

OCKER BRETHREN CHURCH

Serving Christ, Serving Our Community

From the Pastor....

Should Christians Celebrate Halloween?

Every October Christians begin debating whether or not they should take part in the Halloween celebrations and traditions that come crawling out of the woodwork as soon as the calendar flips over to fall. I have witnessed this Christian conundrum my entire life. The Christian circles I grew up in was split down the middle on the subject of Halloween.

Many Christians happily set up haunted houses, take their children trick-or-treating, and host a house full of teenagers who cluster around the TV to watch scary movies. Other Christians, however, claim that Halloween is demonic, satanic, and a way of opening the door to all sorts of hellish horrors. Those Christians prohibit any celebrations so to blunt the “enemy” from getting a foothold in their home and lives...a very admirable action.

So which is it?

What should we, as Christians, do with Halloween? Should we celebrate it or reject it as pagan and evil? Well...if you know me, you know that I am not going to give you a straight yes or no answer at the very beginning of the article. I think you deserve better than that. Instead, I am going to give you some history and information and let you decide what you think your family should do in regards to Halloween and your Christian faith.

Ready? Here we go...

Halloween is simply a popularized version of “*All Hallows’ Eve*” or “*All Saints’ Eve*” and refers to the night before the Christian Feast of *All Saints*. This feast began centuries ago and was meant to recognize and celebrate all the Christian martyrs and saints who had already died. The feast day is always 1 November, which makes “*All Hallows’ Eve*” always on October 31—Halloween. All Saints’ Day also overlaps with the Mexican holiday of *Día de los Muertos*, or *Day of the Dead*, a two-day festival meant to remember loved ones who have passed, but the two events have different purposes and traditions.

All Saints’ Eve also overlaps with another holiday as well, the ancient European pre-Christian Celt/Saxon/Irish holiday of *Samhain*. The ancient holiday of *Samhain* is where our contemporary Halloween originates.

....continued on next page

HARVEST
SUPPER

OCTOBER 9
6:30 PM



Board of Elders
will meet
WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 16
at 6:30 pm.

Annual
Congregational
Meeting

OCTOBER 27

.....continued From the Pastor.

Samhain falls at the cross-quarter between the autumnal equinox and the winter solstice. Samhain is a celebration of the second harvest. It also marks the anticipation of winter. It is the time for hunting, slaughtering livestock, and preparing meat for winter. Sheaves of grain are gathered into barns. With all of this death, it stands to reason that the festival would be marked with symbols of death. As the leaves fall from the trees, it is a time to remember those dearly departed who have fallen from our lives. Some historians argue that Celts believed *Samhain* was a time when the veil between the living and the dead was the thinnest.

Because of that, the way we celebrate our holidays reflects the Greco-Roman value of cultural appropriation that began with the Greek emperor Alexander the Great. As he conquered, he wanted his subject peoples to assimilate into a melting pot. Some say he was the first to envision a one-world empire. So, he accepted the cultural festivals and religions of all the conquered people. But he shaped them to his own purpose. The Romans did the same. To a certain degree, the Roman Catholic Church followed that example.

Since *Samhain* was a pre-Christian holiday to remember the dead, the Church invented *All Saint's Day* to replace it on November 1. *All Hallow's Eve* was the night before All Saint's Day. This became shortened to Hallow E'en or Halloween. Catholic and Pagan practices mingled, combined with the influences of capitalism and Hollywood, to produce a holiday that looks like what we have today.

No one knows exactly when or why Halloween was associated with the demonic or re-associated with paganism...although there is a lot of debate. Most of what Christians associate with Halloween are long-standing practices that have nothing to do with either paganism or demons. Dressing up in costumes dates to early *All Saints' Day* traditions, and early Americans celebrated by putting on "play parties," dancing, and singing.

Superstition has always been associated with Halloween, but there is a long history of Christians being encouraged to celebrate Halloween in a Christian fashion. Rather than leaving out food to

appease angry spirits, Christians were encouraged to give food to hungry neighbors. In fact, trick-or-treating is believed to have been born out of the practice of "soul cakes" and "going a-souling." On *All Hallow's Eve*, poor citizens would go door to door begging for food, and families would give them special pastries called "soul cakes" in return for the person's promise to pray for dead loved ones.

Okay...there you have it — a brief, inconclusive but timely history of Halloween and how Christians came to practice the holiday/festival. So...what do you think? Should we, as Christians continue to celebrate Halloween?

