



GOOD TIDINGS NEWSLETTER

JANUARY

OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC

SUNDAY WORSHIP 10AM



Telephone: (757) 255-4353

Office Hours: 9 AM to 3 PM Monday - Thursday

Email: Office@OaklandUCC.com



Beloved,

I'm probably not the first, but I can be the next person to wish you Happy New Year! I know that many of us were anxious to say good riddance to 2020. It all started out so hopefully, but then our lives were turned inside out and upside down by the pandemic. Every year brings with it a variety of prognostication ... when the media finally turns from past to future ... with top ten lists of forecasts and predictions, but no one predicted Covid 19.

I was curious as to what was predicted for 2020, so I turned to the archives of the most reliable source for predictions I know, given their vast experience in the field, the *Weekly World News*. You may have seen this hallowed tabloid at the supermarket, but I looked it up on the web. They have the news the other media misses, and they actually name themselves "the world's most reliable newspaper."

When you read it online, they really have a drop-down tab labeled "Mutants." I was alarmed to learn that one out of four UFO pilots is intoxicated, but that explains their diving and dipping ways of zipping around the skies. According to them we were in for a hard year! Well, they got that right, but they missed the pandemic and cited terrorism, assassination, blinding solar flares, disastrous tidal waves, devastating earthquakes, drought, record heat, record cold, and then, on August 8th a black hole should have swallowed the earth. It's just as well, because our sun is going to burn out in 2030 anyway. The headlines blaring from this paper are just priceless... Killer babies on the loose...honeymoon couple attacked by goldfish...and my personal favorite...the right diet will assure you a place in heaven.

The truth is, no one can predict the future nor guarantee its security. That's why we fear it. The future is out of our control. So much for the bad news. The good news I have for you today is that the future is in the hands of a good and loving God. How can I be so sure? "For the Bible tells me so" ... the Bible tell us what we can expect from the future ... not in the form of precise predictions ... so much as general truths that we can trust.

I dare say few of us will be here for the beginning of the next century. But what we do now will impact this century ... and even the thirtieth century. We can take care of the earth so it will still be the good earth for generations to come. We can work for peace so the world will be safe for the future. We can be prophetic enough to demand that no one be left out of the prosperity and progress that has been enjoyed too often by the elite few in the past. By the grace and guidance of God we can use our now to make tomorrow better for everyone.

"Grace, peace and love,
Pastor Mary Anne

In-Person Worship Suspended

Last evening, the Council of our church met to consider several important issues. The most pressing concern discussed was the impact of COVID 19 on our community and our worshipers.

Though we have successfully celebrated in-person services since last summer, we believed it was incumbent upon us as the church Council to consider whether we should continue considering the worsening landscape: the height of cold and flu season; increasing COVID test positivity and hospitalizations; post-holiday travel and celebration spread of COVID; the development of at least 1 new, more contagious strain of the virus; and the slow, inefficient vaccine rollout to date.

During our discussion, all of the Council members expressed conflicted emotions. While relishing the opportunity to worship corporately, to see and hear in-person our church family members, we also know that we have been very fortunate not to experience an outbreak of COVID 19 in our midst. Following the CDC guidelines, we have been careful and diligent. However, this virus has proven to be very tricky, exceptionally deceptive. As many have discovered, you can be asymptomatic and still be a carrier of the germs.

After much discussion, the Council concluded that we should suspend in-person services and other activities for a period to allow some of the risks listed above to be mitigated. At this time, we will postpone live services until March 7 while re-evaluating the situation monthly.

We are very proud of the way Oakland Christian United Church of Christ has embraced the challenges of COVID 19. The church has established guidelines and protocols, has diligently implemented those procedures, and has erred on the side of caution regarding the use of our facilities and the protection of our at-risk populations. Oakland has provided in-person services successfully while all other regional UCC churches have remained closed. However, we believe at this vulnerable time that it is appropriate for us to rely upon our recently developed capabilities to thrive in a virtual environment: the use of Zoom for meetings and Adult Sunday School sessions, prerecorded activities for children and adults, and internet-quality film production of Sunday Services including outstanding musical contributions from Paul Putnam. We are poised to accept this pause in live services without compromising our ability to hear and share the Word of God.

