



Overland Park Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ) 

7600 West 75th Street, Overland Park, KS 66204
913.677.4646

Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Sunday Services

Adult Christian Education Class — 9:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

In-Person Worship — 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Nursery care available for children through 3 years old

Sunday Worship is Live-Streamed on our Website and Facebook Page

www.opccdoc.org • @opccdoc (Twitter) • www.facebook.com/opccdoc

It is so hard to believe this year is coming to a close! At the same time, we usher in a new liturgical church year through Advent. It is one of my favorite seasons: the blue hues, the hymns of longing set in minor keys, the lights of candles.

I am very excited that we are once again partnering with A Sanctified Art for one of their sermon series. This year the theme of our Advent-Epiphany season is "Close to Home." This is what one of their pastoirists (pastor + artist) had to say about the series:

"In developing this series, it has become abundantly clear that the theme of home intersects with the full range of human experience. Home can be soothing and sacred or unsettling and painful. It can be grounding and particular, or it can feel hard to name or pin down. It can be invitational and warm, or it can poke at wounds of exclusion and displacement. For some, home can be the source of war, stolen lands, or economic loss. We navigate this tension of comfort and unsettledness in the season of Advent. In the midst of cheery holiday celebrations, grief and nostalgia may become unwelcome guests. We give thanks for the gifts and blessings of our lives, while longing for the dreams that are not yet realized. We celebrate the closeness of a God who chooses to dwell with us, while remembering what that closeness will cost: Jesus will face displacement, marginalization, suffering, and, ultimately, death. No matter if this season brings great comfort and joy, or hits a bit too close to home, may we remember that God is also just as close."

— Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, Founding Creative Partner



CLOSE to
HOME

I look forward to continuing worship with you this season either in person or online as we welcome the Christ child into our hearts and homes.

- ★ December 12 – A Home for All (Luke 3:1-18 and Zephaniah 3:14-20)
- ★ December 19 – Seeking Sanctuary (Luke 1:39-55)
- ★ December 24 – Invited Home (Luke 2:1-20)
- ★ December 26 – Chosen Home (Luke 2:41-52 and Colossians 3:12-17)
- ★ January 2 – Home By Another Way (Matthew 2:1-12 and Ephesians 3:1-12)

Jana



Advent and Christmas at OPCC



Prayer During Advent

OPCC has provided two in-depth and interactive Advent devotionals for all of us to “dig deeper” into “the reason for the season” as we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming Christ. Both are available on the entryway counter at OPCC or can be mailed to you. Please contact the church office if you would like them to be mailed.

★ Advent Devotional

You are invited to pray individually, but together as a community with an interactive devotionals for each of us to “dig-deeper” into “the reason for the season.” The daily devotional provides scripture, poetry prayers, visual art, reflections, and meditative prompts for the season of waiting. Take one for yourself and your family, we have plenty and can print more!

★ Advent Calendar

Take this family-friendly calendar for a map of action prompts to guide your family through this season of waiting, up through Christmas Day.

Longest Night Worship Service

Christmas is supposed to be a time full of joy and happiness, but sometimes can be hard for those who are experiencing grief or loss. Longest Night worship services create safe and sacred spaces for those who are struggling to feel the joy and light of this holiday season due to loss of any kind. We use these services to acknowledge the hole that grief leaves in one’s heart, while simultaneously remembering that we worship a God who is with us, even in the darkest of times. OPCC will not hold an in-person Longest Night Service this year, but have options from surrounding churches. Our prayer is that you will find the comfort and hope that you need in this season.

★ Shawnee Community Christian Church (DOC) will hold their service on Thursday, December 16th at 6:30 p.m. at 5340 Martindale Road, Shawnee, KS 66218

★ Kansas City United Church of Christ will hold their service on Tuesday, December 21st at 7:00 p.m. at 205 West 65th Street, KCMO 64113

Advent Gifts

Whether its for a dearly beloved grandmother who passed away this year, a parent who has been gone for years, a neighbor who brings joy this day and more, or a friend who gives laughter and comfort – there are many reasons to purchase a “gift” from OPCC this Advent season. Each gift is \$15.

