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Oak Hill News

No. 03 MARCH 2025 Volume 75

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

Our Lenten journey always begins on Ash Wednesday. This year we will participate once again in the Joint Neighborhood Churches' Lenten worship services. The theme will be "Hope in the Wilderness." The Ash Wednesday service will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the St. John's Episcopal Church on Arsenal Street.

"At the beginning of Lent, we are reminded that our possessions, our rulers, our empires, our projects, our families and even our lives do not last forever." (PCUSA Lent Statement) "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:10)

Personally, I always see it as an amazing reminder to make the most of every day, maybe even every moment, because we are not promised tomorrow.

Throughout our 40-day journey through Lent we are encouraged to try to come out sometime in our daily schedule for contemplation, introspection, prayer and repentance. For some people, the practice of giving up something for Lent is an important way to make space for spiritual practices. This year I have heard several people share that they are "giving up" ordering things from Amazon, spending time on social media, streaming services, as well as a variety of other things.

This year we are providing some very interesting activities during Lent including reading the Lenten devotional booklet. This year the theme is "Vincent van Gogh and the Beauty of Lent." It is available to pick up on Sunday, March 2, 2025, near the entrance to the sanctuary. Everyone is also invited to participate in special Wednesday evening Lenten study opportunities sponsored by the Joint Neighborhood Churches. They will be held at Epiphany UCC, located at 2911 McNair every week. A light supper will be provided at 6:30 p.m. (with a free will offering in place). The study will begin at 7:00 p.m. Participants can choose to join a program on the Psalms or Prayer Practices. Oak Hill will be providing one of the meals.

Oak Hill will also be hosting the Joint Neighborhood Churches on Maundy Thursday, April 17, at 7:00 p.m.

It is the power of resurrection on the horizon ahead that draws us into repentance as we prepare for the events of Holy Week, including the cross and the tomb. Lenten repentance makes it possible for us affirm joyfully, "death is no more" on Easter Sunday!

I hope you will take advantage of some of these events and activities as we journey through Lent together. I also hope that you make attending worship a priority throughout the Season of Lent and Easter.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Wanda

The Bulletin Board

FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEONS

The Stewardship and Property Committee will host its annual St. Patrick's corned beef and cabbage luncheon on Sunday, March 16. (A kid's meal will also be provided.) There will be cake, too! You don't need to bring anything, just come and enjoy! A free will offering will be received to defray expenses.

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Submitted by Matt Hanify

Worship

Welcome to Oak Hill Presbyterian Church. March, which is National Umbrella Month, is the home of Daylight Savings Time (March 9), Pi Day (March 14), St. Patrick's Day (March 17), the spring equinox (March 20), World Poetry Day (March 21), and the beginning of a basketball tournament – it's madness! We're glad you found your way here, because we have a lot to cover.

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

Communion

Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, March 2. We offer pre-sliced portions of bread and individual servings of juice. We also offer individual Communion units with juice on one end and a piece of bread on the other. This doubles as our gluten-free option. And everyone is invited to share.

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

Children's Sunday School meets at 9:30 in the morning in the Large Assembly Room, downstairs from the sanctuary. Miss Lisa and Miss Sarah will be happy to see you. It's an interactive and creative experience, often featuring crafts.

Adult Sunday School also meets at 9:30 in the morning in the Theleos Room, often called the "room with a piano and some trophies." Miss Donna and Pastor Alan are always excited to see new faces. Adult Sunday School is also interactive, although I don't know about its crafts policy.

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

Calming Corner

Downstairs from the sanctuary, underneath a large TV, framed by bookshelves and rugs, near our puzzle area, is the Calming Corner. This is a place where parents, kids, families – anyone, really, can just go when you need a break. Head downstairs. The TV will be showing the service, so you won't miss anything. There's a changing station for our littlest little ones. There's a space to just take a few breaths and relax whenever you need. Let us know if you have questions, and we'll send one of our older kids downstairs to help you out with anything you might need.

