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1 Peter: 10-11 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

Building A Forever Home

(One Brick at a Time; One Gift at a Time)

In case you haven’t noticed, members of Open Arms are buzzing around, working to get that “Forever Home.” They are using their God – given gifts to raise revenue for a much-desired place in which to worship and from which to reach out to our brothers and sisters with open arms and welcoming hands.

Witness those gifts at work here at Open Arms: **marathon walkers** with strong bodies, hiking I-45 for financial pledges; **culinary specialists (cooks)** preparing dishes and desserts for sale; **collectors of coins** of all denominations; **those talented with needles**, “stitching with love” and selling the creations to eager shoppers; **garage sale aficionados**, offering goods for a cheap price with no overhead; **writers** slogging through grants and letters of supplication, asking for donations and setting up a “Go Fund Me” account; **members with generous hearts**, tithing and pledging; **those who know the power of the Spirit**, leading and encouraging prayer for our success; and those with **dramatic and musical talents**, giving time and energy to perform for donations and church publicity.

Each of us must ask—are we using our gifts to the maximum, and how else might we use our gifts? If you have not been involved in one of these activities to achieve our goal, join a group. Or go out on your own. We challenge you to be creative with your fund-raising. As Peter says, use your gifts from God to serve others and, we add, to move us all to a Forever Home.

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.

- **Carol Foss**, who is struggling with a severe case of Shingles.
- **Gladys Barton**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Rev. Bill Royster**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Ray Durham**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Jean Brooks**, who welcomes prayers as she struggles with various issues.
- **Romie Hollins**, who welcomes prayers.
- **Phil Compton and his family**, who welcome prayers.
- **Tammy Spangler**, who entered an experimental program at M. D. Anderson.
- Our friends, **Rev. John and Han Will**, who welcome prayers.
- **Brenda Mayfield**, who is dealing with pain.
- **Storm victims, flood victims, wildfire victims, those suffering from the extreme heat, natural disasters, violence.**

Welcome Guests

We welcome our guests who joined us in worship this past month. Dalton Pratt, Sophia Braun, CJ Grimes.

**This is the day
The Lord has made;
*We will rejoice
and
Be glad in it.***



Ps. 118:24

Count Your Many “Thank You’s”

- ❖ Thank you, **David and Kenneth**, for agreeing to let us use your facility for the garage sale. The perfect location.
- ❖ Thank you, **Rev. Carol**, for the lovely meditations and prayers, one a day. That takes work and dedication.
- ❖ **Thanks to the cast and crew** of “It Really Happened in Old Spring.” Lots of rehearsal time wore you down, but the beautiful production made it worthwhile.
- ❖ Thanks to our recent blessings, the **Noonans**. So many contributions that it’s difficult to name them all. Donation of a defibrillator, creation of Open Arms personalized pens, fund-raising with hand-made garments “stitched with love,” and many other projects. **Ruth and Bob, we are grateful to you!**
- ❖ Thanks to **Kim Williams** for getting someone to train us on use of the defibrillator and for creating the “Change for Change” drive to raise money.
- ❖ **Thanks to all who contributed** “Change for Change,” making the collection a great success.
- ❖ Thanks to **Ian and Heather Says** for setting up and manning our Gay-Pride tent at the Woodlands festival.
- ❖ Thanks to **Micah Tanner** for setting up our Go Fund Me account.
- ❖ Thanks to **Liz Lemm, Gail and Bill Royster, Elise Daulley, and Margaret Smith** for contributing to Rev. Dr. Moore’s reception.



World Communion Sunday – October 1

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER is when Christians in every culture break bread and drink the Cup to remember and affirm Christ as the head of the church. On this day, we recognize that we are part of the whole body of believers. On this day, people draw faith and inspiration from seeing that they are part of a community that boasts millions of believers and worshippers.

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us— ²so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. ³May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. ⁴May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth. ⁵May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. Psalm 67:1-5

IT'S TIME TO BRAG

Modesty is considered a positive quality, but there are times to brag—a time when humility should be swept under the rug, and success is celebrated!

On September 22, at Big Stone Lodge, nine members of Open Arms UCC, plus two guests from True Vine Baptist Church in Old Town Spring Heights, presented “It Really Happened in Old Spring,” a series of entertaining monologues focusing on characters and events in the history of Spring, Texas. Topics ranged from humor to sensationalism, to acts of bravery, and to audaciousness in what seemed to be a hopeless situation.