We hope you appreciate the spirit in which this decision was made by Council and ask that you pray with us that the necessity for this pause in live services is short-lived.

Blessings to all.



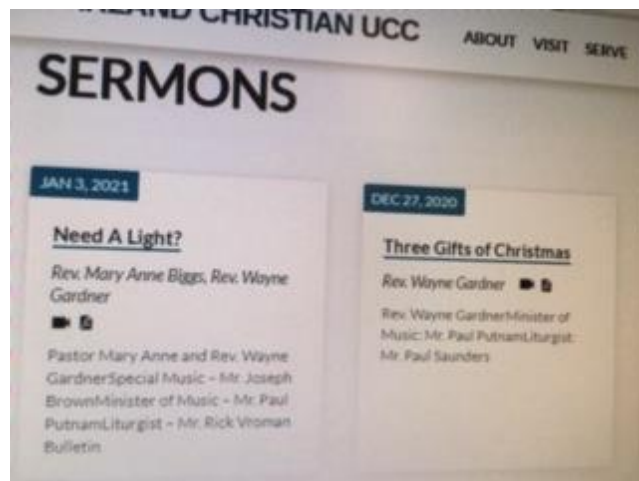
A New Year

A New-and-Improved WEBSITE



Simply type in [Oaklanducc.org](https://oaklanducc.org) on your address bar or in your google search bar.

All the on line recorded worship services can be found on this website and watched with a click of a button!



Please thank your Website Committee

Connie Burgess, Paul Putnam,
Kyle Arcand, Pastor Mary Anne,
Rob Rhodes, and Darden Langston



Jesse Williams	6	Cate Jordan	18	Connie Edwards	27
Bee Norris	7	Kevin Kennedy	19	Jesse Burgess	27
Alexi Shearin	14	William Blanks	20	Becky Brennecke	27
Aubri Wilson	14	Robert Fly	21	Mary Hunter Hardison	30
Jackie Pierce	15	William Fly	21	Wilma Roth	31
George Fly	16	Gavin Billings	21	Chris Bryan	31
Mary Jane Naismith	18	Lisa Arcand	25		

If we missed your Birthday or have it incorrect, please call the office 255-4353 and let us know.



2021 Stewardship Campaign

Pledges Exceeded 2020!

To Our Members and Friends,

Your giving generosity to Oakland Christian UCC continues to be amazing! Pledges for 2021 of **\$202,120**, topped last year's pledges! In the past year, when most of us opted to worship virtually, unable to enjoy one another in worship, fellowship, and even our beautiful new Community Life Center, your faith and support never faltered.

On behalf of all our committee members, thank you for making our 2021 campaign such a success!

Your Stewardship Committee



Oakland's Legacy Angels Committee's Twenty-One-in '21 campaign, scheduled to begin this month, has been put on hold because the projected number of CoronaVirus cases has been predicted to increase, especially in January and February.

We look forward to the time when we can all be together again, and when we can introduce our Twenty-One in '21 campaign.

Oakland's Legacy Angels Committee

Most of you will have the same Deacon as last year! Letters from your Deacon will be out soon.

2021 Deacons -

Danna Vroman, Dana Mitchell, John Gayle,
Ella Mae Winslow, Susie Eaton, Carole Matt,
Ralph Howell, Sharon Winslow, Kyle Blanks
Penny Hathaway, Brenda Hodgson
and Sharon Burton





Music Corner

Paul Putnam - Minister of Music

peputnam@yahoo.com

Happy New Year!

"There's a Song in the Air!" is an old hymn written by Josiah Holland in 1872. Josiah was born in 1819 and was from Belchertown, Massachusetts. I found this interesting because that is 2 towns over from where I was born and the town my sister and parents live in currently. His words are just as true and poignant today as they were so many years ago.

There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
 There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!
 And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
 For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song
 That comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.
 Ay! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
 And we greet in his cradle our Savior and King!

