

December 2011
January 2012

Come Grow With Us!

Dear Oak Tree Friends,

Hope, peace, joy, and love... sounds good, doesn't it? It's what we all need more of right now! During Advent this year our sermons will be on restoration—restoration of hope, peace, joy, and love.

An artist named Franck de Las Mercedes has been doing his part to restore peace. He's been making and sending "peace packages" to people for several years now. He mails small boxes with abstract designs on them to anyone in the world—for free. On the box it says: "Fragile: handle with care. Contains Peace." More than 9,000 peace boxes have been sent out to date! Hearing about that artist made me think about what we are doing (or not doing) to restore peace to our lives and our world. What kinds of peace packages can we send in this Advent and Christmas season? Perhaps we can give a peace package of steadfast love to someone who's hard to love? Perhaps we can send a package of frequent affirmations to our spouses? Perhaps we can show righteousness in school and at work by being honest and fair in all that we do. Let's work for peace in all our relationships, looking for ways to reduce tensions and increase harmony, instead of picking fights and spreading gossip. If we invest as much time and effort in these peace packages as in our holiday gift packages, this just may turn out to be our best Christmas ever!

Restore us, O God! Give us the gift of peace, so that we can share it with others.

Shalom,

Rev. Jill



OTPC - *December at a glance*

- 4—"Bad Girls" Bible Study
- 8—Brighton Gardens 2 PM
Knit One, Pray Too 7 PM
- 10—Pot Luck Supper & Tree Trimming
- 11 Deacons Meeting 11:15 AM
- 12—Session meeting 7 PM
- 13—Oak Tree @ FISH Clothing Room
- 19—Soul Feast at Ann Marie Williams'
- 24—Christmas Eve Service 7:30 PM

Choir — Wednesdays at 7:45 PM
Bible Study — Wednesdays at 6:30 PM
Thursdays at 10 AM

Christmas Eve At Oak Tree

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be at 7:30 PM on December 24th. Bring a friend, bring the family and join us as we welcome the Christ child and tell once more the wondrous story of Christmas in scripture and song.



Tree Trimming & Pot Luck Supper



Our annual Christmas potluck dinner and tree trimming

party will be held on Saturday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert to share and join us for an evening of good food, music and caroling. There

will be Christmas crafts for kids and adults, caroling, and a time to decorate our tree. Everyone is welcome, bring a friend or two or three — the more the merrier! Each family is asked to bring a few new ornaments for the tree. A big thank you goes to Jeff and Laura Reeves for their efforts

every year to get us a fresh and beautiful tree!

There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex for the dinner. Please let us know how many to expect so we can plan accordingly.



God's House

The Yellow Brick Sidewalk

A few blocks in our needed new sidewalk have been purchased! But we still need a lot more! Estimates to replace the sidewalk came in at approximately \$160 per square and we need about 60 squares! Won't you consider buying one square of our much-needed walkway?

Let there Be Light!

Our lighting fixtures in the classrooms all need to be replaced. Thanks to Rich Listash, the fixtures were replaced in Rev. Jill's office. Fixtures run about \$45 each and there are 8 per classroom. If you would like to adopt a classroom or help with the installation, see Karen Wallner.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to Jeff Reeves for all that he does around our building and grounds. Jeff made a good start on staining our shingles, but there is still a lot more to do. If you can help, let us know. If not, please consider a donation to the building fund so that we can get the rest of the staining done.

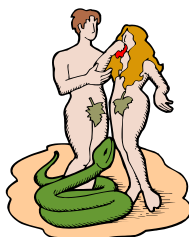
NURTURING THE SPIRIT

FALL BIBLE STUDIES

Because we believe that we never stop learning and growing in faith, we are offering two Bible Study opportunities this fall. There will be an evening Study on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and a morning Study on Thursdays at 10 a.m. Both classes will be studying the Gospel of Matthew, which is our lectionary gospel for the fall. Everyone is welcome to join us for these group discussions of God's word. No former experience or knowledge is needed, just a willing spirit and an inquiring mind!

