



Oak Branch

OCTOBER 2023

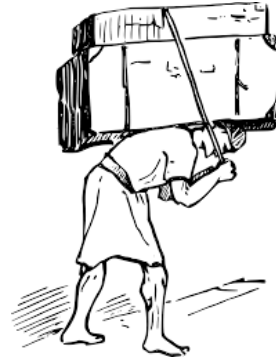


Oak Hills Presbyterian Church
Rev. Rachael Huntley

Beloved Family,

The weather may be trying to tell us differently, but autumn is upon us! October is here, and at OHPC we will be using this month to do a bit of preparation. At least, that's what I'll be doing in the pulpit. November is the month of gratitude and thanksgiving, so I thought I might use October's sermons to help us identify what can often impede our gratitude. We will journey back and forth between the New Testament and the Old Testament, learning how our ability to be thankful can be inhibited by:

- Disappointment
- Entitlement
- Greed
- Nostalgia
- Worry



Is there one of those five gratitude-blockers that you immediately recognize as especially true for you? Is there one that does not seem to trouble you often? I would love to know your answers, and would be happy to share mine in return. I think I may even take the time to rank them in order of most troublesome to least.

I hope these weeks will prove useful to you. Sometimes we are so inundated with the command to "be grateful!" that we forget to take the time to explore what might be making us less than grateful in the first place. As we hang our decorative cobwebs for Halloween, let us simultaneously be clearing the negative cobwebs from our hearts and minds. When November arrives, we will have done some "fall cleaning" of our attitudes, making space for a renewed sense of hope and blessing. May October be a time of unburdening for us all!

With love,

Pastor Rachael



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Sunday Morning Worship, 10:30 a.m.

October 1 is World Wide Communion Sunday. We celebrate the life and resurrection of our Lord in communion with fellow believers all over the world. While we don't all look alike or worship in the same way, we are all children of the kingdom of God. But Jesus didn't ask us to love just those in our circle of friends or even the wider circle of believers around the world. In our final lectionary text, he asks us to love our neighbors—all of the human beings that God created and that inhabit the world with us. As we go through this month, let us reach out and find ways to share love with all of those around us, even those who act, look, believe or love differently.

Lectionary passages for the month follow:

October 1: 18th Sunday after Pentecost—World Communion Sunday

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Is the way of the Lord unfair? Turn away from your sin and live.

Psalms 25:1-9

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord; do not remember my sin.

Philippians 2:1-13

Seek the mind of Christ, who was humble, but exalted by God.

Matthew 21:23-32

Leaders question Jesus' authority; he answers them with a parable.

October 8: 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 5:1-7

Isaiah sings of a vineyard that has failed to produce good fruit.

Psalms 80:7-15

Restore us, O God of hosts; have regard for the vine you planted.

Philippians 3:4b-14

All that I have is nothing; knowing Jesus Christ is everything.

Matthew 21:33-46

A parable about a vineyard, wicked tenants, and the owner's son.

October 15: 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 25:1-9

God will make a feast for all peoples, destroying death forever.

Psalms 23

The Lord prepares a table for me in the presence of my enemies.

Philippians 4:1-9

Rejoice in the Lord; do not worry; God's peace will be with you.

Matthew 22:1-4

The kingdom is like a banquet; many are called, few are chosen.

October 22: 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 45:1-7

The Lord anoints Cyrus: I alone am God; I call you by name.

Psalms 96:1-9 (10-13)

Declare God's glory among the nations; all other gods are idols.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Paul writes to the Thessalonians: We give thanks and pray for you.

Matthew 22:15-22

The Pharisees test Jesus with a question about paying taxes.

October 29: 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

Be holy as the Lord is holy; love your neighbor as yourself.

Psalms 1

Happy are those who delight in the law of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

We came to you to share the gospel; we also share ourselves.

Matthew 22:34-46

Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself.

