

Plumbline

ORANGEWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

September 2023

Pastor Page's Pastor's Page

I want to use my last Pastor's Page to express my love for you all and to let you know how much being your pastor has been a blessing to me. It has been a wonderful 17 years full of many challenges and many joys. I have grown as a pastor and grown in my faith and spirituality.

I'm not worried about Orangewood Presbyterian Church. You will be just fine because the ministry at Orangewood has never been just about the minister. As I reflect on my years here, I remember how many times you have ministered to me and my family. You helped Lori and me raise our children. When I asked them as young teenagers "who are your heroes?" I expected to get soccer players and rock stars as answers. Instead they mentioned people like Dirk Oosterwyck, Bernale Wright, Tully Fletcher and Esther Raybuck.

You gave me a sabbatical to study Spiritual Direction which has been tremendously fruitful in my life and my ministry. You supported us through my heart attack and my disability with diverticulitis and c-diff. We've truly seen some miracles together! I also recall how you have stepped up recently when I couldn't be here. You continued the ministry of the church. You all can, and always have, stepped up to the tasks of the ministry before you. I have no doubt that you will do it again, and that God will bless you through it.

I read an article recently about a difference in wine making between California and France. In California they irrigate abundantly. In France they don't. When you don't water you will have lesser crops in some years, but the roots of your vines will grow much deeper. Eventually, they will reach the ground water and will be resistant to any drought. Relying on your pastor for everything is kind of like irrigation. In the short term, crops can be increased. In the long term, though, your roots need to go deeper into the living water of Jesus Christ.

Your roots are deep! You know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You may be in for a bit of a drought between pastors, but it will also be an opportunity for your roots to go deeper into the Lord.

Thanks for 17 wonderful years! You will be in my prayers, and I ask the same of you. May God bless you richly as you minister together to each other and to this community!



Recognition

Lynne Orf was recently recognized by NourishPHX for her 15 years as a dedicated volunteer. We at Orangewood also appreciate your many years of kindness and service to this wonderful organization and the families it serves.



For the past twelve years, Sports360AZ has been committed to acknowledging the best and brightest student athletes in Arizona. This year the All-Academic Spring Sports Teams recognized excellence of student athletes not only in competition but in the classroom as well.

Names were compiled after Sports360AZ reached out to every athletic director in the state, as well as every varsity head coach. In this case that would be Coach Michael Fenton, Joan Fenton's son, and Sunnyslope Varsity softball coach who submitted the names and GPAs of his qualifying athletes.

TWO of our girls placed in the **TOP 10** spots among all 5A and 6A Arizona Softball players.

Addison Case in the #2 spot with a weighted **GPA of 4.83.**
Sabrina Case in the #7 spot with a weighted **GPA of 4.70.**

We are **very** proud of our kind, smart, sporty girls. Both are seniors at Sunnyslope.

The Shower Ministry from the UCC Church of the Palms in Sun City provides mobile shower facilities to the homeless who do not have access to showers. Along with a hot shower comes a towel, shampoo, and soap. The ministry also provides new socks, underwear, and outlets for charging cell phones. Just imagine what this feels like when you've been out in 115° heat for days on end.



If you'd like someone or an organization to be recognized in the Plumblin, please email the info to editor Barbara Digges @ zeebah48@gmail.com. Photos are appreciated, if available.

Upcoming Events

Congregational Meeting	August 27
Undie Sunday	Sept 3
Welcome Back Sunday	Sept 10
Immerse Bible/Small Groups	Sept 10
OPW Picnic	Sept 23
Bible Study	Oct 3
Sages	Oct 10
Grace Lutheran	Oct 15
Pancakes for the Homeless	



Not every upcoming event will be listed here. The Plumblin will include Special Events and Worship Services, as well as groups that are resuming after summer break. Please check the OPC website calendar and/or Bulletin

SPOTLIGHT

The Plumblin will periodically introduce a member of our three congregations in a feature article. (Peter) Bhan Ruot is in *The Spotlight* this month. Bhan is a member of both the South Sudanese New Life Presbyterian Fellowship (formerly Nile Congregation) and the original Orangewood congregation. He attends both services most Sundays.

