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Butt-Prints in The Sand

An unknown author once wrote the following comical but actual words about life and individuals that refuse to change. The author stated,

“One night I had a wondrous dream.
One set of footprints there was seen,
The footprints of my precious Lord,
But mine were not along the shore.

But then some stranger prints appeared,
And I asked the Lord, ‘What have we here?’
Those prints are large and round and neat,
‘But Lord they are too big for feet.’

‘My child,’ He said in somber tones,
‘For miles I carried you alone.
I challenged you to walk in faith,
But you refused and made me wait.’

‘You disobeyed, you would not grow,
The walk of faith, you would not know.
So I got tired, I got fed up,
and there I dropped you on your butt.’

‘Because in life, there comes a time,
when one must fight, and one must climb.
When one must rise and take a stand,
or leave their butt prints in the sand.’”

During my years of service, I have encountered many people that attended church but refused to change. Refusing to change is common in the lives of most people. The transformation process demands getting up and standing on our own two feet followed by marching onward by faith along the path of transformation. No one is going to pick us up and carry us to the place of inner

change. The Bible is replete with examples of people that entered life and left leaving a legacy of transformation and action due to the process of transformation. There exists a new life on the other side of the door of complacency.

*Blessings,
Rev. Jules Williams, Jr.*

Welcome Guest

We welcome our guests who joined us in worship this past month. Elijah Powell, Dr. Kendall Moore, Hannah Poenisch, the Rinehart family, Liz and Jim Lemm.

We Remember in Prayer

Prayers 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:

- **Olive Baer**, who has limited mobility.
- **Cheryl Jett**, who has back issues.
- **Marjorie Meier**, who is living in a memory care facility.
- **Gladys Barton**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Kevin**, who welcomes prayers during his illness.
- **Anthony Maldonado**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Tammy Spangler**, who is receiving a stronger dose of chemotherapy.
- **Mack Joseph**, who welcomes prayers during his illness.
- **Diane Mayo**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Mary Amburn**, who is suffering with a vertebrae fracture.
- **Ray Durham**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Clifford Lester**, who has had a massive stroke.
- **All who have been affected by COVID-19.**

Really Big **THANK YOU'S** To Special *People*

Thank you to **Norman Swaney** who used his creativity and woodworking skills to fashion a remarkable version of the Open Arms logo. He has replicated the design exactly by copying the image printed on the newsletter as his model. He has also achieved the same coloring Vicky uses on church communications to finish his wooden carving of the Open Arms' symbol. True to the purpose of this church, Norman has presented the picture of open hands reaching out to comfort and cherish others just as we reach out with open hands and arms to welcome all.

Thank you to Open Arms members who dedicated time and work to groom and cultivate the front yard of the Tamina Community Center, our worship home. Twelve, oops, thirteen with Bandit, dedicated their efforts to Martin Luther King on Martin Luther King Day. An even greater thanks to **Gail Royster** who had the idea and initiated the plan. Thank you, Gail, for putting this day into place. Again, thanks to all. See photo on page 9.

Thank you to all who agreed to serve on the **Open Arms Council** for the 2022 year. It will be work, but you are the great people who can do it. Thanks again.

Thank you always to **Peter and Vicky**. Without you we would have no technical "exposure." Your work is vital to our church.

Thank you to **Rev. Ray Jordan and First Community UCC** in Dallas for the gift of 15 New Century Hymnals to Open Arms. Thanks also to **Pam Mayo** for arranging this transaction. Thanks to **Barry Fairbanks** for volunteering to keep the hymnals at his home and transport them back and forth to use at Tamina Community Center.

A Council for The First Time

At the Congregational Meeting on January 23rd, the Open Arms congregation elected its first Church Council, an event that says to us “we are up and rolling.”

Following are church members who were chosen for our *first* governing body: **Kenneth Reaves, Barry Fairbanks, Vicky Royster, Ian Says, Chris Teese, and Bill Royster.** **Rev. Jules Williams, Jr.** will round out the Board membership. As you may have noted, Kenneth has been our designated president since we formed Open Arms, and Vicky has been our Financial Secretary/Treasurer, Bill has been the guiding force behind it all. So, we know we have an experienced Council; added to it we have knowledge, dedication, and energy in the new members.

All in all, we have great leaders to lead Open Arms in its role as a servant church in Christ.

Committees For Open Arms

The new council will be determining committees for the new year at open arms. Proposed groups include a mission committee, an education committee, and a building and/or search committee. Other committees that have been suggested are parish family life and evangelism. The size of our congregation will be a limiting factor for determining the number of specialized areas. If you are interested in working on a particular committee, talk to the council about joining, even chairing, a group.

Plans For an Open Arms Year 2022

Following are suggestions for activities at Open Arms this year. These events were discussed at the Congregational meeting. Many of you seemed pleased with the ideas and made additional suggestions. Here is a list so you can put these happenings on your calendar and start planning for them.

February 27, Friends and Family Day. You've been telling your neighbors and relatives what a great church we have; what a loving, inclusive, spirit-filled fellowship calls us each Sunday! Now's the time to try to get them to see it. Invite those folks to come and worship with us and partake of a fellowship luncheon afterwards.