★ If you would like to purchase a **poinsettia** in honor or in memory of a loved one, we will display those poinsettias in the sanctuary during the worship services closest to Christmas. Your gift will help us adorn our space, and our hearts, for the Christmas season. Poinsettias can be taken home (or to your friends’) after Christmas Eve.

★ If you would like to purchase a **turkey/ham** in honor or in memory of a loved one, we will share that gift with our neighbors and clients who visit the OPCC Food Pantry on December 18. Your gift will help us to provide for a family in need, sharing the love of Christ with those who need it. Turkeys/ hams will be given to each family who visits our food pantry.

Each of the gifts given in honor/memory of loved ones will be listed in our worship bulletins on December 24th and December 26th.

Christmas Eve Worship

OPCC will offer two opportunities to worship on December 24. We hope you will make one of these services a part of your family’s plans on Christmas Eve. Please remember face masks are required at all OPCC in-person gatherings.

★ From 4:00pm – 6:00pm OPCC will offer “Come and Go Communion,” where you will be welcomed to light a candle, receive communion, and take a few moments to spend in contemplation and prayer. This year we’ve added a prayer journey suitable for all ages that can take as much or as little time as you have. Come and go as your schedule allows from 4:00pm – 6:00pm.

★ At 7:00pm we will offer a Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship with scripture, hymns and readings as we welcome the Christ Child with one another. Please join us for either or both of these services to celebrate the coming of Christ.

Hello OPCC Family & Friends,

In this season of advent, let us prepare our hearts for Christ's coming. I love the theme that Laura presented for this season of "close to home". Here is a little take on the word Christmas with that in mind. I hope you enjoy.

- C** - Church community
- H** - Hope
- R** - Respect for tradition
- I** - Improve - be willing to pivot to something different
- S** - Self care
- T** - Take time to just sit and wonder
- M** - Move to a different beat
- A** - Anticipate what the future will bring
- S** - Stay connected to each other

Theresa Krebs
OPCC Board Chair on behalf of the Board



Since November 28th, our pastors have been holding a baptism preparation class for two young women seeking to be baptized into the faith. We thank you for your prayers as we together learn more about our individual faith journeys,

the placement of our own stories within the wider context of the life of the church, and get ready for that important promise they will make with God. Our current intention is to baptize these two individuals on Sunday, January 9th during our regular worship service, and invite you to mark your calendars for that special day!

If you or someone you know would benefit from this class, please contact Rev. Laura for more information, or to let her know of your interest (laura@opccdoc.org)

Mitten Tree

Make the holidays warmer by donating gloves, mittens, scarves and hats — just put them on the OPCC Mitten Tree! The tree will be in the church's front hallway now through January 6. All donations will go to our food pantry clients and/or refugee service organizations.



Church Office Closings

In observance of Christmas and New Year's holidays, the church offices will be closed:

Monday, December 27; Tuesday, December 28; and Monday, January 3.

Winter Weather Closings

Any changes about having in-person worship or not, holding things virtually or otherwise, will all be communicated to you by way of phone tree, email, OPCC Facebook, and OPCC website.

Please use your own judgment in choosing to come to the OPCC building when winter weather arrives. If these last 20 months have taught us anything, it's that we will still remain community and still "be the church" no matter where we are!

Order Your Poinsettias!

Remember a loved one or honor a special friend at Christmas by purchasing a live poinsettia to help decorate the church for the Advent season. Cost is \$15.00.

Your name(s) _____

I/we would like to purchase _____ poinsettias, in **memory** of: _____

I/we would like to purchase _____ poinsettias, in **honor** of: _____

Please make checks payable to OPCC and return with this form to the church office, or put in the collection box on Sunday morning.

Poinsettias may be taken home following the Christmas Eve worship service.





