



April 11, 2023

In Our *Prayers*

Please remember these friends in prayer:

Ukraine
LaRue Ingram
Marilyn Storm
Rae-Jean Burke

Andrew Orr's father & uncle
Mary Francis Hedrick (Prayers are much appreciated.)
John & Latricia Pratt
Tom Johnson, son of TJ Johnson

We Had Such a Wonderful Easter

We had such a wonderful Easter. Those were the words of Aidan at dinner. It was a long day, beginning with an early Sunrise service listening to the birds serenading us with their early morning songs as we set up for worship. Not only worshipping three times that day, but also the family time spent together in the afternoon and the beautiful weather outside. Then the call came. Answering the phone, a robotic voice informed us that Yukon Schools had received a threat of violence and it would not be counted against student's attendance if parents kept their children home. Suddenly conversations of joy and love turned to conversations seeped with fear. There was not enough information to make a decision and not knowing but having the decision placed on parents left only one logical response. No school on Monday.

This is how my Monday changed and left me focused on the news we would later receive, a troubled high school student left home with his father's AR-15 assault rifle. Sure, it had been locked up, but like most responsible gun owners who keep their weapons locked up, most trust their high school age children with the knowledge of where the key is and how to get into the safe in case of an emergency. I know growing up, I was entrusted with a key to the gun cabinet. I also knew my father's instructions never to point a gun at a person or anything unless you meant to destroy it. Guns had one purpose and one purpose only, and that was to kill, for us that meant hunting. My father taught me at a young age, if ever I misused such a weapon, he would wrap it around a tree.

Now, this is by no means a political newsletter article, because I find these very themes and topics to coincide with lessons in the Bible and often people like to use the Bible to justify their behaviors even when they misconstrue the Bible. Child safety is not political. Community welfare is not political. Public safety is not political. These are all things that should be a responsibility of all within a community and are religious tenets. But I do need to get a political statement out of the way. The problem is not the Second Amendment, it never has been. The problem is when people use the Second Amendment, and sometimes the Bible, as a weapon itself. Pause with me and consider some of the lessons we should take away from the Bible. First, the people expected the Lion of Judah to raise an army to overthrow Rome, but instead, they discover the Paschal Lamb who came to bring peace. They wanted a warrior riding a stallion but discovered the Messiah riding a donkey. Even the disciples wanted to rain down fire from heaven on a town that did not agree with them, instead, Jesus rebuked them for such talk saying things like "Love your enemies" and "brush the dust of their land from your sandals" and even "turn the other cheek."

When we actually listen to the words of Jesus, we discover the teachings are against the use of violence and that he actually condemns the use of violence and always seems to take the unpopular side of the people who are oppressed. But some will argue, "Jesus said he came not to bring peace but a sword." This is true, but you can't cut this one statement off from the context in which Jesus said this, in only one gospel account. The passage is about the division that can occur when you are faced with following the teachings of Jesus as opposed to the popular rhetoric of the world. One is filled with love, mercy, compassion and actually peaceful living focused on the wellbeing of others. The other is focused on self-centered beliefs.

Perhaps that is where the problem is today. People want to recreate Jesus into their own image, to fit the ideals they desire instead of on the actual teachings of Jesus. Have you seen the pictures with Jesus dressed as a boxer saying, "I will fight for you?" Or the image of Jesus carrying multiple AR-15 assault rifles? People want to indoctrinate an image of Jesus into the mindset of people to justify their beliefs. But Jesus did not come like Rambo, or Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Commando*, instead Jesus came as the Lamb of God. But I also think a large part of the problem we discover in the world today is this idea of overreacting to the things that rub us the wrong way. If I don't like what you say, I feel it must be okay for me to attack you personally. If I don't like that you are more accepting to someone I don't like then I can hurt you. It reminds me of raising a toddler who hits their brother for saying something they don't like. Here in Oklahoma, we are seeing increases in road rage and gun violence, and there have been stories of someone getting shot because someone cut someone else off on the road. It feels like we, as a society, have lost the ability to deal with issues of disappointment and anger in a rational manner. News of gun violence in Oklahoma has become a weekly occurrence, desensitizing us, and becoming part of mainstream acceptance. But, what happens if someone tries to speak out against gun violence? They often get silenced. They receive threats. They are attacked and accused of many things. When someone says that we should love our children more than guns, they get attacked, people get upset, and lash out. Because we are not taking the time to listen to one another, even when we disagree, we are normalizing

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the very behavior that is exasperating the problem. If I am being honest, I am fearful of writing these words as well.

