



OVERBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

News from the Crossroads

June 2020

Letter from our Pastor

An excerpt from “Can You See it?,” preached on June 14 in worship. A full copy of the sermon is available by request.

Overbrook Presbyterian Church is a welcoming and diverse Christian community that seeks actively to love and serve God, each other, and the world.

—Mission Statement

In 1873, the city of Newton, just west of Boston, had a thriving black community. Locally referred to as the Village, the Village was settled by former slaves from the south who were barred from settling in Boston proper. Many residents of the Village worshipped at the local Baptist church where they were required to sit in the balcony. Tired of this discrimination these folks founded their own church -- a little structure on Curve street-- Myrtle Baptist Church. Slowly the church grew in stature and in reputation. After the first building burned down, they built a bigger church. Over time it became known for its rich worship, its powerful preachers, and its community care. Martin Luther King Jr. preached at Myrtle regularly when he was a doctoral student at Boston university. Myrtle was the religious center of the Village.

Overbrook Church Staff

Rev. Dr. Adam Hearlson
Designated Pastor

Rev. David K. McMillan
Pastor Emeritus

Dr. Christopher Gage
Director of Music

Anthony Carrella
Director of Christian Education

Lisa Faso
Office Manager

Carol Rozmiarek
Financial Secretary

Leonard Robbins
Church Custodian

The Village is now gone.

In 1952, a plan was hatched to create a toll road running east and west through Massachusetts. This road would be a testament to progress and the mobility of the suburbs. Run by William Callahan, the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority was given unprecedented power and no citizen oversight to make sure the Mass Pike was constructed. When deciding where the Pike should run, Callahan and the Turnpike Authority drew the plans for the freeway right through the Village. In an act of deep corruption, houses were seized by eminent domain and people were forced to move from their homes before they had negotiated a price for the property. Black residents of the Village were forced to move and the redlining policies of Boston made it all but impossible for them to find other homes to live in. The peach trees that stood tall in the yards of the village, the gardens the residents planted, the homes where they raised their children were demolished.

What stands today on the site of the village is a monument to progress built the back of another black community: a toll road connecting the white suburbs to jobs in the city. And Myrtle Baptist Church, it still stands. About 300 people from all over the Boston area come to church on at Myrtle on Sunday. The backyard of the church is literally the toll road. If you looked out the window behind the pulpit, you can see the Mass Pike. But you can't look out the window, because behind the pulpit is a giant stained glass window of a black Ethiopian eunuch being baptized. Behind the church is a large powerful sign assuring the congregation that the world cares less about them than their neighbors, and inside that church is another sign, a reminder that the first Gentile convert to christianity was a black person. That window assures the congregation that God doesn't love as the world does. God's love comes first to those left out and left behind and built over. That window reminds everyone that God wouldn't let the eunuch remain forever despondent in his rejection. That God sends scripture and the spirit to inspire new ideas. That god sends saints and strange hellenized jewish allies like Phillip to comfort and help.

That window is a reminder that the Spirit of God will not allow us to settle for the imagination of the world, but like the Ethiopian Eunuch, is calling us to imagine something more. That window is not a way to distract the people, but to inspire the people to read as the eunuch reads, with hope, with creativity, with imagination and with faith that God is turning the world. Oh what a privilege it is to follow this God, who calls us not to preserve and keep the world for the powerful, but change it so that all might know the power of God's deep love.

- Adam

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Support during the Pandemic

You
are not
alone

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are hitting us all in profoundly different ways, leaving us with needs that are financial, logistical, physical and spiritual. As the weeks stretch on, those needs may grow and change, and Overbrook Church is here with many options for discrete and confidential help.

Please find the ministry that best meets your current needs, and reach out if anything is missing. We understand circumstances are ever fluid. Each ministry will be available to you, when and if you need it.

Prayer & Care Ministry

Prayer and Care Team: Ministry on the Move

In early March, the warning was direct: the elderly and the medically fragile were considered at risk for Covid-19 and cautioned to avoid all group gatherings. With that caution, the OPC Prayer and Care Team was formed. The group goal was to deliver groceries to our senior members, as well as to those who were identified as medically at-risk for Covid-19. The bags, containing food for 3-4 days, would be freely given as an act of love and compassion for fellow congregants. It was hoped that this ministry would lift the spirits, and limit the viral exposure, of our members and friends. This ministry was a leap of faith. To be successful, it would require volunteers who were willing to take personal risks as shoppers and as members of the delivery team. It would require financial resources, as well as a high degree of resourcefulness, for the ministry to be realized. It would be dependent on food accessibility, and due to widespread panic buying, store shelves were often bare. While the challenges were evident, the Prayer and Care Team remained prayerfully optimistic.

