

*LOVING GOD...
CHANGING LIVES*

Oak Leaves



A Publication of Oak Grove Presbyterian Church

Bloomington, Minnesota

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Deadline for the January 2012 Oak Leaves is - December 12 - Articles may be edited for space and/or content.

December
2011

Sunday, December 4 between worship services

Heifer Alternative Marketplace in Gideon Pond Hall

(See more info on page 4)



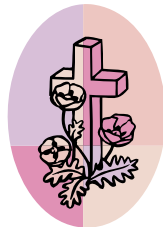
December 11

9:15 am in the Sanctuary

Children's Christmas Program

"A Christmas Collage"

(More info on page 11)



December 13 A Service of Remembrance at 6:30 pm

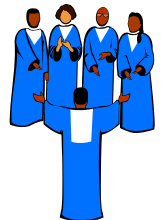
(More info on page 10)

December 18 "Canticle of Joy"

A Cantata for Christmas by Joseph M Martin

10:45 am

(More info on back cover)



Saturday, December 24

4:00 pm Family Service (no nursery, bring the entire family to the service)

11:00 pm Candlelight Communion Service

Sunday, December 25—One service at 10:45 am

OAK LEAVES

Editor Beth Angerhofer
Editor-in-Chief Bill Chadwick

Oak Leaves is a monthly publication of:

OAK GROVE

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Part-time Custodian: **Tim Dubis**
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2012 Per Capita is \$31.63

Twins Outing — Save the Date: Sunday, June 10, 2012

It's almost winter, but spring training and a better Twins season (after all it can't get much worse!) is not far behind. Sunday June 10, 2012 is the date for the annual Oak Grove Twins outing. It will be an inter-league game vs. the Chicago Cubs and the seats are in section 239 rows 3-8. We have 70 seats reserved, so ski, skate, and enjoy the snow but think baseball!



Singles Annual New Year's Day Party

Location: Jody Milton's house: 5248 W 96th St., Bloomington

Date: New Year's Day 2012 (potluck)

Time: 4:00 pm

Bring a dish to share and a game to play.
Call 952-831-7325 with questions.

Upcoming Retreats

2012 Women's Retreat at Clearwater Forest

Save the Date: January 20—22

Registrations will be accepted in December.

Beth Hart-Andersen will lead this year's discussions.

Contact Jodi Milton (952-831-7325) or Paula Uvodich (952-884-1766 Uvodich@hotmail.com) if you have questions.

2012 Men's Retreat at Clearwater Forest

Save the Date: February 3—5

Registrations will be accepted in December.

Harry Lichy will be this year's retreat leader.

Contact Greg Johnson (952-432-9389 glasm@frontiernet.net) or Bob Nesbitt (952-941-6166 bob13100@msn.com) if you have questions.

Intergenerational Weekend Retreat at Clearwater Forest

Save the Date: March 2—4

We welcome individuals, couples and families in all forms to this event.

Activities will include outdoor recreation-cross country skiing, sledding, snowshoeing, hiking, etc. Indoor activities-cards, games, puzzles, reading, resting, eating, etc.

Cost: \$58 per room per night + \$15 per person for food (\$8/child)

Final costs will depend on the size of our group

Example: fee per couple - \$116 (2 nights/room) + \$30 (food)



Please note that because of government privacy laws hospitals and care centers no longer are allowed to notify churches that a person has been admitted (even if the person lists his/her home church at admission). So the only way that the church staff will know if someone is hospitalized is if a family member or friend lets us know. (And we'd rather get 20 calls about the same person than none.) Thanks for your help!

Dear Ones,

As you see elsewhere throughout the Oak Leaves there are so many exciting opportunities for worship, education and service during Advent and Christmastide. We hope you will take advantage of these. This is a wonderful time of year for the whole church family to be together as people are home from far-flung places.

Also, this is a time of year when people without a church home may be especially receptive to an invitation from you to join in one or more of these activities. Will you issue a gentle invitation?

