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Oak Hill News

No. 11 NOVEMBER 2023 Volume 73

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

Pastor's Corner

As we enter the month of November, the song "Give Thanks" repeats itself on a never-ending playlist in my mind reminding me to cultivate a spirit of gratitude. It is something that we must focus on, not just at this time of year, but every day.

Theologian M. Craig Barnes puts it this way, "I doubt that there is such a thing as a measure of spirituality, but if there is, gratitude would be it. Only the grateful are paying attention. They are grateful because they pay attention, and they pay attention because they are so grateful."

Another way to put it is to simply notice what is going on around you. Notice how you smile every time you hear the chorus of that song. Notice the brilliant colors of the leaves on your daily walk. Notice the happiness you feel after a telephone call with a family member or close friend. Notice your dog's tail going in circles when you come home. Notice the loud purring of your cat as you pet it. Notice it. Notice it. Notice it.

Noticing means learning why we react the way we do. Noticing means focusing on the moment when it matters. Noticing means profoundly connecting to the world around us. Noticing helps us not to take things for granted. When we notice something and we share a word of gratitude or thanks to God in prayer or with another person, our perspective shifts and we open ourselves to experiencing joy, even during difficult times.

Another theologian, Heri Nouwen, has written, "To be grateful for the good things that happen in our lives is easy, but to be grateful for all of our lives--the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections—that requires hard spiritual work. Still, we are only grateful people when we can say thank you to all that has brought us to the present moment. Let's not be afraid to look at everything that has brought us to be where we are now and trust that we will soon see it in the guiding hand of a loving God."

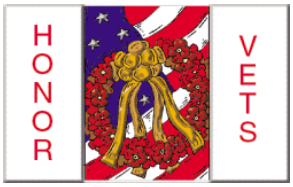
May you experience the fullness of God's love and grace as you pay attention, notice, and focus on cultivating a spirit of gratitude and thankfulness this month and always.

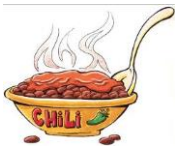
Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Wanda

FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

November 12, Veteran's Day Chili and Fall Festival!! The Mission and Justice Committee is the host for the November luncheon. Get ready for another year of Brian Beckmann's tasty, heart-warming chili in honor of our Veterans. (Everyone is asked to bring a side dish that will go with the chili.)





This year, the E&M Committee will add to the festivities with a Fall Festival and Baked Bread Competition. There will be four (4) categories for competition:

1. corn bread
2. sweet bread
3. B-R-E-A-D bread, and
4. cakes/cookies/desserts

And yes, there will be prizes! We ask that Baked Bread entries provide a label with any common-sense good-to-know ingredients like jalapenos, nuts, gluten, gluten-free, or pineapple. There's also talk about a cake walk with twinkies and other Hostess snacks as the prize.

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

By Matt Hanify

Worship

Welcome to Oak Hill Presbyterian Church. Whether you are a new visitor checking things out, a regular member, a returning member, just visiting for the weekend – however you came to be here, we are excited to have you here. Pastor Rev. Wanda Lawry, Parish Associate Rev. Dr. Alan Meyers, Minister of Music Susan Brown, and Church Secretary Carole Adams are ready to help you with your spiritual needs. And the entire Oak Hill family is also here to support you however we can.

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

Volunteering

We're a small congregation, but we strive to do big things. In our families, our church, our neighborhood, our community, our society, we strive to live out our mission statement: With Jesus as our guide and community as our goal, we worship, love, serve, and grow. To that end, we partner with Isaiah 58 Ministries in its food pantry. We volunteer at New Roots Urban Farm. We had a booth at Tower Grove Pride (near the food trucks, so prime Tower Grove Pride real estate).

Many of us wear many hats.
And now we're asking for help.
Full disclosure: We are first and foremost just happy that you are here. And if you're not comfortable taking a larger role, you don't have to. There is no pressure. Nobody's going to strongarm you to help out. However, if you would like to have a larger role around here, let us know. Think about your skills, your talents, your gifts, and consider where they might be applied here. We have a regular need for liturgists and greeters. Church choir is always happy to have a new voice. Church membership is not required. Again, no pressure; just please give it some thought. Thanks.