October 31: Reformation Day

Jeremiah 31:31-34

God says: I will make a new covenant, writing my law in your heart.

Psalms 46

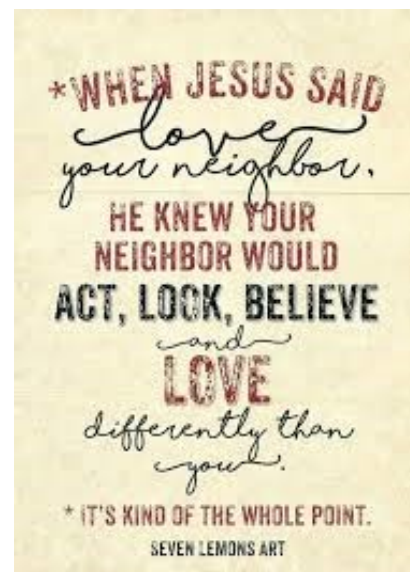
Though the earth changes and the waters roar, God is our refuge.

Romans 3:19-28

We are justified by the gift of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

John 8:31-36

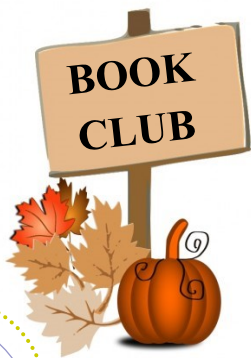
Jesus says: You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.



We'd be delighted to have you joins us at 11 am the third Thursday of each month— in person or on Zoom.

Oct 19: Killers of a Certain Age

Best-selling author Deanna Raybourn is a 6-th generation native Texan with a degree from UTSA! Join us as we follow four female assassins who must rely on each other to take out a colleague out to eliminate **them** during their retirement voyage.



Upcoming books:

November 16: *Dear Edward*, by Ann Napolitano

December 7: *I heard The Owl Call My Name*, by Margaret Craven

Choir is back and we need your help!



As you may have noticed, our choir has grown just a bit, but we could use still more voices! We generally rehearse each piece for several weeks, so you have time to become familiar with it even if you don't read music. Therefore, if you would like to

"make a joyful noise" please consider joining us on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Bless and be blessed by being a Children's Church Volunteer!

Curriculum and materials are provided. For more information, please see Pastor Rachael or Heather Ebert.



*I scream, You scream,
We all scream for ice cream!*



*September 3
Ice Cream Social
celebrating Labor Day*



SESSION NOTES

- The annual Christmas Dinner was approved for December 9, and wine will be served.
- The new lease with ISSA has been signed for the 2023-2024 school year. The use of the library during school hours was included in the increased payment.
- Robert Stull will be coordinating with a young man wishing to work with the church to do a project for his Eagle Scout award.



Donna Amonett, Clerk of Session

5th Sunday Capital Giving Campaign



Thanks to your support, we have been able to paint our steeple and repair several of our HVAC units. But there is more work to be done! The outside of our building needs painting, we have trees that need trimming, and our storage buildings need repair and maintenance. Given that our HVAC units are quite old, they will need to be replaced in the future, possibly the near future! Please consider giving extra toward these expenses during our 5th Sunday Capital Giving Campaign.

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FINANCIAL NEWS

Fall is here and we are beginning to think of the budget for 2024. The Interpretation and Stewardship committee will be meeting in early October to begin preparing the new budget and the stewardship campaign. The good news is that the garage sale took in about \$7000, less expenses. But with all of the expenses incurred this year for A/C and building repairs, our reserves are nearly depleted.

I do appreciate all of you who have contributed so generously this year. We will be preparing up-to-date contribution statements soon so that you have that information as you are asked to estimate your support for next year. Thank you again.

P. Jack Henson, Treasurer



2023-24 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Emma Yaje
Docia Mabo
Kaorie Chi
(Bryan Butler, absent)



Membership - Let's Get to Know One Another Better

*This month, the Membership Committee is highlighting one of our new Elders, **Jose Lopez**.*

Jose is our first youth representative to the Session.

