



Oak Hills Presbyterian Church
Rev. Katheryn Barlow-Williams

"For dust you are and to dust you shall return." Genesis 3:19

Dear Church Family:

God is a creator who uses a strange palette of dust and dirt; spit and mud, broken dreams and contrite hearts to paint a beautiful portrait of human life. Through the Holy Spirit, God sweeps up human ashes to design masterpieces. This is the story of Scripture from beginning to end. God breathed life into Adam and Eve. When they were covered in the dust of shame and guilt, God began a new painting so their lives could continue in love. That was the first story of redemption, but certainly not the last. Noah, Moses, Abraham and Sarah, King David, the disciples, the blind man, the lame man, and the woman at the well, are just a few in the cast of God's redeemed characters. God loved them and believed in them even when they did not believe in God, or themselves.

It is easy to get discouraged about the dust and dirt that gets kicked up as we make our way through this world. Try as we might, we can't get our slate clean. It's discouraging because we would like to do better, but we keep making the same mistakes and the same old dust settles over our lives. The dust of guilt, resentment, fear, and even greed grows thick in our souls. When that happens we must follow the lead of our ancestors found in Scripture. Like them, we can open our hearts to the power of divine love. We can remember that human dust is God's favorite medium to create life portraits. Instead of wallowing in self-pity or denial, we can simply place our ashes on the divine palette and let God use it to paint a new and wondrous beginning to our life story.

The beginning of the new year beckons us to make resolutions and with firm resolve, we vow to do better. But then before the end of January, we are back to our same old bad habits, and often discouraged and defeated. We can't keep a clean slate. It's impossible. But it is possible to return to God again and again and again to give God our dust. In our hands, dust is just dust; useless, annoying, and even sickening. But in God's hands, human dust is the precious, cherished and unique oil that paints the wonder and the mystery of human life.

May God's paintbrush swirl through our lives in the coming year so that Christ's story of redemption can be proclaimed in our world today.

In Christ,
Katheryn

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January Worship

Jan. 1, Galatians 4:4-7 (Reuben Lashley) “The Children of God” In Paul’s letter to the Galatians he offers them this reminder “...you are no longer a slave, but God’s child...” As we begin a New Year, it is easy for us to look at the ways in which we do not measure up to those around us. We make promises and resolutions of how we want to change. But how often do we really take time and view ourselves the way that God views us? Regardless of who, what or where we are...we are God’s children.

Jan. 8, Mark 1:4-11 “Prophet Gone Wild” John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness to proclaim the coming of Christ. Hungry for hope and meaning, people traveled to hear John’s message of redemption. While seekers were being baptized in the wilderness, Jesus entered the waters with them. Our God does not stand on the shore refusing to get dirty. Jesus enters the wilderness and muddy waters of the human experience to tell us that we are loved and cherished.

Jan. 15, John 1: 43-51 “Surprised by Goodness” When Jesus called his first disciples, he simply said, “Follow me.” When told that Jesus came from Nazareth, Nathanael asked, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Clearly he expected the Messiah to be of more distinguished origins. Sometimes God’s greatest blessings come from unlikely and even undesirable beginnings. Instead of looking back on the low places we might have been, Christ calls us to follow him into a future filled with love.

Jan. 22, Mark 1:14-20 “Leaving for Love” According to Mark, when Jesus called his first disciples, they immediately left everything without hesitation. The power of divine love drove them away from all they knew to embrace a promise yet fulfilled. On our faith journey, there will be times when we must leave behind an old life to embrace what is only the promise of a new life that is yet to be found. During those uncertain times, we must keep our focus on Christ and follow his love.

Jan. 29, Mark 1:21-28 “Living Truth” Jesus was an amazing teacher of divine love and law. He literally lived God’s truth. According to Mark, people were astounded when Jesus taught in the temple. When a man with an unclean spirit confronted Jesus while he was teaching, Jesus healed the man by first ordering silence. Jesus continues to teach us today and sometimes we must learn to be silent to experience the fullness of Christ’s healing power.

Sunday Morning Adult Education, 9:15 a.m.

