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The Hand That Rocks the Cradle “Saves” the World

ON MAY 14, MOTHER’S DAY, we consider the woman most influential in our lives. We revere her memory if she is no longer with us and show our affection if she is still here, in both instances cherishing what she has done for us in loving, teaching, and nurturing. We rarely think of her as a “savior.” Yet that role as savior may be the most important role in the function of a mother.

In the book of *Genesis*, some mothers were just that, ones who *saved* a child for the role he would play in future events. Sarah sent the child, Ishmael, into the wilderness to face a sure death so that she could save her son, Isaac, to inherit Abraham’s role as the leader of God’s chosen people. Ishmael’s mother Hagar was no less of a savior, for she endured the desert with her child, gave him life-preserving water, and saw him become “a great nation.” Moses’ mother saved him from the watery grave Pharaoh had ordered for Hebrew boys, saved him to lead his people out of Egypt and across the wilderness to the Promised Land.

Solomon in his idealistic depiction of a wife and mother (*Proverbs* 31:10) designs a woman with the elements of a savior: she is honorable and thrifty, but most important, she stands on the edge of her world ready to catch and *save* the “needy” and “poor,” the family members whom she protects from illness, the servants who are guaranteed their “portions,” the household that needs her alacrity in managing domestic affairs.

And in the Gospels, blessed Mary, also teetered on the edge of her Son’s world, ready to *save* if she could--when He was whisked away to Egypt, when He was at the temple as a child, when He was an itinerant preacher, when He suffered on the cross. Ultimately, she could not save Him. He was too busy saving us.

On this Mother’s Day, think of your mother as your savior. How did she *save* you? How did she contribute to who and what you are today? Christ is the Universal Savior. A mother is the “personal savior” of her child—life giving, defending, reaching out to keep you from falling.

THANK YOU, Mother.

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.
- **Anthony Maldonado**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Antonia Rivera**, who has major medical issues.
- **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 Weaver** and others in her family who have various illnesses.
- **Tracey Thomas**, who shattered her knee which required surgery and broke her shoulder.
- **Victims of natural disasters.**
- **Victims of violence.**

Welcome Guests

We welcome our guests who joined us in worship this past month. Micah Tanner, Dalton Pratt, Rev. Tom Coop, Kim Joplin, Anthony Alex, Kole Krueger, Cambridge Krueger, Emma Nunez, Justin Brunson, Jose Nunez, Moira Manning.

‡ **SUNDAY, MAY 28** ‡
PENTECOST SUNDAY

Stars In Open Arms' Crown

☆ As we count our STARS, we must begin with *Heather Meinhart*. Using her beautiful soprano voice, Heather treated us to a rendition of her school concert piece. Thank you, Heather. Expect many successes from this talented young singer!

☆ Another STAR, and just as talented, is *Julia Reinhart*. Julia is a musician and a remarkable artist and is involved in drama activities. She is also Open Arms' first Confirmand!

(We will hear more about the achievements of our youth, including Julia's sister, *Laura*, in the June newsletter. We'll include *Chris Grimes* and his accomplishments in our list also.)

☆ Of course, *Dr. Kendall Moore's* STAR shone brightly on April 22 during his Ecclesiastical Council at the Houston Association meeting. Further information about this meeting and Kendall follows in a special article.

☆ *Liz Lemm* deserves an extra-ordinary STAR. She sold her fabulous Rum Cake in the Cyber Sale for \$130.00! Liz, cake baking may be a better business than fishing!

☆ *Our "At the Foot of the Cross" cast all deserve STARS*. How they did shine! Musicians and actors merit much praise for their outstanding performances.

☆ Our STARRING duo, *Peter and Vicky*, again made it happen. A monitor with the actors' lines, special vocal effects, and great editing (see U-Tube). What a blessing to have those two.



Success Of Cyber Sale

With the cooperation of the entire church, either through preparation and/or purchase, our sale of Open Arms' goods earned **\$510.00** for our Forever Home Fund. Many thanks to all. We keep walking.



“Adopt a Mom” – May Mission Project

“Biology is the least of what makes someone a mother”

There must be hundreds of names for our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and other maternal figures that have been a part of our lives. A few favorites might be Oma, Honey, Gigi, Granny; you add your favorites. These special persons, related or not, have a special place in our hearts. No wonder we set aside a special time to say thank you and love you.

Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit that moved the mission team to name “Adopt a Mom” for our May mission. Recently we received a plea from Star of Hope mission in Houston. Star of Hope is a Christ-centered community dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless men, women, and their children. The current request is for urgent needs to help moms living in shelters.

Mother’s Day usually conjures up thoughts of flowers, candy, or maybe gift cards. But at Star of Hope there are more essential needs: some include Pedialyte, baby wipes, body wash, baby wash, towels and wash cloths, lotion, large size adult diapers.

