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# Oak Hill News

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*With Jesus as our guide and community as our goal, we worship, love, serve and grow.*



“Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel: God with us, Revealed in us! His name is called Emmanuel.” This is the song that we sing throughout the season of Advent after the lighting of the Advent candles. It reminds us that: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” God sent a present into the world, the gift of a loving presence named Jesus.

The gospel stories indicate that Jesus gave few material things to people. What he gave most was his personal presence. He spent time with people—in conversations around the table and the campfire, and while he walked on dusty roads, through fields and villages. His gifts were treasures of the heart. Words of encouragement, inner and outer healing, compassion, forgiveness, peace of mind, dignity, and justice.

Like Jesus, we can give gifts from the heart. We can share our care and concern, our hope, our joy, our understanding and forgiveness, our kindness. We are right in the middle of “the Christmas rush.” The messages all around us are screaming: “Buy this and you will be happy; buy that and you will prove your love.” Sharing presence is hard to do in a culture that keeps promoting material things as a sign of how much we love others. Sharing presence is difficult in an environment that encourages us to be as busy as possible so that we will be rich, successful, and important and able to buy more things.

Advent is a good season to slow down and be more deliberate about cultivating our relationships with God, and with people. It is a good time to share the present of our presence every day. It may be through a text, a Facetime call, or a visit. It may be by extending an invitation to a friend, a family member, or a neighbor to attend some of the special activities happening every single week. (Please see page 2 for more information.) I encourage you to make plans to attend our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 24. It is one of the most inspirational and beautiful services of the entire year. It is the time when we can truly feel the presence of Emmanuel. God with us in the birth of the Christ child. This year we will revive the Oak Hill tradition of sharing a potluck extravaganza of appetizers and desserts after the worship service.

Please be sure to attend our Christmas morning worship service on Sunday, December 25, in the sanctuary. We also invite you to participate in our informal worship service on Sunday, January 1. It will be held in the Large Assembly Room. We invite you to bring a breakfast dish to share.

May you have a very blessed Advent and Christmas celebration.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Wanda

## SPECIAL LUNCHEON

There will be an **Advent Potluck Luncheon on Sunday, December 4.** It is a true potluck, so bring your favorite dish to share with everyone. (See below.)

### WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*By Matt Hanify*

#### **Worship**

Good morning, and welcome to Oak Hill Presbyterian Church. We're glad you found your way here, especially during this very special Advent season. However, if you're still not 100% comfortable celebrating worship in person, we also offer Zoom worship if you prefer. It is a great way for us to remain connected in spite of the distances between us. However you are here with us, know that you are welcome.

Sunday worship, 10:30 a.m., in person or on Zoom (meeting ID 768 992 383)

#### **Communion**

Because we celebrated Communion on the first Sunday in Advent, November 27, December will be a Communion-free month. We still have plenty of other ways to celebrate together.

We also offer in-home Communion for our extended members. Please let us know if one of our extended members would like Communion in their home, and we can schedule a time. Please reach out to Pastor Wanda or someone on our committee.

#### **Advent Potluck Luncheon**

The second Sunday of Advent, December 4, will feature a very informal potluck after service. This will be a craft potluck, meaning that you can snack while simultaneously using glue and scraps of paper to create a holiday mosaic. Full disclosure: This craft prediction is at best a semi-educated guess, although I am somewhat more confident in the use of glue.



Featuring solos and duets from some very talented and dedicated singers, this year's cantata will be during service on December 11. There's also a narrator involved who likes to think that he ties it all together and is the most important

part of the show. He's insufferable; try not to make eye contact.

This year's Christmas program for our youth is on December 18. Our Minister of Music, Susan Brown, has put together a show that features singing, angels, animal costumes (I assume), kids in choir robes (again, I assume, because I haven't actually seen the script), and some truly brilliant piano accompaniment.



We will be celebrating with a candle lighting service on Saturday evening, December 24, at 6:00 p.m. This service will be followed by an appetizer potluck in the Large Assembly Room, which is located in the basement directly below the sanctuary.



We will be holding a service on Christmas morning at our regular time, 10:30 a.m.

## WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (cont'd)

### *Volunteering*

We are in regular need of people to help out around here. The church needs greeters, liturgists, and nursery caregivers (that last one has a few forms that need to be filled out, but we can walk you through that easily). On the church's website, oakhillpcusa.org, you will find an orange box under the "Worship" tab. That's where we keep our Sign-up Genius link, which contains all of the wonderful things you can do around here, along with the worship bulletin and old newsletters. Church membership is not required.