A special day offering of Disciples Mission Fund supporting the ministries of our Region

Regional Church ministries may not be your first thought when you ponder Advent and Christmas giving. After all, this is a season of miracles — not a fundraising season for an administrative ministry.

Yet, through Regional Church ministries we see miracles every day!

The Christmas Special Day offering supports the many miracles of our Region. Your generous gifts make a difference in our shared ministries as Disciples in Greater Kansas City.

The Christmas Special Offering will be received in our worship services on December 12 and 19.

We hope you will join in making a gift towards these miracles to bless the ministries of our Region carried out through the Disciples congregations of Greater Kansas City.

How do Greater Kansas City Disciples — together — reveal God's limitless love?

- We celebrate your mission and ministry successes with our Region and the whole Church in the United States and Canada! Your good work is good news well beyond the KC Metro!
- Provide grants of up to \$5,000 to congregations for ministry innovation and congregational transformation
- Lead a cohort of new church planters in our Region (and 4 other Regions!)
- Help congregations prepare to find their next pastor (8 in 2021!)
- Offer online courses and cross-congregational conversations
- Organize summer church camps and youth retreats
- Commission and ordain new ministers to serve and lead today
- Encourage and support discouraged pastors and lay leaders
- Create and share new resources
- Assist congregations with discerning how to be the Church in a changing world

Thank you for your online donation at kcdisciples.org/donate/ or opccdoc.org/online-giving.html

Afghan Aid Opportunity

You've seen the dramatic pictures. With our exit from Afghanistan, tens of thousands have fled for their lives. Many of those who worked directly with our government are being offered Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) to enter the US.

Many others fled for safety and humanitarian reasons but don't qualify for SIVs. However, Humanitarian Parole is a class of temporary entry, somewhat like a visa, that is available to them. If their application is successful, they can apply for asylum after they are here.

OPCC has a long history of helping refugees and this tragic event has given us a chance to help our neighbors again. There are many possibilities available to us from funding the filing fees for their applications to full sponsorship of one or more individuals.

We are trying to organize the Region's Disciples churches and other churches in the area for a bigger impact but we need to start with ourselves. Our recently passed budget did not anticipate this opportunity, however, if you would like to help you can contribute to OPCC specifically for Afghan aid, by check or at opccdoc.org/online-giving.html They will know we are Christians by our love.

MORE² METRO ORGANIZATION FOR RACIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY

Some big things have been happening in Johnson County, and MORE² has played a significant role. Come find out what this means! As part of our Outreach-Mission efforts at OPCC, we are a partner organization with Metropolitan Organization for Racial and Economic Equity (MORE²). However, we are more than just a pastor-led partner, and invite you to join in the efforts. Join in one of the following events to find out how you can be involved:

- Kansas Issues to Action Night – this is where MORE² decides the work that is important to us, where we discuss how we can work toward racial and economic equity in Kansas.
 - Monday, December 13, 6:00 – 7:30pm Currently planned for online by way of Zoom ([Click Here to register](#)) (<https://bit.ly/opccMORE2>) Check out the [website](#) or [Facebook page](#) to be sure!

Music Department

OPCC is having a hymn-sing service on Sunday, December 26 (yes, the day after Christmas) where we will be singing ALL Christmas songs. Please be sure to join us in worship that day! If we have missed singing a particular Christmas hymn or song this season that you find especially meaningful to you, please email our music director at marybeth@opccdoc.org by December 14 to have it included in our hymn-sing service.

With this being the last newsletter of 2021, we would like to thank everyone who has served in the Reverberations Bell Choir and the Chalice Chancel Choir. Many churches during this re-opening time after the quarantine have had very little, if any, participation in their music programs. Our musicians have been so faithful to bless us by serving OPCC with their musical gifts. If you see one of our musicians, please be sure to thank them for their service.

Men's Fellowship Group

The Men's Fellowship Group meets on the first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. in the Fireside Room for coffee, study, and fellowship. Our current study book is "Mere Christianity."
All men are invited to join us.