Those prayers have been answered; blessings have been realized. The OPC Emergency Fund was established and became a financial resource for the Prayer and Care ministry. Twenty-eight volunteers, ranging in age from 10-82, offered to shop, drive, make masks, schedule deliveries, pack bags, write devotional messages, pray, and contribute food. When the church building was closed, a new staging and storage site needed to be found...and it was. Raelyn Harman and Gopal Subramanian graciously offered their home for a staging site, and generously packed bags for delivery. When Raelyn tested positive for Covid-19, the prayers for her recovery were abundant. (*...and those prayers have been answered!*) Definitely a ministry on the move, the OPC Prayer and Care Ministry has now pulled into Jane Rozmiarek's garage. *Thank you, Jane!*

To date, over 160 grocery deliveries have been made. Each bag is prayerfully packed and delivered with warm OPC greetings. Since March, the delivery team has travelled countless miles throughout Philadelphia, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties...and shoppers have been known to cross state lines for canned goods. Each volunteer has been a blessing, and each deserves prayers of gratitude. We are especially thankful for Zack Wong's unwavering commitment to this ministry. Until recently sidelined by hip surgery, Zack's faithful service as a driver brought joy to many members of the OPC family. Additionally, we remain grateful for the support and the collaborative spirit of Pastor Adam and the Deacons.

If you, or someone you know would like to receive a grocery delivery, or would like to join the Prayer and Care Team, please contact Sharon Parker (sparker614@gmail.com; 267-292-5628).

Blessings to all,
The OPC Prayer and Care Team



Emergency Fund

An Emergency Fund has been established to respond to the acute financial needs of members of our community. Within the first couple of weeks, the fund has been able to help defray the costs of rent, car repairs, utility bills and other essential living expenses. A committee has been established to administer this fund. Those members include: Nancy Gilhool, Will Schick, Herb Brabham, Sharon Parker and Bill Baker, as well as Pastor Adam Hearlson.

To reach the Emergency Fund, a special email has been established: emergencyfund@overbrookpresb.org
You can also call the main church number 215-877-2744 to leave a message to be returned, or contact any member directly.

Support (Cont'd)

OPC Deacons

Overbrook's Deacons are a remarkable team who minister in myriad ways. The Deacons are making telephone rounds to ensure contact is made with every member of the community and to check in on any prayer or other needs. They help the sick, the home-bound, the grieving. They celebrate milestones and birthdays. Please reach out for prayer requests or any other question or concern. deacons@overbrookpresb.org or Terri Hunter, teresahunter42@gmail.com or by phone, 484-684-0247.

Spiritual Support

Pastor Adam Hearlson is available via phone, email and Zoom for "face to face" conversations during this challenging time. His email is adam@overbrookpresb.org, or you can reach out via the church phone 215-877-2744 and he will return

From the Director of Music:

Toward an Anti-Racist Music Program

Recent events have compelled all of us to undertake a long-overdue reckoning with the ways in which we perpetuate racism in aspects of our daily lives—and music is no exception. Existing power structures, everything from multimillion-dollar arts organizations to, yes, our program at Overbrook, unequivocally favor music by white European composers. How can we rectify this injustice while still being true to our church's rich musical traditions?

The first step is to be aware that a "traditional music program," more often than not, enables racist musical practices. I propose eschewing the "traditional" label, which is fraught with colonialist undertones: we can be much more inclusive by saying that we perform composed music. What does this term mean? It refers to music that has gone through some kind of compositional process resulting in a score or other legible representation. The majority of our existing repertoire, with pieces by such venerable composers as Bach, Mendelssohn, and Vaughan Williams, certainly fits this description. But broadening our conception of the music we celebrate allows for an escape from "traditional" Austro-German roots to include music from all over the world, with a variety of different styles, textures, voicings, and messages.

Our next step is to decide how to be true to our stated inclusivity—in other words, putting our money where our mouth is. Over the next several years, I would like to add to our music library at least **10 new pieces**, either for choir or for solo voice, by composers from underrepresented populations. Of course, this initiative devotes much of its focus to music by Black composers but also seeks to highlight other voices, such as those of female and LGBTQ+ musicians.

