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Oak Hill News

No. 01 JANUARY 2024 Volume 74

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

Pastor's Corner

In the dark and cold month of January, life can sometimes seem a little lonely or dreary. The Christmas trees have been taken down, lights packed away, wrapping paper trashed, and the cookie crumbs eaten. Children have played with their new toys until they do not seem new anymore and the New Year has come and gone. You may have already broken a resolution or two.

But the joy of Christmas isn't over yet because we can choose to recognize the love of God and the presence of Christ in the everyday stuff. With open hearts and expectant outlooks, believers can have epiphany moments any day.

When you look at something you may have known about for a long time, and suddenly you realize that it is very special, much more meaningful than you've ever acknowledged, then at that moment–you've had an epiphany.

You have uncovered something that was there all along but was hiding–in a sense just below the surface. It was not obvious. It took a second look.

Long ago, the Magi followed the star and when they saw Jesus, they fell down and worshipped him. They had an epiphany, or a sudden insight into the true nature of something. They realized that they were in the presence of God.

We will commemorate Epiphany Sunday on January 7. It is going to be a marvelous celebration as we remember the story of the Magi, as we ordain and install our elders, and as we gather around the table for the Sacrament of Communion. Following worship, everyone is invited downstairs for cake to welcome our new elders.

Throughout the month of January, we will also be focusing on new ways to incorporate our Mission Statement into our weekly church activities, including our worship experiences. Our Mission Statement proclaims, ***"With Jesus as our guide and community as our goal, we will worship, love, serve, and grow."*** We hope that by the end of the month everyone will know our Mission Statement by heart so that when someone asks you what your church is all about–you can answer the question with a heartfelt response.

May you experience the love of God in an unmistakable way as we enter the new year.

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Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Wanda

FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

We hope everyone enjoyed our breakfast potluck on December 31! We also hope you participated in the December 3 potluck, the PW Cookie Sale, and the Christmas Eve appetizer potluck.

As we begin 2024 with a very busy month, it was decided that we would take a break from a potluck luncheon in January. There are events occurring every Sunday, including an Ordination and Installation of Officers (with cake), a Service as Worship, Bowling at Epiphany (with snacks), and a Congregational Meeting (with donuts). We do hope to see you every Sunday. We will still have time to visit during our regular fellowship time following worship (where there are always refreshments).

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

By Matt Hanify

Worship

Oak Hill Presbyterian Church bids you a Happy New Year. We hope you had a fantastic Christmas and that your home was filled with warmth, love, and hot cocoa. We are happy to see you here. May your 2024 be your best year ever, unless your 2023 was pretty awesome and you would just like to phone it in for this year. Whatever works for you.
Sunday worship, 10:30 a.m., in person or on Zoom (meeting ID 768 992 383)

Volunteering

If you would like to help out around here, please let us know; we would like that very much. We regularly need greeters and liturgists. The choir always welcomes new voices. And not one of these roles requires church membership. Alternatively, on the church's website, oakhillpcusa.org, is a link under the "Grow" tab that contains volunteer opportunities. Or feel free to speak to anyone around here, and we will be happy to point you in the right direction.

Communion

Communion will be offered on Sunday, January 7. We offer individualized portions of bread and juice, and everyone is welcome. If you're a regular here, you might see Communion looking a little different. This year, the tiny paper cups with bread are "out." A large tray with pieces of bread, where you get to pick your own, is "in." Juice is (now picture me in an oversize gray suit) the same as it ever was. 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.

In-home Communion is offered for our extended members. Please reach out to Pastor Wanda or someone on our committee, and we can schedule a time.

Epiphany

On January 7, we celebrate Epiphany Sunday, which commemorates the visit of the Magi (rhymes with Ray Guy, but with a soft "g") to the Christ child.

Sunday School – Adult and Youth

Children's Sunday school starts up again on January 7 at 9:30 in the morning, upstairs in the education annex. Miss Lisa and Miss Sarah are working with the children through *Feasting on the Word*. If you are a first-time student, welcome. The only prerequisites are show up, participate, and have fun.

Adult Sunday School also starts back up on January 7, also at 9:30 in the morning. But it meets in the Theleos Room, which is downstairs in our main building. The prerequisites here, much like the youth class, are show up, participate, and have fun.
Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. (no Zoom option for Sunday School this year)

Confirmation

We are gearing up for a Confirmation class for some of our older, more mature (but not as mature as they like to think) Oak Hill youth. At confirmation, a young person receives specific instruction in faith to help them make their own profession of faith. It will feature some overnight retreats in the AMEN House, field trips, and more. If you're interested, please let us know.

