



THE OLIVE BRANCH

APRIL 2024

OLIVE BRANCH CHRISTIAN CHURCH

(Disciples of Christ)

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CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

REMEMBERING CLAY HARRISON

"For we are the product of His hand, heaven's poetry etched on lives..." (Ephesians 2:10, TPT)

On the evening of March 17, Olive Branch Christian Church lost its poet. Clay Harrison, our friend and brother-in-Christ, passed away peacefully in his sleep. He had fought the good fight, spending the last four weeks of his life in Hospice care at home. Clay died surrounded by his family that loved him dearly, especially Shirley, his partner for 57 years. As she wrote in her announcement of his death, "Our lives will never be the same, but thankfully we have the promise of seeing him again in heaven."

As you know, it is my practice in remembering one who has passed to pick out a passage of scripture that, incompletely of course, lifts up a quality where I saw God revealed in his or her life. There are so many that come to mind when reflecting on Clay's life! But then I read The Passion Translation (TPT) of the passage from Ephesians, and it spoke perfectly to a part of Clay's life that I experienced time and time again: "For we are the product of His hand, heaven's poetry etched on lives..."(Ephesians 2:10).

The Passion Translation in this verse builds upon an older translation from The Jerusalem Bible which reads, "We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it." The art that God planted in Clay's life was poetry.

Clay had a gift I have never seen before, not in my 44 years of ministry. His poetry was inspired. He could sum up the highest qualities of a person's life in 12

lines, a task that would take me pages. And it wasn't just people he wrote about; Clay captured in verse our fears, our loves, our relationship to God, our relationships with others. Before he passed, I asked him how many poems he had written in his life. His answer: over 6000!

Clay was able to take a simple item like paper and make it far more than ordinary. He made that paper the media for his poetry. In pen and ink with the most beautiful of handwriting, he declared the person he was writing about was loved and of great value. I think Clay, if asked why he wrote poetry, would agree with the verse from Ephesians I used earlier. He would have said heaven is simply writing poetry on the lives of others, and using me as an instrument to reveal it.

So here is a lesson to learn from Clay and his gift: we are called by God to take ordinary things, even ordinary people, and by affirming them that they matter, and by loving them as Christ would, help them to see that they are of great value. After all, if heaven is writing poetry on the lives of His children, who am I to step in and deface the work of Christ? Clay spent his life affirming that all people are of value to God and should be treated as works of art. May we live our lives in the same way.

Thank you, Lord, for allowing me in my life's walk to travel with Clay Harrison. It was far too short a walk. Amen.

Blessings,
~Pastor Richard

MEETINGS & BUILDING USE

T.O.P.S.: Tuesdays; 9:30AM; Taylor Hall

Seekers Prayer Group: Tuesdays; 11:30 AM
Adult SS Room

Our Day Out: 2nd Wednesdays; 10AM-2PM;
Branch Hall

Comfort Ministry: 2nd Saturdays; 10 AM
Sandy's Restaurant

DWM Tuesday Bible Study: 3rd Tuesdays; 2 PM;
Taylor Hall

Girl Scouts Troop 1385 Meetings:

Alternate Wednesdays; September 6 until June 5,
2024

6:30-8:00 PM; Adult Sunday School Room

OBCC Men's Meeting: 2nd Thursdays; 9 AM; Branch
Hall with breakfast

4th Thursday Lunch Bunch: 4th Thursdays; 11 AM;
Sandy's Restaurant

Oak Grove Baptist Church Fashion Show: Saturday,
April 27; 9AM-4PM Branch Hall (setup Friday, April 26)

OBCC Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 30; 6PM; Adult
Sunday School Room



SERVICES & HOURS

Sunday Services:

8:30 AM Branch Hall 11:00 AM Sanctuary

Sunday School:

NFH Sunday School following the 8:30 service

Andy's Sunday School at 9:30

Nursery:

Open on Sundays: 8:15AM-12:15PM

Office Hours:

Mon-Fri 8:30AM-1:30PM



OBCC Board Meeting: April 30; 6PM; Adult Sunday
School Room

Celebration of Life Service for Betty Barber: Saturday,
May 4; 11:30AM; OBCC



PRAYER LIST

Church Family: Jimmy Biggs, JC Biggs, Linda Brown, Janet Dombrowski, Phyllis Gardner, Nancy Griffith, Irma Gustafson, Norm Hall, Shirley Harrison & Family, Keeta Hodson, Anne Holland, Linda Hutton, Cheryl Johnson, Gene Johnson, Jean Lawrence, David Love & Family, Keith McMurdo, Dallas Mitchell, Fred