### *Sunday School*

We offer Sunday School for adults and children. Adults meet in the basement, in a room with an upright piano and some old trophies that probably has a name, but I am not remembering it right now. Ask anybody who seems like they know what's going on to lead you to the room; that person can help you. The children meet in the Sunday School room, which is located at the end of the ground floor hallway in the Educational Building. Children are also practicing for the Christmas show.

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. (no Zoom option for Sunday School this year)

There will be no Sunday School on December 25.

### *Wednesday Bible Study*

Wednesday Bible study is beginning a new book, *Wholehearted Faith*, by Rachel Held Evans. Through theological reflection and personal recollection, Evans struggles with God's grace and love and explores universal human questions about becoming and belonging.

Wednesday Bible Study, 11:00 a.m. on Wednesdays on Zoom (meeting ID 259 777 226; password Disciple)

### *50th Ordiversary*

On October 30, we all met in the Large Assembly Room to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pastor Alan's ordination. Because it was the day before Halloween, we also decorated pumpkins (which makes sense) and ate hot dogs (which makes less sense).



## EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

*By Stephanie Hoegger*

E & M met on November 7. We discussed holiday events, member prayers, and plans for the remainder of the year.

The Fall Festival we helped co-host on October 30 was a huge success! Although the rain meant we had to move inside, folks enjoyed music, food, fall-themed games, crafts, and a fun time of fellowship. Our Baking Contest was also a hit. There were 16 entries for five categories: cookies, cakes, bars, brownies, and dessert breads. Festival-goers voted for their favorite treats, and a top prize was awarded for each category. After the voting, we all enjoyed the delicious treats!

**The Annual Neighborhood Christmas Carol Event** will be held on Sunday, December 11, at 2:00 p.m. We will meet in the Large Assembly Room for a walk through the neighborhood while singing carols. Everyone is invited to help spread the cheer—no singing expertise required. Donations will also be collected for the St. Louis Christmas Carol Association. The organization helps fund local children's agencies. Please bring a friend and join us!

We are continuing to work on membership ideas and plans for the new year. Our next meeting will be held on Monday, December 5, at 6:30 p.m.



TO FULFILL WHAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET.

*Matthew 1:22, ESV*

## MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

*By Donna Cook*

“Christmas is a box of tree ornaments that have become part of the family.”— Charles M. Schulz

There’s still time to donate to “Jeans for Teens”. (Our effort to support Christine Woodward’s Christmas Outreach with her students and families in University City Public Schools, where she serves as a Social Worker.

Don’t forget to stock up on Go-Bags if needed.

**Isaiah 58 Ministries** was able to provide Thanksgiving supplies to over 230 households. (And a lot of folks got Jell-O!) Thank you for your ongoing support for this vital food ministry in our community.

Your **Isaiah 58 Ministries** shopping list is below. Remember, donate as you are able.

### December 2022

4th - Light Tuna or Salmon in cans or pouches (Hopefully that doesn’t auto correct to peaches, but peaches are ok, too.)

11th - canned beans (look for low sodium)

18th - Instant Brown Rice or whole wheat pasta

25th - canned greens

### January 2023

1st - beef stew

8th - canned greens

15th - coffee or hot chocolate

22nd - toilet paper

29th - laundry detergent (50 oz. or less)

## PUBLIC WITNESS CALL TO ACTION

**Do we really need to ban books in our state? What does it mean for your local library or school library? How will that change access to families?**

The Missouri Secretary of State, Jay Ashcroft, has proposed restricting financial support to libraries that shelve books by his office standards, rather than those educated in library science.

**Here is the Secretary of State’s proposed rule.**

[https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/AdRules/main/images/15\\_CSR\\_30\\_200\\_015.pdf?fbclid=IwAR155bIYi8EJQ4zU6DBychH4suvnX5kLPHJSbemMhToASBpNbk9xT3bLX10](https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/AdRules/main/images/15_CSR_30_200_015.pdf?fbclid=IwAR155bIYi8EJQ4zU6DBychH4suvnX5kLPHJSbemMhToASBpNbk9xT3bLX10)

**Here is the Missouri Library Association response.**

<http://molib.org/mla-statement-on-intellectual-freedom/>

Have your voice heard by emailing: [comments@sos.mo.gov](mailto:comments@sos.mo.gov)

With the subject line 15 CSR 30-200.015 and let the Missouri Secretary of State know that what you think about his proposal to ban unspecified books at libraries.

