

OCKER BRETHREN CHURCH

Serving Christ, Serving Our Community

APRIL 2024

Sunday School News

Sunday, April 3rd is First Sunday Fellowship at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Breakfast is **POTLUCK**. All are asked to bring a breakfast item to share.

Sunday School is hosting the Quarterly Craft Retreat April 19 & 20. Meal Schedule is: Friday Dinner – Rose Ann’s Standard Class, Saturday Lunch – Mayberry Class, Saturday Dinner – Books of the Bible Class. Help is needed for Clean Up on Saturday Evening. See Tracie for more info.

Looking ahead: Graduate Luncheon will follow Worship on May 5th. Entire meal will be provided by the Sunday School. If you have a graduate of 8th Grade, High School or College, please let any C.E.C. Officer know by April 21st. We do not miss anyone.

I want to begin this article with telling you how proud I am to be your pastor. I thank God everyday that he has given me this wonderful opportunity to serve such an amazing community of believers. Each year that goes by, I am more and more thankful that God led us to Ocker....and so very thankful Ocker has seen fit to continue to allow me to serve!

As we are still, hopefully, on a spiritual “cloud-nine” from Easter just barely behind us...I thought it would be appropriate to share an Easter devotion I recently read from my friend Wes Eades (Christian author and minister). I think it is important for me to read as much as I can and then to share some of those voices with you.

I am sure you have noticed that, many times, I use my newsletter article as a “pulpit” for those voices.

In his blogpost, Dr. Eades describes the truth of Easter in a very unique way that I thought you might enjoy.

Imagine you are hiking along one of the most amazing trails in the world, the Appalachian Trail. (see note at bottom). Imagine that you are somewhere along this 2000 mile trek that stretches from Georgia to Maine, enjoying the sanctuary formed by a canopy of huge pines and decorated with colorful foliage. You hike alone, taking in the sort of beauty that has convinced thousands of pilgrims that there must surely be a Loving Artist under girding creation.

You see the dark clouds forming in the distance, and the breeze in your face lets you know they are moving your way. A sense of awe is mixed with a bit of anxiety as you see the first flash of lightning, and you realize a storm is approaching. You’d said you wanted the full experience of this trail, and it looks like your wish is coming true.

The sun is going down. The light recedes quickly as the clouds move overhead. You hear the thunderclap, and the first drops of rain splash on your face. Thankfully, your map indicates a tiny wayside cabin is ahead, placed there for just such situations.

You bust through the cabin door just as the deluge hits. You stumble straight across to the little cot, drop your pack, and lie down. The huge smile on your face reflects both the joy of the experience and your dumb luck at having found shelter at just the right moment. Exhaustion hits, so you roll over on your side, hoping to sleep despite the stormy symphony playing outside the little window.



....Continued from previous page.

And that's when you see it. In the dark, coiled right next to the door you have just entered through, is one of the biggest snakes you have ever seen in your life. Suddenly every nerve ending in your body is firing. "Oh my Goodness!" You stare at the calm creature, trying to make out any sort of markings that would give you a hint about just what level of danger you are in. But it's too dark. An occasional lightning flash offers a bit of light, but to no avail. You don't know if it's a copperhead or just some big ol' garden snake. "What can I do?" There's nothing you can do, except lie there as motionless as possible, and hope that whatever energy your entry might have stirred in the little monster has dissipated. You simply pray that you don't look like food.

Minutes pass, though they seem like hours. You can't quite keep your eyes open, but you sure as heck can't let them completely close. The full force of the storm is now right overhead. And suddenly a lightning bolt illuminates the tiny cabin like a football stadium. The shock of light lasts for only 3 seconds, but that three seconds is more than enough time for you to reach a startling conclusion. "That's not a snake, that's a coil of rope?!" And once more you mutter, "Oh my Goodness!"

The near-pitch dark returns. Nothing has changed, yet everything has changed. It still LOOKs like a snake by the door, but now you know. You know that you know. You know that you can go to sleep, and continue your adventure in the morning.

Sometimes our lives "go dark" and in our "dark nights" we think we see scary things that threaten to hurt and injure....so we stress out and lie awake at night hoping and plotting strategies to avoid the seemingly impending "attack."

But the good news of the resurrection (which we just celebrated) is that Jesus took away death's ability to scare and threaten. The resurrection is the flashes of light that we get in our lives that reveals there is nothing to fear. Are you watching for those "flashes?"

One of the responsibilities of a church body is to help those "in the dark" by flashing the light of Christ on that which scares them. I think we do that really well here at Ocker. And I want to encourage you to do that more and more. If we keep "flashing the light of Christ" into the darkness, we are going to have some bright days ahead of us – I promise.

I will see you on Sunday – I hear it is going to be a bright day....I will save a seat for you.

Brad

Baby Blanket Buddies

Hi all! Thank you for your baby blanket donations for Hope Pregnancy Center in Temple. I know that the women that have received these blankets have been blessed and felt the love of God through your work and your prayers. This is my final request for handmade blankets for Hope. Please call or contact me by April 7 if you have any blankets so that I may deliver them in early April. You can call or text me at 512-632-0642 and I will arrange to pick them up so that they can be delivered. Thanks again and blessings be upon you. Maggie

Board of Elders Meeting

Wednesday
April 10
6:30 pm
Meetings are always open to all.

Matthew Bible Study

The bible study for the Book of Matthew continues. We meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm with the exception of Family Game night or other major church events. All are welcome. Come and enjoy the group fellowship and learning together as we explore what Matthew has to teach us about who Jesus is. Whether you are just beginning in learning about the Bible or you have studied for a long time, there is a place at the table for you. Hope to see you there! Shalom, Maggie



Operation Christmas Child Toy Drive



During the November OCC Packing Party, we were able to pack ALL toys collected over the past year. Each box is always full of many variety of toys ranging from bouncy ball, dolls, hot wheels, frisbees, and much more.

