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# Oak Hill News

No. 05 MAY 2025 Volume 75

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

Though all the chocolate bunnies have been eaten, the celebration of Easter is far from over as Eastertide is just beginning. Eastertide is 50 days long, leading up to Pentecost.

Jesus declared: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." We have to ask ourselves this question. "What does it mean to live a resurrection life in 2025?"

When we look around the world we live in right now, we realize that fear—real, palpable fear—is a daily companion for many. We are living in very uncertain times. Like the first disciples, it is tempting to stay inside, locked behind closed doors. But once again, we ask ourselves, "What is resurrection living?"

Resurrection is not just about what happens after death. It is about how we live now. It is about living with a peace that surpasses understanding, even when things are not okay.

Now—more than ever—it is about reclaiming our values and proclaiming that love overcomes hate and hope transforms fear.

For more than 130 years, the Oak Hill Presbyterian Church has been sharing the light and love of Christ with this community.

The mission and ministry of this church has always been about faithful people working together to put their faith into action at the cross roads of Oak Hill and Connecticut to make a difference for Christ in this neighborhood.

Now—more than ever—, we must proclaim from the roof tops that evil and despair will not have the final word. Resurrection living is not a distant dream. It is a call to life here and now, today.

Now, more than ever before at Oak Hill, we proclaim, "With Jesus as our guide and community as our goal, we worship, love, serve and grow."

I encourage everyone to join us as we celebrate the 130th Anniversary of Oak Hill all year long. Look for our new banner and signage. Join us for the Anniversary Block Party on Saturday, May 17. The whole community is invited to join in the celebration. Please take this opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor to join us for this exciting, fun event. There will be great food, music, games, activities, and much more.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Wanda

# Oak Hill's 130th Anniversary

**Happy Birthday, Oak Hill!**

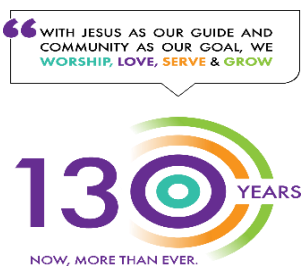
On April 16, 1895, Oak Hill became a congregation in a rural area that was becoming more and more residential. On Easter Sunday, we began a year-long celebration of our 130-year history AND our continued strength as a worshipping community. There's a new banner above the red doors and a new sign displayed at the corner. Credits for the logo go to Megan Frank, Oak Hill member and founder of Power Creative. Josh Smith expertly engineered the hanging of the banner.

The logo features Oak Hill's Mission Statement with the four action words shown in four different colors. The rings around the zero in the number 130, not only represent each of the action words from our mission, but are reminiscent of the growth rings inside a tree's trunk to symbolize our history. Worship is at our core, followed by love, moving outward to serve, and with the farthest ring symbolizing growth. The tagline "Now more than ever" speaks to our continued relevance to the world and to the community.

The first event of our year-long celebration will be the Block Party happening on Saturday, May 17, hosted by the Evangelism and Membership Committee. On Rally Day, September 7, the worship service will have a Homecoming theme, and all "alumni" of Oak Hill are invited to come back to rally with us! This winter, watch for a Staycation Mission experience where we will work on improvements or upkeep of our church building. There are also plans in the works for the Anniversary committee to host a meal and a presentation about the history of the neighborhood and our church building.

The 130th Anniversary Committee will meet again on Thursday, May 8, at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom.

*--Submitted by Lisa Thompson*




## WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*Submitted by Matt Hanify*

### *Worship*

Welcome to Oak Hill Presbyterian Church. Nestled in the heart of Tower Grove South, we're a small but energetic group. In pursuit of our mission statement, "With Jesus as our guide and community as our goal, we worship, love, serve, and grow," and with the strength of our 130-year history, we're looking to make this corner of the world just a little bit better, a little bit brighter.

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

### *Communion*

Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, May 4. This month's Communion will be a little different, in that it will feature options – like one of your finer buffets. Option 1: You select a pre-sliced piece of bread and an individual portion of juice, you eat the bread and head back to your seat, then you drink the juice. We've been doing this for months. Option 2: Individual, hermetically sealed, individual cups shaped like tiny hourglasses that contain both bread (gluten free) and juice. You tear open the bread portion and dig in, then open the other end and drink the juice. This is also our safest option (pandemically speaking). Option 3: You select a pre-sliced piece of bread, then dip it into a communal cup of juice – that's right, intinction Communion is back! The options are, well, not endless, there are only three of them, but it still feels like a lot.