The problem, in my opinion, stems from the hateful speech that we have allowed to be normalized and seen as tolerable. Hateful and dividing rhetoric has become something seen as acceptable. Throughout history though, wars become justified because the enemy is demonized, but now, if we are not careful, we start to demonize anyone who has a different opinion from me.

There are no easy answers. But perhaps we need to look back to a time when this problem did not persist. There were no assault weapons capable of firing multiple rounds with large capacity magazines designed for mass casualties in times of war in the hands of everyone who wanted one. There was a time when any weapon if transported had to be locked inside a case, inside the trunk of a car so it could not be easily accessible in a fit of rage. Still today, all firearms are required to be locked in an armory on military bases and soldiers do not have access to them except when necessary for drills and only issued ammunition at the qualifying range under close supervision and in times of actual conflict. It also feels like many have been indoctrinated to say, "guns don't kill people, people kill people" but the truth is that these weapons are designed for one purpose, to kill, and some are designed more proficiently than others. It would seem that the very laws that once existed to protect the people have slowly been stripped away. For me though, this goes against the gospel which is intended to remind us to place the needs and welfare of all people ahead of our own selfish desires.

Shalom,

Daniel

All Church Fellowship Dinner

April 23, 2023 5:00 *Baked Potato Bar*

The Fellowship Committee will provide baked potatoes, and toppings, along with beverages. You are invited to bring a side dish or dessert to share.

There will be a Jigsaw Puzzle exchange.

We are going to **Fill the Blessing Box.**

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| shampoo/conditioner | toothpaste/toothbrush |
| deodorant | feminine care products |
| body wash/bar soap | children's bath products, |
| peanut butter | canned foods with pull tabs |
| granola bars | individual meals-to-go |
| individual fruit cups | snack cracker packages |
| instant oatmeal packets | |

The National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is an expression of the church that promotes reconciliation, social justice concerns, and transformational ministry.

The National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) invites all churches to stand in solidarity for the sake of social justice. Something that you might not know is that Rep. Justin Pearson is a member of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) church in Tennessee and that he is the son of Rev. Jason Pearson of Community of Faith Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Memphis Tennessee.



20²³ Phillips
Theological Seminary
Commencement

Daniel is Graduating
May 20 — 11 a.m.

 Metropolitan Baptist Church
1228 West Apache St.
Tulsa, OK 74127

Rev. Allison Longman will be preaching here on May 21st.

2024
Assembly at Sea

Western Caribbean Cruise to Cozumel, Mexico

Sailing from Galveston, TX
July 11-15, 2024 on the Carnival Breeze




REGISTRATION

Early Bird Registration EXTENDED through April 15!

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023
in Louisville, Kentucky

If you are planning to attend the general assembly and want to be a delegate, please call the church office as soon as possible.

Another successful Easter Egg Hunt is in the books.

Thanks to so many who shared the excitement of the event with the children from our church, our neighborhood and the children from Western Oaks Elementary School.

We are grateful for Kelli Fearing leading our craft group: Nance Cunningham, Lissa Foster, Fern Melton and Jan Sills. Three generations who helped the children put on Easter tattoos: Kari Simmons, Monica Orr & Layla Jackson. The yummy hot dogs and chips were made and distributed by Charlene & Tony Majetic, Linda & Max Patzack and Sandra Spillman. Face painting was a big hit and we can thank Sandra Cook and Mandie Howry. Another cheerful group with a long line were Tobi Frank and Andrea Teter who made wonderful cotton candy!! The music was brought to us by Daniel & Aidan U'Ren who set up the speaker etc. The game to pass the time while waiting for cotton candy was done by Dianne Beck. Parking lot attendants who helped navigate the parking lot were Jimmy Ille and Bob Melton.

Finally, we want to doubly thank those who helped stake the three Easter egg sites and **laid out eggs for five** Easter egg hunts were Diane Beck, Jerry Cobb, Nance Cunningham, Mark Gillett, Bob Melton, Sara & Andrew Orr, River Rayburn-Joseph, Alorah & Adele Ross, Aidan & Liam U'Ren. It takes a village, and I am so grateful to call you my church family!! Thanks for all the hard work to make this an extraordinary event!!

Rev. Julia Jordan Gillett

Western Oaks Christian Church

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



Senior Sunday is May 7th

We will celebrate James Frank's graduation from high school and Jacob Foster's graduation from college.



If you have a family member you would like us to recognize on Sunday, May 7th, please let Julia Jordan Gillett or Cindy Cannon know by contacting the church office ASAP!

Coming June 12 - 15!

Vacation Bible School

VOLUNTEERS: Let Julia know if you would like to lead a group, fix meals, help lead recreation, singing, or be a part of the market place.