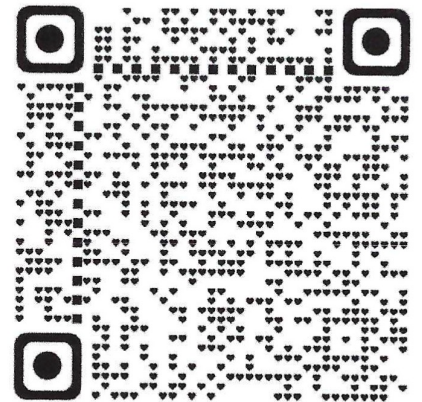
For the months of **April** and **May**, Operation Christmas Child will be have a **TOY DRIVE** to collect as many toys as possible. We want each box as full as possible!! **We are asking everyone to participate in the Toy Drive and bring in at least one toy each week for the months of April and May!** Please place all toys into the collection box.

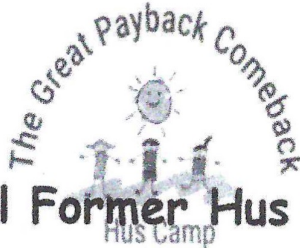
*The collection box is located under the OCC bulletin board in the fellowship hall just before the hallway leading to the Sunday school rooms.

The **Amazon Wishlist** can be access through:

- The Ocker Brethren Church website under Ministries
- Ocker Brethren Church Facebook page

Or Scan here!! →





Calling all Former Hus Campers

On Saturday, June 1, The Great Payback Comeback will take place at the Hus Camp. The day will be an opportunity to reunite with other Hus Camp alumni to spend the day cleaning up and sprucing up the camp for this year's class of campers. There will be opportunities to help for all skillset levels.

Our tasks will include these items, and more:

- Repairing and organizing recreation equipment (bikes, fishing poles, golf equipment, etc.)
- Minor repairs to the Putt-Putt course
- Remove junk from around the Edwin Hlavaty Barn (recently acquired property)
- Demo the old Hlavaty Barn
- Cut down and remove dead trees and shrubs around the campus

A cook-out of hamburgers and hotdogs and all the fixings will be an opportunity to unwind and spend time visiting with other alumni. Food, water, and lemonade will be provided. (Bring any special non-alcoholic drinks you might want.) All you need to bring is work gloves, hats, sunscreen, protective eyewear, protective footwear, and any tools and yard equipment (including chainsaws, limb saws, clippers, rakes, wheelbarrows and shovels) you might have available.

The day officially begins at 9:00 am (but early-birds always welcome) and ends at 3:00 pm. The meal will be a late lunch, giving everyone plenty of time for the journey home.

Please share this information with your congregation and any other interested parties. We look forward to seeing as many friends as possible. Everyone who wants to help is welcome.

Questions may be directed to PaybackComeback@yahoo.com

**To Register and Reserve your Meal send the names of all participants
to PaybackComeback@yahoo.com**



2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 <i>Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	4 Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am – 1 pm	5	6
7 First Sunday Fellowship 8:30 am POTLUCK Worship 10:15 am Mission Trip Interest Meeting following worship.	8	9	10 Board of Elders Meeting 6:30 pm <i>Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	11	12	13
14 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am	15	16 Christian Sisters 11:30 am	17 Missionary Visitor Presentation 6 pm	18 Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am – 1 pm	19	20
21 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am	22	23	24 Family Game Night 6 PM	25	26	27
28 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am	29	30	31 <i>Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	Youth Activities will be dependent on School Activities. Info will be sent out via Remind.		

QUARTERLY CRAFT RETREAT

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Temple, TX 76501

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Stacie Sebek

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APRIL BIRTHDAYS
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 ~ 4/2 – Emily Sebek
 Scott Cummings
 ~ 4/7 – Kim Dillard
 ~ 4/9 – Karly Powell
 ~ 4/10 – Kolbi Caldwell
 ~ 4/11 – Frances Harper
 ~ 4/12 – Dillon Barbisch
 Erin Brinkley
 ~ 4/17- Jordan Barbisch
 ~ 4/18 – Tamela Paddenburg
 ~ 4/24 – Jordan Sebek
 Grant Jungmann
 ~ 4/25 – Jerry Dillard
 ~ 4/28 – Kyler Caldwell
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April Anniversaries

2 – Bernard & Cathy Koenig
 8 – Ron & Sandy McAdams
 9 – Lawrence & Dianne Psenck
 27 – Ronnie & Elaine Moore



***** **FATHERS DAY FUNDRAISER** *****

Please mark your calendar for
June 16, 2024!

*Sign ups are available now in the church entry.
See Ryan Zdroik for more info.

*Donations for Silent Auction are requested.
See Mark Wilfert to donate.

More information will follow in the coming months newsletters.

News from around the Unity....

Friends – As we start our Spring cleaning we find items that we just don't want anymore yet they're too good to throw away, but we don't want to deal with a garage sale... so what do we do with it?

Cross Church on Birdcreek at 2202 Birdcreek Drive, Temple, would appreciate donations of items in good condition for its upcoming Garage Sale Fundraiser to be held on May 2, 3, and 4. Please call or text Gayle at 254.718.2683 to schedule a drop-off. Most items, including furniture are welcome. Large appliances, mattresses, sleeper sofas and clothes CANNOT be accepted. Proceeds for the sale will help support the church's ministry and youth programs.

We're on the Web!
www.ockerbrethrenchurch.org
 Twitter: @ockerchurch
 &
 Facebook!