BAD GIRLS OR— AMAZING WOMEN?

A Bible Study that takes a look at some of the "bad girls" of the Bible will be held the first Sunday of every month immediately following worship. Led by Madelynne Lindsey this study will consider some of the amazing women of the scriptures and the bad rap that some of them got! Join us on November 6th in the Conference Room.



TALK BACK TO YOUR PASTOR...

... but only once a month! After worship once each month you will have an opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the sermon and the topic for the day. Talk Back is usually the third Sunday of every month; we will take a break for December, and in January it will be the 15th. Bring your coffee and join us as we discuss the sermon for that day.



Giving Thanks!

Feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, visiting the sick, breaking bread with our neighbors. Sounds a lot like the list Jesus gave us, doesn't it? The list of what we are to do as Christians. It's also the list of just some of things that we did as a congregation in the past year. We may be small, but we have a big heart — more than 250 bags of food were donated in 2011! Thank you all for the work you did and the food and clothing you donated. Thank you, Oak Tree Church for your caring hearts.

PCUSA.ORG

Have you looked at our denominations website lately? www.pcusa.org is worth a look every once in a while. It's the place to find out what's going on and what we are doing in the connectional church. When you go on it next time, be sure to look at some of the *Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide* videos. They tell wonderful stories of congregational change and renewal. Follow this link:

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/deepandwide/video-growing-christs-church-deep-and-wide/>.

Prepare your Hearts

Some folks like to prepare for worship by reading the upcoming passages and reflecting on them. Here are the lectionary passages for the Sundays of December & January:

Dec 4: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8.

Dec 11: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28.

Dec 18: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38.

Dec 25: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14.

Jan 1: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40.

Jan 8: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.

Jan 15: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51.

Jan 22: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20.

Jan 29: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28.



Congregational Meeting

By Order of the Session of the Oak Tree Presbyterian Church, 445 Plainfield Road, Edison, NJ, the Annual Meeting of the congregation/corporation has been called for Sunday, January 22, 2012, immediately following the worship service in the sanctuary. The purpose of this meeting is to receive annual reports, elect officers, approve the pastor's terms of call for 2012, approve necessary funds from the investment/endowment fund to balance the 2010 budget.

“The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope ” May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15: 12-13

OAK TREE CARES

FOOD DONATIONS NEEDED

Unemployment continues to grow, people all around us are living on the edge, facing foreclosure and wondering how to feed their families. Next time you go to the grocery store, why not pick up some extra food to help refill our food pantry and the emergency pantry at Amandla Crossing. Non-perishables such as pasta, soup, canned fish and meat, canned fruit, peanut butter, and cereal are particularly welcome. Donations can be put in the bin in the back of the sanctuary.

FISH UPDATE

Oak Tree Friends and neighbors donated more than 150 bags of clothing to FISH in 2010! That's more than 2000 pounds of clothing! The FISH Clothing Room is a busy place these days. With our current economy, there is a great need for gently used clothing. Donations of new underwear and socks are also appreciated. We will be going to FISH on Tuesday, December 13th, from 8:30 a.m. till noon.



Environmental Health & Exposures

Have you ever wondered how the environment affects your health? Join us for a research discussion for the faith community with scientists from UMDNJ and Rutgers on Thursday, January 19th, from 5:30—8:30 p.m. at here Oak Tree Church. A light dinner will be provided, so please sign up in the Narthex.



Christmas & Christmas Eve At Oak Tree

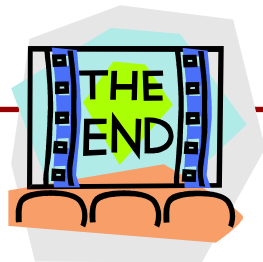
Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held at 7:30 p.m. on December 24th. Bring a friend, bring the family and join us as we welcome the Christ child and tell once more the wondrous story of Christmas in scripture and song.



Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year, and we will have our regular 10 a.m. Worship Service on Dec. 25th, *without* our regular coffee hour.

