

“Remember That You Are Dust”: One Year of COVID

If you joined us for worship on February 21st, you heard me talk about the basic message of Lent: “we are dust.” Biblically, we know that human beings are mortal, made from the dust of the earth, endowed with fragile bodies and short lifespans, dependent upon the grace of God for daily bread and daily breath. If you lost power during the recent ice storm, you no doubt felt that frailty. Without power, light and heat, we quickly bump up against our own weakness.



We will soon mark the one-year anniversary of the COVID pandemic. Our last “normal” pre-covid worship service was March 8th, 2020. In the year since, we’ve endured isolation, disease and fear of disease, loss of loved ones, political upheaval, relational breakdown, economic uncertainty, wildfires, ice storms, and the emotional turmoil of it all. As one friend recently asked: “when are the locusts coming?!” It’s been a year unlike any I can remember. What, if anything, is the lesson in all this? Is there any redeeming value in what we’ve endured?

The word “Lent” is derived from the Latin word for “spring.” In the spring of the year, the dirt and soil of the earth is soft, soaked by winter rain and churned up by the forces of weather. Perhaps that’s how you feel as we mark one year of the pandemic: soaked and sodden, churned up and broken down by life. Truly, this year has forced us to “remember that we are dust.” But consider what happens to soil in springtime: all that rain and weather makes for *fertile* ground. All that churning breaks the earth open *so that life can grow*. If we’ve been broken open this year, perhaps it’s because God is planting a new crop: seeding new life into old soil that needed to be tilled. The primary job of soil in springtime is to receive – to receive the seed that is sown, to receive the cultivation of the Gardener, who alone knows what he intends to harvest.

In the coming weeks, as we approach Easter, I invite you to see this pandemic in a new light: not as an interruption of the life you hoped to be living, but as necessary cultivation in your heart for a new season of growth. Let’s be on the lookout for the seeds God is planting in us: new seeds of purpose, of compassion, of love and of deepening discipleship. It’s a pattern we see everywhere, in scripture and in nature: growth emerging from broken ground, buds shooting up from soggy soil, *life springing forth from death*. It’s the Easter story – the revelation of a God who specializes in resurrection! How is he resurrecting your heart, this Lent? What seeds are springing forth? Let’s be open, prayerful and ready, as the Master Gardener does his work...

Yours in Him,

Jeremy



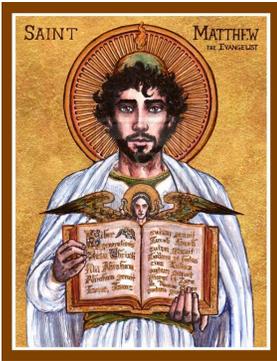
Jeremy Sanderson
Jeremy@oakhillspres.org
503-654-6173 (Pastor’s study)

the
OAK HILLS
ACORN

March
April
2021

Volume 19, Issue 2

SUNDAYS



...According to Matthew

Back in September we began a journey into Matthew's beautiful story of the life of Jesus. It's a story we need to know, about a man who changed history, and who still changes hearts and lives. This year we jump back in and follow Jesus' ministry as he teaches and heals, laughs and weeps, comforts and agitates, and ultimately walks the dusty road to Golgatha... We'll be taking our time, savoring the details as we get to know this man we call Messiah – our Savior. Join us!

March 7	"A Greater Power, A Deeper Healing"	Matthew 8: 28-9:8	
March 14	"New Rules for A New Kingdom"	Matthew 9: 9-17	Communion (Daylight Saving's time change)
March 21	"Healing Lessons, Part II"	Matthew 9: 18-34	
March 28	"Workers for the Harvest"	Matthew 9: 35-38	Palm Sunday Larry Totzke, preaching
April 2	Good Friday Prayer Vigil		4-8pm (drop-in with music & prayer stations)
April 4	EASTER Sunday		
April 11	"Their Mission, Our Mission"	Matthew 10: 1-15	Communion Eastertide Rev. Christy Polk, preaching
April 18	"Suffering Wisely, Fearing Rightly"	Matthew 10: 16-33	Eastertide
April 25	"The Great Divide"	Matthew 10: 34-42	Eastertide

Holy Week 2021 at Oak Hills

March 28, 9:15 & 11am, **PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP**. Children's Palm Processional at both services.