Our actors and crew played to an audience of 77 members in the Big Stone auditorium. When the stellar performance concluded, the audience gave a standing ovation, expressed lavish praise, and even asked for autographs!

In case you didn't make the show, here's the participants: **Ian Says**, Narrator; **Sue Krueger**, story of Clint Harless, murdered sheriff; **Peter Royster**, story of Homer Brown, bank teller; **Gaye Fairbanks**, stories of Prohibition, Bootlegging, and the Spring Fire Department; **Maggie Bennett**, education at the Spring School Annex; our guests, **Shaunon McClellan** and **Nell Shepherd** with details about B.F. Clark and Integration; **Vicky Royster**, technician, including operation of the monitor; **Ron Krueger**, leader of music, using saxophone and guitar; and **Barry Fairbanks**, Stage Manager, builder of performance platform and operator of the program's Power Point.

Although the Big Stone Harris County facility doesn't encourage the promotion of church activities, the crowd will definitely remember us as the Part-Time Players of Open Arms Church, and our pens with the church logo were available to everyone.

Watch for the Part-Time Players, using their gifts to bring in revenue for our Forever Home! See pictures of the cast members in the Open Arms Photo Gallery.

“Fall” Into Health with The Christus Mobile Health Unit

ON OCTOBER 3, 10 AM-12 NOON, Tamina Community Center will again be blessed with the angels from Christus Foundation. At this visit, in their mobile health unit, the Christus nurses will be bringing flu shots to adults and children six months or older. For senior patrons, the unit will have special flu shots for adults. Christus does ask that you consult your doctor for approval to take the stronger inoculation. This service is for Open Arms members, citizens of Tamina, and all others in need of protection from the flu this winter. Lunch will be provided for all in attendance so you may nourish your immune system and your entire body while you are here.

The Christus Foundation helps to provide medical outreach and other services to the uninsured and underserved of Greater Houston and Galveston. Their charitable efforts began in 1866 when the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word came to the Gulf Coast to treat “the sick and infirm.”

What a pleasure to partner with such a fine organization. Hopefully, when we have our Forever Home, we will be a base from which a Christus Mobile Health Unit can serve the community, all benefitting from their offerings. Thank you, Christus Foundation, for your good work.

Clergy And Pastor Appreciation: A Worldwide Observation

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CLERGY APPRECIATION MONTH, a time to recognize the contributions and services of pastors and other clergy members. **October 9**, the second Sunday of the month, is the specific day to pay tribute to our clergy.

At Open Arms we are blessed to have four pastors in our midst. Of course, we have our wonderful preacher and leader, Rev. Dr. Williams, who inspires us each Sunday with words that ring true to us, teach us, and take us through the week. This spirit-filled orator is the Super Glue that holds us together as a cohesive Christian community.

We also have retired Pastor Bill Royster, the “father” of Open Arms—without him we would not be here; Rev. Ron Krueger, retired from ministerial service, who helps

in worship and in music in the congregation; and Rev. Dr. Carol McAninch, who contributes strongly to Christian education and daily contributes to our lives through meditation and prayer.

These are precious ones who dedicate themselves to Open Arms and to helping us continue to grow and multiply. Thank you, God. We do so appreciate them.



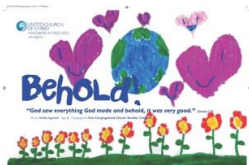
Neighbors in Need -- October Mission Offering

N EIGHBORS IN NEED (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States.

In 2023, the Neighbors in Need **“BEHOLD!”** theme continues. This year’s focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet!

One-third of Neighbors in Need funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

This year the graphics were designed by youth members of various UCC churches around the country. They are most inspiring and interesting. Each week we will display a different one. It is thoughtful that the youth “gets it” maybe more than we do. They have a vested interest in saving the planet for their future.



At first glance, it may seem odd that a mission project has to do with the environment. What could be more of a mission than saving the planet?

The Great Duck Race and The Garage Sale—Fun and Profitable

What's happening? *The Great Duck Race.* Racing will be **Saturday, October 7,** at Margaritaville on Lake Conroe, sponsored by the Community Assistance Center. Our little ducks will be quacking along, swimming for Open Arms. Cheer them on!

More happening! *Open Arms Garage Sale* is **October 13-14** at Kenneth and David's, 2160 Pine Drive, Conroe, 77304. Bring your garage sale treasures to these two gentlemen and, if you can, sign up to work. What fun to participate in a Garage Sale!