Dinner & A Movie

We are planning a Dinner & Movie Night at Menlo Park Mall Cinema on Friday, January 20th. Movie & time to be announced. Guests of Menlo Park's Fork & Screen can enjoy in-theatre dining combined with the most current movies presented in the immersive big-screen. Guests must be 18 years old or accompanied by a parent. The menu features a flavorful variety of classic favorites, from burgers to sandwiches to pizzettas. Watch for the sign-up sheet in the Narthex in early January.



Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Every December Plays-in-the-Park moves from its home in Edison and travels to New Brunswick, lock, stock and camels, to do their annual production of **JOSEPH** at the delightful State Theatre. A holiday tradition for 17 years, **JOSEPH 2011** will be better than ever! For those who have never seen it, and for those who wish to see it again, Oak Tree Church has purchased 20 tickets (only 10 remain at press time!!) for Wednesday, December 28th at 8 p.m. If you would like to join our group, please see Nancy Sittinger for tickets ASAP. Tickets are \$7.50.

Stewardship Thoughts



Thank you to everyone who made a pledge of support to the ministry of Oak Tree Church for 2012! We know what a difficult economy it is and are grateful for your ongoing support. The Session is working on our budget for 2012 and will present it at our Annual Congregational Meeting on January 22nd. The Session has chosen to develop a balanced budget this year so that we do not have to dip into our investments once again. We are looking at a three-pronged approach: reducing our budget, raising our revenue, and increasing giving. We will pare the budget down as much as possible, increase the rent of our building tenants, and look at having at least one major fund raising event. We have estimated that if we do these three things, it will leave us with a smaller deficit that could be met by every person increasing their giving by just \$60 per year! That works

out to just \$5 per month. We ask that you prayerfully consider your giving for 2012 and see if you can help us to balance our budget and not have to cut any programs or staff in the coming year. If you have not yet filled out a pledge card, you are encouraged to do so soon. Please also make sure that your pledge for 2010 is up to date before the end of the year. That will help us end the year on a good financial basis.

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

Is God calling you to serve the church as a Deacon or Elder in the coming year? Please give some prayerful consideration as to how you might serve the Lord in the life of this congregation. You never know what God has in store for you and what YOU can do with God's help!



Come on the Journey



The Jeremiah Journey begins in January! This will be the beginning of a 3-year journey of exploration where we, as a congregation, listen for what God would have us do. It is a

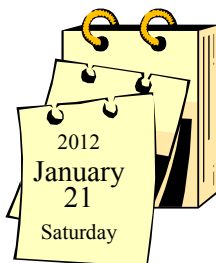
journey of discovery and discernment, of listen-

ing to the word of God in a new way that just might lead our congregation in a new and exciting direction. The Journey begins on January 7th and we are presently building our coordinating team. If you feel that God is calling you to help our church move into the future with hope, please speak with Rev. Jill!

Equipping the Saints

Leadership Training Event

The Education & Discipleship Unit of the Elizabeth Presbytery will hold a leadership training for Elders, Deacons, and anyone interested in furthering their ministry. The event will be held on Saturday, January 21st, 2012 (snow date Feb 11th), 8:30 a.m.—3 p.m. in Stuart Hall at Princeton Theological Seminary. There is no cost for the program; lunch will be available on campus for \$10.



Choir is for Everyone!

You are invited to sing with the choir for Christmas! We would love some extra voices for the wonderful music of the season. Join our new director on Wednesdays at 7:45 p.m. for practice or come on Sunday mornings at 9:15

a.m.. If you have ever thought about singing with the choir, this would be a good time to join. No experience necessary — everyone is welcome!



