



Oakmont Presbyterian Church



Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 17, 2023 at 11:00 am

GATHERING IN FAITH

Reflection in Preparation for Worship

“We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison

Welcome

Steve Crocco

Please sign, pass and return Friendship Record pads during this time of announcements.

Introduction of The Rev. Dr. Tim Spring

Sally Huber-Lewis

Trinity Chimes

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.

Gathered In God's Name

Choir:

Gathered in God's name 'round the table and font.

Gathered as one fam'ly in the name of love.

Congregation Singing:

Refrain

with great joy!



Gath-ered from near and far, gath-ered in



this ho - ly place, gath-ered as strang-ers and



friends, gath-ered and gift - ed by grace.



Gath - ered in God's name 'round the liv - ing



Word. Gath - ered as one fam - 'ly



in the name of love, in the name of



love, in the name of love.

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Call to Worship (from 1 John 4:7, 19)

Steve Crocco

Leader: Beloved, let us love one another.

People: We love because God first loved us.

Leader: Praise the lord.

People: The Lord's name be praised.

*Hymn of Praise

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Hymnal, No. 376

**Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.**

**Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest;
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.**

**Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.**

**Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

*Prayer of the Day (please remain standing)

Steve Crocco

Call to Confession
Prayer of Confession

Ronnie Bailey

Tender Savior, we receive with gratitude Your love, which You demonstrated by laying down Your life for us. You have chosen us as Your own, and called us to love one another as You have loved us. But we fall short of Your life-giving command. Forgive us, we pray... time for silent personal confession

Pour out Your Spirit on us anew, that we may know and proclaim the depth, the breadth, the height, and the length of Your love that passes all measure. Help us abide in You and share Your love with others. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: *Beloved, hear this good news: God is for us!
Not even our sins can separate us from the love of God.*

People: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.**

*Act of Praise

Glory Be to the Father (Gloria Patri)

Congregation Singing
Hymnal, No. 579

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, Amen.**

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Gospel Reading

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

John 15:9-17

Deb Nichols
Pew Bible, NT, page 109

Time with the Children

As the children gather

Ronnie Bailey
Congregation Singing

Where Children Belong

This, this is where chil-dren be-long, wel-comed as part of the
wor - ship - ing throng. Wa - ter, God's Word, bread and
cup, prayer, and song: This is where chil-dren be - long.

WORDS: James Ritchie

MUSIC: James Ritchie

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RITCHIE
Irregular

Children go to JAM after time with children.

Epistle Reading

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Romans 8:35-39

Pew Bible, NT, page 158

Sermon

The Burden of Love

Lee Nichols

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*Hymn of Response *Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here* using tune: *ST. CATHERINE*

**Great God, Your love has called us here
As we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear,
Though marred, dishonored, disobeyed.
We come, with all our heart and mind
Your call to hear, Your love to find.**

**Great God, in Christ You call our name
And then receive us as Your own,
Not through some merit, right, or claim,
But by Your gracious love alone.
We strain to glimpse Your mercy seat
And find You kneeling at our feet.**

**Then take the towel, and break the bread,
And humble us, and call us friends.
Suffer and serve till all are fed,
And show how grandly love intends
To work till all creation sings,
To fill all worlds, to crown all things.**

**Great God, in Christ You set us free
Your life to live, Your joy to share.
Give us Your Spirit's liberty
To turn from guilt and dull despair
And offer all that faith can do
While love is making all things new.**

- Brian Wren

Faith Community Concerns, the Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer Steve Crocco
Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Offering of Our Tithes and Gifts Steve Crocco
Call to Offering

A Choral Offering Chancel Choir

Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace † Philip WJ Stopford (March 2023)

*Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace, of Thy peace,
Where, where there is hatred, let me sow love, sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.*

*Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace, of Thy peace,
Where, where there is hatred, let me sow love, sow love.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
 To be understood as to understand;
 To be loved as to love;
 For it is in giving that we receive;
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
 And it is in dying, it is in dying that we are born,
 that we are born, that we are born, that we are born to eternal life,
 eternal life, eternal life, eternal life.
 Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace, of Thy peace.
 –St. Francis of Assisi*

*Doxology

using tune: *LASST UNS ERFREUEN*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
 Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
 Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*Prayer of Dedication

