



# GOOD TIDINGS NEWSLETTER

## MARCH 2021

### OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC

### SUNDAY WORSHIP 10AM



Telephone: (757) 255-4353  
Office Hours: 9 AM to 3 PM Monday - Thursday  
Email: [Office@OaklandUCC.com](mailto:Office@OaklandUCC.com)

Beloved,

On February 12, 1944, thirteen-year-old Anne Frank wrote these words in her now famous diary:



*Today the sun is shining, the sky is a deep blue, there is a lovely breeze and I am longing – so longing for everything. To talk, for freedom, for friends, to be alone.*

*And I do so long...to cry! I feel as if I am going to burst, and I know that it would get better with crying; but I can't. I'm restless, I go from room to room, breathe through the crack of a closed window, feel my heart beating, as if it is saying, "can't you satisfy my longing at last?"*

*I believe that it is spring within me. I feel that spring is awakening. I feel it in my whole body and soul. It is an effort to behave normally. I feel utterly confused. I don't know what to read, what to write, what to do. I only know that I am longing.*

In the midst of this pandemic her words clearly resonate with us. But despite our circumstances, inside each of us, at the center of our lives, there is a tension, an ache, an insatiable fire that cannot be quenched. We are always longing. Sometimes this is focused on a person, particularly if we are in love with someone who does not reciprocate our feelings; at other times we experience this as a longing to attain something.

Often though, it is a longing with no clear focus and no clear name...an aching that cannot be pin pointed or described. Like Anne Frank, we only know that we are longing. St. Augustine once prayed, "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

I believe that Jesus experienced this same longing, especially in the weeks before his crucifixion. I think that may be a partial explanation for his mad dash to Jerusalem and the cross that awaited him there. It must have been powerful longing...a holy and sacred longing,

However, he was not only intentional about his destination and fulfilling his longing, but also about the journey itself. He was strictly focused ... not just where ... but how he went ... and what he taught ... and the way he treated people along the way. As we travel through this time of Lent together, I ask you to do likewise by following his example.

He will show you where to go and how to go because he came, in the first place, that we might have life - eternal in quantity and abundant in quality. As you go, he is the way to go. So, I invite you to listen to him. I invite you to follow him. I invite you to imitate him, even if it means passing through some difficult places, because, what a rich journey you will have. It will make you a new person. In the end, you will have a new life. That's what I long for...how about you?

Grace, peace and love,  
Pastor Mary Anne

## IN PERSON WORSHIP BEGINS AGAIN!

I am thrilled to announce that we will begin to gather together once again in our Community Life Center for worship on Sunday mornings at 10:00, beginning on March 7<sup>th</sup>! The numbers of Covid cases in our area are going down, and the numbers of people vaccinated are going up!

We will follow the same safety protocols as before: masks, social distancing and contact tracing will be employed at all times. Unfortunately, it is still not considered safe to have choral or community singing, but we look forward to the day when we can “make a joyful noise to the Lord!”

For those of you who are not able to join us in-person we will continue to record our services and post them on YouTube.

We look forward to the day when we can be fully opened, but for now we will not host outside groups.

We so appreciate your forbearance during the past year. While we recognize that we cannot predict the future and that the day may come when we must once again refrain from gathering, we are grateful to welcome you back on March 7<sup>th</sup>!

Grace, peace and love,  
Pastor Mary Anne



Paul Putnam - Minister of Music  
[peputnam@yahoo.com](mailto:peputnam@yahoo.com)

## Music Corner

It only takes a spark to get a fire going  
And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing.  
That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it  
You spread God's love to everyone, you want to pass it on.

What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees are budding,  
The birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming.  
That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it.  
You want to sing, it's fresh like spring, you want to pass it on.

Have you noticed the birds singing a little bit louder lately? Has anyone seen new growth on any of their rose bushes, or little crocus blossoms peeping out of the ground? There are signs of spring all around us! We are so blessed to be part of a world where God's handiwork is manifest in visible signs to us each and every day.

After nearly a year of navigating through all the lockdowns, restrictions, limited visitation and public gatherings, there is hope on the horizon! I feel so incredibly blessed to have been in the 1B vaccine category as a school teacher who is now fully vaccinated! This is the first line of defense against this virus which has made its way through households of friends and families of those we know and many we don't.