April 2, 4-8pm, **GOOD FRIDAY PRAYER VIGIL**

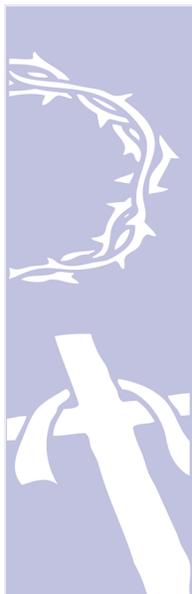
April 4, **EASTER WORSHIP** and **FLOWERING OF THE CROSS**.

7:00am Sunrise Worship Service

9:15am Worship Service

10:30am Family Egg Hunt

11:15am Worship Service



Daylight Savings Time begins

March 14th.

Set those clocks ahead One Hour, so you don't arrive late to church.

OAK HILLS PURPOSE

Gather... Grow... Glorify

To be gathered by the Spirit as a community of faith, to grow into the likeness of Christ, and to glorify God every day in all we do.

CORE VALUES

Bible-Centered, Prayer, Missional, Generosity, Hospitality, Sabbath, Empathy, Wholeness

To receive *the* OAK HILLS ACORN via email, contact the office, ohpc_admin@oakhillspres.org



**VBS IS COMING
BACK!!!**



Save the Date for Oak Hills' VBS:

Rocky Railway: Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through

July 19-23, 2021

VBS will be mostly outdoors this year!

Ages 4 years through rising 6th grade are invited to join in!

All Covid protocols (as of July) will be followed, including mask-wearing for children 5 years and up, if recommended at that time.

Pre-registration will be required, and will begin in May.

We can't wait to get back to VBS!

Idaho Servant Adventures Camp 2021

OHPC YOUTH ARE GOIN' BACK TO IDAHO!!!

(...and we're taking 6th graders—yup!)

Save the Date: August 1-6, 2020

Cost: \$184 (scholarships available)

Ages: Rising 6th grade-High School

Expect to participate in fundraisers and also *have a lot of fun* as we prepare for another week of service and awesomeness at Shoshone Mountain Retreat.

Contact Pastor Jeremy to pre-register!

Jeremy@oakhillspres.org

~Pastor Christy, christy@oakhillspres.org



Pastoral Sabbaticals: What You Need to Know



If you joined us for our recent Congregational Meeting, you heard the announcement of our upcoming pastoral sabbaticals. The Oak Hills session has granted sabbatical leave to both pastors – Christy from June through August of this year, and Jeremy from June through August of 2022.



Why a sabbatical? The concept of sabbatical derives from the biblical concept of sabbath, which means to “cease” or “rest.” The goal of a sabbatical is rest and spiritual renewal. The work of ministry is unique in that it requires not just a healthy mind and body, but a healthy soul and spirit. Pastors who serve for too long without stepping back to reflect, pray, and renew their calling become a danger to themselves and their flock. Knowing this, our Presbytery requires that a sabbatical leave be granted in the terms of call of its clergy.

Why a sabbatical for both pastors? While technically Christy has been our associate for only four years, in truth she has functioned in her ministry role for a decade. During that time, she has balanced her ministry role alongside parenting and supporting Eben’s demanding career. The Polk family has faithfully given Oak Hills their evenings and weekends, and are overdue for some dedicated family time, especially in the aftermath of a challenging year.

How will ministry continue? Thanks to a capable team of volunteers, we will be moving forward with our normal summer ministries of Vacation Bible School and the Youth Mission Trip. Pastor Jeremy will chaperone the youth trip alongside some willing parents. Our VBS team is already underway planning this year’s event.

While pastor Jeremy is away in summer of 2022, we will utilize the resources of our congregation, Presbytery and the broader ministry community to ensure that preaching, worship, pastoral care and ministry oversight continue. Pastor Christy and our capable staff, alongside the Oak Hills session, will take the lead.

What about the Lilly Grant? The Eli Lilly Foundation invites churches to apply for clergy renewal grants of up to \$50,000. These competitive grants fund sabbatical experiences for pastors, including travel and study expenses, and supplemental funds for churches to cover pulpit supply, renewal activities and fellowship resources in the pastor’s absence. Oak Hills will be applying for a Lilly Grant to help fund pastor Jeremy’s 2022 sabbatical (see next page for Jeremy’s sabbatical plans).