Food for thought — just so you know what our family does. We have decided to celebrate Halloween with our Christian values...in the same way we celebrate Christmas and Easter (we emphasize the Christian nature of the holiday) But what about you?

Either was is totally fine...as long as you know the right history!

I hope to see you sometime this month....

This should be a fun month at Ocker...October always is! We have our Harvest Supper, our pumpkin decorating party in the park and our annual Church-wide business meeting.

I will save a seat for you!

Brad

**ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY – OCTOBER 27**

The ANNUAL MEETING of the Congregation of Ocker Brethren Church will be held following Worship on Sunday, October 27.

The BFY is sponsoring the Meal.

All members are strongly encouraged to attend because many important decisions affecting the Church are made (budget, election of Board of Elders, etc.).

Visitors are welcome to attend.

Sunday School News:

The CEC will meet on Sunday, October 6 immediately after worship. The Sunday School Christmas program will be discussed as well as other business. Information will be provided in the November newsletter.

October First Sunday breakfast will be provided by the Bible Application Class. November First Sunday breakfast will be provided by the Books of the Bible Class. December breakfast is Potluck with everyone bringing a dish.



CHRISTIAN SISTERS NEWS:

The Christian sisters met on September 17 with 8 members present. Carolyn Groseclose gave the lesson from the book of Numbers on "The Voice of God". The upcoming Harvest Supper and October crafting retreats were discussed.

The Sisters will sponsor country store at the Harvest Supper and will happily accept items that will be offered for sale. These can include baked goods, hand crafted items, canned fruits and vegetables, and other items anyone wants to contribute.

The Sisters will also sponsor the October crafting retreat on the 18th and 19th. Members are asked to provide desserts, help with setting up and cleaning up afterwards, as well as preparing and serving meals. Talk with Roseanne Groseclose if you have questions.

Our next meeting will be October 15 at 11:30. All are welcome.



CHOIR NEWS

The Sactuary Choir will sing the 4th Sunday in October and November. We will rehearse at 10:00 am on the 4th Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. The more singers, the better. Please join

us if you enjoy singing! You will be glad you did!



HARVEST SUPPER WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9 6:30 PM

Invite your friends and neighbors to Ocker's Annual Harvest Supper. Share the Facebook post. This POTLUCK meal is a great gathering for friendship and fellowship.



The Pastor's Book Club The Book Club will change it up a bit and listen to a Podcast: *The Letter: A Parent's Nightmare*



Do you enjoy Christmas decorating? Would you and your family consider putting up the Tree and decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas? If you are interested, please see Brad or Stacie.

Youth and Children's Activities

Wednesday Youth Bible Studies

6th grade & up are invited to join us on Wednesdays, October 2, 16, & 30 for food, fellowship, and Bible study from 6-8pm. Bring a Friend!

Family Game Night

Family game night will be Wednesday, October 23; 6-8pm. We'll be having soups and salad. This fellowship is for ALL ages. Kids run and play; we have board games; card games; dominoes ;or just sit and visit. We'd love to visit with you; come and join us!

Harvest Supper Festival Games: Wed. Oct. 9

Bring a few dollars for your kids to enjoy some fun at the Harvest Supper. We will have Facepainting- \$1; Ring toss- \$1 for 3 tosses; Fish pond- 2/\$1; Plinko- 2/\$1 and more!

Youth Fundraiser: Sunday, October 27

Youth will be providing pulled pork sandwich meal for the congregational meeting after worship. There is a youth signup for meal donations. A free-will offering will be collected.

Looking Ahead

Saturday-Sunday, November 9-10

Fall Youth Retreat at Hus Encampment. Forms are due no later than Sunday, October 27. This is for 6th grade & up.

Saturday, December 14

Ocker's Annual Children's Christmas Camp. This is a one-day, all-day program for kids ages 3 & up. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided. Bible lessons, crafts, music, and more!

Sunday, December 15

Family Service Project. After worship, we will be carpooling to Temple to visit assisted living facilities and deliver Christmas Cards/crafts to the residents. Afterwards, we will eat lunch at Cici's pizza.

Sunday, December 22

Children's Sunday School Christmas Program during the worship hour. See Tracie Malovets for more information.

Jennifer Cherevka (254) 913-1244
jenncherevka@gmail.com

PRIMETIMERS'

GATHERING

at

HUS ENCAMPMENT
Saturday, October 26

9:00am-3:00pm

Coffee and sweets 9am.

