



Pastor: Rev. Jules Williams, Jr.

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Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, May 20, 2022, on the occasion of Rev. Williams award as Doctor of Divinity. In the picture from left to right: Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr.; Margaret Smith and Pam Mayo, members of Open Arms UCC; Kim Williams; Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

Thank God!

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 appreciated all of our birthday cards and welcomes prayers.
- **Kevin**, who welcomes prayers during his illness.
- **Gladys Barton**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Anthony Maldonado**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Tammy Spangler**, who is awaiting surgery.
- **Mack Joseph**, who welcomes prayers during his illness.
- **Elna Swaney**, who is dealing with issues with her eyes.
- **Matt Royster**, who is recovering from surgery.
- **Antonia Rivera**, who has major medical issues.
- The family of **Phyllis Bradbury**, who passed away on May 21, 2022.
- **All who have been affected by COVID-19.**

Welcome Guests

We welcome our guests who joined us in worship this past month. Elijah Powell, Robert Monroe, Marcus Wilkins, Irene McCartney, Jennifer McCartney, Taylor Herrick.

Open Arms May Offerings, Mission, and Forever Home Fund

Offerings - \$4,832.63

Mission - \$448.68

Forever Home Fund - \$201.00

Meet Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr.

On May 20, 2022, Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, conferred the degree of Doctor of Ministry on Rev. Jules Williams, Jr., Pastor of Open Arms United Church of Christ in Conroe, TX (Tamina Community). Rev. Williams, who earned his pre-doctoral degrees at the College of Biblical Studies and Dallas Theological Seminary, has pastored Open Arms, a new church in the area, for two years. In efforts to lead his congregation to follow the way Jesus intended, Jules models one who strives for justice and equality, for inclusion, for service, for love of all. In addition to his church duties, Rev. Williams works for the Texas Department of Corrections in the Windham School District as educator and counselor. Jules cherishes his family: his wife, Kim; daughter, Nia; and sons, Jules III and Mustapha. Incidentally, all three of his children are talented musicians, Nia having just completed her degree in Music at Sam Houston State University; and all contribute their talents to Open Arms worship. The Open Arms congregation congratulates Pastor Williams on his achievement and cherishes his leadership.

CONGRATULATIONS

In addition to **Rev. Jules** receiving his doctorate, other friends and neighbors deserve

congratulations. Also, a doctoral candidate, **Whitney Mayo**, daughter-in-law of Greg and Pam Mayo, earned her PhD. in Music Education from Michigan State University in May. This spring, **Cate Castille**, daughter of Rodney and Barbara Castille, graduated from Carl Wunsche Sr. High School as Valedictorian of her class. She plans to attend the University of Texas and major in Computer Science. **Zoe Spangler**, whose parents are Rob and Tammy Spangler, will be awarded her high school diploma from Klein High School and will enter Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. **Nia Williams** graduates with a degree in Music Therapy this fall, 2022, from SHSU, Huntsville. Please notify us of others who merit recognition so we can make note of them in the newsletter.



Big Bouquets to some Wonderful Folks!

Thanks to Pam Mayo and Kim Williams for coordinating our Celebration Day on May 14 and for working so hard to make it a success.

Thanks to Greg Mayo for preparing some of the best hot dogs many of us have had. Umm umm good!

Thanks to the participants on May 14 for lending their talents to the day's festivities in spite of the afternoon's heat. (Playing the sax, hula hooping, and so much more.)

Thanks to our church council for keeping us moving forward as we struggle to be good missionaries and work to plan a more permanent meeting place.

Always, **thanks to Peter and Vicky** for all they do each and every Sunday.

Thanks to Leru and Liz H. for distributing door prizes on our Celebration Day, and **thanks to Gail** for preparing the prizes.

Finally, **thanks to Rev. Bill Royster and Rev. Ron Krueger** for sharing their preaching expertise and ministerial skills with Open Arms. How blessed we are to have three ordained ministers in our congregation!

Happy Father's Day

June 19

June Mission Project

To Remember Victims and Families of Shootings in Uvalde, Texas and Buffalo, New York

“It was standing room only at the Uvalde County Fairplex for a vigil remembering the 19 children and two school faculty members who were shot and killed Tuesday. Three faith leaders preached and led the mourners in prayer.”

For several weeks now we have been overcome with grief and anger as fellow Americans have been slaughtered in Buffalo and Uvalde and in cities, towns, and places in our country. We have heard, and concur, that prayers and thoughts are not enough.

The mission team at Open Arms presented a suggestion during worship Sunday, May 29th. We will share our June mission between Uvalde and Buffalo. Following a thorough vetting, we'll be in touch with UCC churches in Buffalo, and community leaders and churches in Uvalde.

We understand from the media that large donations have been announced from corporations and individuals. Their gestures should be received with gratitude. We hope and pray that their generosity will not extend to companies and organizations that continue to promote gun violence. Our giving may pale against their contributions, but we are called to be involved in some way. We trust that our giving will bring comfort and support in some small way.

Looking ahead: The mission team is considering suggestions for the July and August mission projects. If you have any thoughts about our mission ministry please contact Gail, Pam, or Kim.