Bhan was born in a small Ethiopian village. Bhan's Grandmother took him to Presbyterian Church and had him baptized at age two. She taught him the Commandments, which were recited in church. When they got home from church, Grandmother made Bhan again say the Commandments before he could go play.

Their father wanted a different life for Bhan and his brother Buany from what he had as a cattle farmer. He sent the boys to school in a nearby town, an hour's walk from home. One day in 2005 after some violence and killing in their village, Bhan believed he was a target of the aggression. He left his class, went to his brother's classroom and grabbed him by the hand. The boys, ages 18 and 14, took off running without a goodbye. They had only what they had worn to school and a little lunch money. And so began a journey that would last both a month and a lifetime.

Bhan and Buany headed towards a refugee camp in Ethiopia. When they arrived, they were told they could not stay since the camp was for persons who had fled other countries, not those who lived in Ethiopia. They were sent on their way to Kakuma, a large refugee camp in Kenya.

Their journey took them from Ethiopia through South Sudan and into Kenya. Sometimes they walked alone, sometimes in the company of others. They travelled on foot over dirt roads and were grateful when they could hitch a ride for a few miles on a better road. Often they were without food or water. At times they slept during the day and travelled at night when it was cooler and safer from predators. When they arrived in Kakuma nearly a month later, they had travelled at least 614 km, as the crow flies. This translates to 382 miles, equivalent to the distance and terrain from Phoenix to LA.

In Kakuma the boys attended and graduated from high school. Bhan learned English, Arabic, and Swahili in addition to his native Nuer language. Bhan held a number of jobs within the camp, some paid, some volunteer. His favorite role may have been as choir master for his Presbyterian church's 3 choirs—youth, women, men; when the three groups united as one, 150 refugees raised their voices in song.

In 2009 the Red Cross was finally able to connect the boys to their parents by phone. For the past four years, their parents had believed the boys were no longer alive. In 2022 Bhan saw his parents, the first time since 2005.

Bhan met a young woman from So. Sudan. Their friendship led to a serious relationship and then marriage, according to tribal customs. They had two children, a daughter and a son. In 2017, Bhan was informed he and Buany had been selected to emigrate to the United States. Bhan was faced with a most difficult decision—should he stay in Kenya with his wife and children and be there for the birth of his third child? Staying would mean he might never have another opportunity to go and if he declined, Buany would have to remain in Kenya also. Should he go and later bring his family to America for a better life, with more opportunities for education, jobs, safety, a family home. Bhan believes that God guided him to chose to GO at this time. Bhan and Buany arrived in Phoenix in December, 2018.



Gach and Bhan

Bhan has met and conquered many challenges in Phoenix. He is employed, has learned to drive, owns a car, attends English classes three times a week, has connected with the South Sudanese community here and has continued his Presbyterian worship and affiliation. Bhan is grateful for the friendship he has with fellow refugee Gach Kur. It is Gach who invited Bhan to come to Orangewood. Bhan shared that his greatest challenge is his family being far away. He could have remained in Africa with them. But he is certain the better life for all of them is in America.

There isn't room in the Plumblin to tell you as much as you'd like to know about Bhan's life story. We have added a more robust version on the Orangewood website, under Connect/Library or take this link: [Peter_Bhan_Ruot_Story.pdf \(unite-production.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://unite-production.s3.amazonaws.com/Peter_Bhan_Ruot_Story.pdf)

Join in Celebrating Our September Birthdays

Wish them a happy birthday with a card, email, phone call or prayer.