I hope that we will also take time to be quiet and, like Mary, "ponder in our hearts" the wonder of God's grace made known in Jesus. Advent devotional books to aid us are available in the narthex. In addition, the chapel is such a welcoming space for any who wish to take some time away from the often-frenetic activity.

Advent blessings, Pastor Bill

**WORSHIP FOR:
DECEMBER 4—25**
—
Sunday Mornings
SERVICES AT
8:15 am & 10:45 am



DECEMBER 4
2nd Sunday of Advent
Sermon by
Bill Chadwick

DECEMBER 11
3rd Sunday of Advent
Sermon by
Bill Chadwick

DECEMBER 18
4th Sunday of Advent
8:15 am Casual Service
Beth Hart-Andersen

10:45 am Choir Cantata

DECEMBER 24
Christmas Eve
4:00 pm & 11:00 pm
Sermon by
Bill Chadwick

Stewardship Update

We thank God for all of you.
Oak Grove is Loving God ...
Changing Lives and your
support of our 2011 .

Also from Pastor Bill...December is the season of gift giving

Pastor Beth and I want to say a giant THANK YOU to those of you whose gifts make the Pastors' Discretionary Fund (PDF) possible. The PDF helps members—and people referred by members—with emergency financial aid.* It is often a lifesaver (sometimes perhaps literally). Please know that this is available. If you have a need, don't hesitate to contact one of the pastors for a confidential conversation.

*Those who are not members or referred by members who come to the church seeking help are referred to Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP). They have the expertise to assist people on many fronts. Oak Grove is and has been a strong supporter of VEAP since its inception.

Stewardship Campaign demonstrates your desire to continue Oak Grove's mission and ministry. Forty-seven percent of the pledge cards mailed were returned by Commitment Sunday!

Our goal this year is to have everyone, regardless of commitment, return their pledge card. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, please do so as soon as possible.

Social Justice Meeting

Please join us the first Thursday evening of each month at 7:00 pm. We need you.
Peace,
Your friendly Social Justice Committee

Loaves and Fishes Update

A hearty THANK YOU to everyone who has stepped up to volunteer for Loaves and Fishes! Thanks to you, Oak Grove, we will be able to continue our commitment to serving meals twice each month. Of course, there is always room for more volunteers. In particular, we are looking for someone to make reminder calls to the folks who sign up each month. If you are interested or would like more information about this opportunity, call Diann Boesch at 952-887-5099.



Alternative Gift Market

The annual Heifer Alternative Gift Market will be December 4th between worship services. As usual, there will be goodies and crafts for sale — and a silent auction — as well as the opportunity to sponsor Heifer animals. All proceeds from the sale and auction will support Heifer Project, an international organization that provides families around the world with livestock to support their needs. Heifer Project also provides training in the care of the animals.

This year, we will be offering additional alternative gift options in support of other Oak Grove mission efforts. We will sell Guatemalan coffee, Palestinian olive oil, and scarves and shawls made by women in Pakistan in support of our new Schools for Peace partner, the Presbyterian Education Board. Finally, we will provide an opportunity for shoppers to participate in Kiva, a micro lending organization.

If you have items to donate for the sale or auction, bring them to church on Saturday morning, December 3 or drop them in the church office a few days before the sale.

Project Homeless Connect Volunteers Needed

The next Project Homeless Connect will be held on Dec. 12, 2011, at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Project Homeless Connect brings volunteers of all ages, backgrounds, and experience levels together to serve people in our community experiencing homelessness. There are a variety of volunteer opportunities, but the majority of volunteers will act as guides, partnering with guests to help them find the resources they want.

The guides and guests will complete a quick intake to identify service priorities for the day, and will then explore the site to visit service providers. A sit-down lunch will be provided. A background in social services is not required; however, you do need a sense of humor, the willingness to help, and the ability to be on your feet for relatively long periods. All first-time volunteers are required to attend a training and orientation session. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age.

Look for more information in the Narthex, or go to the website www.homelessconnectminneapolis.org/volunteer.htm to sign up. Contact Ron Dubis at 887-6852 or rojiti@aol.com with any questions.