Wednesday Bible Study

The Bible study group is studying a new book, *The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus's Final Week in Jerusalem*, by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan. Heading into Lent, *The Last Week* is an ideal companion for the inquisitive soul who would like to learn more about the final hours of Jesus. Everyone is always welcome to participate in Bible study (even if you haven't done the reading), but if you want to know the reading assignment, contact the church office or Pastor Alan.

Wednesday Bible Study, 11:00 a.m., Zoom (259 777 226, password Disciple)

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Volunteering

If you would like to take a more active role around here, we can make that happen. We could use help in various positions: greeters, liturgists, educators, etc. Please let one of us know, or you can sign up on the website, oakhillpcusa.org (the "Worship" tab has an orange box that contains a Sign-up Genius link).

Choir

Chancel choir rehearses at 9:00 a.m. in the choir room on Sunday. Please contact our Minister of Music, Susan Brown, if you'd like to participate.

Youth group

Eden Johnson, Tower Grove Youth Pastor (youthpastoreden@gmail.com), continues to work with our growing youth group. So far, the group has assembled Go-Bags for our unhoused neighbors, received training in environmental justice, and reconnected with each other and with the wider community. Contact Oak Hill or Pastor Eden for more information.

The group could always use help with chaperoning or providing snacks. Let Pastor Eden know if this sounds like something you could do.

Scheduled March events:

- March 2: AMEN House, 5:00–6:00 p.m.
- March 9: AMEN House, 5:00–6:00 p.m.
- March 16: Nature walk beginning at St. John's, 5:00 p.m.
- March 23 – No meeting.
- March 30: St. Louis Zoo (the Zoo!), Oak Hill, 1:30 p.m. to whenever our feet get tired.

Ash Wednesday (March 5): We will be participating in a joint service at St. John's Episcopal Church with Compton Heights Christian Church, Epiphany United Church of Christ, and Isaiah 58 Ministries. Please check St. John's website (towergrovechurch.org) for more details – I think 7:00 p.m., but don't quote me.

Lenten devotionals: This year's devotional is *Vincent van Gogh and the Beauty of Lent,* from the SALT Project. The son of a Christian pastor, van Gogh set out to be a preacher himself. And the word "lent" refers to "lengthening days." This Lenten devotional integrates Scripture and the paintings and letters of van Gogh. Copies are available in booklet form in the sanctuary. Feel free to pick one up.

Wednesday Lenten Study (March 12, 19, 26; April 2, 9, 16): Epiphany UCC at 2911 McNair will also be offering weekly Wednesday study services for those interested. For more details, please visit the website (epiphanyucc.org) – I think 6:30 p.m.

Palm Sunday (April 13): Please join us in making crosses for Palm Sunday on Saturday, April 12, at 10 a.m. in the Large Assembly Room under the sanctuary (we need to order palms – help me

Maundy Thursday (April 17): We will be hosting a joint service with St. John's Episcopal, Compton Heights Christian, Epiphany UCC, and Isaiah 58 Ministries at 7:00 p.m. Communion will be offered. This has previously been a foot- and hand-washing service and will be available on Zoom (meeting ID 768 992 383).

Easter flowers: If you wish to purchase an Easter lily, please contact the church office for details. We will have more information as we get closer to Easter.

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EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Submitted by Josh Smith

Bowling Par-tay!!. It was a bad day to be a pin (and a worse day to be a gutter). We had a great time bowling with our church family and youth group on January 26th at Epiphany Lanes. Snacks were had, prizes were won, strikes and spares abounded. And we got to share it all with friends we invited from St. John's and Compton Heights churches. Please come and join us at our next outing!

Zoo Trip. We are planning to attend one of the premier FREE destinations in St. Louis, the Zoo at Forest Park! On Sunday, March 30th, we will leave for the zoo from church, at 1:45 PM, carpooling available. You can also meet us directly at the zoo at 2:00 PM, we'll meet at the front fountains inside the entry gate. There is no cost for admission, but if you park on the zoo lot there is a charge for that (usually $10). There is also typically free parking in Forest Park in the area around and behind the zoo, with a bit more walking involved. Please come and enjoy God's creation with us!