He is 18 years old and a senior at Holmes High School. He plays the trumpet in the HS Band and has been busy practicing for the fall football season.

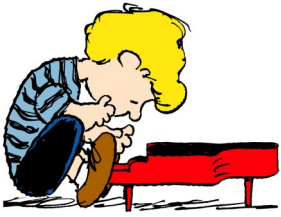
Jose is the eldest of four children in the Lopez family. His two brothers, Kiko and Jerry, were adopted by Mayra and Armando in 2014. He also has a younger sister, Juliet.

Following high school, Jose is hoping to attend college at Texas A&M San Antonio. He is interested in studying cybersecurity.

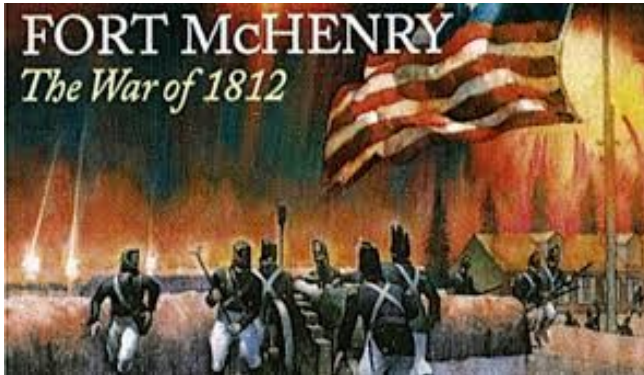
Jose enjoys playing video games and drawing when he has free time.

We're so pleased to have such a wonderful young man taking part in the leadership of our church!





SINGING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM



"The Star-Spangled Banner" is the National Anthem of the United States. The lyrics were written by lawyer and amateur poet, Francis Scott Key, after he witnessed the bombardment of Fort McHenry by British ships during the War of 1812. He was inspired in his writing by the large U.S. flag, with 15 stars and 15 stripes, flying triumphantly above the fort during the U.S. victory. Key's splendid lyric was set to music originally composed in the 1770's by British writer John Stafford Smith. The composition was adopted by the Navy in 1889, and by joint resolution of Congress became our National Anthem, an Act signed by President Hoover in 1931.

Smith's score is notoriously difficult to sing, especially by amateur vocalists. The composition has a large tonal range, and aspirant singers simply cannot reach the high notes. The lyrics are compelling to sing with drama and Victorian grammar, and even professional singers have struggled. Even skilled singers have been known to forget the words, leading some singers to pre-record and lip-sync their performances.

The most famous performance gaff occurred on May 25, 1965, when Robert Goulet (famed opera-trained singer, remembered as Sir Lancelot in *Camelot*) mangled the lyrics to the National Anthem at the opening of the second Muhammad Ali-Sonny Liston heavyweight fight. Goulet forgot the lyrics and was booed by the crowd and mocked by announcer Howard Cosell. More recently, Christina Aguilera performed wrong lyrics to the song prior to Super Bowl XLV (2011) leading to public criticism.



In the past few decades, popular vocalists have taken to stylizing the presentation of the Anthem. Common today are singers using trills, warbling, and various edits to the original composition that evoke a more modern interpretation. Whether these renditions are hip-hop, rock, pop, or Country Western, they are not what is contained in Smith's original score. Frankly, and in my opinion only, these presentations are disrespectful both to the original author and to the country. This is the National Anthem, not the National Ballad, or the National Song.

Yankee Stadium featured for many years the famed operatic baritone, Robert Merrill (1917-2004) singing the National Anthem at the opening of its ballgames. I think Merrill's performance is the best of all. Many versions are available on YouTube; just search for Robert Merrill National Anthem. You will be moved.