Report On “Change for Change” And Other Fund-Raisers

CONGRATULATIONS, OPEN ARMS, on a successful drive to gather change for our Forever Home fund. The first report (Early Birds donation) brought in \$371.00. September 17th, a day of “Accounting,” was a blessing with a total of \$932.10 in the money tub. **Those figures added up to \$1303.10** for “Change for Change.” This has been such a lucrative project that we ask you to participate in the drive again. Jars at the church are available for you to use for collection or to give to someone else for collection. It will be two or three months before we again ask you to bring your coins in.

Our drama project at Big Stone Lodge was not quite as fulfilling, but profitable all the same. We received **\$250.00** after sharing with the lodge. That audience, however, will know us and know our name and will be happy to see us perform in another show. The Part-Time Players of Open Arms have made a name for themselves! ***Our Forever Home fund has been enriched by \$1553.10.***

The Woodlands Pride

JOIN THE WOODLANDS PRIDE FESTIVAL ON OCTOBER 21, 2023, for the 4th year of connecting, educating, and fostering relationships in an event that promotes equality and unity. Open Arms will have an exhibition promoting the church and spreading joy and friendship. Making this happen will be Ian and Heather Says, who have been our cheerful envoys each year for this event. Can you help the Says make this a positive experience for our church, as it has been in the past?

Event and ticket information may be found online. Talk to Ian or Heather to learn more. Save the date, October 21. See you there.

(As an extra note: At the festival this year, Open Arms will welcome pets-- that is furry friends--, and provide water and treats. Any contribution of treats for our canine guests would be welcome.)

Lit Wits:

Fun Stories About Females

On September 12, the Lit Wits group met at the I-45 Diner to dine and discuss *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. Hostess was Tammy Spangler. This bestselling and most popular novel of 2022-2023, set in the late 50's and early 60's, focuses on the life of Elizabeth Zott, a brilliant scientist who struggles with the inequities women face at that time in a male-dominated society. Elizabeth's response to the way she is treated by men makes up provocative and sometimes humorous situations in a delightful read.

Another novel titled *Run, Rose, Run*, scheduled for October 17, will be just as entertaining. In this book, Dolly Parton and James Patterson, prolific mystery writer, collaborated to write a thriller about "a young singer-songwriter—determined to do whatever it takes to survive." "She's a star on the rise, singing about the hard life behind her." This book has been on the Best Seller List and has merited positive reviews. Kathy Howerton looks forward to leading the discussion.

This is a great time to join the Lit Wits group. Complete details about the meeting will come later. Call Sue Krueger at 281-684-6998 for more information.

Rev. Dr. Kendall Moore, Pastor in The United Church of Christ

HAS A VERY **IMPORTANT** SOUND—AND IT IS! On September 16, 2023, at St. Peter United Church in Houston, Texas, Dr. Kendall Moore was ordained as pastor in the United Church of Christ. Aiding in the appointment of Kendall to this honorable position were Rev. Dr. Jules Williams, Jr., pastor of Open Arms Church and Kendall's home pastor; and certain other officials in the church including Rev. Dr. Carol McAninch of Open Arms; Rev. Phil Hodson, South Central Conference Minister, and Rev. Leslie Jackson, pastor of St. Peter. As a demonstration of love and support in his future ministry, twenty-one members of Open Arms came to the ordination along with relatives and other friends.

The ceremony was enhanced with music by Kamica King, accomplished song writer, singer, and music therapist. After the ordination, the audience attended a reception given in Kendall's honor. Rev. Moore and wife Carolyn are making their home, and serving at Cresskill Congregational Church UCC in Cresskill, New Jersey. See pictures of the Ordination in the Open Arms Photo Gallery.

Happy Birthday Wishes

Doris Luetge – October 4
Elise Daulley – October 15
Vicky Royster – October 16
Magpie Bennett – October 22
Heather Says – October 22
Barry Fairbanks – October 23
Bill Royster – October 31

Some Monthly Observances in October

Blindness Awareness Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Country Music Month, Emotional Wellness Month, Halloween Safety Month, National Book Month, National Cookie Month, National Pretzel Month

The United Church of Christ Makes History with Election of New President – The First Black Woman



Cleveland-based United Church of Christ has elected Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson as its President and General Minister.

