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Loving Our Fathers On Fathers' Day

WE CALL HIM DAD, DADDY, POP, PAPA, PA—they all mean the same, the male who guided us or sheltered us or who provided for us or who cherished us, mostly in our younger days. But for many, this male has been the stalwart force for **all** of our lives, not just our youth.

The word “father” can be confusing in our religion. Christians speak of God the Father, because that’s the name the traditional Bible gives God. This usage is genderless, and some think God the Mother is as correct as God the Father. For example, in William P. Young’s enormously popular book *The Shack*, God is depicted as an African-American woman from the South.

Whether masculine or feminine, this Heavenly Spirit embodies the qualities we like to find in our Daddy—or our Pop—or our Father. Note how the comparison works. The Divinity we worship takes an active interest in all the human affairs of this world as our earthly Father takes a deep interest in the affairs of his children who are dependent on him. That Divinity protects us, listens to us, gives us strength to face the problems of life just as our “personal” Father Figure nurtures and directs us in our everyday existence.

In June we honor these wonderful fathers. Thank you, "God the Father," for imbuing these “parents” with the enduring qualities they teach us in our efforts to carry on.

And thank you, Fathers of this Earth, for supporting us in that “carrying on” in life. We love you.

We Remember in Prayer

Prayers: we reach out to God. Let us lift in prayer these loved ones and all others who are in need physically, mentally, or spiritually.

- **Gladys Barton**, who welcomes prayers.
- **The Maldonado Family**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Jean Brooks**, who welcomes prayers as she struggles with mobility issues.
- **Romie Hollins**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Tammy Spangler**, who is taking chemotherapy.
- Our friends, **Rev. John and Han Will**, who welcome prayers.
- **Brenda Mayfield**, who is dealing with pain.
- **Norman Swaney**, who had injections for back pain.
- **Wanda and Richard Weaver** and others in their family who have various illnesses.
- **Tracey Thomas**, who shattered her knee which required surgery and broke her shoulder.
- **Rev. Bill Royster**, who had surgery to replace his Pacemaker.
- **Victims of natural disasters.**
- **Victims of violence.**

Welcome Guests

We welcome our guests who joined us in worship this past month.
Ashlee Royster, Micah Tanner, Dalton Pratt, Moira Manning.

Your word is a lamp

for my feet,

a light on my path.

PS. 119:105

Pray . . .

LET'S CONTINUE TO GET to know others in our community of Open Arms. This is not just to talk to someone but to *know* them. To encourage closeness and growth at OA, we need to be a church that prays to our Creator and for each other.

We don't want to be only a church of the fleshly but to be a spiritual community where the love of God flows freely from heart-to-heart. We have to be intentional about all that we do so that OA will survive and succeed where other churches have failed over the past few years.

We need to have a stable foundation in order to grow, and this foundation will help immensely in gaining our vision of a permanent home. Be with us. Pray with us. And we look forward to seeing you Sunday.

Blessings to All,

Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr.



Update and Thanks from The Wheelchair Foundation



You may remember our mission projects last December. We actually managed to complete several projects. One of those was a donation to the Wheelchair Foundation. Their mission is to provide a wheelchair to everyone who needs it.

Currently, working with the Dzherelo Children's Rehab Center in Lviv, Ukraine, the foundation is providing mobility relief and helping children be children even as the war continues. Closer to home, the Nevada foundation is providing specialty wheelchairs for youth who need specialized seating systems for their specific needs.

Recently we received a lovely thank you packet of recognition. It says, "The Wheelchair Foundation wishes to thank Open Arms UCC. Because of your most generous gift, hope, mobility, and freedom will be given to a young boy in Indonesia." His smile from his wheelchair testifies to a big thank you! (See page 15 of the Open Arms Photo Gallery for picture of the young boy.)

THOSE WE HONOR

Open Arms UCC has been blessed with those who have done outstanding things this 2022-2023 year. The five below were honored during worship on May 28 and with a party afterwards. Included are summaries of their achievements. If there are others who have had outstanding successes, please let us know so we can honor them also!

Heather Meinhart has had a successful 2022-2023 school year with her musical activities, achievements that point to her outstanding vocal talents. As a seventh grader at Irons Middle School, Heather spent time with the all-girl Treble Choir, preparing for the pre-University Interscholastic League contest, and qualifying to compete at McCullough High School on February 21, 2023, in Pre-UIL Regional Competition. Her choir received the maximum rating in the contest, and she received a UIL Competition Award for her work. Heather also performed in her school's pop concert. At her church, Open Arms UCC, Heather has used her talents to sing solos and to speak during special events. Next year, as an eighth grader, she will be a member of the Chamber Choir, a higher choir class at Irons MS. We look forward to again being treated to her lovely voice!