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

### *Sunday School – adult and youth*

Both adult and youth Sunday school begin at 9:30 a.m. Kids join Miss Lisa and Miss Sarah in the Large Assembly Room, which is directly beneath the sanctuary. Adults meet in the Theleos room, which is past the kitchen, down the hall, hang a left, and you will see a room with adults. If you hit any stairs, you have taken a wrong turn or gone too far. We keep the two groups separate because they can get rambunctious.

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

**Note: May 18 is the last day for Sunday School for adults and youth. Both groups will be taking a break for the summer.** That means there are only three classes for May. And you might be thinking, "Well, I don't want to suddenly start going to Sunday School if there are only three classes. What if there's a test and I have missed all the necessary material? What if the other participants make fun of me? Are there snacks? My family keeps telling me to watch my sugar intake, but if there are Peeps, well, I can't say no to Peeps. And then I might be all rambunctious. Then what?" I assure you: You are welcome to come to class as much or as little as you want. And we won't tell your family about the Peeps.

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

### *Childcare*

Downstairs from the sanctuary is our Calming Corner, a space off to the side where parents and kids (and anybody, really) can go to just relax. There are puzzles and books and toys. There is a large television tuned into the service, so you can still participate. There is a changing station. And if you need someone to tell you where things are or just help out a bit, let us know and we will send someone down.

### *Wednesday Bible Study*

The Bible study group is reading *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen. Exploring themes of homecoming, affirmation, and reconciliation, the tale of the Prodigal Son will be newly discovered by all who have known loneliness, dejection, jealousy, or anger. 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)

### *Volunteering*

We're always welcome to anyone who might like to take on a larger role around here. We are in regular need of greeters and liturgists. Sign up at our website, oakhillpcusa.org, under the "Worship" tab. You can chaperone the youth group or just bring some snacks (or both). Or you can just worship with us. You don't have to do any of that, but if you want to, you can. And church membership is not required for any of that (especially the snacks).

### *Choir*

Chancel Choir rehearsal is Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. Like many things at Oak Hill, if you want to participate, just show up. You don't need an audition song or an accompanist. Susan Brown, Minister of Music, would love to have you. Just show up.

Youth Group

Eden Johnson, Tower Grove Youth Pastor (youthpastoreden@gmail.com), has been working with our young people for a while now, and the group has done some amazing things: a screening of "Wicked," a trip to the zoo, a nature walk, assembling go-bags for our unhoused neighbors. And sometimes the kids just talk about what's going on in their world. For May, the group is planning a meet-up at the AMEN House on Sunday, May 4 (5:00 p.m.), as well as a trip to New Roots Urban Farm on Saturday, May 17 (2 to 4 p.m.), and a lock-in on Friday, May 30, starting with dinner at 6:30 p.m. Contact Pastor Eden for more details.

The group could always use help with chaperoning or providing snacks. Please contact the church office or Pastor Eden if you would like to do either of those things (or both).

## EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

*Submitted by Josh Smith*

We went to the zoo on March 30th. It was a rainy day, but the animals stayed out to play. Our community youth group joined in and we found plenty of indoor critters as well! Big thanks to Kelsey Thompson, our resident zoo staffer and animal expert, for hosting our group and sharing her knowledge of grizzly bears!

## EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (cont'd)

### Easter Egg Hunt

We held our annual egg hunt on Saturday, April 19, in Tower Grove Park. It rained very hard, and we had the kind of turnout you might expect on a stormy day, but it was still a fun day with plenty of candy. Thanks to everyone who showed up to help, it was a great turnout from Oak Hill. And thanks to everyone who donated candy for the treats.

### Friday Dinners

We are planning another great dinner at AMEN House in May. Thanks to Brian Beckmann for organizing and to everyone who has brought food so far. Because the AMEN House is booked for the last Friday in May, we will instead hold dinner on Friday, May 23. Dena is bringing taco meat and tortillas, and everyone is encouraged to bring toppings and sides. Dinner usually starts between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m. All are welcome.

### Block Party 130th

On Saturday, May 17, we are hosting a Block Party for the neighborhood in celebration of our 130th Anniversary. There will be games, bounce house, food, and some fun crafty activities. Maybe even a special guest appearance from some furry friends! Please mark your calendars and come join us from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.!

## MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

*By Donna Cook*

**Mission and Justice for all.**
**"May is green and pink and red"**
**— Richard L. Ratliff**

Ready to shop?
Isaiah 58 Ministries reports that they are in need of toilet paper, Mac & Cheese, and peanut butter. Feel free to substitute those items for our "regularly scheduled" items.

**May 2025**
4th - tuna
11th - canned ravioli with meat
18th - coffee or tea
25th - multi-purpose cleaner

**June 2025**
1st - Salt substitute or other spices or seasonings
8th - oatmeal
15th - canned fruit
22nd - dish soap
29th - toilet paper

**YES! We're STILL 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 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. "The best underwear jokes are…brief."