We will never be finished with our work toward an anti-racist music program, but we can take significant steps to support everyone in the community. I look forward to sharing this journey with you
-Chris



Worship Committee



Greetings from the Worship and Music Committee

Wow! Do we have a team! Overbrook has now worshipped via Zoom for 13 weeks—that's a full quarter of a year. We've been able to do this only because we have a phenomenal team making it happen. Adam continues to plan and lead worship with the participation of Chris. Chris records organ music for use during the service. He selects previously recorded hymns and other music for use during the service. The choir members record their own voice part in an anthem and send it to Chris who puts together all the voices to produce the anthem we hear. The soloists sing live during worship accompanied by a recording. Our guest musicians play live during worship. Anthony and Becky plan the time with children and invite others to participate, all presented live during worship. Guest prayer leaders participate live during worship. Scripture readings, prayers, and the affirmation of faith magically appear on our computer screen. And who makes sure everything happens when it is supposed to happen? Carol! Carol is the queen of tech who plugs in each part of the service and keeps the service moving without a glitch and even permits us to exchange the peace and chat at coffee hour. Friends, there is no team like our team. We are grateful for their gifts which they generously share with us.

As pleased as we are to be able to worship by zoom, all of us long for the day when we will again worship from our sanctuary. Unfortunately it is not as easy as just sitting in every other pew with six feet between worshippers. The Committee has reviewed a long list of requirements for returning to the sanctuary, and each time we review it, the list gets longer as we are reminded of even more details we must address. Clearly the safety of our worshippers is our first consideration.

The Session voted to keep the building closed for programming through Labor Day. By then we will have established procedures to allow us to worship together safely, we will have implemented a live-streaming capability so that those who cannot join us in the sanctuary will still be able to worship with us from their homes. These are challenging goals, and we believe we can accomplish them. Until then, I look forward to seeing you on Zoom

-Eileen Wiggins

Women's Ministry



Beauty in a Wounded World: Women's Gatherings

The women of OPC are invited to attend an online Women's Gatherings on the evenings of June 23rd. We have invited Rev. Dr. Christy Lang Hearlson to facilitate this session. The session, which will take place via Zoom on June 23 from 7-8:30pm, will be a highly interactive "beauty salon," with participants sharing examples of beauty that bring them hope and courage, including poetry, photographs, paintings, quilts, songs, or other forms. Participants may offer something they themselves created or share another's work, or simply appreciate what others have to share.

Please register at this Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrcu6gpjMtH9b90WL2TsNJ9nD5CGnPoMeY> You will get a confirmation email with a link to use for the event.

Please contact Artia Benjamin (Newlife5125@aol.com) or Becky Lazo (rebeccalazo@hotmail.com) with questions.

Women's Prayer & Support Group-

Women's weekly prayer groups are now Tuesday and Thursday. Below is the information for both sessions:

Tuesdays at 7:30am-8:30a

Join <https://zoom.us/j/97359780682> or by phone: 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 973 5978 0682

Sign up to lead a Tuesday group:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040948a9ac29ab9-opcwomens>

Thursdays at 8pm-9p

Join <https://zoom.us/j/95829739000> or by phone: Phone: 646-558-8656, Meeting ID 958 2973 9000

Sign-Up to lead a Thursday Group:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040948A9AC29AB9-opcwomens1>

Anti-Racism Resources from Christian Education Leaders

The Christian Education Ministry at Overbrook fully commits itself to dismantling racist systems. We aim to continue fostering safe, vibrant spaces for all of God's children to thrive no matter the color of their skin. We further affirm to lift-up prophetic voices, diversify our curricular aims and content, and to promote Christ's peace in all that we undertake. We invite you and your entire family to listen to an important message delivered by our Christian Education leaders. Anthony Carrella, Cheryl Davis, and Becky Lazo speak to the entire family [here](#). If you are reading our print publication, please visit: <https://youtu.be/ofwTsZljEbo>



Save The VBS Dates!

ReNew: A Take-Home VBS

We are excited to announce that we will offer a **take-home** VBS this summer! Our theme is *ReNew*, a VBS that will take us through the *Parable of the Sower* as we learn about creation and sustainability. Registration will be made available soon with a link sent to families in the coming week. This VBS is geared for children ages 4-11.

Weekend of 7/25: Parents pick-up materials from OPC in shifts.

Monday 7/27: Zoom Welcome and Sing-Along (30 mins).

Tuesday - Thursday 7/28 - 30: Enjoy VBS at home! Optional remote lunch.

Friday 7/31: Zoom Closing Ceremony (45 mins).



Summer Fellowship Schedule

Thanks to all who helpfully contributed in our Summer Fellowship survey! Our CE Committee reviewed the survey, and moved to follow the momentum and gathering preferences kindly noted by our Overbrook Family.

