

The Log

August 2023



A note from Pastor Katie

Dear Church,

I have been spending a lot of time over the last decade or so wondering about church. What does it mean to be a church; how do we “be” church; what should church look like these days?

I’m not unique in this; these are questions asked by many folks who realize the church of our parents and grandparents doesn’t exist anymore. And as we all know, the church of Winter 2020 doesn’t even exist anymore.

Our executive presbyter, Rev. Aisha Brooks-Johnson, has been recommending a book called, “Canoeing the Mountains” to folks. It has some issues, and at the same time, it’s discussion about being the church in a world that we’ve never seen before and a world for which none of us are prepared is quite intriguing.

Even though the book was written in 2015 and the author, Tod Bolsinger, had no idea what chaos was about to emerge, the practices he spoke of then are still helpful because they are practices that enable a faith community to adapt to an ever changing world - whether there’s a pandemic - or multiple ones, a natural disaster, a tragedy in the community, and on and on.

My prayer for Oakhurst is that we will find that place in relationship with God and one another where we are so attuned to the Spirit that the unknown does not frighten us because the Spirit is inspiring and empowering us to live Oakhurst’s ministry in mission in a new and grounded way.

There are three pieces worth thinking about as we approach the visioning process that begins this September.

- **A “church without experts”.** Bolsinger says that not one of us knows how to map out the church of today. Our seminaries are still teaching to lead in a world where people come to church every Sunday - a world with no soccer games, swim meets, and brunch reservations. So, we’re all in this together - wondering, listening, seeking.
- **Relationships and trust are essential.** As a community, we don’t know where we are going to end up. It’s almost like that first community after Jesus ascended. They didn’t know what the road was going to look like, but they trusted that what Jesus had taught them before would serve them now.
- **Focus on mission.** As Presbyterians, we say that the church is a “provisional example of the Kingdom of God”. If that is true (which I think it is), how do we live and serve (as a community and in our daily lives) as if God’s Kingdom is alive right now? How do we worship? How do we learn? How do we pray? How do we advocate in a way that people - inside and outside our community - can experience that Kingdom now?

At this point, our tasks are prayer for one another and the church, relationship building and deepening, and discerning Oakhurst’s core mission and ministry. I’m grateful to be doing this with you.

Katie

Peace,

This Issue:
Page 1
Pastor's
Page

Page 2
Events,
Birthdays,
Weekly
Meetings

Page 3
New group
and Youth!

Page 4
Christian
Education

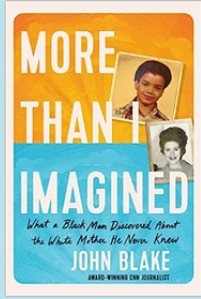
Page 5
Creation
Wise,
Peace-
making
and Justice

Page 6
Stop Cop
City

OAKHURST
PC(USA)
118 2nd Ave
Decatur, GA
30030



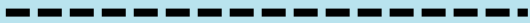
You are invited to gather on **Saturday, August 12 at 5 p.m for potluck supper and a conversation.** The book: *More Than I Imagined: What a Black Man Discovered About the White Mother He Never Knew*, by John K Blake. John will be with us for this conversation. Please put this date on your calendar, bring a dish and join us.



An award-winning journalist tells the story of his quest to reconcile with his white mother and the family he'd never met—and how faith brought them all together.

John Blake grew up in a notorious Black neighborhood in inner-city Baltimore that was the setting for the HBO series *The Wire*. It was there that he became a self-described “closeted biracial person,” hostile toward white people while hiding the truth of his mother’s race. The son of a Black man and a white woman who met at a time when interracial marriage was still illegal, Blake knew this much about his mother: She vanished from his life not long after his birth, and her family rejected him because of his race.

Blake covered some of the biggest stories about race in America for twenty-five years before realizing that “facts don’t change people, relationships do.” He only discovered that after experiencing what he calls “radical integration.” It was the only way forward for him and his family—and it’s the only way forward for America as a multiracial democracy. *More Than I Imagined* is a hopeful story for our difficult times.