Laura Reinhart has also been outstanding this year as an equestrian and as a musician. In her second year of riding, Laura learned to canter and canter jump. She competed in two shows at her barn, winning Grand Champion for her Division in one show. As a double bass player, she performed as second chair with Conroe ISD Honors Orchestra; ranked as first chair in the Honors Orchestra at her Intermediate School; participated in UIL Solo and Ensemble contests, receiving superior ratings for both her solo and her quintet's rendition of Cabello's *Havana*; and after an audition, was selected to participate in this Summer's Woodland's Chamberfest strings program at Mitchell Pavilion. At school Laura also had a successful academic year. She is in faithful attendance and service at OA.

Laura's sister, **Julia Reinhart** is an outstanding student academically, too. In her musical achievements, Julia made District Finals in the All-State Choir Competition and received "Superior" ratings at Texas Music Educators Association choir competition. In theater, she worked backstage for all four theater performances at her high school, three as costumer and one as a set designer and on "run crew." As a talented artist, she competed in the Regional Visual Arts Scholastic Event at College Station and received "superior" ratings for her multimedia 3D work. In

terms of other activities, Julia volunteered at the Montgomery County Library for the fall semester, 2022, and became a Red Cross Certified Life Guard. Julia participates in activities at Open Arms and is a candidate for Confirmation.

Congratulations to **Chris Grimes**, 2022-2023 graduate of Oak Ridge High School. Chris was the first recipient of the Tamina Tutoring and Children's Ministry Fund, a fund created in memory of Bud and Pat Spooner. From Rev. Dr. Williams at Open Arms, Chris received instruction on workplace ethics and practiced hands-on application of his lessons for various OAUCC assignments. At Oak Ridge, Chris was a member of the varsity basketball team. As a testimony to his athletic skill, Chris Grimes has received an offer to participate in the basketball program at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona!

May, 2023, our own **Dr. Kendall Moore** was awarded the degree of Master of Divinity at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. In 2022, Kendall received two distinguished honors: The UCC Rooks Scholarship and a Samuel Dewitt Proctor conference Summer Fellowship. In 2023, he also received the Eden Seminary Senior Preaching Award. On April 22, Dr. Moore met the qualifications for his Ecclesiastical Council at the Houston Association meeting in Rosenberg, Texas. At this assembly, Kendall was required to answer, extemporaneously, questions from an audience of forty clergy and lay people about his faith journey and his ability to handle religious and social issues in the church. Dr. Moore has assisted at Open Arms through delivery of sermons, scripture readings, prayers, and music and with arrangement of settings for worship. At Open Arms, Kendall has performed requests for jobs, large and small, including delivery of wife Carolyn's superior bake goods! He will be pastoring his own church in the near future. Our love and best wishes go with him.

(See the Open Arms Photo Gallery on pages 12-14 for pictures of those honored.)

Important Notice: Finding One's Spiritual Personality

SUNDAY MORNINGS FROM 9:00 A.M. UNTIL 10:00 A.M., Dr. Carol McAninch is offering to Open Arms a class on self-evaluation of one's spiritual nature. You are encouraged to rise a little earlier and make your way to the Community Center for study and discussion before church at 10:30. You will be blessed!



CAMP HOPE PROVIDES INTERIM HOUSING FOR OUR COMBAT VETERANS SUFFERING FROM COMBAT RELATED PTSD IN A CARING AND POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT.

The facility opened in 2012 and is located in a quiet and safe setting in Houston, Texas, where veterans and their immediate family members can find healing, help and hope while benefitting from an intensive peer support and mentoring program for combat related Post Traumatic Stress.

In addition to temporary housing, Camp Hope offers a minimum of a five-month program that includes a one-month transitional program in which residents: attend group lessons and support sessions with other combat veterans; conduct individual mentoring sessions with certified combat trauma mentors; participate in off-site small group interaction activities (i.e. fishing, camping, local activities and sporting events); and get involved with local churches, businesses and volunteer organizations to assist in their personal healing and educating the community on the invisible wounds of war. The Camp Hope community embraces our troops, veterans and their families as they seek the rewarding and fulfilling lives they so richly deserve.

Since we recently honored veterans on Memorial Day, Camp Hope was an appropriate choice for our mission project in June. And honoring our veterans is fitting as we approach July 4th. Our freedom and independence are secured by the sacrifice and service of our veterans.