Bible Study The Present Word: Room “A”

Karen Seal, Bob Dalglish, Alita Cooper & Betty Sneed

Unit I: God’s Covenant

January 1: God Watches Over Joseph
Genesis 39:7-21a

Unit II: God’s Protection

January 8: Joseph Finds Favor
Genesis 41:37-45, 50-52

January 15: God Preserves a Remnant
Genesis 45:3-15

January 22: Joseph Transmits Abraham’s Promise
Genesis 50:15-26

January 29: Out of Egypt
Exodus 15:1-3, 19, 22-26

Social Issues Class

What it Means to be Presbyterian,
Library, Rev. Barlow-Williams

All new members are encouraged to this class to learn more about our church, and to meet members of our congregation.

Using *The Presbyterian Handbook*, we will explore historical and theological information about Presbyterian beliefs alongside fun-filled facts and practical tips on being a churchgoing follower of Jesus Christ. Complete with illustrations, the book presents a wonderful combination of vast truths, complex details, and bits of humor about Presbyterian understanding of the Christian life.

Sunday Fellowship Hour

The after worship fellowship hour is growing and many have begun to participate. Come on down and enjoy the "fellowship".

The volunteer calendar for 2012 is available; please sign up for the Sunday of your choice. The calendar is posted on the main hallway at the bulletin board. Hosts are asked to provide a light snack for about 50 people to enjoy as they spend some time in fellowship. Please feel free to use your imagination; this is an excellent opportunity to try out that new or old snack recipe. Feel free to use items that are available in the kitchen and pantry. **Many have offered donations – those are greatly appreciated.** *Thanks to those who have hosted the Sunday Reception.*

Men's Fellowship Breakfast

Saturday,

January 14, 2012, 8 a.m.

Fellowship and Planning Session



Donald Braswell presents

Gli Unici & Guests

Donald Braswell is doing a major fundraiser at the Laurie Auditorium for Haven For Hope!

All proceeds—

100% is going to Haven For Hope.

It will be a spectacular evening!

Saturday, January 7, 2012

8:00 pm

Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.



Save the Date

House with a Heart Gala

Friday, February 10th, 2012

Join us for a fabulously fun evening to benefit
House of Neighborly Service

Crowne Plaza

San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel

6:00pm - 11:30pm

Tickets \$65 per person

Invite your family, friends, and associates to enjoy a delicious gourmet dinner, silent and live auctions and dancing.

This celebration that will help raise funds to help keep the ministry, programs and services of HNS a vital and active part of the Westside community.



Let's Recycle

Remember to recycle your Christmas cards. Just cut off the front of the card (with no written messages) and send to the following address:

St Jude's Ranch for Children
Recycled Card Program
100 St. Jude Street
Boulder City, NV 89006-0100



Don't forget that the stamps get recycled too. The receptacle for the stamps is in the hallway across from the office.

If you have any questions, call me at 698-3987.

Joy Eckbreth

1. We have welcomed three new members in the past month. Esperanza Pensado (children Edna and Diego), Chantal Moto (baby Melvinio), and Mike Alphin. Carol Johnston has transferred to First Presbyterian Church in San Marcos.

2. Session approved having the broken sewer line replaced at a cost of about \$6,000. The money will come from the Capital Improvement Fund. The contract on the AC units was renewed as was the insurance continuing with the same companies in both cases.

3. The annual congregation meeting will be on Sunday, January 29, following the worship service.

4. WiFi service is now available throughout the church. The router is near the library with repeaters now in the office and in Room A which will reach into the sanctuary. Thanks to Reuben for installing these.

5. Session and the Stewardship Committee have been working on balanced budgets. An undesignated gift of \$10,000 was placed into Holding and will be applied to the 2011 budget. The Christmas dinner earned about \$1,000 since the cost of the food was covered by a donor. The Annual Report will have the final numbers for the year. For 2012, committee expenditures are being cut substantially trying not to adversely affect programs. Unless Estimates of Giving increase significantly, one reduction will be our mission giving and our support of Presbytery. Local mission will be given priority. In 2011, we made investments in church staff as a step of faith and that step is beginning to reap dividends with new

active members joining us.



6. New Year's Day comes on a Sunday. Even though you may be up past midnight, roll out of bed and begin the new year with God at 10:30 am at Oak Hills Presbyterian Church.