Lee Nichols

SENDING INTO THE WORLD

*Charge and Blessing

Lee Nichols

Postlude

Organ

Festive Postlude

Douglas E. Wagner

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! – Psalm 150:6

WORSHIP NOTES

† ***Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace*** was premiered on Sunday August 13, 2023, at the service honoring The Rev. Dr. Stephen Wilson’s retirement. The dedicatory words on each copy of this anthem reads:

Commissioned by the Chancel Choir of Oakmont Presbyterian Church, to honour the Rev. Dr. Stephen Wilson’s 35 years of faithful service to our OPC family, the greater community and the wider world, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, on the occasion of his retirement as Senior Pastor, August 2023. May his example of humble service and loving leadership inspire us all!

Worship next Sunday, September 24 – 8:30 and 11:00 am in the Sanctuary.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost Lee Nichols will be preaching *Before Winter* based on Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and II Timothy 4:6-22.

Early Worship at 8:30 am – a more intimate service, approximately 45 minutes, with a simple worship order including the sermon and two congregational hymns with piano accompaniment.

Service for The Lord’s Day - at 11:00 am. This traditional worship service includes a fuller liturgy, with sermon and congregational hymns. A variety of musical styles are offered by our various choirs accompanied by the pipe organ, piano and other musical instruments. September 24th the Chancel Choir will share in the *Ministry of Music*.

JAM stands for “**Jesus And Me**” and will be our 2 classes for children. PreK through Grade 2 and Grades 3-6. We welcome any middle schoolers who desire to mentor and build relationships with our younger kids. **JAM** will be held after Children’s Time that takes place during worship. We will have an engaging, fun, children’s sermon and following that, children will join their classes in the education wing upstairs.

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Hymns taken from:

- *The Presbyterian Hymnal – Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Songs*, 1990 Westminster/John Knox Press.
- *Where Children Belong - Sing the Faith* © 2003 by Geneva Press; adapted and compiled by permission from *The Faith We Sing* © 2000 Abingdon Press

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We express our deepest sympathy to BJ Sipe and family on the passing of her husband Dave on September 6. And also, to Nick Kokales and family on the death of his wife Polly on September 10.

The **Oakmont United Methodist Church** (419 Maryland Avenue) is hosting a concert on **TODAY, September 17 at 3:00 pm** in their sanctuary. All are invited to attend and enjoy Performers' Potpourri. The concert will feature music by Telemann, Malavé, Schubert and Rachmaninoff presented by a variety of musicians: Dr. Edith Humphrey & Faye D'Ippolito, pianists; along with a baritone soloist, a cellist, an oboist and a composer/pianist playing his own works. Donations will be appreciated. All are welcome!

Interim Pastor Search Team Update - Your Interim team is pleased to announce the end of our search for a gifted OPC Interim Pastor. The Rev Dr. Tim Spring will join us on 10/08/23 and be in place for a year or more leading us with his enthusiasm, strong leadership and his caring nature. Please give him a large OPC welcome. The Interim Team thanks you for your patience while we diligently conducted our search. Peace, *Nick Kokales/Sally Huber Lewis Co-Chairs, Christine Little, James Kinter, David Geis, Chris Hudack and Presbytery advisor Dr. Edwin van Driel.*

OPC Film Series - Join us at 7:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room. Brochures are available in the vestibules. Elevator door entrance opens at 6:15 pm.

SEPT 22 – 80 For Brady (2023)

OCT 6 – Little Boy (2015)

Chancel Flowers – Are you interested in placing flowers in the sanctuary some Sunday to provide beauty to worship? One or two arrangements are welcome each week and can be placed *in memory of loved ones, in celebration of an event or to honor someone*, and all to the Glory of God. **Contact Carla Lowman** (412-826-5914) to **RSVP your date** with info and wording for the bulletin. **Available dates: September 24; October 1, 15, and 29 and beyond.**

Your OPC Family Cares About You! There are times when you are ill, in the hospital or in emotional need and we don't know about it, please remember to contact the church office (412.828.5770) or a staff member so we can support you in your time of need. You are loved!

Prayer Requests - Members of our church will pray for you and anyone in need. Please send prayer requests to: prayers@oakmontpresby.org or contact Carol Heimerich at 412.242.1028.