**Thank you to our folks who were able to participate in MCU’s recent get out the vote campaign.** MCU committed to knocking on 12,000 doors in areas with historically low voter turnout. Our volunteers knocked on doors over several blocks in our neighborhood. They reminded voters to get out and vote on election day and reminded them about the various constitutional amendments on the ballot that would impact our community and lives.

**Watch the weekly updates for opportunities to serve or action to take, that may arise throughout the month.**

## STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

*By Brian Heuckroth*

**November was a busy for Stewardship and Property.**

We had an inspection of our heating systems, roof, and other building areas. The roof is fine, and our heating systems are largely in good shape, but some repairs needed for the long-term to keep things running smoothly.

Tuckpointing and outer wall repairs are needed to stop some water leaks into the buildings, and proposals are being solicited. We have some water leaks which need to be addressed before they get worse.

## STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Pledge season is in full swing. Responses are good so far, so thank all of you who have already responded for taking the time and committing your treasure to God's work. If you are considering pledging, please get in touch with our treasurer, Brent Crittenden (you can take a copy of your pledge card and email it to Brent at treasurer@oakhillpcusa.org), drop it off in the green pledge card box in the back of the sanctuary, or mail it to the church. It will really help the church achieve its potential and guide the Session leadership to do the right things at the right time. Thank you for all your support!

Session will vote to approve the 2023 budget at its Stated Session Meeting on December 14, based on pledges and history.

### *2022 Christmas Joy Offering* The Perfect Gift

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us—past, present, and future—who have pointed us to God.

We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial needs. We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be received during worship on Sunday, December 18. Offerings may be made online. In addition, offering envelopes are available in the back of the sanctuary and you may place your envelope in the offering plate also in the

back of the sanctuary. If you wish you may send a check to the church marked "Christmas Joy Offering." Thank you for your support of this vital offering.

**PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT FOR 2023** – Per Capita is the donation we make to support Presbyterian ministry at the denominational, synod, and presbytery level. This contribution supports staff salaries, denominational programs, Bible studies and curriculums, and so many important programs. Our congregation commits to supporting this ministry, and we encourage all members to make a special donation to help cover this commitment. A voluntary contribution of \$35.00 from each member will help cover the Per Capita commitment Oak Hill has made for 2023. If possible, payments should be made before the end of the year and identified "For Per Capita." Donations made online, placed in a pew envelope, or a designated "Per Capita 2023" envelope which is located in the back of the sanctuary.

## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

### Scholarship Fund

Scholarship Application Packets for the spring semester of 2023 from the Oak Hill Scholarship Fund are available in the church office. The purpose of this fund is to assist members of the Oak Hill family in their pursuit of higher education. Individuals eligible are students pursuing an under-graduate college degree or a post-secondary degree at any state-licensed educational facility. Graduate students are not eligible for this scholarship. Applications must be submitted by January 10, 2023 to be considered for scholarship. Those interested in applying for full-year scholarships should wait and apply to our March scholarship offering of grants.

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were reported or approved by Session in their November 9, 2022, Stated Session Meeting.

Average Worship attendance in person and via Zoom in October was 50.

**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS (cont'd)**

Membership as of October 31, 2022, was 96. This includes the addition of Will Jones and Bette Welch as active members effective October 16, 2022.

Session approved resuming the time of fellowship following worship, adhering to the same safety precautions that we have been using for other events.

Session approved Pastor Wanda taking November 22 and 23 off. (Thanksgiving and the Day After Thanksgiving, November 24 and 25, are church holidays so the office is closed). In addition, Christmas and New Years Day are both on Sundays this year, so the office will be closed on the following Mondays.

Session approved having the Christmas Eve Service at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 24, followed by a reception with hor d'oeuvres, appetizers, or desserts.

Session approved having worship on Sunday, December 25. There will not be a time of fellowship following the service. (No Sunday School classes on Christmas.)

Session approved having an informal worship service on Sunday, January 1, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. It will be held in the Large Assembly Room and breakfast will be served.

Brent Crittenden, Treasurer, submitted the October financial report following the meeting:

Financial Reports for October and  
Year-to-Date 2022

	October	2022 YTD Total
<b>Income</b>		
Actual	\$17,199.46	\$160,089.17
Budgeted	\$12,580.00	\$160,820.00
Over (Under) Budget	\$4,619.46	(\$730.83)
<b>Expenses</b>		
Actual	\$13,131.28	\$124,292.61
Budgeted	\$17,519.71	\$177,276.01
Over/(Under) Budget	(\$4,388.43)	(\$52,983.40)
Net Revenue/(Loss)	\$4,068.18	\$35,796.56

**BOOK CLUBS*****Oak Hill Book Club***

The Book Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 13, at the Barrow residence to pick our books and movies for 2023. Please bring your dinner and join us. We are always looking for new members.