Summer Fellowship for all ages will be held twice per month on Wednesdays

(6/24, 7/8, 7/22, 8/5, 8/19, and 9/2).

Children parents, and Sunday School leaders will gather from 5:00 PM to 5:45 PM.

Youth (13-17), Anthony, and guests from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM.



CE Text Message Notifications for Parents and Teens

With the blessing of our leadership and the CE Committee, we are pleased to announce we will offer a convenient, teacher-approved, *text message notification option* for parents and teens over 13 years old. With *Remind*, you and your teens can opt-in to receive weekly updates, reminders, and words of encouragement.

Learn about Remind: <https://www.remind.com/>

Join Here: <https://www.remind.com/join/opcce>

Blessings to our Graduates!

Congratulations to the Class of 2020! We are so proud of you, and know God has BIG plans coming your way.

Each school-aged child received a postcard addressed to them at their home.

Each High School and College graduate received a personal visit from Anthony or Becky, as well as a *send-off bag*.

Inside the bag was:

- A handheld cross of olive wood to remind graduates that sometimes we are called to carry our own burden without the help others.
- A vial of mustard seeds to remind them of their faith
- A cupcake for their own personal feast.

Congratulations



We would like to congratulate the following graduates for a job well done:

High School:

Tarah Paul graduated from Agnes Irwin and will be attending University of Pennsylvania.

Amanda Duckworth graduated from Masterman High School and will be attending Harvard University.

Noble Brigham graduated from Episcopal Academy and will be attending Brown University.

Siarra Cummings graduated from Science Leadership Academy and will attending Penn State University.

Sarron Cummings graduated from Roman Catholic and will be attending Penn State University.

BK Kothari graduated from Friends Central and will be attending New York University

Joanna Scherluebbe graduated from Lower Merion High School and will be taking a gap year.

College

Madison Harden graduated from Columbia University

Sophie Shaw graduated from University of Pittsburgh

Brett Kaercher graduated from Temple University

James Piatt graduated from Temple University

Stephen Folwell graduated from Duquesne University.



Finance Committee

The Committee has increased its meeting frequency in order to better monitor the financial impacts of the COVID pandemic. Because the church building is closed, we are not receiving the rental income that was expected when the annual budget was created. We also continue to assess the impact on giving of holding virtual church services in place of in-person services. We are extremely grateful to those who continue to give to the church in spite of our new remote condition, and we feel fortunate that we are currently able to cover all expenses.

As noted in the last newsletter, we received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan through the Small Business Administration for \$164,900. We are working with the other church committees and the preschool, which is a program of the church, on how the money will be spent so that we can maximize forgiveness. The payroll of church staff and preschool teachers and administrators is our first priority, and also meets the requirements for PPP loan forgiveness.

Mission & Outreach



June 30 is our next date for the meal for the residents of the Life Center of Eastern Delaware County. Due to the virus, the Life Center is no longer serving meals for the community. However, (and you may not have known this) there are 29 people who are residents of the Life Center. Because of the virus, they have moved to two motels. There are 15 people at the McIntosh Motel in Media and 14 people in the Travelodge in Essington. Volunteer group like OPC are providing bagged dinners and breakfast items for the next day to these residents. We trust that OPC members will be willing to help feed these people on June 30. It seems to me that the best way to do this is to have a team of 4 people for each motel group. Each team would be responsible for providing a bagged dinner (sandwiches are fine, with drinks, something else healthy, and a dessert) and items for breakfast such as cereal bowls, boxed milk and juice, a piece of fruit, a hard-boiled egg. Each team hopefully will be able to deliver the meals, also. There will be a sign-up genius sent to you soon. Since the church building is closed, all meal preparation will have to be done at home. Please feel free to call me with questions and to volunteer. Thanks, Nancy Gilhool

Deacons

Happy June Birthdays

6/4	Deb Rottinger	6/19	Chris Gage
6/5	Vicki Swartz	6/20	Miriam Harden
6/6	Declan Bright		Liz Shah
	Sean Henry		Paul Stricker
6/7	Ellen Valudes	6/21	Hugh Taussig-Lux
6/8	Bill Baker	6/22	Ernestine Harris
6/11	Kate Shackelford	6/25	I-Mei Huang
6/13	Ted Dillon		Linda Huff Paul
	Anna Taussig-Lux	6/26	Adam Hearlson
6/14	Sharon Parker	6/29	Kevin Trindade
6/15	Theodore Baker	6/30	Elias Hotek
	Kieran Fernandez		James Whalen
	Claire Morris		
6/17	Grace Underwood		
	Rachel Underwood		
6/18	May Phan		