7. Session appointed a special committee to plan an application to the Lily Endowment for the summer of 2013 for a grant of \$50,000. If successful, this grant will accomplish two major things: 1) It will permit the pastor to spend three months on leave using that time to refresh and have time for renewal and reflection. This is the major thrust of the Endowment's purpose. 2) The congregation will be able to use some of the money to have church program renewal. Some of the money will also be used to pay an interim pastor. If we are successful, it is a win-win situation. The committee, The Pastor Sabbatical Committee, is composed of Frank Walmsley (chair), Betty Sneed, Nancy Wilson, Reyes Ramos, and Katheryn Barlow-Williams. Members of the congregation will be recruited to help plan the congregation renewal portion of the proposal. Questions can be directed to any of us.

8. God's Gift Factory (where children make gifts for their parents) was very successful again. Youth will be going to Mid-Winter Retreats on Jan. 13-15 (Jr. Hi), and Jan. 20-22 (Sr. Hi).

Frank Walmsley, Clerk of Session

FINANCIAL NEWS



As we approach the end of 2011, we are working hard to make the year balance out financially. With the proceeds from several activities including the Christmas Dinner, XYZ Luncheon, the Braswell Concert and the generous extra donations from members, we are in much better shape than was predicted last month. The Interpretation and Stewardship Committee has prepared a very conservative budget for the Session and as we approach the January Session meeting and budget approval time, the Session will have a plan for 2012.

One of our cost-cutting measures was to order fewer contribution envelopes. If you had a number above 200, you will be assigned a new number. Please make sure to use your new assigned number.

I end 2011 by saying *Thank You* to all who have contributed so generously to the work of God at Oak Hills Presbyterian Church. We look forward to the challenges of 2012 knowing that God is with us.

Happy New Year!

JACK HENSON, FINANCE OFFICER

EXtra Years of Zest

Happy New Year! Now, before I jump too quickly into 2012, I'd like to thank Jack Henson for hosting a fabulous Christmas luncheon for our group at his home. Not only was the food superb and the company engaging, but the money raised came right back to our church. Jack, thank you for your generosity and for creating an afternoon of wonderful memories for us!

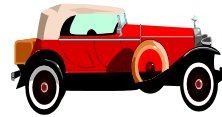
If you look on our XYZ bulletin board you will see a detachable list of our activities for the next several months. Please take one to keep in your purse, or for you fellas that don't carry purses – your wallet. I've got some fun and interesting activities planned that you're sure to want to add to your calendar. If you're reading this and have never joined our group before then 2012 is the perfect time to jump in.

This month will see the return of one of our more popular (and oft requested) activities: The OHPC Murder Mystery Luncheon. Maybe you've seen pictures of our past luncheons in the hallway just outside of the choir room and have wondered what all of the fun was about. Well, now is the time to find out. Make room on your schedule to join us on Wednesday, January 4th at 10am in Fellowship Hall. See me if you have any questions but I can assure you that



only the most minimal of acting skills is required and we use clues from the game's writers. Easy! I'll serve a light lunch for a small donation so we can work right through to find the guilty party. This year's theme is: Once Upon a Murder. Featuring the likes of Jack and Jill, Little Miss Muffet, Cinderella, Little Bo Peep... Don't forget to sign up.

This month will also see the return of Jack Henson's Antiques Roadshow on Thursday, January 19th at 10 am in Fellowship Hall. Bring your friends for a morning of fun and education. Most importantly, bring your antiques for Jack to examine and evaluate. Jack has been doing this program for our group for many years as well as for Oasis. As usual, Jack will be utterly entertaining but you'll be surprised, I promise, on how much you'll learn. Please join us. Afterwards, a lunch will be coordinated at a nearby restaurant.



Best wishes for an exceptional new year filled with good health, good friends and the love of God.

Kelley Kelch, Older Adult Ministry Coordinator

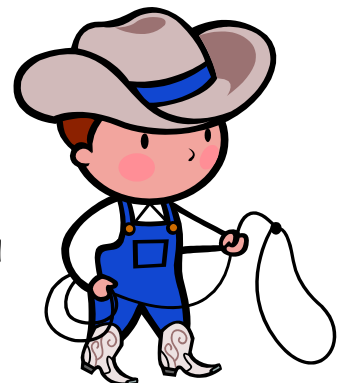
Children's Enrichment Center

Dear Oak Hills Congregation,

It's hard to believe that 2011 is already a memory and we have begun the New Year. We have all returned from our Christmas break rested, relaxed and ready to continue the fun and excitement we have planned in our classrooms. We will have a pajama day in January, along with each class exploring themes based on the interests of the children. The staff and I will spend January 2nd as an in-service day reviewing the Creative Curriculum and working on webbing our themes with the children. The week of January 23rd - 27th, CEC will host a New Family Week, when we will provide tours and information for potential families for the upcoming 2012-2013 school year. If you know families of young children looking for a quality preschool, please spread the word! On Fri. Jan. 20th the staff and board members will have their own CEC Cowboy Breakfast. We will continue the western theme the following week with a trail ride in our Music and Movement classes; be on the lookout for all the cowboys and cowgirls rustling around the building.