There are two ways to give: money collected will go to buy critically needed items with no worries about transportation. If you choose to buy and bring items, a basket will be available for collection.

Go ahead buy those flowers and chocolates, but remember moms and their children who will be thankful for “An Adopted Mom!”

Life doesn’t come with a manual. It comes with a mother.





“42nd Mile”

It seems there are many places where a person could walk, hike, bike, or drive 42 miles on trails, highways, or paths. How about the Grand Tetons, LA to Malibu, PA to WV borders, around the shoreline of Percy Priest dam near Nashville? Or perhaps the 42 miles of ocean beach of Koorong, South Australia? Too hot? Try 42 miles Chugach Mountain in the Alaska backcountry?

Probably none of us will ever take any of those “42” mile trips. But we did participate in sharing in Open Arms April Mission Project. The focus of that project was to honor the 41-mile walk completed by Pastor Williams and wife Kim. Yes, they did the 41-mile walk.....we cheered them on and did our “42” miles by contributing to the Forever Home Fund. Thanks to everyone who added to the fund and, once again, affirmed our support and love for Pastor Jules and Kim.

Just a Note: If you missed worship Sunday, April 23, you would have heard a powerful sermon from Pastor Jules. He gave life and encouragement in the vision for Open Arms and our future together. The significance was one of purpose, hope, determination, and excited joy.

Lit Wits Of 2023:

The Year of Remarkable Readings

On April 11, the Lit Wits group met at Sue Krueger’s home to discuss *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. As the discussion leader, our hostess took us through one of the best book talks we have ever had. Most members read this book first in 2002, but this 2023 reading gave us further insight into Kidd’s first novel. The issue of racism and early integration, the power of a confederacy of women, gaining strength and spirituality through one’s search for redemption—on and on goes the list of topics which enriched our discussion. Thank you, Sue, for having us re-read this book.

In a very timely reading for May, Donna Gonzaski has selected a book which uses an event in British royalty, the marriage of Elizabeth II, as the background for a romantic novel. *The Gown: A Novel of the Royal Wedding* by Jennifer Robson takes us “inside who/what was involved in creating Queen Elizabeth II’s dazzling wedding gown.” For her fifth historical novel, Robson has done an awesome amount of research to achieve authenticity, but her fictional creation of the

characters who made the exquisite gown with its intricate embroidery is just as interesting. Whether you are an Anglophile or not, you will enjoy this book. Meet with us on Tuesday, May 9, 6:00 pm, at 403 Main Street, Spring, Texas.

This is a community book club, open to all who love to read.



Sarah Rinehart – May 2

Chris Grimes – May 10

Jim Lemm – May 13

Tim Hontz – May 20

Carolyn Moore – May 20

Elna Swaney – May 22

Vivien Elise Mayo – May 23

Matt Royster – May 28

***Monthly observances in May include:* National Burger Month, Older Americans Month, National Military Appreciation Month, Arthritis Awareness Month, Better Sleep Month, Mental Health Awareness Month.**

Memorial Day is Monday, May 29, 2023

On May 30, 1868, the first national commemoration of Memorial Day was held in Arlington National Cemetery.



Lent, Including Holy Week, Revisited

OPEN ARMS LENTEN SEASON, including the events of Holy Week, was so inspirational that it merits revisiting. Rev. Carol McAninch blessed us with a series of Lenten lessons on Sunday mornings entitled *For the Common Good*. The lessons led participants through a personal spiritual assessment and urged class members to use their spiritual gifts for the church.

On Maundy Thursday, Rev. Jules focused on the act of Jesus' foot washings during that last time with his disciples. He explained the meaning to us today, urging us to be servant people to others as Jesus became a servant to his beloved followers.

On Good Friday, eleven Open Arms members presented a series of dramatic monologues, *At the Foot of the Cross*, portraying the responses of those closest to Jesus, elaborating on His last words. Actors and musicians made Jesus' suffering real, prior to his return on Easter.

Easter Sunday lifted us from the somber mood of the Crucifixion to the glory of the Resurrection. Open Arms says, "He is Risen! He is risen indeed!" as we celebrate the beautiful day.

News From the Houston Association UCC

THE HOUSTON ASSOCIATION of the United Church of Christ is composed of UCC churches and affiliates in the Houston area. On April 22, the HA met in its regular spring meeting, located this year at St. John's UCC in Rosenberg. Five Open Arms members represented our church as well as Pam Mayo, who is Association Secretary.

One of the main subjects brought up during the business meeting was the discussion of the future of Slumber Falls Camp in New Braunfels since a proposal is to sell the camp. Those who love the camp lament its possible loss to the denomination. Hope is that the property will be purchased by a group within the UCC for continued use as the lovely worship and recreational spot that it is. However, many conflicting factors are involved in this issue.