**Hunger Action.** Lots of action! Dena cooked up a huge stash of egg patties but first she had to hunt down her "go-to" liquid eggs which was out of stock at her usual food mission haunts. Bagels are another story when you need 10 dozen of them at a time, but she found a good source as usual. The Presbyterian Women (Circle 3) spent a delightful morning assembling 120 breakfast sandwiches and of course enjoyed each other's company and conversation.

**AMEN St. Louis** - still accepting reservations for summer, or any time. As we're writing this an inquiry came into our website for the weekend of July 25-27. It's a small group of college students and leaders from Hastings College. They will be coming from the "Synod School" in Storm Lake, Iowa which is held every summer at Buena Vista University. Synods are a Presbyterian Government Body up the line from Presbyteries. They are the

## MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (cont'd)

"Synod of the Lakes and Prairies" and we're the "Synod of Mid-America." They hope to rest and do some team building here (we hope, too). Then they will head off to The Presbyterian Youth Triennium in Louisville. (Can I go, please?) Whew! That was a lot!

June is fully booked. There's one full week booked in July and maybe the weekend mentioned above. In August (mid-month) we have a tiny group booked. There might be opportunities for folks to hang out and try out some of our work sites with our ministry partners. More details next month.

**Keep your Wednesday Nights (and one Thursday to be named later) open for Neighbor Nights at Tower Grove Park at the Turkish Pavilion.** We'll have hot dogs and burgers, sides, snacks, water, and lemonade. Games with our neighborhood partner, Clayton Delaney, are not to be missed. You can also just hang out and enjoy conversation and our beautiful neighborhood park. See Josh Smith, Pastor Wanda, Dena Roper, or Donna Cook for more information.

Watch the Weekly Updates for more opportunities to Worship, Love, Serve, and Grow!

**"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." — C.S. Lewis**

## STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

*Submitted by Bob Ream*

Committee meeting (April 7th)

I. Active projects and old business
   A. Wall repairs following the work to reroute the heating pipes leading to the Education Building have reached the dry wall stage in the Choir Room.
   B. Our insurance company is requiring a reconfiguration of the pressure release valve on the AMEN House boiler. Martin-Jetco H&AC is submitting a proposal.†
   C. Contract signed with Fielder Electric for hard-wired EXIT signage with battery backup for the AMEN House ($1900).*
   D. Sidewalk repairs are still waiting for action by the city.
   E. In April, FEMA funding of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program was temporarily suspended for several weeks without warning or explanation. Although our application for security lighting and security cameras remains under federal review, confidence in this funding source for a positive decision and timely reimbursement of expenses has come into question. In light of the assigned priority for security lighting, Session voted to use Church funds for a proposal by Fielder Electric to place security lighting around the property and a contract has been signed ($5450).*
   F. Architectural renderings of re-imagined Church space are a work in progress.
   G. Martin-Jetco H&AC is working on an updated proposal for repair/replacement of the 4 nonfunctional AC units as well as a proposal for preventative maintenance on the rest of the Church AC.*
   H. We have 2 proposals for replacement of the Education Building Roof that vary widely in cost (50-100k). We had two other roofing companies stop by in late April and are waiting for their proposals.*
   I. Unscheduled Sanctuary Building boiler shutdowns this past winter will be investigated by Martin-Jetco H&AC when they come out to address the AMEN House boiler pressure valve (above). Many thanks to Josh S. for repeatedly (at least weekly) resetting the boiler system and keeping the heat on during the winter months.
   J. Repair of the dysfunctional toilets in the restrooms outside the Nursery is being tackled as a committee DIY project.
   K. The Gateway Men's Chorus has decided not to use the Large Assembly Room for their summer concert venue but would like to stay in touch for potential collaborative ventures in the future.
   L. The PCUSA's "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering was held on Easter Sunday (although it's not too late to place a donation).

## STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE (cont'd)

II. New Projects and business

A. A small number of Sanctuary Building roof shingles have become dislodged and may be added as a side item to roofing proposals.*

B. The missing down spout in the alley behind the Church will be replaced as a committee DIY project led by Quinn C.*

C. Plaster repairs will begin in the women's restroom after Easter and be performed by a local contractor ($3000). *

D. Dysfunctional stove pilot lights (x2) in the kitchen have prompted a search for repair services willing to work on outdated but functional commercial kitchen equipment.*

E. A magnetic door lock malfunction at the 4111 Connecticut entrance was repaired by Krause Key and Lock ($130).

F. An electrical inspection of all three Church buildings, mandated by our insurer, was performed by Fielder Electric on 4/21. There is a subpanel in the Sanctuary Building boiler room that will need to be replaced ($750); all other items on the checklist were satisfactory.†

G. Our insurer also requires a historical building survey be performed on all buildings >100 year old (the Sanctuary Building and Amen House). These surveys have been completed and will be presented at the next S&P meeting.†

H. There is a possibility that the Church, located in the officially designated "Oak Hill Historic District", may qualify for historic preservation tax credits. These credits may help offset the cost of large expenditures such as roofs and AC repairs/replacement. Brent C. is investigating.