March 19, Spring Yard Sale. Most everybody loves a Garage Sale/Yard Sale. This will take all of us working, but it will be fun—and bring in some revenue for good causes. The most powerful positive is that it will help us get to know our Tamina neighbors and help them to know us. Save your stuff: clothes, furniture, books, knick-knacks, etc. **“One person's trash is another's treasure.”**

April 15, Holy Week/Good Friday Drama. Many of our congregation love to perform. Let's perform for the glory of our Savior on this day of days. Think about volunteering to be in a Holy Week drama.

May 14, Celebration Day. A really big day honoring graduates, acknowledging successes, a pre-summer blast-off: Preaching on the grounds, music, OA talents displayed, weightlifting, Hula Hooping, a bake sale, a plant sale, face painting, food trucks. “All things Bright and Beautiful” in our lives.

June 19, Juneteenth. Plans to be announced.

July 4, “A Unified Country” Day. Prayer for our land, for peace and equality, and justice for all our people. Picnic on the grounds and music, etc.

August, Back to School/Health Fair. Equipping children for school, health and hygiene, medical personnel, vaccinations, blood drive, etc.

What can you add to this list?

Bible Study:

Peeling The Orange to Discover The “Entire Fruit”

On Monday, January 10, devoted Open Arms Bible scholars met at Wunsche Bros. Café for lunch and an organizational meeting for the year’s Bible Study.

We will be looking at religion, its definition, the Christian Bible, and the history of the Bible itself before we get into content, analysis, and application as found in parts of this great book. Some members will help the study by presenting short sessions on their areas of interest, even controversy, as found in the Bible.

Field trips to aid in study and research were put forth. The group discussed a tour of a synagogue with a rabbi informing us about the Jewish faith, a trip to Houston Baptist University’s Dunham Bible Museum to see the way the Bible emerged from the oral tradition to the written and printed word, and a visit to the Houston Museum of Fine Arts to see samples of great artwork inspired by the Bible.

If things work out as planned, we will have a wonderful year of enrichment and inspiration as we learn more about the Bible and its role in our lives.

Tentatively, we will meet every other Wednesday at 11:00 AM, alternating zoom sessions with luncheon meetings. Dates are January 26 and February 9. Other dates will be announced. As the year progresses, Open Arms hopes to have workshops on building the inclusive church and on issues related to white privilege. Watch for information on these studies.

Happy Birthday, Sweet Olive, Our Valentine

Febbruary is the month of valentines, of flowers and chocolates, and declarations of love. Open Arms is so blessed to have as its **VALENTINE**, birthday girl **OLIVE BAER**, who will be 100 years old this month on February 12.

Happy Birthday, Olive.

We love you and cherish you and rejoice with you at this wonderful time.

Dining Out With “Lit Wits”

For the first meeting of 2022, the Lit Wits book club broke with tradition and dined out at Wunsche Bros. Café in Old Spring on January 11th. Between bites of Wunsche’s signature cuisine, members discussed Anne Tyler’s *The Redhead by the Side of the Road*, the story of a quirky man who changes his behavior in the face of loss and discovery. Tyler indicates a second chance comes for her protagonist as well as for all of us.

The group was blessed with two guests: Angie Gonzaski and Vicky Royster, both of whom were invited to join as regulars. Hopefully, they will! The Lit Wits enjoyed the setting so much that they may return to the café for the next meeting.

For the February 8th session of Lit Wits, Linda Michalicek will be discussion leader. Linda has chosen the book *Walk in My Combat Boots*, by Chris Mooney.

Happy Birthday Wishes

Olive Baer – February 12

Angie Gonzaski – February 23

February Mission Project – STRIVE Boutique

Mandy Hale says, “Change can be scary, but you know what’s scarier? Allowing fear to stop you from Growing, Evolving, and Progressing.”

Picture this: You’ve been incarcerated for some number of years. Prison was hard, but now you’re about ready to re-enter society. Talk about scary!!

Some women are lucky to be part of a program called: **STRIVE**

Strength Through Restoration Independence Vision and Empowerment

STRIVE is a re-entry center operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice at the Mountain View Unit in Gatesville. Participants learn basic PC skills, how to search for employment and submit applications. Training also includes job interview skills, public speaking, personal self-care planning, and hairstyling and makeup. What about clothes?

“I have nothing to wear!” Be honest, how many times have we all said that? How can a woman dress when about to re-enter the “outside?” **The answer is probably in your closet!!** So here is where the boutique and February mission project come together. STRIVE operates a boutique. Word is that it equals the swanky boutiques where some women shop. The difference is the women at Mountain View Unit don’t have to pay upscale prices...actually they pay nothing!

Open Arms congregation and friends will collect clothing items that will stock the boutique. Most importantly are business attire, nicer casual clothes, purses, some shoes, jewelry, and scarves.... Anything that helps a woman feel presentable, confident, and “lookin’ good!”

We can’t collect all clothing items like undies, (as momma said, “unmentionables”), hygiene items, etc. Our regular financial giving will be sent to assist in purchase of those articles.

We will collect items after worship on Sundays, February 20 and February 27. If possible, packing in large shopping bags would be helpful. Got extra bags? Please bring them, too. If you have a large donation and can’t bring on those Sundays, call Gail Royster; and we’ll try to make alternative arrangements.

In February we observe Valentine’s Day and many thoughts turn to love. What a better way to show love than to help clothe sisters in need and support their new beginnings.

“There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.”

John Holmes



Work Day at Tamina Community Center for Open Arms Members