

March 28, 2023



In Our *Prayers*

Please remember these friends in prayer:

Ukraine
LaRue Ingram
Marilyn Storm
George & Dean Lunsford
Rae-Jean Burke

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

Words are Important

I think it is funny sometimes when I preach a sermon in the first service and think, oh wow, that was a really great statement I made at the end of the sermon. Then I am in the middle of the sermon during the second service and I go, “oh I should have written that down, what was it that I said that sounded so profound?” I really do need to write it down to help me recall what I thought was so meaningful. But then as the sermon takes on a life of its own in the second service I discover something else that comes out just as evocative. Yes, the written word is important to remember, but equally important is to be open to the diversity of ideas.

Long ago, I encountered a book that I despised with a passion. The book was called, “The Giver” and I found it triggering when it talked about an infant being killed as a form of population control. I had a nephew who died as an infant and to this day his death troubles me, knowing there was nothing anyone could do to protect this precious child. But what surprised me is that this book I could not finish was given the Newberry Award, an award given for the most distinguished contributions in American Literature for children. I could not wrap my head around the idea that this book that I could not even finish could get such a distinguished award, let alone sell 12 million copies. However, if I would have read on I might have discovered the book focused on a young boy who was given the job of holding all the memories. You see, the story was really about a society that prided itself on conformity, and everyone was given a task from birth that lasted throughout their lifespan. Their memories were taken away so they would not know the evils of the world, the pain, the suffering, or even the hunger that people had experienced. But, lost also was the memory of color, and rainbows lost their beauty. What would have become obvious if I had read the book instead of the “Cliff Notes” I would have discovered that this young boy discovered all the atrocities that were being committed because people did not remember. So, he began giving back their memories to bring peace into their lives, to build human connection, and to stop them from doing the very things that they had forgotten were wrong.

I may not have liked this book, but I can’t deny that it had a wonderful message that is so important today. I fear that we are in need of remembering where we come from, and we need to remember whom we belong to, and we need to remember whom we are called to be. Hopefully, you remember the quote by George Santayana, “Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.” I had an amazing opportunity a couple of years ago to sit and visit with an amazing woman with a beautiful soul, who talked to me about living in Germany during World War 2. She shared how frightening it was to see the Germans burning the books and censoring anything that they thought to be controversial or promoting critical thinking. She talked about how they condemned more than just the Jewish people, but also anyone who was not gender-conforming to their ideals, and anyone who was not straight and white. She talked about how they would steal the art too. Then her eyes grew dark as she looked at me and said, “I fear that we are living through this all over again, and we need to remember the evils of our past.”

I was shocked. I did not know what to say, other than agree. But this made me realize how wrong it was for me to see only the bad in something like a book so many years before. Instead, I needed to remember

to seek beauty in all things. That diverse ideas are beneficial to society as a whole. But I also needed to find a way to speak out against the injustices in the world today. For if the people today who are banning books, or covering up art, or a number of other things, had actually read the Bible, then they would lump the Bible in with those banned books. We would have to blur out the prophet for 3 years if it was a TV show (Isaiah 20). We discover a similar story to the Giver in Genesis 22. David was rather creepy at times (2 Kings 11). There once was no shame in our bodies (Genesis 2:24-25). Whatever you do, don't read Song of Solomon, especially chapter 4. Don't do it. Maybe the many things people are getting hung up on lately really are not necessarily Christian values. Instead, we should remember that Christ teaches us to do no harm, and let others be who they are, even if we do not agree (Luke 9:54-55) but instead remember to listen to others, hear their concerns and provide for their needs (Matthew 25:40). Jesus was extremely aware of and actively attentive to the important facts and issues of his time and heavily focused on issues of social justice, so don't try to push personal agendas, but instead, seek to understand the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-5). Remember also, that as Christians we are called to demonstrate compassion and kindness, not exude hate and discontent. Instead, we should be more concerned with how we are treating others. (Galatians 5:22-23, John 13:34).

Shalom,

Daniel

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH: As the co-moderator for the Central Area of Oklahoma Clergy, I have been leading this wonderful group in a conversation about who we are as Disciples of Christ as we discuss what it means to be in covenant with one another. What has helped immensely is a curriculum our denomination has put out that walks us through the Preamble and Design of the Christian Church. The curriculum has short videos of presenters talking about the importance of living into who we are as the Christian church and I have found it to be an enjoyable learning opportunity. I would encourage all the adult Sunday School classes to consider using this 5 week program to explore a deeper understanding of covenant. The curriculum can be found at [disciples.org](https://disciples.org/our-identity/covenant-conversation/) or more precisely <https://disciples.org/our-identity/covenant-conversation/>

A special thanks to all my church family

Thank you so much for the loving support you have given me and my family as we adjust to life without George. Daniel has been so good to us....spending time at the hospital, planning the services, and sharing who George was at the memorial. The wonderful family meal was delicious, and gave us all a chance to visit with some of our relatives we see seldom.

Thanks to those who have written cards, called and offered help, and those who attended the service. One of the most comforting things to me has been hearing people tell me what George meant in their lives and letting me know that they saw him the way I did...a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend.

Dean Lunsford and Family

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023
in Louisville, Kentucky

**Early Bird Registration EXTENDED
through April 15!**

Join us July 29-August 1, 2023 for worship, workshops, Bible study, a Louisville mission project, and the sacred work of the church for children, youth, and adults across the life of the church.

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

Special Worship Services

Palm Sunday	April 2	
Maundy Thursday	April 4	6:00pm
Sunday Sunrise Service	April 9	7:00am



New Custodian for WOCC

Please help us welcome Ethan Cossey, our new custodian. Ethan has some maintenance experience and will be working for us part-time.

We look forward to having him on staff.



Our Acolytes Serving



Western Oaks Christian Church

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



The Annual Easter Egg Hunt is fast approaching. Saturday, April 8th @ 11a.m. to 12:30p.m. We will have Egg Hunts by grade levels, crafts, cotton candy, hot dogs, games and more!!

Your help is needed to distribute eggs at the Easter Egg Hunts and the various activities! We appreciate your help!! All the children enjoy the various activities!!

We will meet @ 10:15 am to set up for the Easter Egg Hunts. If you are able to help with any of the activities, especially distributing eggs, please contact Julia Jordan Gillett.



We still need lots of filled plastic Easter Eggs

You may pick up empty Easter Eggs In the Narthex or outside the church office or purchase some at the Dollar Tree to be filled.

Bring filled eggs back by Sunday, April 2nd.



Vacation Bible School

Coming June 12 – 15!

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.



Time to start thinking about Church Camp!

Discount Rates are 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

Discovery Camp (grades 2-3): June 23-25

Discount Rate: \$175

Regular Rate: \$225

CYF Conference (grades 9-12): June 19-24

Discount Rate: \$429

Regular Rate: \$500

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



**God's Love
Endures
Forever**
 Psalm 118

April 2 & 9

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
3/12/2023	2	10	56	1	69	23	47	70	3/12/2023	\$8,659.	\$30
3/19/2023	9	16	48	0	73	19	36	55	3/19/2023	\$10,164	\$55

*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»