



Pastor: Rev. Jules Williams, Jr.	Telephone: 409.998.0339
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## No More Cheesecake

**W**hen I was younger, I thought Ash Wednesday, which begins on March 2<sup>nd</sup> (first day of the 40-day season of Lent leading up to Easter), was only about a time when you gave up something that you enjoyed like strawberry cheesecake. However, after years of study and spiritual growth I came to know that my juvenile understanding was far from true.

Ash Wednesday is a day of reconciliation that sparks renewed hope for transformation. Transformation is the foundation of the teachings of the Christ. Simply, depriving ourselves of “cheesecake” during this holy season may have a positive effect on our waistlines, but it will do nothing for our inner growth. Inner growth makes us stronger by chipping away at the thoughts, behaviors, and habits that keep people stuck in cycles of pain and frustration.

Take time to step away from the noise and meditate, pray, and read during this season. May we rise from the ashes like a phoenix during this season of reconciliation and renewal filled with inner peace that surpasses all understanding!

*Peace,*  
*Rev. Jules Williams, Jr.*

## 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:

- **Olive Baer**, who appreciated all of our birthday cards and welcomes prayers.
- The family of **Marjorie Meier**, who passed away on February 28, 2022.
- **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.
- The family of **Mary Amburn**, who passed away on February 19, 2022.
- The family of **Clifford Lester**, who passed away on January 30, 2022.
- **All who have been affected by COVID-19.**

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## *Welcome Guests*

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**W**e welcome our guests who joined us in worship this past month. Eva Hollins, the Rinehart family, Valerie Loughmiller.

**Kind words are like honey –**

***sweet to the soul***

**and healthy for the body.**

**Proverbs 16:4**

## February Thank You's

- Thanks to **Ian Says** for engaging a coach to help Open Arms in achieving its Smart Goals for 2022. And thanks also to Ian for carrying out the scheduling and paper work involved in a covenantal agreement with the coach as we fulfill the terms of our CASA grant.
- Thanks to **Adam Mayo** for help in designing and implementing a video to advertise Open Arms on Facebook.
- Thanks to **Peter Royster** for construction of the storage cabinet in the Tamina Community Center.
- Thanks to **Kim Williams** for being the coordinating lady! She has worked to coordinate a location for our March 19 Yard Sale. She has also worked to coordinate details for the Friends and Family Day. Thank you, Kim, for all you do.
- Thanks to the **Friends and Family Day planning committee**.

### A LOCATION FOR THE GARAGE SALE:

*"OH WHERE, OH WHERE?"*

**A**s you may remember from the February newsletter, Open Arms has scheduled a yard sale/garage sale on **March 18-19**. This type of money-raiser involves work and community effort, but it usually pays off with financial gain and good fellowship! We had hoped to achieve both of these things, using the Tamina area as our locale. Unfortunately, those plans didn't work out, so now we are looking for another venue for our sale.

Any suggestions? A vacant store front with a big parking lot on I-45 would be ideal; a community park; or ????

If you have a suggestion, notify David Durham or Margaret Smith.

## Report From the Open Arms Church Council

Officers for the Council have been elected and they are:

Kenneth Reaves - President

Ian Says - Vice-President

Vicky Royster - Recording Treasurer

Barry Fairbanks - Secretary

The group has designed committees to address various areas and needs of the church. Please sign up for the committee you would like to join.

- ❖ Committee for external services—community outreach, mission, evangelism, etc.
- ❖ Committee for internal services—worship planning, music, Bible studies, internally focused services and events.
- ❖ Committee for church sustainment—building search, grants, alignment with United Church of Christ priorities, publicity including advertising.

If you have concerns, or matters you would like addressed, contact one of the members of the council.

### **HELPING OTHERS, ONE AT A TIME**

Open Arms is a mission-oriented church, giving to large groups and causes at least once a month. OAUCC also addresses the needs of individuals.

The STRIVE reentry program (last month's mission) aids those recently released from prison to learn skills that will help them get a new start in the outside world. Open Arms has given clothing for various occasions to help women in this reentry process. Each woman can go to a "boutique" to choose garments to fit her purposes in her orientation/job search process.

Open Arms also donates personal hygiene items --- toothpaste, soap, etc., and cleaning staples to the Tamina Food Bank, along with groceries. Again, the individual benefits, choosing his or her materials to use personally or in the home.