Pastor Jeremy's Sabbatical Project: "The Kingdom in the Margins"

Lilly Grant applicants are encouraged to develop a clear focus of study for their time away. As I began to pray about how best to use this sabbatical season, a clear theme emerged. *"The Kingdom in the Margins"* is what I am calling my sabbatical project. My theme verse is Matthew 11:25-26, where Jesus suggests that the things of God are "hidden from the wise and learned" but "revealed to little children." Jesus made clear that the "little" people – the simple, the poor, the needy – understood the gospel in ways that the powerful and privileged may not. When the church forgets its position of humble need and dependence, its life and ministry grow distorted. My hope is to spend my sabbatical exploring life among believers "in the margins," listening and learning about the ways that Christ is uniquely present in places of weakness and need, hoping to glean wisdom for our own life and ministry here at Oak Hills. Elements of the project may include:

A visit with the Rasmussen family serving with Wycliffe International in Cameroon, and/or a visit with Lahash International Ministry partners in East Africa, exploring how ministries there are shaped by the realities of poverty, persecution and need.



A study trip to work with Dr. John Swinton of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, who specializes in ministry with and for the disabled community.

A visit to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, home of my own ancestors, to observe how native believers there are addressing poverty and mental illness within a marginalized community.



All three of these destinations represent parts of my own spiritual journey that I long to revisit. My prayer is that as I immerse myself in the "margins of the kingdom," my perspective will be refreshed in ways that fuel our approach to ministry here at Oak Hills. Specifically, I'll be asking questions like:

1. *How do communities of need define resources differently? How do they define "success" or "failure" in ministry?*
2. *What do people in the margins understand about Jesus and his kingdom that the comfortable and the privileged may not grasp?*
3. *What would it look like here at Oak Hills to go about ministry in a way that reflects the kingdom values of trust, dependence, inclusion and simplicity, rather than pursuing worldly goals such as security, power and influence?*

Part of my project will involve applying the insights from my sabbatical to our day-to-day life here at Oak Hills. Stay tuned for updates on the Grant Project and what it will mean for our fellowship!

In the meantime, *please join me in praying that God will open up this door for renewal.*

This Lent, Oak Hills is eating ... Rice & Beans!!



Lily enjoying her Rice & Beans dinner

Rice & Beans Continues!

Though we aren't able to have Wednesday dinners together this Lent, we aren't letting COVID stop us from eating Rice & Beans with our friends at Lahash! Many have already stopped by church to grab their take-home rice & beans kits, with a rice & beans meal, recipe card, and devotional attached. If you haven't grabbed yours yet, its not too late! Stop by church Sunday morning or during weekday office hours.

Others are approaching Rice & Beans month in their own way, choosing to eat one, two or even seven simple rice & beans meals per week, and donating the grocery savings to our partners at Lahash. Donations can be made using the giving jar here at church, by sending in a check, or through our website: www.oakhillspres.org/online-giving/.



Once final donations trickle in after Easter, we'll share the total amount raised. What a joy to be connected with believers around the globe, serving Christ together this Lent!

Questions contact ~Sylvia Totzke, Missions Team

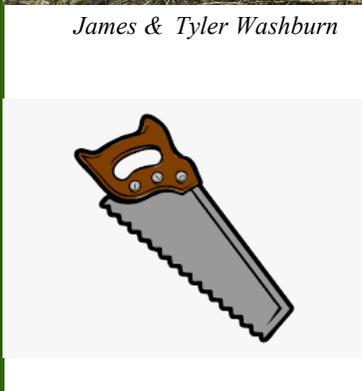


James & Tyler Washburn

Thanks to the many volunteers who came out to help us clean up storm debris! We visited some homes to help out, and got a good start on our campus cleanup. Stay tuned for more work dates...



Dean O'Dell, Craig Munn & Jared Burns



Louie Spisla & Norm Smith

Women's Association

continues to meet on Zoom, the second Thursday of the month, 9:30-11:30 AM.

Three meetings remain:

March 11, April 8, and May 13.

~Louise Anderson, coordinator

Prayer Chain

You are invited to join our telephone or email Prayer Chain, to commit to pray for those who have requested prayer for themselves or their loved ones.

~Joann Devlin

Backpack Buddies

The team remains on standby, to fill another round of food boxes, or start packing bags for the weekend when schools open. We have 101 peanut butter jars on hand, ready for the next packing. ~Jim & Louise Anderson, Co-coordinators for BPB



New!



Follow Oak Hills on Twitter and Instagram as [Oak Hills Church PDX](#).



You can continue to find us on Facebook and YouTube as Oak Hills



Presbyterian Church.

We appreciate the generous giving spirit of Oak Hills. Thank you for all the donations for Love INC's nonfood pantry drive. Love INC serves many low income families who are in need of these items. Bless you!