As we usher in 2021, may we continue to be a joyful people rejoicing in the light Christ's birth brings to our lives. With all of the sadness, despair, and upheaval around our world, it is so easy to be dragged down. Always seek the light of Christ, and you will be a light to those around you.



Peace and love in this New Year 2021!

~Paul

Paul ended 2020 and began 2021 by bringing us two accomplished local artists!



Bradley Fielding

Bradley singing on the 4th
 Sunday in Advent 2020

*"The People Who Walked in
 Darkness (The Messiah)" and
 "Gesu' Bambino"*

Joseph Brown began 2021 with

*"Largo " Clarinet solo
 "There's a Song in the Air" and
 "Go Tell it on the Mountain"*

*Duets with Paul
 "We Three Kings" Clarinet solo*



Advent Candle Lighting



The Brennecke Family
Andy & Becky
William, Clark, & Jack

2nd Sunday of Advent
Lighting the candles
of Hope & Peace



The Harris Family
Waylon & Janet
Braedon

3rd Sunday of Advent
Lighting the candles
of Hope, Peace & Joy



The Hathaway Family
Penny
Gabe & Nathan

4th Sunday of Advent
Lighting the candles of
Hope, Peace, Joy, & Love



The Mitchell Family
John & Dana
Dori & Clare

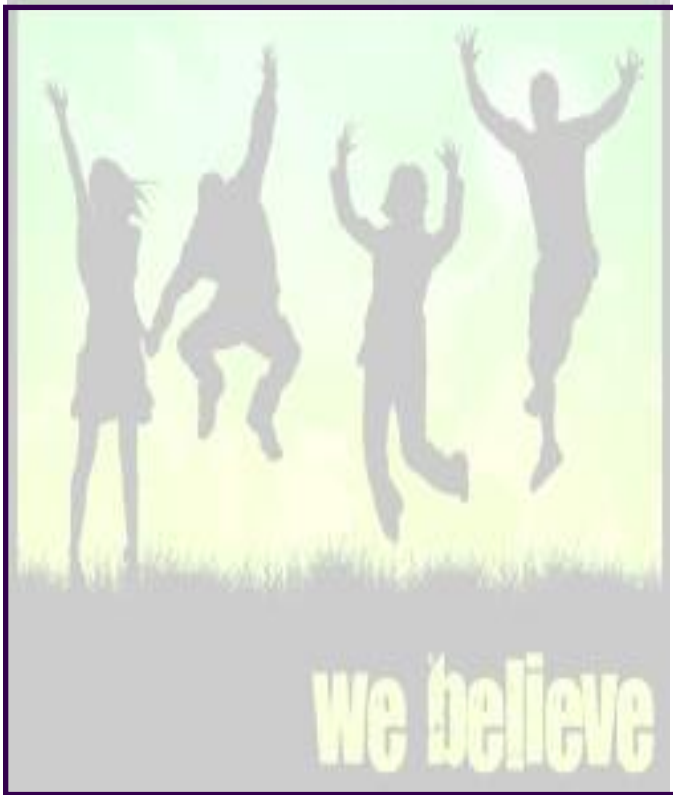
5th Sunday of Advent
Lighting the candles of
Hope, Peace, Joy, Love
and the Christ Candle



The Children's Christmas Party was a little different this year.



*Good Bye
2020
We will
look forward
to a brighter
2021!!*



We Welcome You

If you believe that God is calling you to be a member of this congregation, please let us know with a call to our church office. We can help you join by baptism or profession of faith, as a transfer, or by reinstatement.

It would be wonderful to have you in our Church Family!

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To share God's love with all people,
To serve the Lord with humility and kindness,
To grow with the Lord in wisdom and strength.

Oakland Christian United Church of Christ
P. O. Box 2008
Suffolk, VA 23432

January 2021

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Pastor: Rev. Mary Anne Biggs
Minister of Music: Paul E. Putnam
Secretary & Newsletter Editor: Connie Edwards
Financial Secretary: Janice Roberts
Nursery Attendant: Kimmy Curliss

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