While a large mission project is admirable, each of us can reach out to one or two others with personal gifts from the heart. Let's never forget that we can help others, one at a time.

## **Bible Study:**

### **Field Trips, Reading, Discussion, Lessons by Class Members**

**M**any activities are planned for the Open Arms Bible Study Class; you are welcome to join any or all of these sessions.

- \* The Ten Commandments -- then, now, forever more? (Discussion)
  
- \* Visit to the Dunham Bible Museum at the Houston Baptist University on March 2 at 11 a.m. for guided tour. The address is 7502 Fondren, in The Morris Cultural Arts Center, University Entrances #1 or #3.
  
- \* Visit to the Congregation Jewish Community North on March 9, at 10 a.m. for guided tour by Rabbi Jonathan Siger. The address is 5400 Fellowship Lane, just off Klein Church Road.
  
- \* The Lot Scandal (don't look back!).
- \* Moses, The "Man," God's Mouthpiece
- \* Psalms, Songs, and the Beautiful World

Following are sessions to be led by class members:

- \* "The Role of Prophecy in The Old Testament"
- \* "The Bible and Anti-Semitism"
- \* "The Bible and Women"
- \* "The Bible and Homosexuality"

Dates will be established and published at later times. Call Margaret Smith for information--713-416-0491.

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**Information About the CASA Grant:  
Choosing A Coach; Designing A Covenant; Pursuing Smart Goals**

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**A**s you know, Open Arms has been promised a \$15,000 CASA grant (Congregational Assessment, Support, and Advancement) for New and Renewing Spiritual Communities. The grant comes with stipulations designed to keep us on track for fulfilling our SMART goals submitted on the grant application. The goals deal with locating a place of worship and obtaining equipment for worship, etc.

One stipulation for the grant is that we have a “coach,” who is “a skilled thought partner,” a “gentle guide,” and a “support person.” Ian Says has located from a list of nominees a suitable partner for us and for our pastor to work with in achieving our goals. That person is Rev. Don Egan, New Jersey synod, skilled in just the ways we need him. Ian and Rev. Egan have agreed on a Coaching Covenant that has been submitted to proper persons.

With requirements met, we will soon begin meetings with our coach and start receiving regular payments on our grant. Watch for more information.

**Lit Wits: Conflicts in Two Very Different Books**

**L**it Wits is a lively book club that meets every month on the second Tuesday in a discussion over a contemporary reading selection led by one of the Lit Wits members.

On February 8, Linda Michalicek hosted the group and discussed *Walk in My Combat Boots* by Chris Mooney and James Patterson. In dramatic, sometimes poignant, sometimes frightening details, military personnel tell their true stores of combat, mainly in Iran and Afghanistan, and the amazing ways they respond to danger. The accounts make American realize the sacrifices others have made for our country.

On March 8, Kate Flagge will review *The Bishop's Wife*, a novel by Mette Ivie Harrison about Linda Wallheim, mother of five boys and the wife of a church bishop, who becomes suspicious when a woman disappears, leaving all possession behind her. Torn between her concern for the lost woman and her responsibilities to church and family, Wallheim searches for answers to her dilemma.

One critic writes, “Inspired by a chilling true crime and written by a practicing Mormon, this book is a fascinating look at modern Mormonism as well as cunning twisted mystery.”

Discussion of *The Bishop’s Wife* will occur at Wunsche Bros. Café on March 8 at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome.

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### ***Greetings To New Members: Elizabeth and James Lemm***

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**A**n enthusiastic welcome to Liz and Jim, Open Arms’ newest members who joined OAUCC on Sunday, February 27. Liz is a retired postmistress, long time employee of the United States Postal Service. She wears many hats: caregiver, grandchildren sitter, chauffeur, needlewoman, maker of preserves, cook, keeper of the husband!

Jim is just as busy as Liz. For years, he and his brother Robert had their own business, Lemm Bros., located just off Hardy Street on James Road. Although they are now retired, the brothers specialized in construction—clearing land, working on sewer systems, preparing property for building, etc. Mostly when we think of Jim, we regard him as the “big fisherman.” He chases those Trinity River catfish.

***So glad to have you, Jim and Liz.***

*Happy Birthday Wishes*

*Pam Mayo - March 23*

Olive Baer Celebrating Her **100<sup>th</sup>** Birthday!!!!