Yvette Shoemaker	9/2	Joe Morton	9/17
Marian Lusby	9/9	Cheryl Carlson	9/22
Mary Beth Hamel	9/ 10	Edna Brenci	9/24
Joe Hernandez	9/11	Matthew Ramella	9/27
Catherine Allen	9/14	Derek Lamarr	9/29

These folks celebrated birthdays in **July** and **August** while the Plumblin was on vacation. It's not too late to greet them with a belated Happy Birthday!

Janice Schade	7/5	Suzanne Norling	8/3	Edward Hooper	8/20
Beverley Arthur	7/8	Frank DeBenedetti	8/5	Katy Griep	8/21
Lynne Orf	7/12	Dick Wright	8/9	Marilyn Edwards	8/24
Wesley Hooper	7/13	Peggy Widener	8/10	Kai Kroodsma	8/26
Kelly Ramella	7/15	Kristine Rasmussen	8/13	Daniel Burgess	8/27
Bob Orf	7/16	Bob Daudet	8/17	Marilyn Mollman	8/27
Eloise Lamarr	7/25	Jerry Eddy	8/17	Rachel Zemer	8/27
Gigi Griep	7/25	Elizabeth Reifsnider	8/18	Patricia Muilenburg	8/28
Greg Olander	7/29	Liz Brenci	8/18	Barb Digges	8/31

The Old Rugged Cross



The Old Rugged Cross is one of the best known and most loved country gospel songs . It has been performed by some of the twentieth century's most important recording artists, including:

Al Green, Andy Griffith, Anne Murray, Chet Atkins, Floyd Cramer, Eddy Arnold, Jim Reeves, Johnny Cash and June Carter, Ella Fitzgerald, Mahalia Jackson, Merle Haggard, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Ray Price, Ronnie Milsap, Tennessee Ernie Ford, The Oak Ridge Boys, The Statler Brothers, Vince Gill, and Willie Nelson.

Orangewood has it's own "rugged cross" hanging in Page Hall. Have you wondered about its origin?

On one of the Rocky Point trips, the Orangewood crew built a small chapel, rather than a home. Bernale thought it would be nice to construct a cross for the front of the church and to make it out of scraps from the build. The church's pastor declined the offer of the cross, because as the crew learned, Pentecostals view any kind of adornment, whether on buildings or on a

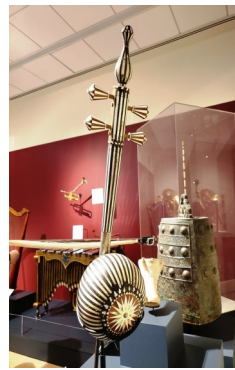
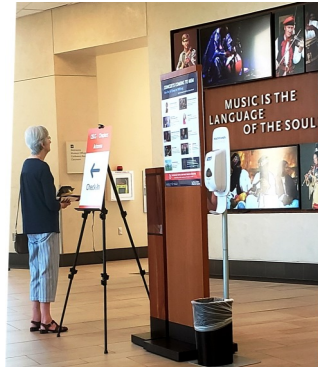
person, as "idolatry", and thus they discourage it. When the situation was explained to Bernale, she suggested, "Well, we'll just take it back and display it in Page Hall."

And there it hangs, as a reminder of scores of Rocky Point trips, a wonderful symbol of OPC's faithfulness to Jesus' calling in Mexico.

Thanks to Ken and Dennis D. for sharing this history.

Summer Fun

While some were able to escape the heat by heading out of town to Pinetop, Payson, Colorado, Oregon, etc., others had a cool time closer to home. Several of the OPW spent time together at the **Musical Instrument Museum**. The highlight was the *Rediscover Treasures* exhibit featuring musical instruments with extraordinary pasts. Many of the instruments are also stunning works of art. I encourage you to visit the exhibit before it closes on September 10th.



The Breakfast Out Bunch always has fun at the Moon Valley Café.



Ice cream art, created by kiddos at the Ice Cream Social.



Ari teams up with Pastor Ken to give clues during our Bible Fish game.

