

ALL ARE WELCOME...except when they aren't

In my sermon yesterday I referenced a conversation taking place in a workshop about how not everyone feels welcome despite churches saying, "all are welcome." All too often, this phrase is meant in a way of "You are welcome so long as you look, act, or become more like me." That is not who we are as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and it is time for us to reclaim part of our historical identity. First and foremost, we are a denomination that makes a stand in the name of justice for others. We always remain a denomination open to conversation, striving for unity, and true to the biblical teachings that remind us of the love God has for the entire world. For me, I have always equated this to a phrase I have often used, "I am tolerant of most things, except intolerance."

I am disappointed in the rise of hate groups and the increasing intolerant behaviors that we have seen in the past decade. Last week, during a lecture, a stately gentleman, a retired minister, stood up in the middle of a question and answer period, following a powerful lecture and offered a profound statement. He said, "I don't know what has happened to my church, but the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) church I grew up in would have been at the front line confronting hate, pushing back against injustice, or stripping away rights of women or anything that seemed intolerant." Another responded that clergy today are afraid to speak out, sometimes out of fear of retribution from people in their own congregation. I am reminded of the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil."

Looking throughout history though, where have we found the Christian Church (DOC) active? L.L. Pinkerton was a physician who was considered a progressive liberal because he first introduced the first musical instruments to the church, a melodeon, a precursor to the organ. He also led the antislavery ideals of the denomination before the Civil War began, seeking equality for all disenfranchised people. Also in the 1800s, Caroline Neville Pearre became known as the "Mother of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions," and started women's groups to address issues of injustice. Preston Taylor, born to slave parents, served as a drummer boy for the Union Army during the Civil War, became an ordained minister in the Christian Church (DOC) who would go on to address racial divides with the help of the financial institution he started that is now known as the "Citizens Savings Bank." Mattie Younkin, began organizing women in 1886 to give voice to women and address the needs of the poorest citizens. Not only did Jane Campbell McKeever, sister of Alexander Campbell, run her own "station" along the underground railroad and she started one of the first Liberal Arts Colleges in the nation. Rosa Parks Welch was a musical artist who grew up in the Disciples Church and used her voice not only for singing, but became known as the "Ambassador of Goodwill" as she spoke truth about not being able to use the restrooms in the very places she was asked to perform. Lew Wallace, a direct descendent of William Wallace, made famous by the movie Braveheart, was married to Zerelda who became a leader in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Zerelda was ignored by her then governor husband, despite having 10,000 signatures of women to support her cause. She then became a leader in the suffragist movement along with Susan B. Anthony.

As we look forward, we are guided in who we are by looking back at these examples. However, another statement was made this past week that was alarming. Ministers are witnessing hate groups actively recruiting people in Kentucky and Indiana. In recent weeks anti-Semitic flyers are being distributed in Oklahoma City. I want to say this clearly, anti-Semitic beliefs, ideas, or attacks on our siblings in faith who are of the Jewish faith, are some of the greatest attacks against Jesus, who was a Jew. Judaism is a part of our identity and is where Christianity originates. As Rabbi Sherman lovingly phrased it, "Christianity is a daughter religion to Judaism." All this hate and intolerance, and then there were commercials during the

Super Bowl by a group called “He Gets Us” which USA Today followed the money of these commercials back to hate groups in Kansas. The scary thing is the way these hate groups use Jesus to promote their ideologies. Even scarier is when these groups begin to push bills and potential laws to support and legitimize their hate and intolerance of others. Any group that is defined by hate and intolerance is antithetical to Christian beliefs and does not follow the very teachings of Jesus.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) continues today to be a voice for social justice, speaking out against racism, prejudice, and discrimination in all forms. We choose to be a voice of love to all people. To do so means we have to overcome our fears, insecurities, and find hope. To speak up and not be silenced means we make ourselves vulnerable as we address the fears of others. This Lent I will be asking you to consider your own fears and the things that make you feel vulnerable. Together we are going to explore ways that we can address those fears in order to find hope. There has been so much research in the science of hope that I hope we can learn from this in order to be agents of hope in the lives of others. But hope begins with tolerance and compassion. There is no room for intolerance, that is why Jesus answered the person asking how many times he has to forgive, seven times? “Not seven, but seventy times seven.” Let us be a people of grace, a people of forgiveness, and most importantly a people that brings the hope we know through Jesus Christ into the lives of others.