Merrill explained he preferred a traditional approach to the Anthem, devoid of additional ornamentation, as he explained to *Newsday* in 2000, "*When you sing the anthem, there's a legitimacy to it. I'm extremely bothered by these different interpretations of it.*"

Singing the National Anthem is important. In doing so, Americans demonstrate their devotion to the flag, an icon for the rule of law and government by, for, and of the People. May our nation be blessed, and may we always honor its heritage in a respectful, appropriate manner.

Gregory A. Nussel
Organist and Music Director
September 21, 2023



OHPC was transformed during the week of September 17-23, as we prepared for our annual garage sale. This was the best-looking sale in 38 years!



Fellowship Hall became home to holiday decorations. . .

. . .books and electronics. . .

. . .housewares. . .



. . .even polished silver and other treasures!



Jesse served as chief breakfast cook and bottle washer and helped out wherever needed.



The Blue Room hosted the women's department while men's wear hung out in the choir room. Linens, crafts, and jewelry filled the classroom.



Working together like this created great bargains for the community and about \$7000 to be used both for Mission and Outreach as well as to supplement our reserves.



Jack's hat

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

A very hearty thank-you to our many wonderful volunteers who donated stuff, sorted stuff, organized and priced stuff, then organized some more before manning the sales booths on Saturday. All that exhausting work resulted in bargains galore for our shoppers and a pretty penny for our reserve and mission funds.

And the workers are thankful to all those who donated food!



CA'S FUR

Garage Sale Fashionistas!



**Dueling
kimonos**



Join us for our annual Trunk or Treat!

What: A safe way for kids to trick or treat and a great way to reach out to our community and the International School. We'll have hotdogs with all the trimmings, games, crafts, and Trick or Treating, of course!

Where: OHPC Parking Lot (weather permitting)

Who: Everyone of all ages—invite your family, friends, and neighbors!

When: Sunday, October 29, 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

OHPC's Membership Team and Fellowship Team encourage everyone to bring a bag of candy or treats to share with the kids from our congregation, the International School, and our neighborhood so our community will see what a fantastic church we have!



Car decorations and costumes are optional.



*Blessing of the Backpacks
August 27*



October 2023



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<p>11:30 Worship 4-6 Guide Dogs</p> 	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 7 PM Choir 7 PM AA</p>	<p>5 12:30 Bridge</p> 	<p>6</p>	<p>7 1-3 PM Girl Scouts</p>
<p>8 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 Session</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>Columbus Day</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 7 PM Choir 7 PM AA</p>	<p>12 12:30 Bridge</p> 	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 10:30 AM Worship 4-6 Guide Dogs</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 7 PM Choir 7 PM AA</p>	<p>19 11 Book Club 1:00 Bridge</p> 	<p>20</p>	<p>21 1-3 PM Girl Scouts</p>
<p>22 10:30 AM Worship</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25 7 PM Choir 7 PM AA</p>	<p>26 12:30 Bridge</p> 	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 10:30 Worship 11:30 Trunk or Treat</p> 	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> 				

- 10/2 Robert Ebert
- 10/7 Maegan Myers
- 10/9 Ashley Amonett
- 10/12 Betty Jean Hill
- 10/13 Sodetou Njifouota
- 10/19 Maurene Stanton
- 10/20 Elvis Bache
- 10/21 Melvinio Moto
- 10/21 Jennifer Myers
- 10/25 Rex Ezeh
- 10/25 Noelle Huntley
- 10/28 Cody Tschirhart



- 10/10 Charlie & Nancy Redd
- 10/12 Hayward & Elinor James
- 10/18 Don & Patty McCurnin
- 10/18 Ashley & Ro Amonett
- 10/26 Charles & LaVunn Mims

Oak Hills Presbyterian Church

6739 Callaghan Road
San Antonio, Texas 78229

210-342-0271

Email: oakhills@oakhillspresbyterian.com

Web Site: www.oakhillspresbyterian.com



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Return Service Requested

Oak Branch October 2023

