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## A New Way

**T**ransformative leadership in a community of faith seeks to identify avenues of new growth; processes that may need to be implemented or changed; existing factors that aid the chances of change, and the factors that may pose a problem when attempting to move forward into new uncharted waters. The mental trap of 'this is how we have always done it' leaves no room for fresh, forward-thinking ideas meant to grow the self and ministries in the local church. A community of faith-filled, forward-thinking individuals provides fertile ground to grow ministries that positively impact youth, young adults, and older adults.

As a transformational leader, I am never satisfied with the status quo. Attending church on Sunday and mechanically going through traditional exercises has its place, but in essence, this is not active ministry. Active ministry leads to breaking new ground to grow a new life in the body of Christ. The areas of new growth constantly on my mind consist of the following:

1. Marriage Enrichment Retreats
2. Drug and Alcohol Awareness Sessions
3. Cultural Enrichment Exposure
4. Physical/Mental Well-Being Enhancement
5. Raising Social Justice Consciousness

Living a dynamic, spirit-filled life demands taking steps towards thinking, feeling, and behaving in a new way. Holding to the mindset of 'this is how we have always done it' is immunity to change. Allowing this type of thinking to take up residence in any congregation will lead to the death of new life and eventual closure of the church. With this in mind, Open Arms seeks to be a true transformational community where lives are changing daily.

## Welcome Guests

**W**e welcome our guests who joined us in worship this past month. Brenda Mayfield, friend of David Durham and Kenneth Reaves; Fayteen Chaffin, friend of David Durham and Kenneth Reaves; Leru Poenisch, Bill and Gail Royster's daughter; Liz Herrick, Bill and Gail Royster's daughter; Carol Foss's daughter Jeanne Stubbs and her great granddaughter Heather; Jean Brooks; Dr. Carolyn Moore; The Marquez Family - Rev. Tim, Pi, Jacob, Jericho; Ron and Sue Krueger's grandson Kole and granddaughter Cambridge; Meme Taylor Davis.

## We Remember in Prayer

**P**rayers has the power to heal and change the lives of those who are hurting in body or mind or spirit. We ask that you would send up prayers for:

- The family of **Lars Royster**, who gained his wings on June 5, 2021.
- **Brother Moore**, as he seeks to get back up on his feet.
- **Olive Baer**, who has limited mobility.
- **Cheryl Jett**, who has back issues.
- **Bud Spooner**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Marjorie Meier**, who is living in a memory care facility.
- **Paula Haley**, who is living with Parkinson's disease.
- **Elizabeth Lemm**, who had breast cancer and rang the bell.
- **Sudie Ferguson**, who will be receiving physical therapy.
- **Gladys Barton**, who is recovering from an infection.
- **Jim Fairbanks**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Nicole Mackenzie**, who along with her family welcomes prayers.
- **John Rehling**, who is living with heart failure.
- **Kevin**, who welcomes prayers during his illness.
- **Carol Foss**, who fell and injured herself.
- **Anthony Maldonado** who welcomes prayers.

## Many Thanks To Those Who Have Helped So Much

### During July At Open Arms

- ❖ Thank you to Dr. Carolyn Moore, Professor of Music at Sam Houston State University, for substituting for Nia Williams during worship on July 18. Having Dr. Moore with us was a blessing and an honor.
- ❖ Thank you to Kenneth Reaves and David Durham for hosting us on July 4<sup>th</sup>. What a treat! Also, thanks to those who brought food for the luncheon after worship on the 4<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ Thanks to our train engineers who got us to Pearland on July 1<sup>st</sup> to see Olive Baer in spite of heat, traffic, construction, road-ragers, and misguided, in-coach navigators. Those engineers were long-suffering Barry Fairbanks and Rev. Ron.
- ❖ Always thanks to Vicky Royster for zoom addresses, communication notes, and clerical work. She forever smiles and never complains.
- ❖ Thanks to all those who have given so generously to get our church started and who are keeping it going. You are a blessed bunch!

### *A Special Children's Moment*

**S**he read to the children, and she read to us all, for we adults are children, too. On July 18, Meme Taylor Davis, author and professor at Lone Star College, entertained and enriched us with her book Being Different is the Name of the Game during "Children's Time." Using a variety of different animals, with their various characteristics, Ms. Davis illustrated the way unique qualities need to be cherished in various people, not condemned. She even used examples of those with physical disabilities and the way, they, too, merit acceptance and respect. The language and art work in the book are precious, in addition to the powerful message. This book is available on Amazon for those who are interested. It also appeals to a variety of age levels and can be a bedtime story for little ones and read alone by older children. Thanks to Gail Royster for meeting Ms. Davis and encouraging her to visit our worship with her book.

## Lit Wits Reading List

**L**ots of companionship, good discussion, praise and criticism of a novel, including controversy, and compliments--all wind up being a part of Lit Wit evenings. In July, Sue Krueger hosted the discussion of American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins. She provided a dinner, assuming that people think better on a full stomach!

American Dirt chronicles the plight of a mother, desperately struggling to get her child out of harm's way and shows graphically that a mother's love can drive a woman to do anything. The final outcome, escape to the "American dirt," makes the harsh journey from Acapulco to Arizona almost worthwhile for the characters.

On August 10, Linda Michalicek will be hosting a discussion of The Paris Library by Janet Charles, a book based on the true story of the heroic librarians at the American Library in Paris during World War II. One source says this novel is an "ode to the importance of libraries, books, and the human connections we find with both." Members will meet at Linda's home or use zoom to be a part of the meeting.

For September, Margaret Smith will lead a review and study of The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah. The Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and the migration of thousands of Americans from the farm to California in hopes of finding a better life drive Hannah's account of a Texas woman and her two children moving from one poor condition to another just as bad. Those interested in this era of American history or who just like a fascinating book will enjoy this novel.