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Childcare

We have shifted our approach to care 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 either you or your child needs a break. We (meaning definitely not me) have installed a television down there, so you can continue to watch the service while coloring or taking several deep, cleansing breaths. 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. If you would still prefer to head to the old nursery (upstairs in the education annex; same place as youth Sunday School), let someone know and we can make arrangements for that as well (the TV stays where it is, though).

Wednesday Bible Study

The Wednesday Bible Study group has finished their study of Amy-Jill Levine's book on Advent and Christmas and are in the process of deciding what to read next. They plan to make that decision at their next meeting on January 3, 2024. So, for that meeting on January 3, they are looking at the Lectionary Scripture readings for the following Sunday, January 7. Those readings are listed toward the end of this newsletter, as usual. But if you don't have the chance to look at those Lectionary readings before January 3, that's no problem -- come to the meeting anyway.

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

Touchy Topics Book Club

Touchy Topics Book Club will look different going forward into 2024. They will be joining the Oak Hill Book Club that meets on Tuesday evenings. They will still be addressing a few touchy topics books throughout the year. Please keep a lookout under Book Club in the newsletter to find out each month what they will be reading. We promise it will be worth it.

EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

By Valery Welch

Here's What's Happening with Evangelism & Membership

<u>January 21, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.</u>
Bowling at Epiphany Lanes!

Please join us on Sunday, January 21, from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., for free bowling at Epiphany Lanes. All are welcome, including any friends you'd like to invite along! The bowling cost will be covered but you may want to bring along some money for the snack bar (we'll have some free food there as well!). Epiphany Lanes is located at 3164 Ivanhoe Ave, St. Louis, MO 63139. It is just south of Arsenal near the I-44 intersection. If you would like a ride or have any other questions, please contact Josh Smith at 314 497-7417.

<u>Sunday, February 18</u>, President's Day - Game Night!

(A backup date is Friday night, March 1.) We may be located in the former youth Sunday School room. E&M is considering setting up this room to see how it works for routine game activities. In the brainstorming stage, this seems like a great location for fun lighting, games, a tv, and maybe a couch. If game night is a popular idea, we may consider donations of new or used items, like, air hockey, pong, video games, karaoke, and streaming devices.

<u>Saturday, March 30</u> – Annual Easter Egg Hunt in Tower Grove Park!

hopefully at the **Turkish Pavilion!**

(watch for details)

EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Banners Update! Josh Smith is submitting "life of church" photos to a graphic designer for the final banner layout. Ultimately, we hope to have a:

- Mission statement sign
- Large central banner
- Add-on smaller banners for Advent and Holy Week

The "Mug-a-Friend" Gift Mugs Are a Success! We'll order more in the Spring! As a reminder, here's the way it works. Buy a mug for $25, and we'll reserve a second mug to give to a first-time church visitor free! Let Josh Smith know that you are interested—bring Josh cash or a check or make an online gift for $25. The whole idea is to share a memorable gift with first-time visitors.

Christmas Caroling

We had a wonderful group out to sing carols to our neighbors on December 10. The weather was beautiful, and deceptively cold, like you'd expect for a good Christmas Caroling session. Requests for songs were made, and we honored those requests in full voice. We also raised around $100 for St. Louis Christmas Carols Association, a cause benefitting several children's charities in St. Louis. And we invited some folks to church! We topped the day off with cocoa. We hope you can join us next year; we usually plan to carol on the 2nd Sunday in December.

Join Us! Our next E&M Committee meeting is Monday, January 8, 6:30 p.m. Contact Josh Smith for an evite to our Zoom meeting!
Josh Smith (Chair), Millie Crittenden, Jeff Dahl

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

By Donna Cook

Happy New Year from the Mission & Justice Committee

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our **New Roots Urban Farm** Workday has been rescheduled for Saturday, January 6. (Our December date was rained out.) Josh Smith will be leading our group in a construction project. Plans are to meet at Oak Hill at 9:00 a.m. and follow to the farm or you can meet us there at 9:30 a.m. The farm is located at 1832 Hogan Street. Contact Josh Smith for more information.

Watch the weekly update for more information about possible MLK Day activities.

Thank you for your donations to "Jeans for Teens".

AMEN St. Louis will have a booth at the Mission Fair that will be held during the **Association of Partners in Christian Education** Annual Conference later in January at Union Station.

Thank you to **Paul Bordeaux f**or rescuing the AMEN STL website. It's still a renovation in progress.

January 2024
7th - canned beef stew
14th - coffee or hot chocolate
21st - laundry detergent, small bottle (Image walking home with it.)
28th - canned or packaged beans

February 2024
4th - canned or packaged tuna
11th - oatmeal
18th - canned fruit
25th - bar soap

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (CONT'D)

All of your donations are welcome, all year! Whatever you have to share from your pantry or find on sale is perfect. Thank you for your continued support of the Isaiah 58 Ministries.