Contact: Emerson Hartzler, 913-422-1378

Family Life

As Christmas draws ever nearer, I hope you're finding the spirit of the Holiday. After lock down Christmas last year, I think we all need something more "normal" this year. I hope that whatever you do, whoever you're with, that you get to experience the true meaning of Christmas. You are loved and valued beyond measure.

CYF Midwinter is happening at Tall Oaks January 7-9, 2022. Get registered ASAP here: <https://docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/2022-gkc-cyf-mid-winter>

The cost is \$150, scholarships are available. Come join us for fellowship, fun, and worship!

Blessings,
Rev. Chuck

Middlers Sunday CE Class

Sundays, 9:00– 10:00 am
NW Section Fellowship Hall

The Middler's Class is enjoying a four-week study of "Good News of Great Joy" on Sunday mornings through December 26. This series introduces us to four canticles ("little songs") that appear in the Gospel of Luke's account of Christ's birth. This opportunity invites us to reflect more deeply on Luke's nativity story, calls us to look for signs of God's presence today, and creates a longing for God's full presence in the future. We are masked and socially distanced. All are welcome to join us.

For more information, contact Peggy Moore at wpmoore63@gmail.com or 913-592-0179.

Girlfriends Unlimited

Wednesdays, 7:00 pm
Fireside Room.

You are invited to join the Girlfriend's Wednesday night Advent series and learn about the "Characters of Christmas." This series gives us a fresh look at the Christmas story by getting to know all the characters who played a part in Jesus' birth. Join us as we slow down, engage our imaginations, and enter into the stories of these men and women. We will see the most important character — Jesus Christ — with new eyes. We will discover the unlikely people caught up in the story of Jesus. Books will be provided. Wednesday evenings 7:00-8:30 p.m. through December 22. No class on December 29. We will resume regular classes January 5, 2022.

For more information, contact Peggy Moore at wpmoore63@gmail.com or 913-592-0179.

Grief & Loss Support Group

The OPCC Grief/Loss Support Group will be changing our meeting dates and times for 2022. We will meet on the first TUESDAY of every other month starting in March. We will be meeting for lunch at Cozy's Café, 6740 W. 75th Street (just east of the Price Chopper at the corner of 75th and Metcalf) at 11:30 a.m. for support and discussion.

Our meeting dates for 2022 are:
March 1, May 3, July 5, September 6, November 1.

Contact: Peggy Moore at 913-592-0179.

Update from the Reopening Committee

Your Reopening Committee, chaired by Sue Elliott, consults regularly about the safest way for the OPCC community to gather. As we move into winter and Covid-19 remains a threat, we will continue to welcome everyone and show our love for our neighbors by following these precautions:

- We wear masks while in the building and during worship, except when speaking or leading singing from the chancel.
- We use individual sealed cups for communion, removing our masks only while partaking. We give our offerings using low-contact methods.
- We sign in for meetings and worship, to allow contact tracing.
- We observe social distancing.
- We use room air purifiers in meeting rooms. The air handlers are operating around the clock to ensure fresh air in the sanctuary.

We have resumed many of our BC (Before Covid) activities by following these and other guidelines, and we will “keep on keeping on” being cautious until Covid-19 is no longer threatening. As the Spirit leads you, we hope that you will join us in person during the Advent and Christmas seasons, or for live streamed worship online!

Lois Wimpey
For the Reopening Committee

Property Commission

Property Commission wishes each of you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a wonderful time with family and friends.

Here are activities which took place this last month or still being worked on:

1. Still waiting for flag pole parts for the top to arrive, until then we are unable to lower the flag.
2. Exterminator completed their quarterly treatment.
3. Lawn & Sprinkler Guys were out to shut down the sprinkler system.
4. We have received three bids for doing pier work under the North wall of room 43 (room on East side of hallway before going down the ramp). Will be discussed at the next property meeting on Monday, 12-13-2021.
5. Lee replaced several light bulbs throughout the building. If you notice lights not working, please let Eileen or Lee know. Thanks.
6. Lee and Laura are renegotiating covenants for Monarch Montessori School, Case Management Services (which is downsizing), and a new lease Honeybee Community Services. More information to come after these covenants are completed.