New Member's Brunch. If you've wondered about what it's like to be a member at OHPC, it's like a mix of joy and insanity!! (Just kidding). But there are real answers to the questions of how OHPC does church, the way we self-govern, and how we try to organize our faith around Jesus. On March 30th, directly after church, E&M committee will have snacks in the Theleos Room (adult Sunday School) and be available to talk about opportunities to put your faith into action as a member. Membership is a great outward expression of your faith, a chance to be an active participant in worship, and a pathway if you're interested in the leadership of our small busy community.

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

By Donna Cook

Mission and Justice for ALL

Nothing is impossible. The word itself says, "I'm possible!" – Audrey Hepburn

March is women's history month! We celebrate the contributions of women to American history in science, politics, and other fields as well as advocate for gender equality.

Ready to shop?
Isaiah 58 Ministries thanks everyone for their generous donations!

March 2025
2nd - chili
9th - shelf stable milk
16th - canned ravioli or other canned meat
23rd - dish soap
30th - Mac and cheese (no milk needed boxes are appreciated.)

April 2025
6th - peanut butter
13th - cooking oil (48 oz or less)
20th – multi/all-purpose cleaner
27th - bar soap

Thanks to Craig Jung for delivering all of our donations to Isaiah 58 each week (or so).

We're collecting underwear for Isaiah 58's Back-to-School Fair 2025. I'm glad we have a head start. We need 125 pairs of adult size **underwear** for teen girls and boys. Assorted sizes. Each child receives 5 pairs of **underwear** with their back-to-school supplies. They would really like the underwear in packs of 5. (I found that hard to find). Plus, folks may not be able to buy 5, but they may be able to buy 1 or 2. So if you are able, we'd appreciate the help.

Humor is like underwear: it's essential and gives you the confidence to face the day.

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (cont'd)

AMEN St. Louis.

June is completely booked for 2025. It's that time of year when we start contacting our AMEN St. Louis Mission Partners to arrange for worksites. Groups are inquiring about July & August. We also have a weekend group booked in November. We keep adding information to the website. Watch for volunteer work days and other projects between now and May!

Hunger Action. Thanks to Dena, Wanda, Ashley, Wendy, Georgia, Karen and her granddaughter, and Eva for shopping for, prepping, cooking, assembling and delivering food to our assorted Winter Outreach winter emergency shelter Bounce Back Project partners during this frigid weather. Thanks to Dena for all of her organizing and coordinating efforts. Watch for more information from Dena about new projects.

Go-Bags are available outside the sanctuary and in the Large Assembly Room.

Thanks for all the offers of help with deliveries and interest in the emergency shelters. And thank you to all that helped that we may have neglected to mention. Please know we are most appreciative.

We cannot change what we are not aware of, and once we are aware, we cannot help but change.
– Sheryl Sandberg

STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Submitted by Bob Ream

Committee meeting (Feb 5th)

I. Active projects

A. Wall repairs following the work to reroute the heating pipes leading to the Education Building will begin in late February and proceed as volunteer time permits.

B. Waiting for the official letter from Hartford Steam Boiler regarding their insurer-mandated inspection of the Church facilities. We already know of one minor code violation regarding the AMEN House boiler pressure valve assembly.

C. Planning for hard-wired EXIT signage with battery backup for the AMEN House and our mission guests.

D. Sidewalk repairs have been brought up with local city officials who will try to advance our concerns to the Commissioner of Streets.

E. Nonprofit Security Grant application for security lighting and cameras remains under review.

F. Seeking an architect with some extra time to meet with the Session and/or the Mission Study Team and provide renderings of re-imagined use of space in the Church (exciting!)

II. New Business

A. Discussed concerns related to the three nonfunctional AC units and lack of reserve cooling for the Sanctuary and Large Assembly Room. A recommendation will need to come soon.

B. Water leaks in the Education Building are likely related to the roof which is the original structure built in the 1950's. Roofing companies are coming out to give us estimates (if appropriate) on patching, recoating, or replacing the roof.