Everyone at CEC wishes our friends at Oak Hills Presbyterian Church a happy and prosperous 2012!

Jeanne O'Brien, Director



And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Revelation 21:3-5

Growing up, we spent almost every New Year's with my mother's family in Mexico. They do New Year's Day a little different in Mexico, at least they did when I was there as a child. All of the family comes together after Christmas and prepares for this massive celebration full of food, music, dancing and...of course...fireworks.

The thing I loved the most as a child (as any child does) was the fireworks. There was no major fireworks show to attend with professionals and security. Instead everyone went out and bought a personal collection to try and display their own miniature fireworks show. Kids would stand on the roofs or balconies of houses and throw the lit fireworks onto the street below. Now, these were not your typical factory produced fireworks in tight plastic wrapping with a warning label on the outside. These were homemade explosives, oftentimes nothing more than tightly packed newspaper in the shape of a triangle with gun powder inside, designed to illicit the largest flash, boom, and sparkle possible. The closer you got to midnight, the louder the explosions came. Finally, at midnight, a massive hour long eruption of dust and smoke, newspaper and gunpowder, dirt and haze filled the night sky with bright flashes of light.

Since the town was situated on the gulf coast, mist and rain regularly came through the night. When we awoke in the morning all of the dust, smoke, and dirt were washed away. It has always been such a beautiful picture to me of what the New Year entails. When we look back at the things we haven't done, or the things we wished we had done differently, it can appear as a conglomerate mess of dust and dirt. When it seems that all of the mess we created has exploded all around us into an inconceivable scene of chaos; the rain of God's grace, love and forgiveness falls upon us, and we are able to begin anew again. May you feel at the start of this New Year that whatever circumstance or situation has clouded your life; God is still there, ever present and able to wipe away the mess of yesterday and make us ready for the beauty of tomorrow.

In Christ,

Reuben

Mo-Ranch

Mid-Winters Retreat

Jr. High, Jan. 13-15, 2012

Sr. High, Jan. 20-22, 2012

Don't miss the fun! Mark your calendar and invite a friend to join us for a super fun weekend. Details & registration forms are posted in the Narthex. Questions? Call Susanna or Reuben.



**Join us in the New Year
Party in a Box**

January 8th

10:30am

**Don't miss out on this
wonderful celebration
planned by Susanna for our
children and youth during our
January 8th worship service**



Les Miserable

**Just a Reminder:
The Majestic Theater
January 5th, 8 pm**

Please see Reuben if you have any questions regarding tickets or directions.

Save the Date!

Super Bowl Party

February 5, 2012 5 pm

Location(s): TBD



2011 Contribution Statements



Our financial volunteers and staff are working diligently to prepare your contribution statements for 2011. Please be on the lookout in the month of January to make sure that your statement arrives.

Good Grief Discussion & Care Group

Tuesday, Jan. 24, 11:30 a.m.

If you have lost a loved one, or suffered another significant loss such as the loss of a job, health, or relationship, please join us as we seek to rely on God's healing strength and compassion.

Born to Run Book Discussion

Saturday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m.

Barnes & Noble La Cantera Mall

Read Christopher McDougall's book, **Born to Run**, this month and join us in February to discuss this amazing story about human resilience and triumph. Even if you are not a runner, McDougall's work will inspire you to transcend self-imposed limitations to discover your life's joy.

2012 Planning Meeting February 4th, 9am

Session and Committee Chairs

Please join us for a light breakfast to discuss God's dreams and goals for OHPC in 2012

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 29th

Immediately following morning
worship



Members, please make plans to join us for this meeting to hear reports from your church committees and staff regarding the 2011 year.

The Membership Committee would like to invite you to participate in our "each one invite one" celebration.



Worship Service

January 29th

Take this opportunity to invite a friend or family member to experience God's love in our church community.

Oak Hills Presbyterian Church

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Return Service Requested

Oak Branch January 2012