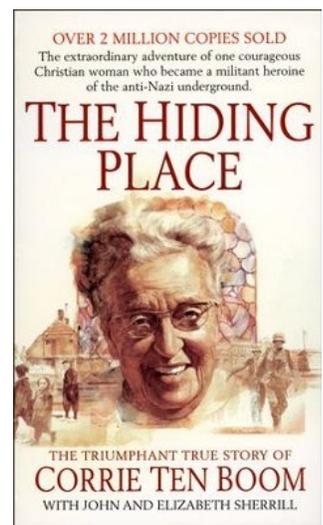
~Cathy Searles, Missions & Caring Elder



“The Hiding Place” Book Discussion with Pastor Jeremy

A number of you recently joined me in reading “The Hiding Place,” Corrie Ten Boom’s remarkable memoir of the Holocaust. There are still copies available for those who haven’t read it – contact the church office to obtain a copy. ***We are planning a special book discussion to wrap up the experience, which will take place on International Women’s Day, Monday, March 8th at 7pm via Zoom.*** I’ll be sending a Zoom link to those who received copies of the book – let me know if you’d like to join in! Questions to ponder in preparation for the discussion:

- How did the Ten Boom family’s faith shape their response to the growing threat of Nazism? What decisions did they make on the basis of their Christian convictions that others may not have made?
- Name some ways Corrie and her family saw evidence of answered prayer or of God’s miraculous provision.
- What part of Corrie’s story was most personally moving for you?
- What lessons does this book offer for believers today?





O God of my exodus,
Great was the joy of Israel's sons
when Egypt died upon the shore,
Far greater the joy
when the Redeemer's foe lay crushed in the dust!

Jesus strides forth as the victor,
conqueror of death, hell, and all opposing might;
He bursts the bands of death,
tramples the powers of darkness down,
and lives forever.

He, my gracious surety,
apprehended for payment of my debt,
comes forth from the prison house of the grave
free, and triumphant over sin, Satan, and death.

Show me the proof that his vicarious offering is accepted,
that the claims of justice are satisfied,
that the devil's scepter is shivered,
that his wrongful throne is leveled.

Give me the assurance that in Christ I died,
in him I rose,
in his life I live,
in his victory I triumph,
in his ascension I shall be glorified.

– *Puritan Prayer, from the Valley of Vision* (adapted)



2021

Oak Hills Presbyterian Church

5101 SE Thiessen Road ■ Milwaukie, OR 97267
 503-654-4321 ■ ohpc_admin@oakhillspres.org
 |www.oakhillspres.org

March

SUNDAYS

Worship 9:15am & 11am

Youth Group (zoom) 6:30pm Middle School
 7:30pm High School

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28 9:15 & 11am Worship Youth (zoom)	1 <i>Office Closed</i> 12-6pm TFR	2 12-6pm TFR	3 10am Staff Mtg 12-6pm TFR	4	5	6 9am Men's Breakfast (zoom)
7 9:15 & 11am Worship Youth (zoom)	8 <i>Office Closed</i> 12-6pm TFR	9 12-6pm TFR	10 10am Staff Mtg 12-6pm TFR 2:00pm Mission & Caring Team	11 9:30am Women's Association	12	13
14 9:15 & 11am Worship  DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS Youth (zoom)	15 <i>Office Closed</i> 12-6pm TFR	16 12-6pm TFR 7pm Session Mtg	17  10am Staff Mtg 12-6pm TFR	18	19	20
21 9:15 & 11am Worship Youth (zoom)	22 <i>Office Closed</i> 12-6pm TFR	23 12-6pm TFR	24 10am Staff Mtg 12-6pm TFR	25	26	27
28 Palm Sunday  9:15 & 11am Worship Youth (zoom)	29 <i>Office Closed</i> 12-6pm TFR	30 12-6pm TFR	31 10am Staff Mtg 12-6pm TFR	1	2	3 9am Men's Breakfast (zoom)



Gather ... Grow ... Glorify

OAK HILLS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5101 SE Thiessen Road | Milwaukie OR 97267
 503.654.4321 | www.oakhillspres.org
 Rev. Jeremy Sanderson, Pastor (Jeremy@oakhillspres.org)
 Rev. Christy Polk, Associate Pastor, Christian Ed.
 (Christy@oakhillspres.org)
 Sue Howard, Administrative Assistant
 (ohpc_admin@oakhillspres.org)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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4 EASTER  7am Sunrise Worship 9:15 & 11:15am Worship 10:30am Family Egg Hunt	5 <i>Office Closed</i> 12-6pm TFR	6 12-6pm TFR	7 10am Staff mtg 12-6pm TFR	8 9:30am Women's Association	9	10
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