Shalom,

Daniel

A CONVERSATION ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

**FEBRUARY 16TH 6:00 P.M.
AT TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL**

David Holt
Oklahoma City Mayor



Shira Goodman
ADL GRACE Team



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





EMANUEL
SYNAGOGUE

**Thursday,
February 16, 2023
6:00 pm**





For address and additional information
please RSVP: tim@jfedokc.org



MISSING: 2.5 Quart Corelle Casserole dish with plastic Lid. It has “Fearing” on the bottom of the dish. If you borrowed it, or know where it was put away in the church kitchen, please call Kelli at 405-473-6938.



RISE UP ANEW

Worship  SPECIAL OFFERING | February 19-26, 2023

I want to thank all of my friends at WOCC for all of the cards and calls during the Christmas season.

I miss you all and wish could see you each Sunday.

Lyeal Amos



Thank you so much for all your support during our move to Saint Ann’s Retirement Center. Howard is in Assisted Living and Nance is in Independent Living.

Our new address is 7501 W. Britton Rd, Oklahoma City, OK 73132. Nance is in #231 and Howard is in #273. We appreciate our WOCC Family!

Thank You!

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL FOR A WONDERFUL VALENTINE'S DAY TEA & DESSERT AUCTION FOR THE YOUTH MISSION TRIP!!

Western Oaks Christian Church



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



What a wonderful time to be the church! As I looked over the beautiful table decorations that Sandra Cook (made the center pieces), Tobi Frank, Judi McDown, Kelli Fearing & Bayley Morris (one of the youth) set for the Valentine's Tea, I felt grateful that so many are willing to work together again and again to for youth and children's programming! It takes a village and what a wonderful village we have at Western Oaks!! We have four to six youth with Rev. Julia Jordan Gillett as sponsor traveling with New Covenant Christian Church and Crown Heights Christian Church.

Jimmy Ille made the dessert auction a success with his ability to auction items and make everyone laugh!! **We raised \$1,120** with all the yummy desserts!

We want to thank those who made soups & sandwiches: Sandra Cook, Jenna Droke, Kelli Fearing, Tobi Frank, Mark Gillett, Judi McDown, Okie Merry, & Julia Jordan Gillett & Daniel U'Ren.

The dessert were donated by Duane Wood, Jane Hughes, Kelli Fearing (who also made some table decorations to sell), Tobi Frank, Lissa Foster, Charlene Majetic, Linda Patzack, Julia Jordan Gillett, Andrea Teter, and Stephanie U'Ren. Especially to Mr. & Mrs. Wood for bringing a dessert for the auction on their second their second visit to the church!

Clean-Up We are also deeply appreciative of those who helped set up & clean up: Charlie Conner, Roslyn Boyd, Sandra Cook, Tobi, James & Kadan Frank, Jimmy Ille, Judi McDown, Jamie Mattox, Bob and Fern Melton, Okie Merry, Bayley Morris, Mark Gillett, Stephanie, Aidan and Liam U'Ren.



Bingo Matinee Sunday, February 19

12:30 - Snacking begins

1:00- Let's Play BINGO!!!

Please bring a snack (Examples: Chips and Dip, Cookies, Vegi Tray, Fruit Tray, etc)

The Fellowship Committee will provide small sandwiches and drinks.

***If you would like to donate a Gift card or other prize for bingo, please bring the item(s) that day. We will have prizes for Adults AND Children, so everyone is welcome!**

Time to start thinking about Church Camp!

Discount Rates are available from Feb 5-April 23. Regular Rates go in effect April 24-May 15 (Deadline)

Chi Rho Camp (grades 6-8): June 5-9
Discount Rate: \$403 Regular Rate \$475

CYF Conference (grades 9-12): June 19-24
Discount Rate: \$429 Regular Rate: \$500

Discovery Camp (grades 2-3): June 23-25
Discount Rate: \$175 Regular Rate: \$225

Junior Camp (grades 4-5): June 26-30
Discount Rate: \$307 Regular Rate: \$380



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

PRAYER BREAKFAST

Don't Forget! We are meeting for prayer breakfast
 the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.

This month we meet Wednesday, February 1st and
 Wednesday February 15th.

Cabinet Meeting - February 26 at 12:15

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
1/29/2023**	0	0	0	0	0	16	35	41	1/29/2023	\$320	\$30
2/5/2023	2	43	0	1	46	17	46	63	2/5/2023	\$5,075	30

*Online attendance taken from respective website reports of number of times the video is viewed on each website.

** Technical difficulty prevented online worship.

“Loving God, Serving our Neighbor”



8100 NW 23rd Street
 Oklahoma City OK 73127

«Name»

«Address»

«City»