



We love because He first loved us.
1 John 4:19

P.O. Box 985, Starkville, MS 39759



Christmas, 2019

Gail Griffith
969 Steger Rd

Columbus MS 39701

Dear Gail,

Warmest Christmas greetings to you from your Christian World Missions family! This year, we would like to share a “traditional family Christmas letter” with you, and let you know just what is going on with all of us. We would love to hear from you, too!



The truth is, this is YOUR family. I’ve said it before, but I really would love for all of you to be able to come and see what you are doing! Our local family just grows and grows, and we want to share it all with you!

As you know, we have a big family on the CWM staff, and we are rarely all in one place at the same time! Since November 2017, Amos Williamson (son

of Cecil, brother of Lee Ann) has been managing and marketing the rental side of center, which is starting to produce some income for the ministry. Amos is pictured here with his 3 children and their mother at Rachel’s graduation from MSU in Microbiology last May. Walker attends Univ. of Southern MS, and Jack is in 5th grade.



In August, we had the official Dedication Service for The Storehouse at Christian World Missions, and were joined by about 70 friends, supporters, and ministry families. The journey to completion of the facility was a long one, but as Proverbs 11:22 says, “Hope deferred makes the heart grow faint, but desire, when it comes, is a tree of life.” We are all enjoying the fruit of that tree, now, and look forward to many years of fruitful ministry at 1437 Fire Station Road.

After working for four years on construction of The Storehouse, Albert Larry transitioned to all-around facilities manager in August, once the carpentry was done. Albert's wife, Beulah, is helping their daughter in Memphis with her children and the daycare she owns and operates. Beulah and Albert keep I-55 hot, traveling to spend as much time together as possible. Albert enjoys listening to Blues Bands and watching football when Beulah is away, and he continues to find ways to make The Storehouse a warm, welcoming facility for our ministry and rental friends.



We are sad to report that Peggy Wilson will be leaving us at the end of the year. Since her retirement from the University more than four years, Peggy has been Lee Ann's right-hand, helping with whatever needed to be done, from office work to catering. She says she is ready to go home, and enjoy time with her great-granddaughter and travels with her husband, Pastor Mike Wilson. We cannot overstate how much she will be missed in our CWM family. God bless you, Peggy and Mike! May the Lord keep watch between us!

Nothing brings a family closer together than a long trip in close quarters! This summer, Lori, Lee Ann, the PREP (formerly Youth Community Explosion) staff, a few parents, and a dozen youth, made a fantastic trip to Washington, D.C. Not only did we see the spectacular sites of our nation's capital, but we also had the opportunity to talk about some really hot-button issues, like racism. We believe that with the troubles our culture is having, we, as Christians, should be pace-setters for reconciliation, mutual respect, and loving one another. Here we are praying before departure.



That trip helped us all to take one step further down that road. Well, maybe a giant leap! In June, 2020, we will be taking the youth to Orlando, FL, where they will serve in missions and tour the Holy Land Experience and Universal Studios. It will be another great opportunity to grow in love and service! The trip will cost \$12-15,000, for 30 persons to travel for a week. If you'd like to help sponsor one of us, your gift of any size will be greatly appreciated!



Now in her third year with CWM, and 2nd as director of PREP, Leah Winters continues to amaze us with her love for the Lord and creative commitment to doing His will, and PREP has grown steadily since she became leader. Leah is from Kosciusko, MS, and still goes home most weekends to be with her family, among whom are a cherished niece and nephew. They love their Bobo, too! The news on the grapevine is that there just may be a very special guy in Leah's life now – her mama sure loves him!

We will be losing another sister at the end of January, when Areal Carter (far right) leaves us to pursue a career in community service. Areal finished her Bachelor of Science in Human Development last spring, and is eager to put to use the things she has learned. Areal is from south Alabama, and shares an apartment in Starkville with one of her younger brothers. Another close-knit family, we have enjoyed telling Areal's mom what a bright light she has been, which is evidenced by the way the kids flock around her.