Back-To-School Immunizations for Children

ON **JULY 18, 2023**, a Christus Healthy Living Mobile Clinic will be available at Tamina Community Center, hosted by Open Arms UCC. The Mobile Clinic will offer free immunizations for children two months to eighteen years. The number to be served will be limited. Watch for more information soon as we plan this important day.

Unraveling Of Mysteries: Stories from Earlier Times!

The Lit Wits book club met May 6 to discuss Jennifer Robson's book, *The Gown: A Novel of the Royal Wedding*, that tells the inside story of the creation of Elizabeth II's wedding gown for her wedding in 1947 that occurred before she became Queen of England. The story combines history, romance, and a puzzling plot detail that lures the reader deep into the action. Donna Gonzaski hosted the session, and along with Sue Krueger, served a meal based on the food referred to in the story, including a wedding cake. A very timely work, considering the British King, Elizabeth's son, had been crowned just days before we met!

Homecoming, Kate Morton's latest, is the choice for **June 13th Lit Wits meeting**. Vicky Royster is hostess and will lead the discussion. A page-turner, *Homecoming* centers around a 1958 crime that by 2018 has never been satisfactorily solved when the protagonist becomes enmeshed in it. Set in Australia, with lush description and an often-ominous setting, the reader cannot leave this novel for a moment. Join us. Call Vicky for more information.

Put Fish in The Skillet, And They Will Come

AT LEAST THAT IS WHAT JIM AND LIZ LEMM have learned after they entertained about 40 folks at their fish fry, Sunday, May 21. That number includes church members, family, and friends. Jim's fish was tender and moist with a little crunch around the edges; his best yet. The sides provided by others were delicious. Thank you, Jim and Liz. The Trinity offered the catfish, but you caught them, cleaned them, and cooked them. What a wonderful gift for us. Thanks again.

Happy Birthday to You



David Durham – June 2
Gail Royster – June 4
Gaye Fairbanks – June 8
Maddison Sanders – June 15
Ron Kreuger – June 30

Monthly observances in June include: Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month, Great Outdoors Month, Lemon Month, National Dairy Month, National Foster a Pet Month, National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month, National Men’s Health Month, National Rose Month.

June 4 – Trinity Sunday
June 14 – Flag Day
June 18 – Father’s Day
June 19 – Juneteenth
June 21 – First Day of Summer



North American names for
June’s full month

which will be on Saturday, June 3, 2023:
Rose Moon, Flower Moon, Strawberry Moon.

OPEN ARMS FINANCIAL INFORMATION - MAY, 2023

Offerings - \$3,602.00
Missions - \$780.00
Forever Home Fund - \$1,894.42
Forever Home Fund To Date - \$24,344.78

¢ Change For “Change” ¢

What is the greatest need for change at Open Arms? Many would say, “We need a change in our church facility.” Tamina Community Center is a lovely place, but we need our own “forever home” with a somewhat permanently arranged worship area and technological set-up, rooms for classes and meetings, an office for Jules, a kitchen equipped for preparing brunches and dinners—the dream goes on and on. In short, a place from which to serve. We have had our noses to the proverbial grind stone in efforts to get finances; but property costs a lot, and that means a lot of work. We have to stay at it! Each project, big or small, gets us closer to our goal.

The newest project is “change for ‘change,’” This one is easy. Soon, maybe next Sunday, you will receive a jar with a slotted lid, a hole through which pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters (an occasional dollar) might fit. Put your jar in a visible spot in your home, and each evening empty your pockets or your purse and put your change in the jar. In two or three months, we will have a “bring your jar” to church Sunday which may also be “count your pennies” Sunday. Let’s see what we can come up with on our continuing walk to “forever home.”



The Houston Association Plans a Multi Church VBS

The Houston Association of the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ is in the planning stages of hosting a multi church Vacation Bible School for the churches of the Houston Association on **Thursday, August 3 - Saturday, August 5, 2023.**

We are looking to attract families with kids ages 4-12, although youth ages 13+ and adults are encouraged to volunteer. We will be using the **“On the Case” curriculum from Grow.** This curriculum offers a variety of activities for children to begin to explore matters of faith, including engaging worship music, age-appropriate skits, creative crafts, high-energy games, small group discussions, and even themed snacks!

We would love your help putting together this event. We are looking at a variety of tasks, such as:

- Volunteering on the planning committee, or naming a liaison from your church
- Promoting registration at your campus
- Providing volunteers to lead worship and/or station activities
- Providing snacks and drinks for the children
- Helping to decorate the space

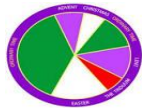
Please let Jay Drummond, Minister of Congregational Life at St. Peter United (mocl@stpeterunited.com), know whether you are interested in filling one of these roles.