Deacons - Food Donations - Thank you for your donations to the food banks at RCAC and Verona Methodist Church supporting families in our community. Please continue to place donations in the shopping carts or drop off financial donations to the office/collection plate. Questions – contact Judy Murray at 724-816-7561.

AV Teams/Members Needed to Live Stream Services - Have you wondered how you could become a part of this vital ministry live streaming our late worship services to those not able to attend in person? No advance special knowledge is required as individual/team training sessions will be arranged. Contact Ron Burkert to volunteer at 412-780-0958 or raburkert@comcast.net

Educational Opportunities for Fall 2023 - Steve Crocco here... It is time to think about what we might do in the fall; a Bible study on Tuesdays or Wednesdays at 11:00 AM (or other time on those days); to tackle any book in the Bible or topical study on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. One of many books' worth reading together is N. T. Wright's *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*. A topic study could be on subjects like *Spirituality for Presbyterians*, *Is Science Our New Religion?* or *The Place of Pilgrimages in the Christian Life*. (Anyone interested in going on a pilgrimage?) I am eager to hear from you! Please email me with your thoughts, suggestions, and questions at scrocco@oakmontpresby.org

On Thursday, the 14th of September, Soupers gathered for the first monthly **Soup's On** for the 2023-2024 season. We made Tomato Basil Soup and Classic Chicken Noodle Soup. Stop by the OPC Kitchen and pick up a serving or two from the freezer and take it to a friend, neighbor, or relative who needs a cup of cheer and your smiling face!"

The Chrismon kits will be distributed after both the 8:30 and the 11:00 services on September 24th in Friendship Hall. If you would like to help with this project, please stop by on the 24th and pick up a kit or as many as you would like. If you have questions, please email Adele Selinger at adeleselinger@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your help in making this project a success.

Welcome to our Interim Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Tim Spring and his wife Pauline

Tim's rich educational journey includes a B.A. in Religion and Sociology from Grove City College Magna Cum Laude in 1981; a Master of Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1984; and Doctor of Ministry from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in 2006. Tim grew up in Williamsport, PA, home of Little League baseball, and was a DJ/Radio Announcer in Williamsport for four years.

Pauline taught for 23 years at Hampton Middle & High School, and previously at West Allegheny and Bishop Guilfoyle (Altoona) and at Carnegie Mellon University as an adjunct. Pauline is also the founder of THRIVE, a ministry to immigrants and refugees <https://www.thrivepittsburgh.org>. Pauline has a BA in German & English from Grove City College and an M.A. degree in German from Penn State University. Pauline is a 'local girl', graduating from North Allegheny High School in 1978.

Tim is an avid sports fan (especially all things Pittsburgh) and enjoys reading, music, movies, and biking. Pauline is an amateur genealogist, gardener, enjoys choral singing, and is a travel enthusiast, having visited 19 different countries so far.

The Spring's live in Gibsonia, PA and you can often find them at the library, Starbucks, on the road, or on their deck (weather permitting).

OPC STAFF

The Rev. Robert Lee Nichols, Jr.	Temporary Pastor
The Rev. Dr. Stephen Crocco	Associate Pastor
Michael P. Frank, III	Director of Music Ministries/Organist
Ronnie Bailey	Education Director for Children and Youth
Maureen Stecik	Program Staff Assistant
Buster Harper	Custodian
Tracy Messenger	Financial Secretary of Accounting
Marge Kuhn	Financial Secretary of Contributions
Roberta Erickson	Handbell Choir Director
Ron Burkert	AV Team Coordinator
The Rev. Dr. Steve Wilson	Honorably Retired Pastor Emeritus

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www.oakmontpresbyterianchurch.org

C. S. Lewis and Christian Truth



Oakmont Presbyterian Church

Sundays

September 17—October 8, 2023

9:30 – 10:30 am

with

Dr. Lou Mitchell

“Coffee and Conversation”

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) is widely considered one of the most effective Christian thinkers of the twentieth century. He used his exceptional literary talents to set out the truth claims of Christianity. From his non-fiction works like *Mere Christianity* to his beloved children’s books, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, to his science fiction work, *The Space Trilogy*, Lewis creatively described the Christian faith, defended it from critics, and above all, made clear why Christianity has an enduring appeal in an increasingly secular world.