A special thank you to **Georgia Smith** and **Rich Wiethop** for their donations of clothing and gifts to the I58 Holiday Store and to **Toby Eckert** for volunteering during the Holiday Store Days. (I know I've forgotten to mention others as I see all the bags and boxes filled with **love**.)

STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

By Brian Heuckroth

It was a busy month for S&P, as we finalized the 2024 budget. We got the chairlifts restored to service, thanks to Carole and Josh. We are working on service for the church boiler to keep it healthy for this winter and beyond, and the whole squad is working on this as it has a couple of DIY-type tasks to save the church money.

Oak Hill now has a QR code. Please feel free to share it with anyone who wishes to donate to our church.

We wish all of you a wonderful New Year!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were reported or approved by Session in their December 13, 2023, Stated Session Meeting.

Average Worship attendance in person and via Zoom in November was 47.

Membership as of November 30, 2023, was 95.

Financial Reports for November and Year-to-Date 2023

	November	2023 YTD Total
Income		
Actual	$11,706.63	$151,107.77
Budgeted	$15,080.00	$185,095.00
Over (Under) Budget	($3,373.37)	($33,987.23)
Expenses		
Actual	$17,628.62	$221,811.37
Budgeted	$19,669.59	$237,803.69
Over/(Under) Budget	($2,040.97)	($15,992.32)
Net Revenue/(Loss)	($5,921.99)	($70,703.60)

Following the examination of our newly elected officer Sarah Gibson, the session voted to approve the examination and to ordain and install Sarah, as a ruling elder, on January 7, 2024. Toby Eckert, Sandy Kay, and Josh Smith will also be installed on the same day.

Session voted to accept, with regrets, the resignation of Valery Welch from Session and the Evangelism and Membership Committee effective January 1, 2024.

Session approved the final budget of $265,638, as presented, for 2024. This includes $225,437 General (church), and $40,201 AMEN House.

Session approved having a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 28, to receive annual reports from the session and church organizations, including financial reports, and to receive the approved budget for 2024.

Session approved inviting our Presbytery Leader, the Rev. Ryan Landino, to preach at Oak Hill on Sunday, February 11.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS (cont'd)

Session approved celebrating the Lord's Supper on the following dates in 2024: February 4, February 14 (Ash Wednesday), March 3, March 28 (Maundy Thursday), March 31 (Sunrise and Regular Service), April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6 (World Communion Sunday), November 3, December 1, and January 5, 2025).

Session approved placing a "yard" sign on the lawn of the church which has several justice-based messages including Black Lives Matter, Love is Love, and Kindness is Everything.

BOOK CLUB

The newly combined Touchy Topics/Oak Hill Book Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 9, at the Barrow residence to watch the movie, *"A Haunting in Venice (2023)."* The third movie featuring Kenneth Branagh as retired detective Hercule Poirot features a seance and a murdered guest and is based on a 1969 Agatha Christie book.

Please bring your dinner and join us. We are looking for new members to join us in 2024!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Weather permitting, Circle 3 will meet on Thursday, January 18, at 10:00 a.m. or whenever you can make it. Please bring a sandwich - salad, chips, dessert and coffee will be provided.

Circle 3 thanks all of those who donated goodies and crafts to our cookie and craft sale. There was a profit of $617, which will be used for our charitable causes and a donation to the church in appreciation of the generosity of those who supported our annual sale.

CRAFT CLUB

Submitted by Dena Roper

Join us at Craft Night on Friday, January 19, at 6:30 p.m. in the church basement. Bring a craft or project and a snack to share and be in community with us! There may be a puzzle started too! Contact Dena with any questions.

Bible Readings for the Month

LECTIONARY FOR

JANUARY

Saturday, January 6 Epiphany of the Lord	Isaiah 60:1-6 *and Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;* Eph. 3:1-12; Matt. 2:1-12
Sunday, January 7	Gen. 1:1-5 *and Psalm 29;* Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
Sunday, January 14	1 Sam. 3:1-10 (11-20) *and Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;* 1 Cor. 6:12-20, John 1:43-51
Sunday, January 21	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 *and Psalm 62:5-12;* 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20
Sunday, January 28	Deut. 18:15-20 *and Psalm 111;* 1 Cor. 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Scenes from Oak Hill

Christmas Cantata

Childrens' Christmas Pageant

Presbyterian Women's Cookie and Craft Sale

Look at ALL OF THIS DELICIOUSNESS!

Neighborhood Luminary Night

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.