Submitted by
Lee Sprinkle, Property Chair

Outreach Update

In November, OPCC continued its regular donations to local and global outreach efforts, including Disciples Mission Fund, Interfaith Homeless Network, Salvation Army Family Lodge, the OPCC Food Pantry, Tall Oaks, and MORE². Additionally we donated \$380.00 MORE to Higher Education and Leadership Ministries during the Thanksgiving Special Offering, plus **over \$2,000.00 to purchase turkeys** to distribute at our November Food Pantry. Way to go OPCC! What a wonderful way to make a difference in our world!

Prayer List

Prayers of Concern

- ♥ Marian Bilyea
- ♥ Pat Brennan (Maurica Campbell's friend)
- ♥ Barbara Cash (Jody Cash's sister-in-law)
- ♥ Harper Claar (Roger & Vicki Claar's granddaughter)
- ♥ Chandis Pendleton (Lois Wimpey's relative)
- ♥ Roger Collins (Monica Fuentes' son-in-law's cousin)
- ♥ Jan Conner (Lorraine Hartnett's daughter)
- ♥ Penny Curry
- ♥ Brianna Dean (Julie Dean's daughter)
- ♥ Julie Dean
- ♥ Evelyn Eastwood
- ♥ Chuck Elliott
- ♥ Gordon Harkness
- ♥ Lorraine Hartnett
- ♥ Ruth Fletcher
- ♥ Tom Fletcher, Sr.
- ♥ David Garner (son of Floyd & Marcille Garner, friend of Jody Cash)
- ♥ Audrey Lavelly
- ♥ Kourtney Leibman
- ♥ Eric McIntyre (Eileen McIntyre's brother, Carla Labunski's and Laura Edgington's cousin)
- ♥ Rhonda Phelps (Roger Claar's sister)
- ♥ Randy Phillips (Laura Phillips' father)
- ♥ Ann Sandler
- ♥ Annabelle Shannon (Sharon McBride's friend)
- ♥ Earl Sheldon
- ♥ David Shields (Piper, Bella, & Maddie Shields' father)
- ♥ JoLynn Sloan
- ♥ Leslie Smith (Calvin McBride's friend)
- ♥ Joe Zacher

Continued Prayers

- ♥ Mary Aelmore
- ♥ Nancy Coffman
- ♥ Nancy Corbin
- ♥ Lawana Degraffenreid
- ♥ Gary Eilert (Jan & Ed Eilert's son)
- ♥ Jan Eilert
- ♥ Laurel Elliott
- ♥ June Faltermeier (Nancy Coffman's sister)
- ♥ Pat Gray
- ♥ Ellen Horseman (daughter-in-law of Dr. Bob & Fran Horseman, friend of Jody Cash)
- ♥ Donna & Marshall Howard
- ♥ Shirley McGee
- ♥ Florene Miele
- ♥ Teresa Phillips
- ♥ J.D. Price (Pat Warner's son)
- ♥ Ann Sandler
- ♥ Tamara Strange
- ♥ Sandy Teeple
- ♥ Doris Watts

Military Prayer List

- ✦ PV2 Rachael Dawson (Fran Dawson's granddaughter), Ft. Campbell, KY
- ✦ Cameron McDonough (Cathy Wilson's son)
- ✦ SSG Edward Pinkelman, Jr. (Ed & Kathy Pinkelman's son)

Condolences

- ♥ to Gordon Toms and Vicki & Roger Claar and their family on the passing of Iline Toms on December 14

Thank You

To the OPCC Family,

Thank you for all the support you have given my mom, Frances Bruning, over the years. She loved everyone there and loved doing the Shawl Ministry.

Thank you and we wish you all the best.

~ Lynn & Mike Davis

A big thank you to my OPCC family for the prayers, cards, and hugs on the loss of my beloved dog, Zachary. God bless you for your thoughtfulness.