Continue to pray for each other, our community, and our nation as we continue to deal with Covid-19. I will say it again: GOD IS GOOD.....ALL THE TIME!!

Blessings to each of you!





# MARCH



Kasie Wilson	1	Rober Burton	15	Darden Langston	27
Max Koser	2	John Mitchell	18	Marie Marr	27
Steve Wilson	3	Frank Daniels	19	Bob Smith	27
Zoie Wise	3	Roger Gunter	19	Lynn Barrett	27
Joe Barnes	3	Keira Osborne	19	Dana Mitchell	29
Ann Johnson	11	Leigha Arcand	22		
Nick Sarick	13	Samantha Fly	23		

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

## Coalition Against Poverty in Suffolk "CAPS" Night Stay Program

### Helping CAPS Night Stay Program

During the pandemic, the Coalition Against Poverty in Suffolk has not stopped working. While "Night Stay" guests are being housed in a local hotel, volunteers are still needed to coordinate and deliver their meals. Oakland Christian Church will serve this role from Sun March 28-Wed March 31, which are the last 4 days of the program for this season. Here are areas you can help:

#### Dinner

- *prepare hot dinners and desserts (we'll have max of 40 guests for 4 consecutive days)*

#### Breakfast

- *donate breakfast items (granola, fresh fruit, single-size oatmeals, grits, cereals, small juice bottles)*
- *assemble the breakfast bags the week we are serving*

#### Lunch

- *donate sandwich items (bread, peanut butter, jelly, sandwich meat, chips, cookies/snacks, waters)*
- *assemble the lunches during the week we are serving*

#### Delivery

- *Deliver as many as 40 individual meal bags to a Suffolk hotel (confidential) nightly at 4:30*

A Google document will be emailed from the church office in the next week, where you may sign up. Or you may contact Dana Mitchell (cell: [757-535-6793](tel:757-535-6793); email: [coopmitch@yahoo.com](mailto:coopmitch@yahoo.com)/ ) to sign you up. If you are unable to help but would like to make a monetary contribution, make sure to indicate that your "gift" is for 2021 CAPS meals.

Thanks for helping us help our Suffolk neighbors who are without homes.

-From: Dana Mitchell and Pam Saunders

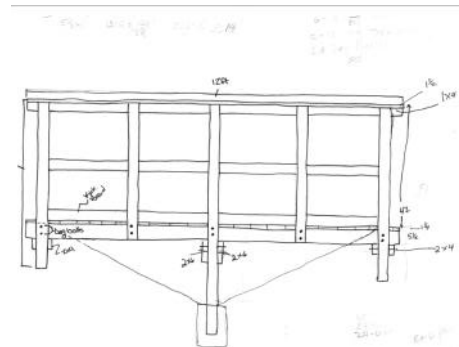
## Eagle Scout Project Underway



Hello, my name is William Brennecke. In addition to being a member at Oakland, I am also a Life Scout in Troop 48 in Great Bridge. I have started work on a footbridge across the newly made ditch next to the church addition. This project will be done to complete my Eagle Scout rank. The 11-foot bridge will be used to connect the parking area next to the community life center addition, which was cut off by the ditch. This bridge has been designed with handrails for safety and is 4ft wide to also allow a wheelchair to cross easily. The completed bridge should be done by the end of April. Due to fluctuating construction material costs, I cannot provide the exact cost of the bridge. However, due to the size of the project and the current price of lumber, it is estimated to exceed \$700. I have included a sketch to give you a rough idea of what the bridge will look like.

Part of the Eagle Scout project process includes fundraising. However, given the current health situation, fundraising options are limited. If any church members could consider a donation for this purpose, I would be very appreciative. Any donations can be sent directly to Church marked "Eagle Scout Bridge" in the memo, to the address below. Thank you for your consideration and support.

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



**John Mitchell**  
Treasurer

### Update on Community Life Center Financing

We've had a spectacular response to the request to fund our new building. We spent \$684k of our own money (graciously donated by YOU!) and \$210k of borrowed money last year. At the end of 2020, we had \$55k available to pay ongoing interest (\$800 per month) on the loan and principal. We had \$83k of pledges outstanding that we expect to collect over the balance of the five-year pledge period. If all our pledges are met we will still have a gap of \$127,000. There's still plenty of opportunity to help us pay off the loan.

My armchair financial advisor says mortgages are bad, so let's get rid of this one!







## 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**

**MARCH 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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