Rothermel, Bob Schmidt, Barbara Thiel, Jerry Van Cleave, Sarah Waid

Friends: The professional and volunteer women and men who protect and defend us, Our Nation, Natasha Angel (Bob & Sharon Herndon's friend), Dave Archibald (Larry & Louise Smith's son's friend), Denny Dasher (Dennis & Anita Dasher's son), Evala (Norm Hall's daughter), Cody Ferguson (Amy Ferguson's nephew), Nancy Ferguson (Amy Ferguson's mother), Janet Gay (Emily Dill's friend), Sue Martin (Michelle Wright's sister-in-law), Julie Painter (Anita Dasher's aunt), Marolyn Pierce (Carolyn Hunt's sister), Zak Reynolds (Larry & Louise Smith's grandson), Andrew Smith (Mary Louise Rich's son-in-law), Howard & Sharon Thackson (Cheryl Johnson's niece), Brenda Walker (Chuck Walker's mother), Jason (Lorraine Beasley's son), Lola (Missy Harbour's friend's niece)



17	Harold & Patty Barker
17	Doug & Emily Dill
19	Dallas & Joann Mitchell
19	Richard & Lynn Onesty
29	Mel & Kaye Watson



Birthday Blessings

01	Jeanne Bell
02	Corey Hooker
02	Shaun Hooker
03	Jonathon Griffin
06	Larry Smith
08	Judy Jones-Wanner
11	Ann Bradshaw
16	Louise Smith
16	Nancy Sheppard
17	Chuck Sheppard
19	John Speegle
20	Marney Brickhouse
21	Brett Matschke
22	Kathy Kidd
24	Donna Perger
25	Jack Heslink
26	Lynn Onesty
26	Maggie Sheppard
26	Tyler Hutton
30	Christy Jensen



ELDERS & DEACONS & DEACONESSES

		THIS MONTH'S DEACONESS
		Edie Larkin
04/07/2024	Richard Bradshaw Andy Bradshaw	
	Missy Harbour Dennis Cotner Ryan Matschke David Love	
04/14/2024	Will Hatcher Linda Williams	
	Judy Eley Jane Hatcher Joann Mitchell Joshua Fulgham	
04/21/2024	Teri Tench Ann Bradshaw	
	Amy Ferguson Karen Barrow Anita Dasher Danny Pitts	
04/28/2024	Abby Matschke Sheila Yeatts	
	Liz Ripley Jason Teagle Jim Holland Tyler Watson (Janet Neal)	



Worship & Wonder

WORSHIP & WONDER SCHEDULE

	Leader:	Greeter:
04/07/2024	Linda Williams	Bob Williams
04/14/2024	Landa Simmons	Cris Simmons
04/21/2024	Landa Simmons	Cris Simmons
04/28/2024	Linda Williams	Bob Williams



BOARD MEETING

The OBCC Board will be meeting on Tuesday, April 30, at 6 PM in the Adult Sunday School Room.



The OBCC Family extends condolences to the family of Clay Harrison. Clay passed away on March 17, 2024. He wrote thousands of poems over the years, many of them for friends who had passed away. Below is a poem written for Clay by his friend, Susan Heck.

To Clay

*These words form a verse for our dear friend, Clay,
Whose poems touched our hearts on many a day.*

*He wrote of beauty, of grief, and of joy
With the freedom of spirit only granted a boy.*

*His words gave us hope when none could be found,
Reminding our spirits of love with no bounds.*

*As the end of his earthly service draws near,
His burden grows lighter and his eyes hold no fear.*

*For the God of forgiveness and love and of grace,
Waits patiently, arms open, at the end of his race.*

*He'll say to this man who gave all and then some,
"Well done, faithful servant, well done. Welcome Home!"*



SPECIAL THANKS

Many, many thanks to everyone for all the prayers and cards during Clay's illness. I am so grateful. Thank you, Richard, for your visits and spending time with him and making him laugh in spite of the situation. Thank you to the ladies of the DWM for their gift and for honoring Clay with a gift to the Memorial Fund. He would be pleased.

~Shirley Harrison



The OBCC Family extends condolences to the family of Diana Love. Diana passed away on March 24, 2024. A service was held for Diana at OBCC on Thursday, March 28, 2024.



OUR DAY OUT-2ND WEDNESDAYS

What a beautiful day we had to gather together for a St Patrick's Day ODO! No one got pinched as a little green was found on all. The wonderful thing about this gathering is the fellowship time, the chance to visit, chat, and get to know each other better.

Christy Jensen did a delightful program complete with dot-to-dot challenges for all to enjoy. We did a little hymn singing which always makes Ellen smile. Chef Sheila treated us to corned beef and cabbage and Anita's delicious butter potatoes. Joann's corn muffins

rounded out the lunch and green pineapple fluff with patty's short bread cookies filled us up.

Then we had a special drawing and those with the luck of the Irish were favored with one of Grace Gardner's beautiful and crafty creations.

Creative Jane helped us make pots of gold and filled them with some delicious candy. We finished the day playing Bingo. Our caller, Tyler, always makes it so much fun and everyone seems to enjoy the M&M cups as well as the thoughtful and delicious prizes.

Next month the theme is "April showers bring May flowers".

Again, I feel so blessed to be a part of this special program which joins us together in Christian love and caring. See you next month!



May God Bless You Always,
Marney Brickhouse, Coordinator



WORLD OUTREACH NEWS

Moms make the world kinder. This Mother's Day blankets the world in love.

Our Church family supports the CWS Blankets program because these blankets bring hope to people who need a reminder that someone cares about them. Just \$5.00 brings hope.