Montlure

I have had the privilege of working as Camp Nurse at Montlure for the past several seasons. Montlure has been renting space to host campers while our beautiful camp in Greer is being rebuilt. For the past two years overnight camp had been housed at Camp Raymond. It's an old Boy Scout camp that sits on the rim over Sycamore Canyon near Williams, AZ. It is a stunningly beautiful, peaceful, unplugged environment.

OPC supported four campers from our congregation this year. Montlure Camp allows youth to share fellowship, make new friends, talk, play, sing and explore faith supported by devoted youth leaders. Thank you all for your support of this ministry.

Christina Suarez

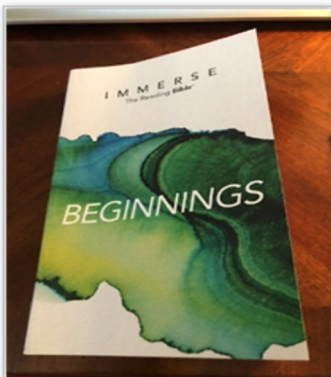


Session Notes

Despite the changes and turmoil we are experiencing and the urgent need to lay out a plan for our future, positive changes and improvements continue to be carried out. See separate articles in this newsletter about the Honduras trip and the ongoing work of the OPC Mission Committee. We appreciate the work of our Facilities team, led by Brent Upson, in carrying out the following projects.

- The sale of the manse has been completed with net proceeds to Orangewood of \$534,663. The sale closed on July 6th. The new owners are a family of four with two preschool boys. The family is excited to be living next to Orangewood and the schools.
- The preschool is having new security rolling shutters installed in response to requests from parents. They will be beige to blend in with the wall color and be closed when the school is not in session to minimize vandalism.
- The cabinets in Page Hall meeting rooms have been repaired and the locks replaced/ re-keyed. See the church administrator for a key if your group would like to have secure storage in the cabinets.
- Our solar project took another step forward as the service panel on the north education building was replaced with 400 amp service to handle the combined solar and existing power. This took alignment of APS, City of Phoenix, Creative Bridges Preschool and our contractor. During the delay of system connection our contractor is paying all our electricity bills.
- Parking lot income. There is a company that manages excess parking for rental. We have started the process of assessing the income and risk of renting our excess parking.
- Discussion about ideas to use of our vacant land (known as "the north 40") continues with focus on the possibility of building some affordable housing units on the property. Session welcomes your thoughts about this idea and your participation in planning for the future of this unused property on our campus.
- Session approved expenditure of up to \$1,000 to retrofit the signage on 10th Street in front of the church with an electronic programmable sign.

Immerse Bible Study Starting in September



Get your copy and come join a small group on September 10th!! We will begin an 8-week series, kicking off in the sanctuary at 10:45 am. Following a brief introduction, groups will be formed for discussion in Room 11 and/or the Choir Room.

Immerse: The Reading Bible comes in 6 volumes and presents each Bible book without the distractions of chapter and verse numbers, subject headers, or footnotes. The New Living Translation text is laid out in easy-to-read, single-column format. No Bible text has been added or left out. There are six volumes: ***Beginnings, Kingdoms, Prophets, Poets, Chronicles, and Messiah.***

The ***Beginnings*** volume includes the first five books of the Bible. We will use an 8-week plan to read this volume, which will mean reading about 40 pages per week. An information sheet about the whole program is available on the patio along with copies of the ***Beginnings*** volume. Come check it out and join us on Sunday, September 10th for discussion in your church community!

Greetings and Salutations

Orangewood welcomes Kristi Parot, the new Office and Facilities Manager. Kristi will begin her duties this coming week. We'll provide a more proper introduction in the next Plumblin. In the meantime, stop by the office to welcome Kristi.

Martha Hargraves, who has admirably filled in during this time of turmoil and transition, is stepping out of the office, but not stepping away from Orangewood. She remains a member of the Orangewood congregation. When you next see her, give her a BIG Thank You for a job well done!