Communion

Communion will be offered on Sunday, November 5. We offer individualized portions of bread and juice, and everyone is welcome at this table. For those looking for a safer option, we also offer small, individual cups of juice with a portion of communion bread in the lid (this also doubles as the gluten-free option). And you are welcome to bring your own Communion materials from home, if you prefer (this would be the safest option).
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.

Sunday School – Adult and Youth

For youth Sunday school, the children, from preschool through eighth grade or so, will meet upstairs in the nursery, which is located at the top of the stairs in the education annex. Class starts at 9:30 a.m. You might be asking yourself, "But I wasn't here last week. Won't I be behind the other students? Is there a lot of make-up work?" Rest assured: All are welcome.

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Adult Sunday School also meets at 9:30 a.m. in the Theleos Room, which is downstairs in our main building. You also might be saying to yourself, "But I wasn't here last week. I am afraid that I will be behind the other students, and they will make fun of me." They won't: All are welcome.
Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. (no Zoom option for Sunday School this year.

Childcare
We have shifted our approach to caring for the younger members of our church family during worship. Downstairs in the Large Assembly Room (the room directly beneath the sanctuary), we have established a bookcase space. Feel free to head downstairs if your child needs a break (or if you need a break, for that matter). We have books and games and toys, and we're happy to send one of our older students downstairs with you to show you around and keep you company.

Wednesday Bible Study
Pastor Alan's Wednesday Bible Study is currently discussing Amy-Jill Levine's *The Gospel of Mark: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News*. These are Amy-Jill Levine's actual titles: The Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace; Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies; and Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Graduate Department of Religion, and Department of Jewish Studies. That seems like a lot. Her book is available on Amazon, and you may be able to find it elsewhere as well. It's available for Kindle as well as in other formats and editions. By the time this newsletter comes out, the group will likely be on chapter six or seven. Ask Pastor Alan, and he will give you a better idea of where in the book the study group is.
Everyone is invited and welcome to come to Bible study (even if you haven't done the reading). Please pass along the invitation to anyone you know who might be interested.
Wednesday Bible Study, 11:00 a.m. on Zoom, meeting ID 259 777 226, password Disciple

Advent
Is it too early to start getting ready for Advent? Maybe. But if you're a planner, please note the following dates:

- ***December 3:*** *First Sunday of Advent,* potluck luncheon in the Large Assembly Room.
- ***December 10:*** *Cantata,* featuring solos and duets from some very talented and dedicated singers.
- ***December 17:*** Children's Christmas pageant, with cookie sale afterward
- ***December 24:*** Christmas Eve Service

EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

By Valery Welch

Mark Your Calendars!

December 3, E&M will Host the December Luncheon! This will be a true potluck with a theme yet to be determined. E&M is working on ideas for a fun, family craft we can all enjoy!

December 10, 2:30 – 4:00ish

Neighborhood Caroling! Dress warm, bring a mug of your favorite hot beverage and help share musical carols and cheer throughout the neighborhood.

The "Mug-a-Friend" Gift Mugs Are a Success! As a reminder, here's the way it works. You can pay $25 for a mug, and a second mug is reserved to give to a first-time church visitor! Let Josh Smith know that you are interested—bring Josh cash or a check for $25 or make an online gift for $25. These are awesome double walled, stainless-steel, pint-size RTIC® mugs with a BPA-free lid. The whole idea is to share a memorable gift with first-time visitors. If the mugs continue to be a popular idea, we may decide to order more in the Spring!

EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Banners Galore! Now that we have graphics files from the Mug-a-Friend project, we'll work with a sign company to create a new, large OHPC banner with the logo and some "life of church" photos. The goal is also a new Advent and Holy Week banner to match and accompany the large banner.