Cindy Sterling, HA Moderator, discussed several items on the agenda, including the works of a committee exploring various Mental Health initiatives in the Association and a committee researching Refugee Sponsorship. She also talked about a Vacation Bible School for the entire HA.

Recipients of Bethel Grants reported on what they have done and what they plan to do with revenue from the grants awarded to them.

Dr. Kendall Moore's Ecclesiastical Council highlighted the meeting. Before the entire assembly, Dr. Moore was required to present his faith journey and to discuss his call to serve. Then he had to answer, extemporaneously, questions put to him from the audience of forty+ attendees. The questions ranged from a simple request for him to discuss his seminary, Eden, to more complex queries about how he would serve as the pastor of a church during certain situations. Kendall's performance was stellar, and he received a standing ovation. His status, prior to ordination, was affirmed. Following the questioning, Kendall gave the sermon for the morning's worship service. (*Kendall, Open Arms loves you and is proud of you.*)

The meeting concluded with the noon meal and an open discussion of church issues.



**North American names for
May's full month**

which will be on Friday, May 5, 2023:

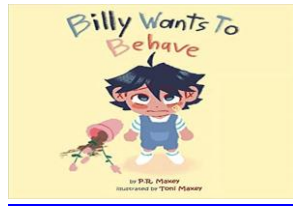
Flower Moon, Planting Moon, Milk Moon.

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

...cast the first **stone**. John 8:7

Rise and shine.... Isaiah 60:1

...**let there be light**. Genesis 1:3



Good New Read

This heartwarming story features Billy, a neurodivergent boy who has trouble meeting society's expectations of "behaving." This story gives a window into how Billy's mind works and helps his parents and others around him get a better understanding of Billy.

“**Neurodivergent**” describes people whose brain differences affect how their brain works. That means they have different strengths and challenges.

The Royster’s are happy to recommend this new publication written by a great-niece. It helped give us some insight for children and families dealing with these challenges.

HOSPITALITY By Bonnie Wheeler in “The Hurrier I Go”

Sure, I believe in Hospitality, Lord
Just not my house.

We can’t afford the fancy foods,
My dishes don’t all match.
The living room sofa needs repairs
And what would I do with the kids?
You just don’t understand, Lord.

But, my child, I do understand.
I never had a house, but I turned no one away:
When I fed the multitudes, it was with the plainest fare-
Borrowed fish and bread. We had no dishes and no place to sit, but the ground.

It’s you that don’t understand, child.

Hospitality is not giving the fanciest food
On your finest plates.

In an immaculate, childless home.
My kind of hospitality is a special kind:
Not things, not possessions, not treasures.

My kind of hospitality is sharing **Yourself**,
As I did.



**New Spiritual Development Session Starts
Sunday, May 7 at 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.**

We will start a 6-week session to explore different ways in which we experience our connection with God. We will look at 6 different styles, one each week. In preparation for the sessions, you can find your spiritual style by taking the quiz at explorefaith.org/seeker. This website has a ten question, multiple choice quiz to give you a look at the style that most closely matches your spiritual style. In our sessions we will spend half of the time discussing the style we are looking at that week and will spend the other half experiencing a spiritual practice related to that style. We hope to see you there.

***OPEN ARMS FINANCIAL INFORMATION –
APRIL, 2023***

**Offerings - \$3,921.80
Missions - \$1,146.61 (42nd Mile)
Forever Home Fund - \$729.83
Total to Date for FHF - \$22,450.36**

**WITH GOD
all things
ARE POSSIBLE.**

MATT. 19:26

PLANTING YOUR SPRING GARDEN

(Suggestions for successful gardening from St. John's UCC, Rosenberg.
Remember Earth Day.)

For the Garden of your Daily Living

Plant three rows of peas

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul

Plant four rows of Squash

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

Plant four rows of Lettuce

1. Lettuce be Faithful
2. Lettuce be Kind
3. Lettuce be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

No Garden is Complete Without Turnips

1. Turnip for Meetings
2. Turnip for Service
3. Turnip to Help One Another

To Conclude, for our Garden we Must Have Thyme

1. Thyme for Each Other
2. Thyme for Family
3. Thyme for Friends

Water freely and cultivate with Love!

(In another newsletter, we punned about Valentine's Day with names of vegetables. Here we try to be "punny" also. Please forgive!)



TWO OF OUR MISSION PARTNERS are having big fundraising events in May. Best wishes to Community Assistance Center and Montgomery Food Bank as they grow their resources to continue to provide mission and ministry in our communities

Open Arms Photo Gallery Photo courtesy of Kim Williams



Dr. Kendall Moore's Ecclesiastical Council Meeting

L/R: Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr.; Dr. Kendall Moore; Rev. Leslie Jackson