- 8-1** Evelyn Wu, Tanya Myers, Valarie Hills Rawls
- 8-2** Tobias Hylen
- 8-3** Desiree Cabrices
- 8-6** Marti Loring
- 8-7** Kate Kochel
- 8-11** Rick Barger, Ashley Wrenn, Sherryl Willis
- 8-12** David Patton
- 8-15** Anna Bennett, Micheal Giles, Keith Munson, David Travillion, Isabella Wauchope
- 8-17** Ana Belote, Sean Evans
- 8-19** Finnegan Downey, Valarie Wilson
- 8-20** Travis Williams
- 8-21** Kevin Belote



- 8-23** Haley Pate, Adeep Sully-Grover
- 8-24** Rahjahn Dashiell, Jim Watkins
- 8-25** Ida Fonkoue, Corey White
- 8-27** Deborah Carter
- 8-28** Ramone Fonkoue
- 8-29** Beth Costello
- 8-30** Clifton Green
- 8-31** Minagustina Wigan

Weekly Calendar

Sundays

11 am Worship

Tuesdays

6 pm Gospel Choir

Wednesdays

4:30 pm Racial Justice Vigil

7:30 pm Chancel Choir

Thursdays

10:30 am – Prayer Group

4:30 pm - Racial Justice Vigil

6:00 pm - Podcast Group

Saturdays

10 am- Racial Justice Vigil



Hagar’s House

Hagar’s House Volunteers Needed

Oakhurst Presbyterian’s week of service at Hagar’s House will be August 21-26. Can you help? Volunteers purchase and prepare food for 10-30 people and deliver it to Hagar’s House between 5:00 and 6:00. Hagar’s House, a 30-day emergency shelter for local families, is a program of the Decatur Cooperative Ministry. To join Oakhurst’s team, contact CJ Evans (evanscj@gmail.com / 434-826-7363).



Youth Group Update

Youth Director Search Process

We are seeking the next person God is calling to be our Youth Director, and we are working to make a smooth transition as we head toward program year starting on August 20th. The job posting has gone out to the area seminaries, presbytery, and online search engines, so please let Marcia Kochel or Pastor Heather know if you have referrals.

Middle and High School Sunday School – 10 AM on Sundays

We are excited to get back to having separate Sunday school on Sunday mornings for Middle and High School. Our lead teacher for High School will be Ted Smith, who is coordinating with his team of teachers. We still need help with our Middle School team.

Youth Group Calendar – August

August 10th at 7 pm – Senior Send Off Party

Let's all meet on front steps of the church to wish our seniors well as they head off to new adventures this Fall. We'll have frozen treats. Bring your friends.

August 18th at 6-7:30 - POOL PARTY @ GLENLAKE POOL

Join in our annual Fall Kick Off event of pool party fun with friends! Youth and siblings are encouraged to come and play, while parents reconnect on the deck. Feel free to bring a snack to share. (Cost is entrance fee for pool)

Aug 25-27 – Youth Group Retreat at Lake House!

We are kicking off the new year with our annual lake house retreat! Come reconnect with friends as we play, learn, and plan together for the next year. Saturday will include fun adventures and planning activities, programs, and opportunities for service. On Sunday, we will join together in interactive Bible Study and worship before heading home with lots of good memories.

RSVP by August 11th, and help us FILL THE HOUSE!! All Youth are encouraged to attend. (Cost is \$50, and scholarships are available.)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



WELCOME BACK BREAKFAST ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 20th with OPEN HOUSE for Classes

We are excited to be able to kick-off our Christian Education year with our Annual Community Breakfast! We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 am for fellowship and breakfast by our Member Nurture Committee. ALL are welcome!. Then we'll have an open house for teachers and students to get to know one another and talk about the year.

Thank you for everyone's feedback about Christian Education during the listening sessions. We are preparing to offer a consistent program this Fall with programming to support everyone's faith formation on a weekly basis. Our focus will be on faith formation through communal Bible study and conversation. Come and enjoy being with old & new friends, as we dig deeper into the stories of God and God's people.

Classes will be on Sundays at 10 am with an additional class for Adults via Zoom on Thursday nights from 6 - 7 pm.

WE VALUE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT OPC - SHARE YOUR FAITH AS A TEACHER

We are still working on teachers for each class, so please reach out to join our teaching teams for the following age groups:

Kindergarten-4th grade

2- 3 Teachers for 2nd & 4th Sundays
2 Subs

5th-8th grade

2-3 Teachers for weekly classes
2 subs

9th-12th grade

2 Teachers for weekly classes
1 sub

ADULT EDUCATION

Susan Hysten will be leading our adult education Bible Study on Sunday mornings this Fall, until Advent when we hope to do a congregational wide program.