Betty Robertson joined the PREP staff last winter, bringing her love for youth, and experience working at the Emerson Family Center and the Mayor's Youth Council to us, helping to deepen the effectiveness of this ministry. Betty, who has been very close to her seven brothers and sisters, lost one of her brothers last spring. She had been his primary caregiver, and it has been a true loss to her. Surrounded by loving family and friends, and her precious daughter, Chastity (left), she has allowed that deep loss to give her an even deeper compassion for those around her.

The most recent addition to our PREP staff is Linda Randle-Harmon (far right), who joined us in May. Her daughter, Taylor, is working at a local bank, and lives with Linda. Her sister recently had knee replacement, and that same sister's husband is fighting pancreatic cancer. Linda awakens at the crack of dawn several days a week to cook amazing meals, not only for that family, but for many others in her wonderful, loving, extended family. She even hosted all of us CWM sisters in her home for a true Thanksgiving feast! There was enough food for an army, and while we were there, they all came marching in, packing up meals-to-go.



Lori and Lee Ann truly could not lead CWM if the Lord hadn't provided such amazingly gifted men and women to come alongside. In Genesis, the Hebrew uses a word for Eve that indicates she is Adam's "super-ordinate" helper, rather than subordinate. In every way, the staff of CWM is the superordinate help, each one uniquely created by the Father to do good works that He planned for them long ago.



Since Lori's dad's death in 2018, she has continued to travel every 2-3 months to see her mom in Fort Worth, Texas. Mary Ruth has settled into her new apartment at Brookdale Senior Living Center, and Lori is grateful that Ramzy, now 18, enjoys visiting the city so he can help her with the long drive.

Ramzy and Christian, Lee Ann's 17-year-old son, are both in their senior year at Golden Triangle Early College High School. They will actually graduate with an Associate Degree from East Mississippi Community College one week before they get their high school diploma.

Ramzy enjoys staying fit, shopping and looking fine in trendy clothes, building and playing on computers, and eating almost anything under the sun – he is a true foodie!

Ramzy plans to attend Mississippi State University next fall, majoring in Kinesiology, and hoping to eventually become a Physical Therapist, Athletic Trainer, or Chiropractor.



Christian enjoys video games, riding his bike and horses, and practicing moves with his large collection of knives and swords. He will begin a fulltime welding course this spring, and if that goes well, he will complete the full 2-year welding program, and either go straight to work, or pursue a degree in Welding or Mechanical Engineering.



Christian and Ramzy make their mothers proud in so many ways. They are kind, helpful, strong, courageous, thoughtful, intuitive, and responsible. We have no doubt that they will make a great impact on the world as they step out into another new chapter next year. Can it be that 17 years have passed already, since these two little guys first met their moms? God is so good, so faithful. We pray that they will always know how much they are loved by God, and they will be consumed by passion to know and love Him in return.



Lee Ann's family faced a tragic loss in March, when her older brother, Sam, died suddenly, alone in his home. He had struggled with high blood pressure and congestive heart failure for several years, and had become quite crippled by hip and back issues. Cecil, Lee Ann's dad, has grieved most deeply, missing their weekly lunches together, and the renewed relationship they enjoyed. We all cherish time with Sam's youngest daughter, Maria, and her two children.

During the trip to Washington, D.C., a nagging knee pain became a critical issue, which led to Lee Ann having her right knee replaced on September 6th. She had her left knee replaced on December 6th, and is looking forward to walking, hiking, and returning to international missions work with strength to travel the trails and mountains with the people she loves to serve so much.

Betty expressed it best for all of us when she said, "We know the Lord is with us, no matter what we face. We can carry on because He loves us, and we can love one another and those we serve. That's where our joy comes from."

That's just about all that needs to be said! "We love because He first loved us." Thank you for sharing in the ministry of CWM with us. We do pray you experience the sweet presence of Jesus and have a very Merry Christmas! God bless you!

With love,

The Staff of Christian World Missions, The Storehouse, and PREP