Winter Coats Needed

Once again we will be collecting new and used coats for the homeless. Collection will begin on December 1st and we will continue collecting them through mid-January. The majority will be distributed to the homeless in Minneapolis through the Central Lutheran Church clothes closet downtown. The second purpose will be to provide for those Bloomington, Richfield, and Edina homeless youth who attend the Oasis drop in center here at Oak Grove. Look for the box in the entryway next to the VEAP collection area. Contact Ron Dubis at 952-887-6852 or ROJITI@aol.com if you have any questions.



Welcome Our Visitors

The responsibility to welcome visitors belongs to every member of the church. Staff, Session, and other committees can help in planning and implementing an overall strategy for welcoming visitors, but the responsibility to do the work (which is an opportunity!) belongs to every Oak Grove member. Want to be a part of this great ministry but don't feel comfortable? Here are some tips:

- Make it your personal goal whenever you are at Oak Grove to seek out one person/couple/family whom you do not know.
- Every time you enter the church building, remember how it feels to enter a room as a complete stranger.
- Point out to the visitor the location of the literature that will explain more about Oak Grove.
- Never walk away from a newcomer. Always try to introduce the visitor to another Oak Grover and thereby pass along the welcoming experience.

People often comment on how they were warmly welcomed when they first came to Oak Grove, and these are just a few tips to help you and encourage you to keep up the good work!

Presbyterian Women News

CIRCLE NEWS – Evening Star Circle meets Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Paula Uvodich for their annual Christmas potluck. Call Mary Jones, 952-831-7655. Goodrich-Nord Circle meets Wednesday, December 9, at 11 am at the Original Pancake House (70th St. across from Galleria in Edina) for their Christmas luncheon. Call Joan Stanko, 952-888-7577. Ruth Circle meets Thursday, December 8, at 9:15 am at Gideon Pond Activity Room. Call Ethel Furuli, 952-844-0435.

KNIT TREE – Presbyterian Women's Mitten Tree for Cornerstone is accepting donations of mittens, scarves, caps and other knit items. Hand-knit items are nice but store-bought items are also accepted. The mitten tree will be in the narthex through December 4. Help make a mom and her children warm and happy this Christmas season.

NEXT COORDINATING TEAM MEETING - will be held Saturday, January 7, at 8:30 am. The business meeting will begin at 9:00. All women who are members of the church are welcome to attend.

Ugandan Unitarian Universalist Minister to Speak

DATE: DECEMBER 11, 2011 at 7:00 pm

Sponsored by Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and the Oak Grove Presbyterian Church. Both churches are welcoming churches, open and affirming to persons of all sexual orientations.

LOCATION: Minnesota Valley Unitarian
Universalist Fellowship
10715 Zenith Ave S
Bloomington, MN 55431

Rev. Kiyimba is the founder of the UU church in Kampala, Uganda. Following the passage of the Anti-Gay legislation, at great personal risk, Rev. Kiyimba spoke out against this bill and mobilized Ugandans to support GLBT rights. This bill was spearheaded and funded by American Evangelists during an Anti-Gay conference led by Scott Lively in 2009.

Rev Kiyimba was exposed in the evangelical news and his life was threatened. The magazine *Rolling Stone* (no relation to the U.S. magazine) wrote an article entitled: "Hang them: They are After Our Kids". Rev. Kiyimba is now a refugee, touring the U.S. to spread his message.

*Merry
Christmas*

OUR STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



An exciting addition is now a part of our Sanctuary. The newest beautiful stained glass window was made possible because of generous donations by members of this congregation. Further phases will be constructed as donated money and gifts become available in the Dedicated Stained Glass Memorial Fund.

The designs of the stained glass windows on the left in the sanctuary are inspired by the community of Oak Grove, and the religious and spiritual tradition of the Presbyterian Church.

Each window represents a tree within a grove of trees, the canopy being diverse and complex. There are "cupped hands" that embrace these tree tops and offer them in prayer and praise. The play of round and square and organic line meandering is reminiscent of how different we all are, yet we can come together. At the base of the windows we have the intertwined three circles, symbolic of the Trinity, and hidden within them, three fish each. The fish "deep" in the design are a reminder of Luke 5 (Jesus calling disciples away from their nets). Woven with the trinity symbol we have root-like elements reminding us that our faith is rooted in Christian beliefs and that actions "grow" from those fundamental beliefs.