Pastor Heather & Cassandra Andrews will continue to coordinate the Thursday Night Racial Justice Discussion Zoom class at 6-7 pm. Email Pastor Heather for more information on our book to read this Fall.

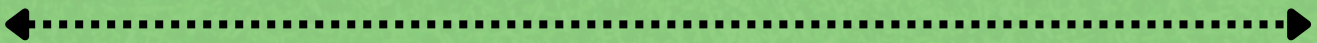


CreationWise Tip by Mary Gould

We have just experienced our hottest day and there are many more to come. This should cause us each to consider our own "carbon footprint" and ask ourselves, "What am I doing to help with the climate crisis?" One thing we can continue to do is recycle. Recycling saves the energy that is needed to make a new item. Kathy Hancock and Margie Ashe have offered to take items to be recycled to the new CHaRM facility which is opening on Columbia Drive. Bring to church your plastics 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 and all plastic film (that's plastic that stretches) and leave it in the labeled bin in the James Jefferson Hall. And continue to use curbside recycling for paper, cardboard, metal cans, and plastic bottles with lids. Decatur will also accept cartons, such as the ones juice is sold in, and glass bottles.



Here's a list showing how long items take to decompose, to give us the push we need to recycle. The Life Span of Trash: aluminum cans 200-500 years, batteries 100 years, cigarette butts up to 10 years, disposable diapers 500-600 years, glass bottles 1 million years, nylon fabric 30-40 years, plastic bags up to 500 years, plastic soda bottles forever, sanitary pads 500-800 years, Styrofoam more than 5,000 years, tin cans 50-100 years.



Friends, we are a partner Faith Community with the New Sanctuary Movement of Atlanta (NSMA) and we've been asked to help Kiran, an asylum seeker housed and supported by the NSMA. Kiran has had success with her pop-up business and seeks to expand it to an on-line store of some sort. If you have any experience with running a small business, especially an on-line business, would you be willing to have a phone conversation with Kiran? If yes, please contact Kathy Hancock and she'll link you with Kiran.



New Justice and Diversity Group starting at Oakhurst

Oakhurst is starting a new Disability Connections Group, as part of our commitment to Justice and Diversity. We recognize that able-ism (discrimination against people with disabilities) is embedded in our culture, shows up in our worship, and is harmful to every person, with or without a disability. At Oakhurst we want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Our group will focus on education, awareness, advocacy, and nurturing connections. We invite people without disabilities, people with disabilities, and anyone (regardless of how you identify) who cares about justice and diversity to join us once a month. You will learn so much, in a supportive environment, and leave the group confident in your role as a 'change-agent for inclusion'. We will learn together how to live more authentically into all of who we are.

Contact group leaders Pastor Heather, Beth Mackie, and Deborah Carter for more information.



STOP COP CITY PETITION - CITY OF ATLANTA RESIDENTS

HOW AND WHERE TO SIGN

(Hint hint - it's not online!)

Please note that you must sign the petition in person (old fashioned pen to paper) in order for it to be counted. Read on for more information about how and where to sign.

Is the petition ready to be signed? YES!

As of June 21, 2023, our petition was approved by the City Clerk and available to start signing! We need to collect at least 70,000 signatures by **August 14**, so every voice and every signature is crucial to our campaign, and by law must meet certain requirements.

How do I know if I can sign the petition?

Based on the election laws, there are specific requirements of who can sign the petition to put the referendum on the ballot for this November. In order for your petition to be counted, you must: 1. Be a current resident of the City of Atlanta 2. Have been registered to vote in the City of Atlanta as of October 4, 2021 3. Sign the petition while you are physically in the City of Atlanta 4. Have your signature witnessed by a current resident of the City of Atlanta, who is also currently registered to vote in the City of Atlanta.

Where and when can I sign the petition?

We will have field teams at our Eastside and Westside location everyday between 11:00 am and 8pm with a petition ready for you and a City of Atlanta resident available to witness the signature.

Eastside Location: Park Avenue Baptist Church 486 Park Avenue SE (Enter on Sydney) Atlanta, GA 30312

Westside Location: American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) 711 Catherine St SW (Enter on Maryland) Suite 150 Atlanta, GA 30310



New Member Dinner- August 16 at 6:30 pm
in
Jefferson Fellowship Hall - watch the
enews for more information