Mission Committee

Honduras – Please see the article elsewhere in the Plumblin for a full report on our July Mission trip.

Undie Sunday, September 3 – Labor Day is the traditional time for OPC to bring donations of toiletries, underwear and socks for Nourish Phoenix (fka ICM). Bring the hotel goodies you may have collected over the last few months (shampoo & conditioner, soap or liquid body wash, lotion, etc.), along with **new** underwear and socks for men, women, and children. Men's sport socks, white, and large size (size 6-12) are especially liked by their clients!

Nourish Phoenix – On the fourth Monday of most months, a group from Orangewood volunteers at Nourish Phoenix, where we help assemble food boxes for those in need and/or sort clothing donations. (This is in addition to two of our dedicated women from OPC who have volunteered in their clothing room every week for many years!) We meet at the church at 8:00 AM, carpool or take the van to their location, and are usually back at the church by noon.

Butterfly Tree – We purchased 75 backpacks and supplies for students returning to school this fall. The backpacks were blessed at a Sunday service in the Sanctuary in late July, after which they were made available to OPC students, including our African Fellowship youth.

Grace Lutheran – We serve pancakes to the homeless on the third Sunday morning of even numbered months. Our next breakfast there will be October 15.

Mission Table – Each Sunday morning, the Mission Table on the Patio has information on many of the mission projects OPC participates in, and includes sign-up sheets for volunteers to participate in our various projects.



Thanks to the Spangler-Case family for filling the backpacks.

Presbyterian Women

To begin the season OPW are planning an "Indoor Picnic", perhaps on September 23rd. Watch for more details and hope for a break in the weather (although realistically we will be inside Page Hall.)

Beginning on Tuesday, October 3 at 1:00 all are invited to this seasons monthly Bible Study: "SACRED ENCOUNTERS The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts". Study books will be provided upon request. To secure a copy please get in touch with Jeanne Matt at jmatt2222@aol.com or 602-881-1927.

Honduras July 2023

While the OPC Mission team was in Honduras, they sent a brief email every evening with a couple of photos and a brief report from one of the team members of that day's activities. Here are excerpts

July 9th

Hello Dear Friends,

After a long, slow day of travel, we arrived safely in Dulce Nombre. Although we arrived much later than expected, many old friends and locals were on hand to greet us and welcome us to the community. The mayor introduced the families whose homes we will be helping to build. Today we took a tour of the homesites under construction as well as of the homes these families currently live in. We saw the block machine that we donated and learned that 2/3 of the blocks needed for ten homes have already been made. This is a very motivated and hard working community. Blessings,
Christina Suarez and the Honduras Team



July 10th

Dear Family and Friends of Orangewood,

Dulce Nombre is filled with energy and enthusiasm with our arrival. The mayor explained to us that our presence motivates the community to continue their collaboration to build 10 homes together. This morning, our group was divided into four teams — one packed up with medical supplies, games, and toys and the other three geared up with working gloves - ready to lay block at three separate home sites.



I joined the medical team and was in awe as we drove about 45 minutes through the most beautiful hills you have ever seen. Upon arriving at the school, we saw 24 to 30 children sitting at their desks and 20 to 30 adults waiting in line for healthcare.



Dental education was one of the many activities today. Every child was given a toothbrush. One of the older students was given the role of teaching the entire classroom how to brush their teeth. She read from the Spanish version of the book *Where There Is No Doctor* while I coached her where to read and what to emphasize. This young girl was empowered by her role as a Maestra and was beaming. After the lesson, we told them it was time for a test and they lined up with their toothbrushes. We gave them toothpaste and asked them to begin practicing the brushing skills. It was so much fun seeing them excited to brush their teeth!

Teaching them healthy lifestyle habits would not have been possible without your prayers and generous donations. We all feel your prayers and are grateful for the financial support as this is what makes the building and the personal health care possible.