~ Jody Cash

I would like to thank the Congregational Care Committee for all their kind notes and messages. Those were truly appreciated. Thank you again, and Happy Holidays.

~ Don Killion

Communion

While many of us have returned to in-person worship we recognize that some are still worshipping from home on a regular basis. If you need more communion elements for at-home worship experiences, please contact the church office, or fill out an order form on our website.

<http://www.opccdoc.org/communion.html>

You will be contacted when the communion packets are ready for you to pick up.. We will continue to utilize these individual communion cups for as long as necessary, to continue welcoming all to the table, and keeping us safe while communing with God and with one another.

To add persons to prayer lists or to submit items for the newsletter, please forward information to Michelle Reiter at michelle@opccdoc.org or 913-677-4646, x223.



Do you buy anything from Amazon.com?

Next time and every time you do,
order from Smile.Amazon.com!

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com **AND donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.**

(Choose Overland Park Christian Church the first time you log in and it will be saved as your charitable organization of choice.)

AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Please support OPCC by doing your online shopping at www.Smile.Amazon.com



Scrip Program at OPCC

We all know gift cards make the perfect birthday or Christmas gift for many folks.

If you give gift cards, buy them through OPCC's scrip program!

You pay the face value of the card, and a percentage of it is given back to us by the retailer, so you will be giving a gift to OPCC, too.

To order Scrip (gift) cards, fill out a form and place it along with your check made out to OPCC in an envelope (provided on the front entry counter) and turn in to the receptionist desk or offering box.

You may also order at www.shopwithscrip.com Click on "Register" at the top of the page, then on "Join a Scrip Program". OPCC's registration number is ABF325891724L.

For both options, if your order is placed by Monday morning, it will be available in the church receptionist office by the following Sunday.

Digital Liturgists

We continue to need volunteers who will share some of the elements of worship, and are especially open to you doing so virtually! If you are willing to read scripture, or share in the Invitation to Worship, or other elements, by recording a video in advance to be included in the worship, please let Rev. Laura know. She can guide you through how to do this, and would love to welcome you into worship virtually!

Budget Update

Hello OPCC Family & Friends! We are fast approaching the end of 2021. As we prepare for the arrival of Jesus, we also want to prepare for the next church year. You may remember we had a congregational meeting November 14 to vote on the 2022 OPCC Budget. That passed and was affirmed by congregational vote. This allows us to begin preparations for this next year within our own congregation and outside the church walls into our community. We are hopeful that with God's guiding hands we can continue doing the ministry of the church.

Theresa Krebs
OPCC Board Chair on behalf of the board

Your OPCC Staff

913-677-4646

info@opccdoc.org

(general church e-mail address)

Senior PastorLaura Ann Phillips

laura@opccdoc.org ext. 222

Associate PastorChuck Pickrel

chuck@opccdoc.org ext. 228

Congregational CareSharon McBride

slmcbride19421965@gmail.com ext. 224

Music DirectorMary Beth Boucher

marybeth@opccdoc.org ext. 229

AccompanistJulie Dean

missjupes@gmail.com

Communications Coordinator/

Bookkeeper Michelle Reiter

michelle@opccdoc.org ext. 223

ReceptionistEileen McIntyre

office@opccdoc.org ext. 221

Building & GroundsLee Sprinkle

lee@opccdoc.org ext. 237

Your 2021-2022 OPCC Board of Directors

Theresa KrebsChair

David Collins Vice Chair

Terri Bookless Secretary

Richard Owens Treasurer

Phil Sigmon Commission Liaison

Jody Cash Leadership Development

The OPCC Scene is generally published the first Thursday of each month, except in July.

Copy deadline for next issue is January 4 for January 6 mailing.

Help us reduce paper and postage costs!

If you would like to be removed from this mailing list or to receive this publication by e-mail, please contact Michelle Reiter

at 913-677-4646, ext. 223, or

michelle@opccdoc.org