Adult Education Opportunities

December 4 Heifer Sunday - Come and do some early Christmas shopping! Make a contribution toward the purchase of an animal to help a Third World family toward a better life. (See article on page 4.)

December 11 Children's Christmas Pageant (*more info on page 11*)

December 18 Green Committee Presentation #3 "**Creating Doubt and Endangering our Future: Obscuring the Truth about Global Warming**"

Oak Groves, John Crampton and Al Frechette will talk about how a handful of scientists, powerful corporate interests, industry foundations, and the media are working together to create doubt about the overwhelming scientific consensus that human-caused global warming is threatening life as we know it. The talk is based on Naomi Oreske's and Erik Conway's book, The Merchants of Doubt, about how the same handful of scientists, with deep connections in politics, industry, national security, and mass media, have over four decades led campaigns to deny links between smoking and lung cancer, coal and acid rain, CFCs and ozone holes, and now greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

December 25 Merry Christmas! (No Education Hour classes)

Financials

Through Oct 31st	2011		Act vs Budg	2010
	Actuals	Budget	Fav/(Unfav)	Actuals
Income YTD	\$524,543	\$522,447	\$2,096	\$499,985
Expense YTD	\$541,410	\$557,675	\$16,265	\$513,525
Income – Expenses	(\$16,867)	(\$35,228)	\$18,361	(\$13,540)

We're heading into the homestretch with some momentum (+\$36 for the month!!)! Even though we're still in the red for the year (\$16.9K), November and December are usually our best months (thanks to you!). Please note that the 2012 Per Capita amount is \$31.63 per member.

HEY, SNOWBIRDS!

When you're heading off to warmer climes, it's difficult to keep up on your pledge payments. We can make it easy. With Oak Grove's online payment system, you can schedule your payments automatically and start or stop whenever you desire. Give it a try and see how much easier giving can be! Contact Jack Kley or Barb Phenicie with questions (p.s. you don't have to be a snowbird!).

Online payments. Easier, simpler, greener. (You may never have to spell "Presbyterian" again!)

Flowers for Christmas...

We have the opportunity on Dec. 4 and Dec. 11 to donate money in honor of, in memory of, or in remembrance of a special event to celebrate Christmas. These contributions allow us to provide flowers and greens for the sanctuary with the remainder of the donations going to VEAP.

On these same Sundays you can also order chancel flowers for each Sunday in 2012. Our goal is to have two arrangements each Sunday.

Book 'em Donations

In November Book'em gave out monies collected from the book sale - \$10,000 was again given to the city to operate two playgrounds at the end of the summer - Oak Grove was recognized as originating this program. Also \$8,000 was given to Cornerstone, another Oak Grove origination.

Thanks to all who donated books.

December Birthdays

(If you don't see your birthday, we don't have that information or you requested that it not appear.)

***Important birthday ** Significant birthday**

- 1 Cliff Christopherson
- 2 Tom McNutt
- 3 Ken Freiborg, Carolyn Hamilton,
Nancy Lamberger, Jason Rettke, Ed Turja
- 4 Deb Dukelow
- 5 Candy Alman, James Pickard (**86 yrs young)
- 6 Matthew McNutt (*17 yr old)
- 7 Bill Boehne, William Jaeger (** 87 yr young), Todd Mathison
- 8 Evelyn Gebhard
- 9 Dianne Lawson
- 10 Bill Chadwick
- 11 Nancy Bergwick, Kris Jacobson
- 13 Nicholas Benz (*17 yr old), Warren DeMuth
- 14 Carol Thomas (**86 yr young)
- 15 Sarajane Myers
- 16 Harry Estes (*85 yr young), Terry Taylor
- 19 Cathy Colborn, Chisom Esele
- 20 Dorothy Sorensen
- 21 Mary Boateng (*17 yr old)
- 23 Sue Dean, Judy Olson
- 24 Joshua Johnson
- 25 Susanne Knutson
- 26 Arlyn Grussing
- 27 Neal Greimel
- 28 Jill Dubis, Ron Nail
- 29 Dexter Freiborg (*18 yr old), Olive Kravik (**98 yr young), Larry Pearson
- 30 Ignatius Esele, Anna Rose Sullivan



Service of Remembrance

The holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas can be a busy time. There is decorating, cooking and shopping to be done. Then there is the array of social and sacred events to attend. Everywhere we turn the dazzle of the holidays surround us. Yet the very things that make this season so special can also be a source of heartache to those experiencing loss and grief.