Finally, a great big shout out to Jeannie Stubbs for giant contribution to the food pantry at the end of May. Jeannie is grandma of Heather and daughter of Carol --- who helped tote and carry many bags of food and supplies. Great job! Thanks to that family for sharing so generously with the Tamina community.

PENTECOST SUNDAY – JUNE 5th



The Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his Ascension, held on the seventh Sunday after Easter.

Pentecost is important to Christians today because it represents the beginning of the Christian Church. It reminds them how Jesus' promise that God would send the Holy Spirit was fulfilled.

WEAR RED!!

Big Celebration

Pentecost, birthday cake, Holy Communion, and the return of THE
REV. DR. JULES WILLIAMS, JR. **WEAR RED**

Continuing Bible Study

After a lapse in meetings, Open Arms Bible Study class will resume in mid- or late-June. Our meetings will be via Zoom for a while until we get a permanent meeting place. Dates and times will be forthcoming in a week or so.

The first meeting in June will include a review of our studies and activities thus far this year and a look forward to further study. One subject that has been advanced is a survey of the origins of two great religions, Judaism and Christianity (in the books of Exodus and Acts) and what their histories tell us. Another suggested topic is on Apostle Paul. Members are asked to think about other subjects for study.

Lit Wits: The Books get Better and Better!

Lit Wits is a group of those who love to read and discuss ideas from their reading. They meet once a month, the second Tuesday, at 6:00 p.m. In various locales, most recently Wunsche Bros. Café and Saloon, to eat supper and share thoughts about the book of the month. Not limited to membership in one church or group; this book club is open to all who would like to be a part of a community of readers.

On May 10, we discussed *People We Meet on Vacation*, a book study led by Donna Gonzaski. After several selections that featured serious subjects and provoked deep thought, Donna gave us a light selection that focused on two people brought together by college studies, very attracted to each other, but unsure about how to affirm their relationship. A series of shared vacations leads to intimacy and insight into what their genuine feelings are. Thanks, Donna, for a light humorous read with a happy ending!

On June 14, Kathy Howerton has chosen to lead a discussion of *In an Instant* by Susanne Redfearn. Everyone in the group is positive about this book that explores “the power of love, the meaning of family and the importance of carrying on when it seems impossible.” Again, we will meet at Wunsche Bros. to sample some of its great food and share our thoughts and feelings about this book.

Sue Krueger will be guiding us through *This Tender Land* by William Krueger (no relationship to Sue and Ron!) on July 12. With positive reviews from all readers, the story tells of the struggles of four orphans. Sue promises a positive ending that is uplifting. We all look forward to *In an Instant* and *This Tender Land* and encourage you to join us on our reading journey this summer.

Note about Grants and Grant Monies

The Grant Committee continues to meet with our coach for help in reaching our Smart Goals as specified in the CASA grant application. In turn, we continue to receive incremental portions of the grant of \$15,000 we were awarded by the United Church of Christ. More information on the progress of this committee is forthcoming next month.

Report on Houston Association Meeting

The Houston Association of the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ met in person the morning of May 7 at Bering United Church. At this meeting, Open Arms was formally accepted into the Houston Association. The meeting also included a lengthy discussion of what the priorities of the Association should be and how the Association should be structured.

Thanks to all who serve, and have served, as officers for this group. Because of tenure stipulations, the Association needs to fill several important board positions this year including Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Secretary, and Treasurer. Hence, change may soon be coming with a change in leadership and organization. Perhaps on a positive note, change will strengthen the kinship among the local churches and in turn strengthen the UCC denomination in the Houston area.

Celebrate a Great Day

May 14 is a day to remember at Open Arms because this was our first festival—and a great one. In efforts to observe our two-year birthday and to reach out in friendship to the community of Tamina, we held many activities: a plant sale and a bake sale; free children's books for the young ones, plus a bouncy castle and face-painting; hula hoop lessons, a weightlifting demonstration, and saxophone serenading; free hot dogs, popcorn, and cookies. The coordination and planning of this day fell on the shoulders of Pam Mayo. With the help and consultation of Kim Williams, Pam was the go-to person of the event. Thanks, Pam and Kim!

Future plans at OAUCC include observations of Fathers' Day, Juneteenth, and the Fourth of July. A **Back-to-School festival** is in the planning. Watch for more information.

Follow Up on May Mission—New Haven

Open Arms UCC provided twenty Mothers' Day gift bags for the moms in the New Haven program, a project for the homeless affiliated with Star of Hope. Gail Royster and Pam Mayo delivered the bags to the New Haven shelter in the Galleria area. Thanks for your support of the May mission project. With this gift, Open Arms made a difference in the lives of those most vulnerable. Workers and sponsors of the project received the gift bags with much gratitude prior to their distribution. Thanks again to Open Arms.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

DAVID DURHAM – JUNE 2

GAIL ROYSTER – JUNE 4

GAYE FAIRBANKS – JUNE 8

MADDISON SANDERS – JUNE 15

RON KREUGER – JUNE 30

The LORD
bless you
and keep you.

Numbers 6:24



Face Painting at our May 14 Open Arms Celebration Day Festival



Open Arms May Mission - Mothers' Day Bags for Moms in the New Haven Program