Fellowship Hour

In an attempt to continue to build community and serve our congregation, we will be holding a virtual coffee hour after worship. At the conclusion of the service, people who remain will be invited to join a breakout room where they will have five minutes to catch up and say hello to their church friends. After five minutes, you can join another room and then another for a total of about 15-20 minutes of conversation and fellowship with other members of the congregation. So, bring your coffee, your snacks, and your finger foods and gather again for a good OPC coffee hour

Prayer List

Mary Lou Ryce broke her ankle and her daughter, Greta is taking care of her.

Lynn Pompa had some complications from a recent biopsy and will begin cancer treatment soon.

Leonard Sloan has been released from the hospital and welcomes continued prayers.

Margaret Young's son Keith's has been released from the hospital and put on hospice care at home. Prayers for the Keith and the family.

Judy Swartz is recovered from COVID-19 but continued prayers for continued healing.

Collette Stanley, former OPC Member, has been diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent surgery on May 12. Surgery went well and she is home recovering.

Theresa Carter is currently being treated for metastatic breast cancer.

Lou Packett, friend of Amanda and Artia Benjamin, is still in the hospital with COVID but is improving.

Artia's friend James Jones Jr., is in the hospital with the COVID-19 virus and is now out of a coma and is no longer in critical care.

Diane, Laurie Geers's sister, is still receiving cancer treatments. Prayers for continued healing.

Al Mayne, father of Scott Mayne, has just completed cancer treatment and is recovering from surgery.

Jeanine Shumaker, Gail Kaercher's neighbor, is battling breast cancer.

Eric Long's father Bill Long's cancer has returned.

Pat, friend of Ginny Leagans, is continuing treatment for cancer. Recent blood work results were positive.

Katie Kupstas's father responded well to treatment for stage 4 lung cancer. The tumor has shrunk.

Wendy Fraser, sister of Jeremy Blatchley, is continuing treatment for cancer.

John Nathaniel is back in PT/OT.

Ed Harvey is still facing some multiple health challenges. He is grateful for all the prayers.

Please contact Terri Hunter (teresahunter42@gmail.com) or the Church Office to add names to the prayer list.

Weekly Online Opportunities

Wednesday Morning Bible Study- 10:30 am via Zoom

Bible Study continues through the summer! Even though we can't gather in body, we can gather online! Adam will be holding the weekly Wednesday Bible Study on ZOOM for everyone who is interested as long as we are separated. The study will begin at 10:30am. The following is the schedule of texts that will be read during Bible Study in June along with the additional supported readings (follow the links for the additional readings):

June 24: Mark 9:33-41

[BrianBlount](#)

[BrianBlountSermon](#)

After Bible study, we will have a time to pray with each other support each other in the midst of separation. Here is the link for ZOOM. It will work each week, so keep using it.

<https://zoom.us/j/659964984>

You can also call into the study using these number: +1 646 558 8656 - **Meeting ID: 659 964 984**

Women's Prayer & Support Group.

Join us every Tuesday morning at 7:30am and now Thursday evenings at 8:00 pm for some prayer, connection, and support. We would like to create a rotation so that women can volunteer to host the meeting (and by host, we mean, maybe open us in prayer, pick a topic of discussion, etc.). We hope you'll join us!

Here's the connection information for the Tuesday's Women's Prayer: at 7:30 am

Join: <https://zoom.us/j/97359780682>

To join by phone call: +1(646)558-8656 - **Meeting ID: 973 5978 0682**

Here's the connection information for the Thursday's Women's Prayer at 8:00 pm

Join <https://zoom.us/j/95829739000>

Phone: 646-558-8656, **Meeting ID 958 2973 9000**



Saturday Morning Men's Group

Join us every Saturday morning at 9 AM on Zoom.

Open to all—invite a friend!

Click to Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/209922549>

Or call 646-558-8656 and enter **Meeting ID: 209 922 549**

Community News

The Farmers Market is Back!

Every Saturday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the church parking lot

About the Market: Established in 2008, this market is located at the Overbrook Presbyterian Church, and has a loyal following of residents in the neighborhood who make this market a regular part of their Saturday mornings.

Look for:

- ♦Walnut Springs Farm - (Early berries and asparagus, in season sweet corn, peaches and more)
- ♦Homestead Gardens - (Seasonal fresh vegetables)