You can join us on Zoom about 7 p.m.: 259 777 226. Password: Disciple (case sensitive)

***Wednesday Touchy Topics Book Club***

The Touchy Topics book club is taking December and January off. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1, to discuss *No Future Without Forgiveness*, by Desmond Tutu. Directly confronting the horrors of apartheid, Tutu illustrates a path forward, based on honesty and compassion, to build a better tomorrow.

Touchy Topics Book Club, Wednesday, February 1, at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom (contact the church via Facebook for the link)

**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

Circle 3 will meet for its Christmas luncheon on Thursday, December 15, at 11 a.m. in the Theleos Room. Various volunteers are bringing the components of lunch.



Love to make holiday cookies and goodies, but don't want to be tempted to eat them? Need holiday goodies, but don't have the time to make them? Presbyterian Women Circle 3 has the answer to both problems – our annual Christmas Cookie Sale on Sunday, December 18.

Homemade cookies will be \$8 a pound.

Donations for our sale are always appreciated! You don't have to be active in Circle 3 to donate to the sale. If you make holiday breads or other goodies besides cookies, please price them for us. Donations should be brought to church by 10:15 a.m. on December 18 and delivered to the Presbyterian Women's table in the Large Assembly Room. The sale will begin after the worship service.

**CRAFT CLUB**

Get ready for our first hybrid craft night! Friday, December 16, at 7:00 p.m. If meeting at church, we will be in the kitchen (someone is going to be making stuff for the cookie sale!). If you can't make it in person, please log in and visit! Please contact Dena Roper with any questions! Hope to see you!



**LECTIONARY FOR DECEMBER**

Sunday, December 4	Isaiah 11:1-10 and <i>Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19;</i> Romans 15:4-13; Matt. 3:1-12
Sunday, December 11	Isaiah 35:1-10 and <i>Psalm 146:5-10 or</i> Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10, Matt. 11:2-11
Sunday, December 18	Isaiah 7:10-16 and <i>Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;</i> Romans 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25
Saturday, December 24, <b>Christmas Eve</b>	Isaiah 9:2-7 and <i>Psalm 96;</i> Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15- 20)
Sunday, December 25, <b>Christmas</b>	<i>Dawn:</i> Isaiah 62:6-12 and <i>Psalm 97;</i> Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20 <i>Day:</i> Isaiah 52:7-10 and <i>Psalm 98;</i> Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14



**Scenes from Oak Hill**

**Hanging of the Greens**



### **A Christmas Blessing**

May there be harmony in all your relationships. May sharp words, envious thoughts, and hostile feelings be dissolved.

May you give and receive love generously. May this love echo in your heart like the joy of church bells on a clear December day.

May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ. May the honor given the Babe of Bethlehem be that which you extend to every guest who enters your presence.

May the hope of this sacred season settle in your soul. May it be a foundation of courage for you when times of distress occupy your inner land.

May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of children be awakened within you. May it lead you to renewed awareness and appreciation of whatever you too easily take for granted.

May the bonds of love for one another be strengthened as you gather with your family and friends around the table of festivity and nourishment.

May you daily open the gift of your life and be grateful for the hidden treasures it contains.

May the coming year be one of good health for you. May you have energy and vitality. May you care well for your body, mind, and spirit.

May you keep your eye on the Star within you and trust this Luminescent Presence to guide and direct you each day.

May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart and visit the One who offers you peace. May you bring this peace into our world.

--Joyce Rupp

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[www.oakhillpcusa.org](http://www.oakhillpcusa.org)

[office@oakhillpcusa.org](mailto:office@oakhillpcusa.org)

We are a welcoming congregation where visitors are always expected!

**Christian Education - 9:30 a.m.  
(In Person)**

**Service of Worship  
(In Person and on Zoom)  
10:30 a.m.**

The ministers of Oak Hill Church are its members assisted by:

**Rev. Wanda Lawry**  
Interim Pastor

**Rev. Dr. Alan Meyers**  
Parish Associate

**Ms. Susan Brown**  
Minister of Music

**Ms. Carole Adams**  
Secretary

Articles for publication  
in the  
*Oak Hill News*  
need to be  
submitted in writing  
to the church office by the  
3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month.