Lunch served at Noon.

Card games, dominoes, and
good old-fashioned fellowship.

No RSVP required.

LORD, OUR LORD, HOW
MAJESTIC



2025 Camp Dates

Encounter Camp: June 15-18

Entering 2nd-4th Grade

Alpha Camp: July 13-17

Entering 5th & 6th Grade

Pioneer Camp: July 6-11

Entering 7th & 8th Grade

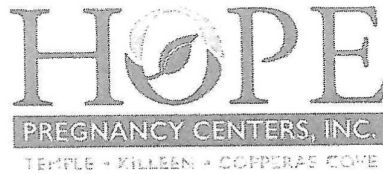
Discovery Camp: June 8-13

Entering 9th & 10th Grade

Hus Camp: June 20-28

Entering 11th, 12th, & College Freshmen

Mark Your
Calendar!



Dear Friend,

We have exciting news to share with you about an extraordinary opportunity God has placed before us. It's actually a dream coming true.

I have dreamed of Hope purchasing the former abortion clinic in Killeen ever since it closed. I couldn't see it becoming a reality because of finances. BUT GOD....The former abortion clinic is for sale, and **Hope Pregnancy Center is now poised to purchase and transform the former abortion clinic into a dedicated Abortion Recovery Ministry center.** By God's grace, this building, once a symbol of sorrow and loss, will become a hallowed space of forgiveness, healing and abundant life in Jesus Christ!

This amazing transformation will not only be a powerful testament to God's redemptive work in people's lives but also provides us with a chance to create a more centralized and secure environment for our Abortion Recovery Ministry, combining it with our administrative offices under one roof. This new sanctuary will offer space for Bible studies, one-on-one restorative meetings, and enhanced facilities for Hope leadership. Truly a place of hope restored.

Currently, our Abortion Recovery Ministry operates at our former Killeen center on Florence Road. Relocating to this new center will allow us to consolidate our operations and possibly to sell the Florence Road property.

Here are the financial details that we know so far. This new facility will be purchased for \$355,000. While the closing date is uncertain but estimated to be late August or mid-September, the closing cost for securing this new Abortion Recovery Ministry center is \$71,000. We are also working to **pay off** the remaining balance of our new Killeen Center on W S Young Drive (yes, already!) —a significant milestone made possible by your generosity in just **two years!** God is sooo faithful! Paying off this balance would empower us to forge ahead with confidence.

Ideally, we are seeking to raise a total of \$118,447 to achieve our goal of paying off the new Killeen Center (\$47,447) and securing the former clinic (\$71,000), leaving us with only the Abortion Recovery Ministry facility debt. Though this is a substantial amount, we trust that God will provide through His people to fulfill His will.

(Continued on reverse)

We invite you to prayerfully consider contributing to this transformative project.

Ideally, we would love to have the current mortgage balance and the closing cost paid off by mid-September so we can then begin the needed renovations.

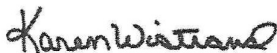
If you would like to designate your gift toward

- 1) paying off the mortgage for our new Killeen Center on W S Young Dr. or
- 2) paying the closing cost of the new Abortion Recovery Ministry facility

you may certainly do that. But designation is not a requirement. Your special gift will go to one or the other of these answers to prayer. God will be glorified and we will praise Him!

Thank you for your support and for being an integral part of this transformative venture. May the Lord bless you in abundance. May He be praised for His goodness to us!

Gratefully,



Karen Wistrand
Executive Director
Hope Pregnancy Centers, Inc.

Your tax-deductible gift can be made online or by mail.
Visit **hopepc.life** to partner with this effort or mail to

Hope Pregnancy Centers, Inc,
3106 S WS Young
Suite C-301
Killeen, TX 76542

*"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55:10-11



Operation Christmas Child



Important Information!!