A few sayings, phrases, and expressions we use every day that come from the centuries old Bible 📖.

...the root of the matter... Job 19:28

...see eye to eye... Isaiah 52:8

...sign of the times. Matthew 16:3



Liturgical Whiplash? **Common, Ordinary Times or Endless Green**

Remember back during the Advent season, worship colors were blue – not the customary purple most of us consider as traditional. The explanation was that the blue sets aside from the purple used during the Lenten season. Lots of churches have used that contemporary blue for just that reason. Following Christmas time, white or gold were used. Recently some churches have used green? Then comes violet of Lent, next white represents Easter time. Then comes the slam, bang of Pentecost red! Thankfully things calm down on Trinity Sunday with white or green.

The green season is called common time or ordinary time. However, some folks refer to that time as “endless” green. Perhaps endless because the green goes until the beginning of Advent in December.

Do the colors really matter? Probably not to most of us. The liturgical colors are a historical theme in worship that may be important to some “high” churches, but not to all. There are no broken rules by modifying the colors. Using autumn colors (none of which are liturgical) in the fall offers a vibrant display of changing seasons. Rainbow colors are pleasant when we celebrate our pride events.

But, back to the endless green season. A recent article in OnlineMinistries presented a new way of thinking of “ordinary time.” The initial observation was one of calmness. No scurrying about, wreaths, and Christmas trees, of ashes and palms, of flowered crosses, or flames and doves. Green symbolizes hope. Like a green plant, God’s love flows through us – nourishing life.

Does that mean that nothing is going on? Think again. Maybe ordinary time is an opportunity to slow down, embrace calmness, recognize the beauty of oceans, lakes, seashells, stones, sand, wild flowers in a meadow, the flight of a butterfly – all the gifts that God’s nature gives us. We often dismiss or forget such treasures as common or ordinary. By celebrating common or ordinary, we are letting God’s grace into our lives in the midst of our everyday life.

Not a Sheep, or Coin, or Even a Renegade Son

It isn’t a big church, but growing and it has a big heart for helping others. It gives food, clothes, money, time and much more if there is a need. Some people have more than others, but they try to share equally. This church also firmly believes in justice. So, when a war started over a year ago, the community wanted to do something to remind them of brothers and sisters in harm’s way, suffering the pain and hardships of war and violence. Mission offerings were collected several times and sent to help the injured, homeless, refugees.

Somebody gathered fabric in colors that represent the flag of that country under siege and placed the fabric in midst of the worship setting. Hearing that a bright sunflower is a symbol of hope for the suffering endured in the war-torn country, a large artificial sunflower appeared on the country’s flag colors.



Now every Sunday, the fabric and giant sunflower are visible and prominent. That is until a recent Sunday, the sunflower was gone, vanished, missing. What happened to our sunflower? Everyone missed it! Thankfully it turns out not stolen, missing, or lost. It was simply misplaced when volunteers packed away worship objects.

The Bible reminds us that God understands loss. Every day, we experience loss. We routinely misplace car keys, phones, and wallets. But we also say goodbye to treasured keepsakes, childhood homes, favorite coffee shops, and beloved pets. We endure transitions between homes, cities, and countries that feel like intangible losses of identity, culture, and community. Too often the lost things seem small or insignificant. The sunflower became a symbol of justice, peace, and healing. The image of the sunflower is small; the meaning of it is big, and reminds us of all we do on behalf of others. Those who are doing small things, may wonder if they are making a difference. In I Corinthians 15:58 Paul tells us “... Therefore, my beloved brothers, and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

Open Arms Photo Gallery Photos courtesy of Pam Mayo

Honored during worship service on May 28, 2023.

Top Photo – Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr. and Heather



Bottom Photo: Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr. and Laura



Open Arms Photo Gallery Photos courtesy of Pam Mayo

Honored during worship service on May 28, 2023.

Top Photo – Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr. and Julia



Bottom Photo: Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr. and Chris



Open Arms Photo Gallery Photos courtesy of Pam Mayo

Honored during worship service on May 28, 2023.

Top Photo – Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr. and Dr. Kendall Moore



Bottom Photo: Dr. Kendall Moore–Eden Seminary-Master of Divinity Graduation Picture May 2023



Open Arms Photo Gallery Photos courtesy of Vicky Royster/Gail Royster

The young boy who was the recipient of our donation to the Wheelchair Foundation.



Star of Hope – Mother’s Day Luncheon Photo courtesy of Pam Mayo



Open Arms Photo Gallery Photos courtesy of Pam Mayo

Star of Hope – Mother’s Day Luncheon