Sip & See Baby Shower for Jasper, Alorah, Adele, Genova and Gavin's baby brother. The sip and See will be on Sunday, April 30th during Coffee Fellowship after the 11a.m. service.

Items baby Jasper could use: diapers size 2 or 3; baby toys; baby gym play-mat; bibs; baby bottles (tommee tippee) bottle accessories or baby books. If you have questions, you can contact Julia or Tobi.



MISSION TRIP UPDATE - Julia and 5 youth are going on the mission trip to Fort Worth, Texas in July. We will participate in a **rummage sale** with New Covenant Christian Church at the beginning of June. The proceeds will help pay for food and gas for the vans. Please donate gently used clothes, shoes, books, kitchen items, & furniture. Please do not bring mattresses or VHS tapes.

Bring your donations Wednesday at 1, & Thursday, June 1 & 2 to New Covenant.



Church Staff

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Daniel U'Ren
 Associate Minister: Rev. Julia Jordan Gillett
 Music Director: Andrew Orr
 Pianist: Rosa McCroskey
 Praise Band Leader: Ben Frantz
 Praise Band: Natalie Griffin and Zach Jones
 Nursery Attendant: Janet Harper
 Admin Assistant: Cindy Cannon
 Sound Technician:

office@woccdoc.org

A Bridge to Giving

Ways you can make donations to WOCC:

- give directly through our weekly collections of tithes and offerings
- donate online at our church website www.woccdoc.org and click the "please donate" button
- text "tithe" to 405-347-8812
- mail donations to the church office 8100 NW 23rd St. OKC, OK 73127
- WOCC's Shelby Giving System
- give to an existing endowment: *Outreach, Legacy Giving, Millie Cress Children/Youth Fund, Permanent Fund*

Attendance	Vimeo Live	Facebook Live	Facebook Live Daniel's	YouTube	TOTAL online Worship	9:00 am	11:00 am	TOTAL on campus Worship	Giving	General	Blessing Fund
3/26/2023	5	7	36	1	49	22	44	66	3/26/2023	\$3,595.	\$30
4/2/2023	3	9	58	5	75	24	54	78	4/2/2023	\$4,540	\$30
4/6/23	2	16	68	11	97	Maundy Thursday		35			

*Online attendance taken from respective website reports of number

** Technical difficulty prevented online worship.

"Loving God, Serving our Neighbor"



8100 NW 23rd Street
 Oklahoma City OK 73127

«Name»

«Address»

«City»

Three Cheers and a Place for You



Please join me in congratulating our wonderful Western Oaks musicians for a job well done on Easter Sunday (as well as every other Sunday!). These individuals spend many hours preparing for Worship, and we are consistently blessed by their efforts. Wasn't it special to hear the Bells ringing in our Sanctuary again? What a special day in the life of our Church!

If you see a Bell Ringer, Singer, or Rosa please encourage them and share your gratitude with them. They are truly a special group.

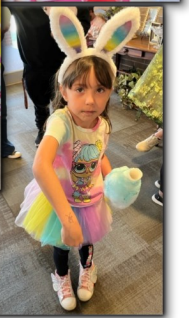
Now, what's next? We have a place for you! Have you ever heard the expression, "There's strength in numbers"? Well, in music, this is definitely the case. I can hear many of you singing well during Worship! Will you please consider being a part of the Chancel Choir? We would love for you to join in on the fun and fellowship. Would you like to try the Handbells? They enhance our worship greatly. No experience is needed for either group.

Our Rehearsal Schedule is flexible! Resources are given each week to help us give our best on Sunday. You are welcome. You are needed. Please consider joining the fun. Traditionally, we rehearse Bells at 6:00 PM, followed by Chancel Choir at 7:00 PM on Wednesdays.



happy,
happy
birthday
to you!

Easter Pics



Marge	Evans	5-Apr
Margaret	Blackerby	5-Apr
Dean	Lunsford	6-Apr
Jack	Frantz	10-Apr
Rita	Norris	14-Apr
Mike	Fadum	17-Apr
Lissa	Foster	19-Apr
Tyler	Bradley	21-Apr
Tina	Bayliff	21-Apr
Max	Patzack	22-Apr
Jenna	Droke	22-Apr
Sandra	Spillman	25-Apr
Donna	Nevel	25-Apr
Sebastian	Digby	27-Apr

Palm Sunday

We are grateful to Aanika Gillett and Jamie Mattox for preparing our children to carry the process with the Palms.



Easter Egg Hunt

Thanks to Jim Ellis and some of our youth: Isla Harper, Adele and Alorah Ross, Aidan and Liam U'Ren!!



Easter Egg Hunt



Easter Morning