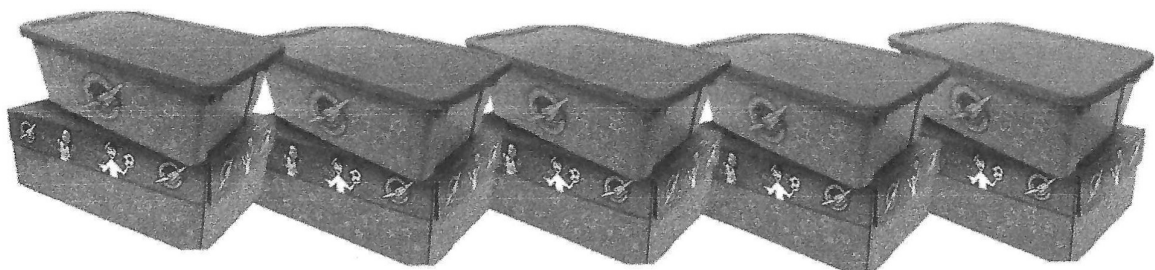
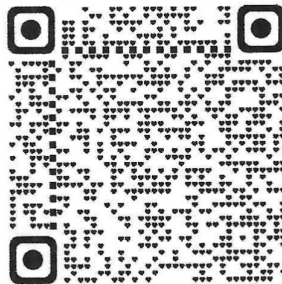
THE OCKER OCC PACKING PARTY, NOVEMBER 16TH, IS ONLY ONE MONTH AWAY!!

We are very excited and preparing for a great day of packing boxes that will be shipped some where within the world. Each box will be filled with toys, school supplies, hygiene items, and more that will benefit the life of many children. Our goal as a church is to pack as many boxes as possible, however, we are still missing important items that each box must have. Please look at the list below and consider donating as many items within the list as possible.

Items	Amount Needed
Combs	50
Pencil packages (any quantity)	100
Pencil sharpeners	175
Notebooks (any kind)	150
Coloring Books	50
Tennis Balls (or any sports balls)	275
Toothbrushes	250
Stuffed Animals	250

- ❖ **Ideas for shopping for OCC:** Sam's Club is great place to buy in bulk. Many stores like Dollar General, HEB, and Walmart currently have clearance deals.
- ❖ **DON'T FORGET! OCC has an Amazon Wishlist!** Check it out at https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2KDH18VR0461/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_4?encoding=UTF8&type=giftlist Access this link through:

- The online newsletter located on the church website
- Or Scan here!! →



OCTOBER 2024

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Christian Sisters Hospitality Coordinator:
Deanna Naivar
Phone: 254.931.5720

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- ~2 – Cheyenne Daskocil
- ~3 – Sandra Dubcak
- ~4 – Amanda Parker
- ~7 – David Sebek
- ~9 – Kole Stephens
Ellie Cummings
Renee Wilfert
- ~10 – Jacelyn Chervenka Coleman
- ~14 – Penny Coots
- ~15 – Raeley Sebek
- ~16 – Emersyn English
Darrell Glaser
- ~17 – Ryan Sebek
Ava Stanolis
- ~20 – Emil Bethke
- ~21 – Bill McGuire
- ~23 – Jacob Chervenka
- ~26 – Mark Wilfert
- ~27 – Kinley Caldwell
- ~30 – Jaidyn Chervenka
Taylor Hutchins
- ~31 – Darlene Pechal

October Anniversaries
2 – Eugene & Dorothy Haisler
24 – Ryan & Stacie Sebek



NEW DAY ORPHANAGE

Check out the postcard on the bulletin board in the Entry. Your gifts are at work at New Day Orphanage in Zambia!

Gifts this quarter made it possible to:

1. Purchase curriculum for the 2025 school year.
2. Take the older children to see Victoria Falls and the amazing animals of Zambia.
3. Take the younger kids on a field trip to visit a museum, eat pizza and ice cream, and visit a service base, where they saw vehicles such as cranes, trucks and bulldozers.

Although Ocker supports NDO – you can send your additional Tax-Exempt donations directly to NDO or by using the PayPal link on the website:

NEW DAY ORPHANAGE
PO BOX 1452
GRANBURY, TX 76048
www.newdayorphanage.org

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

October

2024

			1	2	3	4	5
				YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6-8 PM <i>Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am – 1 pm		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
First Sunday Fellowship 8:30 am Worship 10:15 am			HARVEST SUPPER 6:30 PM				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am		Christian Sisters Meeting 11:30 am	YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6-8 PM BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING 6:30 PM <i>Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am – 1 pm	Quarterly Craft Retreat sponsored by CHRISTIAN SISTERS		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am			FAMILY GAME NIGHT 6-8 pm				
27	28	29	30	31			
Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am CONGREGATIONAL MEETING following Worship!			YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6-8 PM <i>Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am – 1 pm			