December 2011



Sun **Mon** **Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri** **Sat**

4 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 "Bad Girls" Bible Study	5	6	7 6:30 Bible Study 7:45 Choir	8 10:00 Bible Study 7:00 Knit One, Pray Too	9 10:00 Bible Study	10 6:00 Christmas Dinner & Tree Trimming
11 8:00 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Deacons	12 7:00 Session	13 8:00 FISH clothing room	14 6:30 Bible Study 7:45 Choir	15 10:00 Bible Study	16	17
18 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Talk Back	19 7:30 SoulFeast at the home of Ann Marie Williams	20	21 6:30 Bible Study 7:45 Choir	22 10:00 Bible Study 7:00 Knit One, Pray Too	23	24
25 Christmas Day 10:00 Worship & Church School	26 Rev. Jill	27 Jill away	28	29	30	31 New Years Eve A HAPPY NEW YEAR

January 2012

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 "Bad Girls" Bible Study	2 Rev Jill	3 away	4 6:30 Bible Study 7:45 Choir	5 10:00 Bible Study	6	7
8 8:00 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Deacons	9 7:00 Session	10 8:00 FISH clothing room	11 6:30 Bible Study 7:45 Choir	12 10:00 Bible Study 2:00 Brighton Gardens 7:00 Knit One, Pray	13	14
15 10:00 Worship & Church School	16 7:30 SoulFeast	17	18	19 10:00 Bible Study	20 Movie & Dinner @ Menlo Park Mall	21
22 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Annual Congregational Meeting	23	24	25 6:30 Bible Study 7:45 Choir	26 10:00 Bible Study	27	28
29 10:00 Worship & Church School 11:15 Ministry Groups	30	31	6:30 Bible Study 7:45 Choir	7:00 Knit One, Pray		



**OAK TREE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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Staff:

Pastor: Rev. Jill Kitsko

Administrator: Mary Ellen Martin

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
OAKTREECHURCH.ORG

FIRST CLASS MAIL — Address correction requested



Worship at Oak Tree

Worship Assistants

Thank you to everyone who helps with ushering and coffee hour at Oak Tree! We appreciate all you do. We have placed the list of Usher duties on the inside door of the usher's closet. Please review the list when you arrive early on your Sunday and make certain that everything is in order for the service. After the service make sure the sanctuary is ready for the next service. Helpers for the months of December & January include:

Dec 4: *Communion Ushers:* Laura Reeves, Len Sendelsky, Nancy Sittinger; *Communion Set-Up:* Loretta McGue, Doreen Magnani; *Acolyte:* Alexa D'Alessandro; *Coffee:* Joe Ott, Mary Ellen Martin; *Nursery:* Steve Kitsko.

Dec 11: *Ushers:* Barb & Rich Lis-

tash, Eleanor Ternyik; *Acolyte:* Kenneth Echie; *Coffee:* Rich & Karen Wallner; *Nursery:* Mary Ellen Martin.

Dec 18: *Ushers:* Terry Landrigan, Jan Schott, Terry Chukwuneke; *Acolyte:* Dan Kitsko; *Coffee:* Deacons Eileen Ruf & Florence Chukwuneke; *Nursery:* Joanne Mesonas.

Dec 25: *Ushers:* Joyce Biegen, Ann Marie Williams, Joe Ott; *Acolyte:* Terry Chukwuneke; *Nursery:* Nancy Sittinger.



Jan 1: *Ushers:* Chris & Joey Alonso, Joe Ott; *Acolyte:* Terry Chukwuneke; *Coffee:* Barb & Rich Listash; *Nursery:* Eleanor Ternyik.

Jan 8: *Communion Ushers:* Len & Joanne Mesonas, Madelynne Lindsey; *Acolyte:* Blessing Echie; *Coffee:* Mary Ellen Martin, Holly Weakley; *Nursery:* Karen Wallner.

Jan 15: *Ushers:* Nandai Sookhoo, Stella Knill, Mary Ellen Martin; *Acolyte:* Alexa D'Alessandro; *Coffee:* Deacons Joyce Biegen, Doreen Magnani; *Nursery:* Nancy Sittinger.

Jan 22: *Ushers:* Len Sendelsky, Hazel & Gary Shelhimer; *Acolyte:* Dan Kitsko; *Coffee:* Men's Association; *Nursery:* Joanne Mesonas.

Jan 29: *Ushers:* Barb & Rich Listash, Ann Marie Williams; *Acolyte:* Chris Chukwuneke; *Coffee:* Terry Landrigan, Debbie Kratz; *Nursery:* Chris Alonso.