All are invited to become a part of the Lit Wit group. Call Sue Krueger for information. Ask friends to be members also.

**TIRED OF READING? THINK ABOUT "TIME AND MONEY."**

**A man lay on his back, looked to heaven, and spoke to God.**

**"God," he said, how long is a million years?"**

**God answered, "In my frame of reference, it's about a minute."**

**The man asked, "God, how much is a million dollars?"**

**God answered, "To me it's a penny."**

**The man then asked, "God, can I have a penny?"**

**God said, "In a minute."**

## Bible Study:

### The Providential Hand of God In Esther

In 483 B.C., how does a Jewess broach the class barrier and become queen of all of Persia, sharing power and wealth with the king? That closely describes what happens in this distant and ancient land in the Book of Esther. The providential hand of God is at work, moving events in such a way that survival is guaranteed for the Jewish people who have selected to live out their time in Persia.

This is one of the themes/circumstances the Open Arms Bible study group has been exploring as members read, study, and discuss this 17<sup>th</sup> book of the Old Testament of the Christian Bible. The literary craftsmanship, the language, and the unique characters make the book a great read. Unfortunately, we find elements of 2021 America in this old, old work. As human beings, we haven't come very far! God is still working on us!

Come join us on August 3<sup>rd</sup> as we complete our study of Esther. All are welcome. You don't have to be an Open Arms member to join. Call the church office to get into the zoom session. (832-368-9551)

### AUGUST MISSION—“YES TO YOUTH”

**T**he August Open Arms UCC mission project is “Yes to Youth,” an agency of the Montgomery County Youth Services. This organization addresses emotional and physical needs of youth and their families as well as providing a shelter where neglected and at-risk youth may recover and heal from past damages. A complete list of “Yes to Youth” services is provided on the flier included with this newsletter.

Dannette Suding, CEO of “Yes to Youth,” will be attending Open Arms worship on Sunday, August 8, to share briefly some information about “Yes” with our congregation. Gail Royster, our Mission projects coordinator, has arranged for OA members to tour a shelter if they wish. You may call 281-292-6471 to schedule a visit or wait and go for a tour with Gail. Gail believes this organization will provide hands-on opportunities for Open Arms members. Watch for further information.

## Open Doors And Open Arms

**O**pen Arms UCC strives to welcome and embrace all who come to our door. Thankfully, there are other churches who share the same desire to accept all. Kelly Higgins, a United Church Minister, tells of the compassionate nature of First United Church in Vancouver, British Columbia. In an article for These Days, a book of daily devotionals, Higgins recollects a time when a man walked into First United with nothing but the clothes on his back. All his possessions had been stolen while he was on a camping trip in the mountains. Exhausted from a long walk out of the wilderness, he came to the church late one afternoon. He said, “I didn’t know where else to go where I might be taken in.”

Higgins praises First United Church as a church with an open door that took in this wanderer and all others. She says “economic status, gender identify, skin color, or one’s native language does not determine how you are welcomed or who receives help in time of need” at First United.

“We are the body of Christ,” in Higgins’ words, “called upon to do the work of God’s love in the world. When it comes to hospitality and acceptance, there are no unimportant people and no unimportant acts of kindness. There are only people who need us to be an open door.”

So, you see, dear friends of OAUCC, like our Canadian sister church, we must continue our practice of keeping the Door Open and extending our Open Arms to all. There are people who need us.

Higgins, Kelly, “An Open Door.” May 7, 2021. These Days. April, May, June, 2021. Presbyterian Publishing Corp. 100 Witherspoon St. Louisville, Ky 40202- 1396.

## **THE WEDNESDAY FORUM**

**O**nce, Rev. Jules told us we were the hardest working church he had ever seen. This August newsletter testifies to how busy we have been. Our regular Wednesday night meeting records an active group also.

Ian Says moderated the July 21<sup>st</sup> session in place of Rev. Bill Royster. In reflecting on Sunday worship, we rejoiced in a fast-growing church attendance, the performance of a professional writer, the presence of a professional musician, and, as always, Rev. Williams powerful and inspiring sermon. Finding a larger house of worship remains a concern, but as a Body of Christ, dedicated to doing His work through mission, giving, love and care, we discover many blessings for our church.

# Happy Birthday Wishes To You

*Norman Swaney – August 9*

*Kenneth Reaves – August 18*

*Jules Williams, III – August 25*

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## Report From the Care Commission

**H**opefully, all OAUCC members count themselves as a part of the Care Commission, dedicated to reaching out to individuals, making life better for those in need of nurturing. Two programs we participate in are **“Food for Friends”** and **“The Love Train.”**

Every third Monday OA members send meals to five or six folks in the community who are not able to prepare food for themselves or who have a limited food budget. This month, each meal included an entrée, home-made bread, fruit, and a dessert. Members hope to expand the number of recipients as the program grows, and they provide more “Food for Friends.”

“The Love Train” consists of OA members who gather and drive in tandem to homes of those who are sick, lonely, and/or in need of a visit. They take gifts, sing, and pray with the folks they see. In July, the train visited 99-year-old Olive Baer, who has moved from The Woodlands to her granddaughter’s home in Pearland because of a fall. Naturally, Olive misses her home territory, so “The Love Train” brought her a little cheer.

Watch for these programs and join in if you can. Pictures from Olive’s train visit are included below.

## The Love Train – July 1, 2021 – Visiting With Olive Baer



### **Closing Thoughts (With Miss Olive in Mind!)**

Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.

Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting;  
But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Give her the reward she has earned,  
And let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

(Proverbs 31:29-31)