* denotes a high priority item as designated by the Joint Retreat (Session members, Mission Study Team, and the Stewardship and Property Committee)

† denotes a high priority item due to a requirement by our insurance company, Church Mutual

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were reported or approved by Session in their April 9, 2025, Stated Session Meeting.

Average Worship attendance in person and on Zoom in March was 53.

Membership as of March 31, 2025, was 108. (This includes the death of Mel Soles on March 25, 2025.)

The following financial report was provided to Session:

Budget vs. Actual Income and Expense Summary for March and Year-to-Date 2025

| | March | 2025 YTD Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Income** | | |
| General | $10,248.25 | $35,562.79 |
| Investment Income | $20,013.59 | $20,057.55 |
| Total Actual | $30,261.84 | $55,620.34 |
| General | $12,283.33 | $42,260.01 |
| Investment Income | $20,000.00 | $20,000.00 |
| Total Budgeted | $32,283.33 | $62,260.01 |
| Over (Under) Budget | ($2,021.49) | ($6,639.67) |
| | | |
| **Expenses** | | |
| Actual | $15,831.74 | $71,132.52 |
| Budgeted | $23,560.94 | $71,767.82 |
| Over (Under) Budget | ($7,729.20) | ($635.30) |
| | | |
| Net Revenue/(Loss) | $14,430.10 | ($15,512.18) |

Session approved Pastor Wanda attending a Presbytery Clergy Retreat on April 29-30, 2025.

Session approved allowing the Treasurer to sell investments in ETFs invested in equities in our Fidelity account and to place these funds in our interest-bearing savings account due to ongoing high market volatility and the potential near term need for funds if Session elects to proceed with additional capital improvements.

Session approved signing contracts with Fielder Electric to hard-wire EXIT signs at the AMEN House with battery backup at a cost of $1,900 and to place security lighting around the church property for a cost of $5,450.

Session voted to approve spending around $500 for a church banner to use at events.

Session approved a Building Facility and Property Use Policy with an effective date of April 9, 2025.

## BOOK CLUB

*Submitted by Deb Wiethop*

Book club will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13, at the Barrow residence to discuss "James" by Percival Everett. The novel is a re-imagining of "The Adventures of Huck Finn" by Mark Twain as told by Huck's friend, Jim, an escaped slave.

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

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

*Submitted by Jan Stanford*

Circle 3 will meet on Thursday, May 15, at 10 a.m. or whenever you can make it. Bring a sandwich -- salad, chips, dessert, iced tea and coffee will be provided.

## Under the Oak Tree

**Remembering Mel**
**A Celebration of the Life of Mel Soles**

Everyone is invited to attend a memorial service for Mel Soles on Saturday, May 10, at 10:00 a.m.
Donuts and Coffee

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Bible Readings for the Month

**LECTIONARY FOR MAY**

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday, May 4 | Acts 9:1-6 (7-20) *and Psalm 30 or* Isaiah 61:1-3 *and Psalm 90;13-17;* Rev. 5:11-14; John 21:1-19 |
| Sunday, May 11 | Acts 9:36-43 *and Psalm 23 or* Isaiah 53:1-*6 and Psalm 114;* Rev. 7:9-17; John 10:22-30 |
| Monday, May 18 | Acts 11:1-18 and *Psalm 148 or* Lev. 19:9-18 *and Psalm 24:1-6;* Rev. 21:1-6; John 13:31-35 |
| Sunday, May 25 | Acts 16:9-*15 and Psalm 67 or* Deut. 34:1-12 *and Psalm 109:21-31;* Rev. 21:10, 22-22:5; John 14:23-29 *or* John 5:1-9 |
| Ascension of the Lord, Thursday, May 29 | Acts 1:1-11 *and Psalm 47 or Psalm 93 or* Dan. 7:9-14 *and Psalm 113;* Eph. 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53 |

# Scenes from Oak Hill

## Easter

Easter Sunrise Service

Preparing for the resurrection.

Flowering the Cross

## Trip to the Zoom

## New Signage

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.**
**(In Person through May 18)**
**(Resumes in the Fall)**

**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.