Rev. Dr. Thompson, a Jamaican immigrant, is the first woman to lead the mainline protestant denomination of 770,000 worldwide members. Thompson was elected by more than 600 delegates at UCC's General Synod in Indianapolis. She recently served as UCC's officer for global concerns and interfaith relations, and formerly was the denomination's minister for racial justice. She began her new role on August 1.

"As I stand here before you as your newly and duly elected general minister and president, I stand here as a Jamaican immigrant woman, a mother and a grandmother, a sister and a friend to many," Thompson said. "The enormity of this moment will be with me for many years to come."

They Said, "Thank You"

We may sometimes wonder what happens to our mission money.

Recently, we heard from two organizations that we helped in their ministry.

- PTSD/Camp Hope said, "Thank you so much for your wonderful donation in support our veterans. Your benefaction enables us to bring hope and healing to combat veterans with PTSD. Camp Hope has been home to over 1,700 veterans who so selflessly served for us." In addition to our donation, we had a wonderful experience serving their current residents at a luncheon last month.
- Interfaith of the Woodlands said, "Your generous gift will help us provide essential support to those who are struggling to put food on the table and maintain basic household needs. Our clients find us with sufficiency and avoid financial ruin or homelessness. On behalf of our clients, our colleagues, and Interfaith's Board of Directors, please accept our sincere gratitude for your trust in our work to build community, neighbor to neighbor."

October, 2023

October 1 – World Communion Sunday

October 3 - Christus Mobil Health Unit at Tamina Community Center

October 7 - The Great Duck Race

October 9 – Clergy Appreciation Sunday

October 10 – Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day (Observed)

October 13/14 - Open Arms Garage Sale

October 17 – Lit Wits

October 21 – The Woodlands Pride Festival

October 31 - Halloween

North American names for **October’s** full moon which, will be on Saturday, October 28, 2023: Harvest Moon and Hunter’s Moon.

The phrase **“it’s always darkest before the dawn”** was first used by Thomas Fuller in 1650. Fuller was an English churchman and historian. It appeared in two of his works. However, this doesn’t mean that he was the first person to use this phrase or one with a similar meaning.

Open Arms Photo Gallery

Rev. Dr. Kendall Moore's Ordination - Photos Courtesy of Kim Williams



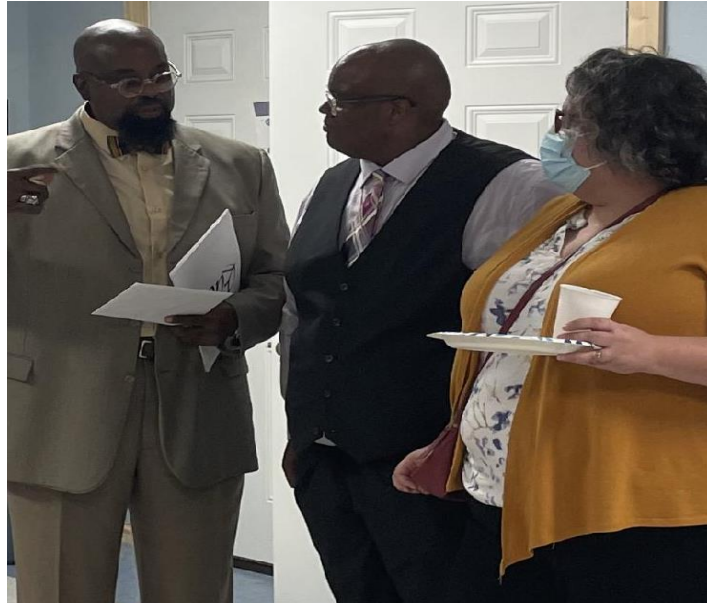
Rev. Phil Hodson and Rev. Dr. Jules Williams



A Moment of Blessing

Open Arms Photo Gallery

Rev. Dr. Kendall Moore's Ordination - Photos Courtesy of Kim Williams



Rev. Dr. Jules William, Rev. Dr. Kendall Moore and his wife Dr. Carolyn Moore



Rev. Dr. Kendall Moore and Rev. Leslie Jackson

Open Arms Photo Gallery

“It Really Happened in Old Spring” - Photos Courtesy of Pam Mayo



Cast Members



Gaye Fairbanks

Open Arms Photo Gallery

“It Really Happened in Old Spring” - Photos Courtesy of Pam Mayo



Sue Krueger



Magpie Bennett