God Bless,
Kelly

July 11, 2023

Hello everyone!

Today was the 3rd work day of the week. I went to Chinda's for the 2nd time. She is a pregnant mother of 3. My group laid a ton of brick and built up the walls to 4-5 levels tall. Another group (Spencer and Bryce's) had to completely dig out part of their house's foundation because of how bad it was. The people here have been amazing so far and we are making a lot of difference. Everyone is so friendly. They actually wave back when you wave at them. The food has also been delicious, mostly beans and tortillas. Thank you for everything you did to allow me to be here!

Addi Case :)



This photo isn't crooked!! The team is using an assembly line to get the blocks up the hill to the homesite.

Hola friends!

Today was the team's last day of building, clinic-ing, learning, teaching, mingling, laughing, and smiling with the beautiful people of Dulce Nombre. The community's hospitality has been heartwarming and consistent everywhere we go. While our short work week was only a drop in the ocean of service that is needed, our work has helped lay the foundation for a truly wonderful community.

At one worksite, the soon-to-be homeowner had two children, a boy and a girl, who were hanging around the site. Seeing their faces light up when I asked for their help makes the entire trip worth it. They are now empowered with knowledge that can help make a difference and a living with their new skills.

One thought that has been said to me and reassured with the actions I have seen this trip has stuck with me— There is only one true language of the world: love. Whether it was in the form of a homegrown mango and coffee snack break, mothers pushing their kids in front of them to get medical attention, or smiles while we play cards with niños, it is clear, love is ever present. One doesn't need to speak Spanish to understand we are all a part of God's creation.

Spencer and The Honduras Team

Hola from Copan Honduras! Today, the 14th, was mostly a travel day as we left Dulce Nombre to head to Copan. The group had a rather late night the day before due to the community gathering and wonderful thanks from the mayor of Dulce Nombre and the families that we have impacted. This morning many of the families came to say their farewells and speak with us one last time. I'm quite pleased how this trip has made me and other youth appreciate many small things that we might not have noticed before we stepped into this beautiful and exciting nation. The people of Dulce Nombre have been a blessing to all in our group.

We thank the numerous donors and people that are reading this that have made this mission possible. Without your support Addi couldn't have made that little girl light up with excitement when she gave her a smiley keychain; without your support our days of clinic wouldn't have brought health and hope to inhabitants of Dulce Nombre; finally without your support our little family couldn't have laid the foundations for homes and a beautiful flourishing friendship with the community of Dulce Nombre. Blessings to everyone.

Bryce Swartz

Hello my friends,

It's with a warm heart I write to you tonight. So very many people have supported our efforts to make a change in the lives of the very poorest of Honduras and I'm grateful to you.

For me, this trip is about many types of mission. We build houses side by side with the owners to show them we see them and want to work as they work.

In the picture Dannaia, in the sixth grade, is standing on the site of her future house, still a dream, but in six months it will be a home. As our groups work each day the walls grow higher and enthusiasm grows. Several women in the families working for their home are also cooking meals for us this week. We eat very well and learn about Honduran dishes.

As many projects are promised by politicians in communities, the funds we sent to buy the first materials also created enthusiasm. But as we learned today, the people and even the municipality were anxious that the money we sent would be the last. Today we reviewed all the expenses and progress made and I'm happy to say all is on track and well accounted for.

Your support is challenging the old thoughts and doubts. The families are working to become a community and the municipality is supporting the process as a partner.

I look forward to seeing Dannaia in her home next year as we plan and hope to help more families. Love and joy to you,

Brent and the Honduras Team



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Thank you, Martha Hargraves!!

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The *Plumbline*, a monthly newsletter of Orangewood Presbyterian Church, contains helpful information for members and friends. If you would like to receive this publication via e-mail (pdf file), contact the office. Issues may also be found on our website. **The deadline for the October Plumbline is September 21.**