A Candlelight Service of Remembrance has been planned to offer a time of reflection in this busy and sometimes difficult season. Everyone is welcome at the service, especially those for who have experienced grief and loss in the past year. The service will be held on **Tuesday, December 13, 6:30 pm**. During the service, you will have an opportunity to light candles in memory of loved ones as we affirm our faith, through scripture, sermon, and song. Please join us as we celebrate the promises of God made known in the one who was born in Bethlehem: promises that have already been fulfilled for those who have gone before us. A time of refreshment and fellowship hosted by our Deacons will follow in Gideon Pond Hall.

A Christmas Collage

December 11th

9:15 am: Sanctuary



All children are invited to take part in this year's Christmas Pageant, "A Christmas Collage." The presentation offers scenes of Christmas from very different perspectives – cowboys, an old time radio show, "Cool Dudes", a storybook and social media. We welcome children of all ages to take part in the presentation, regardless of how many rehearsals they can attend. Lori will make a cd of the music so that children can practice at home. We hope that many of you can attend the rehearsals that will take place on December 7th from 6:30-7:30 pm in the Sanctuary and on Saturday, December 10th at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary. On pageant day, please dress your children in their comfortable Sunday clothing. A time line can be found in the Oak Leaves as well (*see insert*). Please call Mary if you have questions: 952-888-4621.



The Children's Ministry team invites all children to take part in our "**Book Tree**" this season. We are asking the children to look through their personal libraries and select one or two gently used books (non-religious and non-violent topics) to donate to Cornerstone, for a child in need. We are not asking families to purchase a book. The object of this initiative is to help children recognize their abundance and to personally select a book that they have enjoyed and feel that another child might like as well. The tree will be up in the Community Room beginning November 27th and we will take donations until December 18th.

Advent devotional booklets are available in the narthex.



A special thank you to a wonderful congregation!

Words cannot express what my grateful heart feels. I was overwhelmed by the number of cards, by the many hugs, and the generous financial donation to my fun time in retirement. Thank you for your support throughout the years. You were my "spirit"! I treasure our time together; I feel blessed to have served with all of you!

I'm not going to say good-bye because our spirit is connected; I will just say thank you for letting me serve the Lord with you.

Carol Swisher

Thank you for your cards of sympathy and prayers after the death of my father in September. I am grateful for your support and caring. Your kind words brought comfort in this journey of grief.

-Gloria Larsen

To my friends at Oak Grove Church,

Thanks you to everyone for your prayers, notes and phone calls. I've been blessed with a successful operation and hope to get back to activities that have been put on hold for too long.

Jack Huie

I want to thank everyone on staff who filled in for me while my daughter and I were having fun! I especially want to thank Jeri Anderson for her willingness to publish the November Oak Leaves.

Brook Anderson



Condolences to the family of Kathy Howell on the death of her mother, Pat Howell, on November 14. The memorial service was November 19 in Iowa.



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www.oakgrv.org

Canticle of Joy

A Cantata for Christmas



On Sunday, December 18th at the 10:45 am worship service, the Chancel Choir will present “Canticle Of Joy” by Joseph M. Martin.

An instrumental ensemble will accompany the choir, directed by Judy Cooper and accompanied by Nancy Hauser. Vocal soloists include Lori Wasko, Ted Kocher, Karen Gerdes, Gar Nordin, Jim Carroll, and Anne St. Martin Klueh.

May this beautiful Christmas music, narration and candle lighting reawaken the promise of God’s presence and love in our lives.