Keep Those Photos Coming for the OHPC Member Directory! We're still taking photos for the member directory. As we settle into cold weather, this seems like a perfect time to make a cup of hot tea, sit next to the fireplace and begin assembling the photos for the directory. The photo frame remains downstairs in the fellowship hall for anyone who wants to take a photo and send in. Or, if you have a special photo of your own that you would like to submit (without the photo frame), please send it in! We continue to receive all kinds of fabulous photos!

To get your photo to us, simply:

1. Identify the name of each person in the photo (going from left to right)
2. Update any of your contact information that has changed since the last member directory
3. Email your photo and information to: treasurer@oakhillpcusa.org

Join Us! Our next E&M Committee meeting is Monday, November 6, 6:30 p.m. Contact Josh Smith for an evite to our Zoom meeting!

Your Evangelism & Membership Committee:
Josh Smith, Chair
Millie Crittenden
Jeff Dahl
Valery Welch

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

By Donna Cook

"**Every leaf speaks bliss to me, fluttering from the autumn tree.**" — Emily Bronte

November! Greetings from the Mission and Justice Committee.

This month we welcome the confirmation class from the Lovejoy United Presbyterian Church, Wood River, Illinois. They'll be with us the first weekend of November!

We did it! We collected over 400 gravy packs for Isaiah 58 Ministries Special Thanksgiving Food Distribution! Thank you to everyone.

We are receiving numerous requests from churches looking for mission trip opportunities for Summer 2024. We should have a full house. Updates to follow.

There will be other holiday sharing opportunities throughout the rest of the year. Watch for opportunities to donate to our "Jeans for Teens" project with Christine Woodward at University City Schools. If you'd like to donate to the "Jeans" project: make your donations to Oak Hill and indicate the gift is for Jeans for Teens (cash, check or on-line giving option)

See the next page for the Isaiah 58 Christmas Wish List. Please bring your donations to church by the last Sunday of November.

In the meantime, here is your Isaiah 58 Ministries shopping list.

November 2023
5th - canned chicken
12th - rice - your favorite
19th - hot chocolate mix
26th - dish soap (is it Advent yet?)

December 2023
3rd - canned greens
10th - canned fruit
17th - canned meat - your favorite
24th - facial tissues - any size or shaped box.
31st - pancake mix or syrup

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Small Appliances:
George Foreman grill
Coffee maker
Crock pot
Toaster oven
Hand mixer
Rice cooker

Household Items:
Queen-sized comforters
Queen-sized blankets
Towel sets

Personal Care:
New socks: *baby - adult*
New underwear: *children - adult, women's hipsters, men's knit boxers*
Spa kits
Manicure kits
Men's & boy's aftershave/ cologne

Toys:
Infant - Preschool: Fisher Price toys
Balls - basketballs, soccer balls, footballs
African American and Hispanic/Latino dolls
Educational toys
Science kits
Hot Wheels and other cars & trucks
Disney themed items
Legos and K'nex
Ethnically diverse action figures
Nerf toys

Gifts for Teens:
Cozy blankets
Fingernail polish/design kits
Lounge pants

*All items should be new. Recommended value of $10-25.

STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

By Brian Heuckroth

We have identified a contractor for the tuckpointing and have reviewed a proposal. Once we get final details, the work can begin.

The heating system is working, though there are concerns about how well it will stand up to hard use in the dead of winter, given some repairs/upgrades are needed. We will be investigating what is to be done and then how to get it done.

The annual Stewardship campaign is upon us, and the session committees are hard at work to formulate a budget for 2024.

The timeline is as follows:

- Congregation meeting presentation on 11/5
- Mail pledge cards to members 11/8 who were not present on 11/5
- Pledges, dedications asked to be received by 11/19
- S&P approval of final budget by 12/10
- Budget completed and approved by Session 12/13/23
- Budget published in annual report at end of January-2024

We are indeed fortunate to have a wonderful church property which has sustained us all these years, but which sometimes needs some significant care and maintenance. We have a number of big-ticket items to fix, such as tuckpointing to keep water out and upgrades of our HVAC systems, among many others, which will tax our maintenance reserves, so please keep this in mind as well when filling out your Pledge Card so we can keep "the home fires burning."

