT ROCK WALL DAY

Our fifth and sixth graders will meet at the main entrance of the USM Payne Center at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 2. We will enjoy the rock-climbing wall first and finish with an early pizza dinner. The pickup time will be 5:45 p.m. \$10 per family will help cover the event's cost. Please contact Lesley or complete the SignUpGenius if your child plans to come!

## SAVE THE DATE:

PLEASE SAVE THE MORNINGS OF

JUNE 16-19

FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!

## Preschool Play Day at Shooting Stars

Preschoolers and their families will meet at Shooting Stars (4957 Old Highway 11 in Hattiesburg) on Sunday, Feb. 16, at 3 p.m. The fee for 1 hour of playtime is \$8 an hour for children six and under. Parents, please plan to pay on arrival. It's going to be a fun afternoon!

## Start Planning for Camp Wesley Pines

It's time to start planning for Camp Wesley Pines! Camp Wesley Pines, a United Methodist camp and retreat center located in Copiah County, offers multiple summer camp sessions for children of all ages each summer. Parkway Heights will coordinate transportation to and from camp for the following summer camp sessions this summer:

- Younger Elementary Camp (rising 2nd and 3rd graders): June 23-25
- Older Elementary Camp (rising 3rd - 6th graders): June 23-28.

Register at [wesleypines.com](http://wesleypines.com) by March 15 to receive a \$50 discount!



# Mail Room

Dear Parkway Heights UMC Friends,  
Happy 2025! A new year brings optimism that we will enjoy a year of peace, unity, good health, comfort and joy for our loved ones, our communities and ourselves.

Of course, such optimism abounds regardless of one's age, address or income level. However, for many neighbors seeking assistance at Edwards Street Fellowship Center, a season (or a lifetime) of setbacks and roadblocks has created a state of crisis. In spite of the difficulties these neighbors face, you are providing them hope as you support Edwards Street's ministries.

Thank you for caring deeply for neighbors who often feel overlooked by society. Thank you for showering compassion and mercy on those who are food insecure, medically underserved, and/or challenged to afford clothing and household items. Thank you for extending kindness to individuals overwhelmed by the barriers they face trying to care for themselves and their families.

Your generosity ensures these friends receive help, hope and healing in an atmosphere of love, respect and dignity. While we are grateful for your incredible financial support, your greater gift is letting those who visit Edwards Street know they are seen, they are valued and they matter. God bless you for shining the light of God's love so brightly across the Pine Belt!

*He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? ~ Micah 6:8*

With Gratitude,  
Ann McCullen, Executive Director  
Edwards Street Fellowship Center

On January 5, the Parkway Heights staff was blessed with a wonderful appreciation lunch/Epiphany party. The staff would like to thank everyone who helped provide this delicious — and plentiful — meal!

BIG THANKS go to: Susan Benson, Lyerly Christensen, Marcia Cochran, Judy Corts, Diane Fisher, Karen Ford, Debbie Graham, Mary Hale, Carolyn Hood, Linda Howell, Jennifer James, Vicki Kibodeaux, Emily Nelson, Alethea Pierce, Laurie Porciello, Gail Roberts, Susan Slaughter, Ginger Smith, Margaret Thomas, Debra Topp and Paige Zachary.



Our website:



Give online:



Our app:



Stephen Ministry:



## Prayer Requests

Dixie Evans, Becky Grantham and Benson St. Louis

## Sympathy To...

- the family of Evelyn Wiseman
- Pam Myrick Mottley on the death of her mother, Sarah Myrick
- Christine Heath on the death of her brother-in-law, Allen Stringer
- Vicky Ward on the death of her mother, Doris Ward

## PHUMC Finances

### December 2024

Income .....	\$184,972
Invested Income .....	\$ -
Expenses .....	\$153,935
Net .....	\$31,037

### YTD Actual

Income .....	\$1,228,840
Invested Income .....	\$250,000
Expenses .....	\$1,574,604
Net .....	\$(95,764)

### YTD Comparison

Budgeted Income .....	\$1,579,906
Actual Income .....	\$1,228,840
Invested Income .....	\$250,000
Budget Deficit .....	\$101,066



## Parkway Heights UMC

2420 Hardy St., Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
parkwayheights.org | 601.544.7873

### Sunday Worship Times

8:30 a.m.: Contemporary Service in Founders Hall  
9:40-10:30 a.m.: Sunday School  
10:45 a.m.: Traditional Service in Sanctuary



## Ministry Staff

Keith Keeton, *Lead Pastor*

Julie Collins, *Executive Pastor*

Susan Eaton, *Discipleship Pastor*

David Sellers, *Associate Pastor*

Wes Arrington, *Director of Outreach & Facilities*

Alex Doleac, *Director of Youth & Family Ministries*

Lesley Ellison, *Director of Children & Family Ministries*