C. Cold weather has prompted initiatives to allow faucets to drip and heat water pipes in select areas of the Church buildings (particularly the Education Building and Gym).

D. The Stewardship and Property Committee will host its annual St. Patrick's corned beef and cabbage luncheon on Sunday, March 16. (A kid's meal will also be provided.) There will be cake, too! You don't need to bring anything, just come and enjoy! A free will offering will be received to defray expenses.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were reported or approved by Session in their February 26, 2025, Stated Session Meeting.

Average Worship attendance in person and via Zoom in January was 48. There was no worship service on January 5 due to an ice and snowstorm.

Membership as of January 31, 2025, was 110.

The following financial report was provided to session:

Financial Reports for January and Year-to-Date 2025

	January	2025 YTD Total
Income		
Actual	$11,442.95	$11,442.95
Budgeted	$14,086.67	$14,086.67
Over (Under) Budget	($2,643.72)	($2,643.72)
Expenses		
Actual	$32,746.03	$32,746.03
Budgeted	$25,950.94	$25,950.94
Over/(Under) Budget	$6,795.09	$6,795.09
Net Revenue/(Loss)	($11,864.27)	($11,864.27)

Session elected Brent Crittenden as Treasurer.

Session elected Carole Adams as Clerk of Session.

Session approved rotating elders to serve as Oak Hill's commissioners to the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy in 2025.

Session elected Toby Eckert and Will Woodward to serve as representatives from session on the 2025 Nominating Committee with Toby serving as chair.

Session approved Lisa Thompson serving as chair of the 130 Anniversary Committee.

Session approved Pastor Wanda taking vacation from March 6 to 10 (including Sunday, March 9).

Session approved transferring William T. Jones' membership to St. Paul's UCC effective February 26, 2025.

Session approved the 2025 Nominating Committee to begin the process of selecting nominations of members to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee, which would be taken to the Congregation for approval.

BOOK CLUB

Submitted by Deb Wiethop

Book Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 11, at the Barrow residence to discuss the book "Mad Honey" by Jodi Picoult. *Mad Honey* is a riveting novel of suspense, an unforgettable love story, and a moving and powerful exploration of the secrets we keep and the risks we take in order to become ourselves.

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

Discussion of the book will start about 7 p.m. on Zoom: 259 777 226. Password: Disciple (case sensitive).

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Submitted by Jan Stanford

Circle 3 will meet on Thursday, March 20. at 10 a.m., weather permitting. Bring a sandwich -- salad, chips, dessert and coffee will be provided.

March 9

LECTIONARY FOR MARCH

Sunday, March 2	Exodus 34:29-35 *and Psalm 99;* 2 Cor. 3:12-4:2, Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)
Ash Wednesday, March 5	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 *or* Isaiah 58:1-12 and *Psalm 51:1-17;* 2 Cor. 5:20b-6:10; Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21
Sunday, March 9	Deut. 26:1-11 and *Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16;* Rom. 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13
Sunday, March 16	Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18 *and Psalm 27;* Phil. 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35 *or* Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)
Sunday, March 23	Isaiah 55:1-*9 and Psalm 63:1-8;* 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9
Sunday, March 30	Joshua 5:9-12 *and Psalm 32;* 2 Cor. 5:16-23; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Know who (and whose) you are

Actor Kirk Douglas once picked up a hitchhiker. After the man got settled in Douglas's car, he turned to look more closely at the driver. Surprised to recognize the famous man at the wheel, the hitchhiker exclaimed, "Do you know who you are?!"

We would do well to ask ourselves and each other the same thing. Often, we seem to forget — or perhaps we never knew.

Through much of life, we behave as if our identity depends on our occupation, wealth, family line, daily accomplishments or good deeds. But none of these — not even the last one — determines the core of who we are. All that matters is our Creator's opinion, and God loves us with abundant, unconditional love.

Do you know who you are? You are God's beloved child! And so is everyone else. May we live out that knowledge, treating one another as such.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

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We are a welcoming congregation where visitors are always expected!

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

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

Eden Johnson
Youth Leader

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.