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were reported or approved by Session in their October 11, 2023, Stated Session Meeting.

Session elected Matt Hanify to serve as Clerk Pro Tem at the October 11, 2023 Stated Session Meeting, in the absence of Carole Adams, Clerk of Session.

Financial Reports for September and Year-to-Date 2023

	September	2023 YTD Total
Income		
Actual	$18,263.78	$118,638.94
Budgeted	$27,705.00	$159,835.00
Over (Under) Budget	($9,441.22)	($41,196.06)
Expenses		
Actual	$16,913.54	$192,521.05
Budgeted	$21,407.59	$194,996.26
Over/(Under) Budget	($4,494.05)	($2,475.21)
Net Revenue/(Loss)	($1,350.24)	($73,882.11)

It was reported that the following was approved via an electronic vote to include the following in the Pastor's Terms of Call: "Family Leave (up to 12 weeks) per the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy Family Leave Policy, adopted in July 2023."

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS (cont'd)

Session approved the 2024 Asking Budget which included: General Budget $225,281, AMEN House Budget $40,201, for a Total Budget $265,482.

BOOK CLUBS

Book club will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, at the Barrow residence to discuss *"The Diamond Eye"* by Kate Quinn. Based on a true story, the novel tells of a quiet bookworm who becomes a sniper for Russia in World War II.
Please bring your dinner and join us.
Those who want to join on Zoom may join us at 7:00 p.m.: 259 777 226 (password Disciple: case sensitive).

Wednesday Touchy Topics Book Club
The next meeting for the Touchy Topics Book Club is on December 6, when the group will discuss *United States of Grace: A Memoir of Homelessness, Addiction, Incarceration, and Hope*, by Lenny Duncan. According to *Publisher's Weekly*, "This lyrical testament to life as 'a blind date with mercy' will challenge and inspire."
Touchy Topics Book Club, Wednesday, December 6, at 7:00 on Zoom (contact the church via Facebook for the link)

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Circle 3 will meet on Thursday, November 16, at 10 a.m. (or whenever you can make it) in the Theleos Classroom. Please bring a sandwich - salad, chips, dessert, iced tea, and coffee will be provided.

Love to make holiday goodies, but don't want to be tempted to eat them? Want holiday goodies or crafts but don't have the time to make them? Presbyterian Circle 3 has the solution to both problems - our annual Christmas Cookie and Craft sale on Sunday, December 17. You don't have to be active in Circle 3 to donate to the sale, and donations are always appreciated! If you make holiday breads or any other items other than cookies, please price them for us, and if nuts or peanut butter are ingredients please note it for an allergy alert. Donations should be brought to church by 10:15 a.m. on the sale Sunday.

CRAFT CLUB

Submitted by Dena Roper

The Craft Club will not meet in November.

Bible Readings for the Month

LECTIONARY FOR NOVEMBER

Wednesday, November 1 All Saints Day	Rev. 7:9-17 *and* *Psalm 34:1-10, 22;* 1 John 3:1-3; Matt. 5:1-12
Sunday, November 5	Joshua 3:7-17 *and* *Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37;* 1 Thess. 2:9-13; Matt. 23:1-12
Sunday, November 12	Joshua 24::1-3a, 14-25 *and* *Psalm 78:1-7;* 1 Thess. 4;13-18; Matt. 25:1-13
Sunday, November 19	Judges 4:1-7 *and* *Psalm 123;* 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Matt. 25:14-30
Sunday, November 26	Ezek. 34:11-16, 20-*24 and* *Psalm 100;* Eph. 1:15-23; Matt. 25:31-46

November 5, 2023

Scenes from Oak Hill

Halloween

Oak Hill Presbyterian Church
4111 Connecticut Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63116-3926

(314) 664-5525

www.oakhillpcusa.org

office@oakhillpcusa.org

We are a welcoming congregation where visitors are always expected!

Christian Education - 9:30 a.m.

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
Transitional 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
3rd Monday of each month.