

# Bishops are back in ministry

SPECIAL TO THE R-H

Greensburg Cumberland Presbyterian Church has a ministry team filling the pastorate in service of the community.

Rev Bren and Mary Bishop started as a team in military service with honeymoon in route to Ft. Knox in 1981.

They have been boyfriend, girlfriend for 40 years and husband and wife for 38 years. They met at "College of the Ozarks" (Now University) in Clarksville, Arkansas in 1979.

With six children (three by birth and three by marriage) they are grandparents to four-year-old grandson, (Wyatt), two-year-old grandson (Joseph Brenson - "JB") and two five-month-old granddaughters (Annabelle and Maurah). These little "grands" are significant joys in their lives.

Rev. Brenson "Bren" Bishop is a retired Army veteran whose career started out as an armor officer in 1981 and ended 33 years later in 2014 as a Chaplain (Colonel) and retired in 2018 as a Department of Veterans Affairs, Board Certified Chaplain.

Mary Bishop is a retired UofL Hospital pharmacist with years of Infectious Disease experience. She practiced at UofL Hospital as the HIV/AIDS pharmacist from 1995 until her retirement in 2017. She is a second generation pharmacist, growing up in her pharmacist daddy's drug store in Bentonville, Ark. She is the mother to a third generation pharmacist daughter who is in practice now.

Mary also acts as Bren's "Canary in the Coal Mine" supporting Bren in ministry and life while dealing with military service-connected disability.

His military ministry is enhanced by 11 years of service in tank and infantry company units, highlighted with 32 months of Company Command of Armor and Infantry units and deployment to Desert Shield/Storm.

He left the Army, in the post-Cold War and Desert Storm draw-down.

With the help of an army chaplain, he attended Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, graduating in 1995 to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

While an ordained PCUSA minister, he was a solo church pastor, as well served in US Army, USAR. Eventually becoming a Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplain; with over 15 years' experience in Psych, Hospice and Intensive care.

As a USAR Chaplain, he was utilized by the Army for his Department of Veterans Affairs Board-Certified Hospital Chaplain qualifications as well as his previous active Army experience.

As an Army Chaplain, his last combat deployment was in Operation Iraqi Freedom (2004-05) with 1st Cal-



Photos submitted

Rev. Bren Bishop has returned to Greensburg to fulfill pastoral duties at Greensburg Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

vary Division. There he supervised 5-9 Unit Ministry Teams, dependent on the mission. In Iraq, the Army assigned him missions related to his Board Certification and Veterans Affairs pastoral care experience. Here Chaplain Bishop learned that angry people wanted to blow up the chaplain, and during a convoy, Chaplain Bishop experienced an IED incident which left him with his disability.

After OIF II, then Chaplain Bishop, was promoted to Chaplain Colonel with pastoral and unit supervision of one of the US Army's Regional Medical Commands, whose Combat Support Hospitals were deployed in support of the War on Terror.

He was promoted to Chief of Chaplain Service for Robley Rex VAMC (VA Hospital) during a critical time in the certification of a Pastoral Training Program for Chaplains seeking Board Certification.

His last years at the Louisville VA Hospital, Chaplain Bishop was the senior Chaplain for Hospice care with an additional duty covering Surgery Service.

All this, 33 years combined service in the US Army, 23 years of ordained ministry and 20 years of service in Department of Veterans Affairs, was taking a toll. Physicians encouraged he retire and take a slower pace.

In 2016, Rev Bishop's Son in-law and daughter (John and Lindsey Spalding), along with wife Mary Bishop, and his brother Dr. Terrell Bishop collectively bought an 115-acre farm on the Hart/Green County line.

Preparing for retirement Rev Bishop began the transition to retire.

He stepped down as Chief of Chaplain service at the VA Hospital, transferred to the US Army Individual Ready Reserve and started working with his family to recover a neglected farm.

The farm is affectionally named "Bald Eagle Bluff" from an encounter John Spalding had with a Bald Eagle on a farm bluff overlooking the

Little Barren River.

This farm became a loving encounter with Green County where Bren and Mary found some peace and a reconnection to the times of their youth growing up in Pope, Yell, and Benton counties in Arkansas.

Bren was enjoying working and tinkering around the farm with his amateur photography; and working with his favorite tractor; "Rusty", a 1949 Ford 8N. He was continuing pulpit supply for underserved churches and was playing with the idea of writing; to publish pastoral care skills and techniques used in practice as an Army and VA Chaplain.

Mary hoped to watch Bren, grandchildren and enjoy her hobbies, of gardening, quilt making, stain glass, cooking and reading. She and Bren also hoped to be doing day trips in the beautiful state of Kentucky.

"We are amazed that God has brought us to such a wonderful church community at Greensburg Cumberland Church, which is now in its 105th year of ministry in Greensburg, alongside the other christian communities of Green County," Bishop said.

"I think this is what a Christian community should be like - where Christians of Greensburg and Green county focus less on denominational differences and celebrates more on the foundational belief of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

"It is our desire to make Green County home and Greensburg Cumberland Presbyterian Church our home church for this fall season in life's journey," Bishop said.

"We are loving Greensburg and Green County where people know your name and where family and faith are central to the community values."

"We have come home to Greensburg and Green County Kentucky. It's been a long journey but so good to be home."



Photo submitted

Bro. Thomas Metcalf and his wife, Brittoni, will be celebrated at Greasy Creek Baptist Church this Sunday.

## Bro. Metcalf to be ordained Sunday

An ordination service of Thomas Metcalf will be held this Sunday, January 26 at Greasy Creek Baptist Church.

The service will begin at 3 p.m. CT with

a reception to follow. Everyone is encouraged to attend and show support for Bro. Metcalf and his family. The church is located at 7100 Edmonton Road, Greensburg.



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