September 17 *C. S. Lewis and his Conversions*

September 24 *Defending Christianity from its Critics*

October 1 *Christian Truth through Fantasy Stories for Children*

October 8 *Christian Truth through Fantasy Stories for Adults*

Dr. Lou Mitchell has been deeply interested in C. S. Lewis for the past forty years. He has a Th.D. from Harvard Divinity School. He is the author of *Jonathan Edwards on the Experience of Beauty*. Dr. Mitchell spent his career as a pastor in several PCUSA churches in the states of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

!!! Come early for coffee and a donut !!!

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY	September 17 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
8:30 am	Worship (Sanctuary)
9:30 am	Coffee & Conversation (Multi-Purpose Room)
10:00 am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
10:15 am	Children’s Choir Rehearsal (Children’s Choir Rm/Upper Level/age 5&up)
11:00 am	Worship (Sanctuary) & Via Livestream and Children’s JAM Classes (preK-Grade 2 & Grades 3-6)
12:00 pm	Reception for Rev. Dr. Tim Spring (Friendship Hall)
12:15 pm	Youth – Walk after Church
3:00 pm	Performers’ Potpourri Concert (Oakmont United Methodist Church)
MONDAY	September 18
12:00 pm	AA’s (Multi-Purpose Room)
7:00 pm	Boy Scout Troop #854 & Cub Pack #137 (Multi-Purpose Rm/Dining Rm)
TUESDAY	September 19
7:00 pm	Deacons (Dining Room)
WEDNESDAY	September 20
10:00 am	Women’s AA (Dining Room)
4:00 pm	JuBELLation Ringers Rehearsal (Choir Room)
6:30 pm	Lions Club Glass Cleaning (Kitchen)
THURSDAY	September 21
7:00 pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
8:00 pm	NA’s (Dining Room)
FRIDAY	September 22
7:00 pm	Youth attend RHD Varsity Football Game
7:00 pm	OPC Film Series (Multi-Purpose Room)
SATURDAY	September 23
8:00 pm	AA’s (Multi-Purpose Room)
SUNDAY	September 24 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
8:30 am	Worship (Sanctuary)
9:30 am	Coffee & Conversation (Multi-Purpose Room)
10:00 am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
10:15 am	Children’s Choir Rehearsal (Children’s Choir Rm/Upper Level/age 5&up)
11:00 am	Worship (Sanctuary) & Via Livestream and Children’s JAM Classes (preK-Grade 2 & Grades 3-6)
12:00 pm	Youth Group Kick Off (at Zone 28)



The Children's Choir under the leadership of Bev Taylor, will soon be making music again! **Rehearsals begin Sunday, SEPT 17, 10:15–10:45 am in the Children's Choir Room** (Upper Level of the Education Wing). ANY children ages 5 and up - from the church and community, are welcome to participate in this group. It is a great way to learn about music, singing, worship leadership, teamwork and sharing one's gifts and talents. Please contact Bev at 412-736-9707 with questions or for more info.

PRAISE THE LORD ... BELLS WILL CONTINUE TO RING!

Our prayers have been answered. The JuBELLation Ringers welcomed several new and returning ringers to the first rehearsal. Thanks to those who have responded to our need ... there is *still room* for additional ringers. Just 2 more will enable us to utilize the lower bass octave of bells and chimes, and 4 more will enable Bert to return to directing. If you'd like to join us, please contact Bert Erickson at rkerxn@gmail.com. **Rehearsals are held on Wednesday's from 4:00-5:30 pm in the Choir Room.** We look forward to sharing our music in worship on Sunday, Oct. 15 at the 11:00 service.

OPC Chancel Choir Rehearsals have resumed! - The Chancel Choir has begun weekly rehearsals on Thursdays in the Choir Room (Upper Level of Education Wing). We rehearse on Thursday evenings from 7:00-8:30ish pm. We are happy to have new singers join us at ANY time of the year - OPC members, visitors, and community members - from Grade 9 and up. We have openings in all 4 parts (SATB), but in particular we need Altos and a few more sopranos! You just need a willingness to learn and develop your voice and a servant's heart to give of your time as you join in an awesome opportunity to lead God's people in Worship. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Michael Frank at 412-828-5770 x206 or via email mfrank@oakmontpresby.org