On April 28 & May 5 look for blanket order slips in Sunday bulletins. These gifts help those in need around the world, given in honor of mothers everywhere.

~Sheila Yeatts, World Outreach Coordinator



Thank You! SPECIAL THANKS—DWM YARD SALE

The DWM Yard Sale brought in \$4,467.50! We are so grateful for your support. Thank you for all your donations and giving from the heart!



BRIDGES OF CHANGE FUNDRAISER

Bridges of Change held a fundraiser at our Church, where people learned how to hand-knit a chunky blanket. The organization raised \$536.00 and picked up the donations for their shelter we have been collecting. Thank you for all your support toward this ministry!

~Abby Matschke





VA REGION MISSION TRIP 2024

The 2nd Annual Virginia Region Mission Trip is full! Thank you for signing up!

~Abby Matschke



SANCTUARY GARDEN APPRECIATION

Thank you to all the hard workers who gathered to help spread mulch, plant new bushes and flowers, and lend a helping hand to make the Sanctuary Garden look beautiful for the springtime!



APRIL FOOL'S DAY TRADITIONS

April Fools' Day on April 1 is a day where many of us unleash our most creative sides, all in a hilarious – sometimes over the top – attempt at bamboozling those around us. There's no consensus on how it all began, but a popular theory is that while nowadays, January 1 is when we start the new year, this wasn't the case before 1592. We used a calendar called the

Julian calendar – created by Julius Caesar in 45 BC – which saw every new year begin on April 1.

Pope Gregory the 8th created a new method for keeping track of days, which was the start of the calendar we all know and love: the Gregorian calendar. When he moved the date of New Year's Eve, it obviously took some time for everyone to catch on to it. Those who were a bit behind the times still celebrated on April 1, and were considered fools for doing so.

One lesser known, often argued explanation for our beloved prank day is buried in a 1392 book called "The Canterbury Tales" by Geoffrey Chaucer. One line in this publication simply references "March 32", and the debate to its meaning was born. Without much context and being dated so far back, the interpretation remains a mystery. Some believe it to be a joke, dawning this annual tradition, while some say it's none other than a misprint.

Whether we have Gregory the 8th or Geoffrey Chaucer to thank for April Fools' Day, it has existed for centuries and will continue to cause a flurry of creativity and excitement in the first few weeks of spring.

Perhaps what's more interesting is that this year, April Fools' Day falls on the day after Easter, or Easter Monday. Perhaps instead of pulling pranks and trying to fool others for some fun this year on April 1, we can continue to reflect on the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!



SOMEWHERE ANGELS ARE SINGING

SOMEWHERE ANGELS ARE SINGING
THEIR JOYOUS SONGS OF PRAISE
FOR IT'S EASTER DAY ONCE MORE -
THE HOLIEST OF DAYS!
CHRIST'S EMPTY TOMB REMINDS US
OF HIS LOVE AND SACRIFICE.
OUR SIN DEBT IS "PAID IN FULL" -
HIS BLOOD HAS PAID THE PRICE!

SOMEWHERE CHOIRS ARE SINGING
JOYFUL PRAISES TO HIS NAME
FOR THE PRINCE OF PEACE HAS RISEN
AND WE THANK GOD HE CAME!
OUR SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,
NAILED FOREVER TO HIS CROSS.
WITHOUT HIM, WE'D HAVE NO HOPE
AND GREAT WOULD BE OUR LOSS!

SOMEWHERE THE SAINTS ARE SINGING -
"ROCK OF AGES CLEFT FOR ME..."
AND THOSE WHO'VE GONE ON BEFORE US
ARE HAPPY AS THEY CAN BE.
SOMEWHERE THE SUN SHINES BRIGHTER
BECAUSE OF CALVARY,
AND SOMEDAY WE'LL BE UNITED
IN GOD'S ETERNITY!

Clay Harrison
EASTER 2015

Clay,

When on Earth your pen's laid down.
You will receive your royal crown.

Your journey here is said and done,
Your final battle, fought and won.

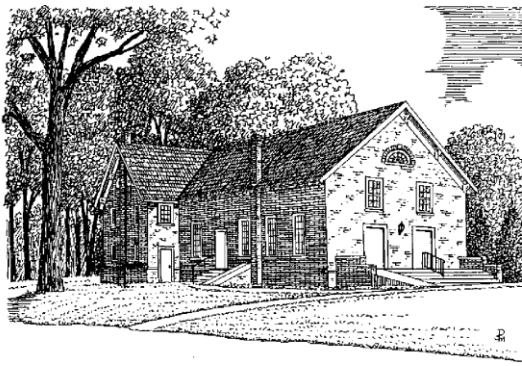
No more pain to set your pace,
You were victorious in Life's race.

You will see Jesus face to face
Receive His loving gift of Grace.

His very best words, you will receive
"Well done, Clay, you have believed."

To your Family you said "Good-bye"
Their hearts will break and they will cry,
You'll someday meet at Heaven's gate
Where every Christian trusts his Fate.

Rest in Peace, our Friend, until we meet again,
Your Olive Branch Family



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The Olive Branch

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