



GOOD TIDINGS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2021

OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC SUNDAY WORSHIP 10AM

Telephone: (757) 255-4353

Office Hours: 9 AM to 3 PM Monday - Thursday

Email: Office@OaklandUCC.com



Beloved,

Yes, Easter bunnies still capture the hearts of children, but you and I know what really happened on Easter. It may not seem to matter to some, but it makes all the difference to those who are in touch enough with reality to take life and death seriously. It made a great deal of difference to a very real woman named Mary. I received a message this week about Mary Magdalen that I would like to share with you.

Mary had the heart-wrenching honor of washing the dried blood from Jesus' lifeless body as two other followers prepared the tomb cut into Jerusalem's cold limestone. Mary wept as she washed--wept and remembered. She had been born to luxury, heiress to a textile fortune, a native of Magdala, a town along the coast of Galilee.

She recollected the gnawing fear, the self-loathing that ate at her very core. And she could remember the caring boldness in Jesus' penetrating eyes as he had confronted the demons that tormented her and commanded them to be gone forever. That had been the last of the frantic, distraught Mary. A gentle, peace-filled Mary had taken her place. Until today.

Today she had seen her Lord die an excruciating death, his body weight hanging limp from the nails driven through his hands and feet, suspended from a cross like a common criminal.

Her heart caught in her throat as she remembered and wept and washed away the caked blood with her tears. She wept, too, as she watched the men lift Jesus' corpse onto the tomb's carved ledge, and roll a massive stone across the doorway.

Was all her hope for nothing? What of all the diseased bodies he had healed? The broken lives he had restored? The promises of the Kingdom of God?

But early Sunday morning she was back at the tomb to finish anointing his body. When she arrived the tomb stood open, stone pushed to the side, ashes of the Roman guards' watch fire still smoldering. "How can they be so cruel?" she cried as she ran to tell the apostles.

But it wasn't cruelty that rolled away the stone that Easter morning. It was the powerful hand of God as Jesus Christ stepped forth brimming with Life.

Mary saw him, mistaking him for the gardener. But there was no mistaking his familiar voice-- "Mary." She fell at his feet, tears of grief melting into tears of joy. "Rabboni," she said as she looked into his face. "Teacher."

In an instant history changed forever, because where once the human mortality rate had held steady at 100%, now it skipped a beat as Jesus, Savior of all mankind, stepped out of dead statistics into life. Death is the last word no longer for Jesus' followers, life is.

"Jesus," Mary would tell us, "He changed my life." And millions around the globe would echo, "Mine, too. He touched my life, too."

Easter blessings to you all as we celebrate the victory of Life over death,

Pastor Mary Anne



Music Corner

Paul Putnam - Minister of Music
peputnam@yahoo.com

HAPPY EASTER!

God sent His son, they called Him Jesus; He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon, an empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives!

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

WOW! Those incredible words were penned in the late 1960's by Bill and Gloria Gaither and are still so powerful a reminder to each one of us this Easter season. We are indeed blessed children of God in knowing Christ lived and died to save us. Each day is precious in His sight.

As difficult as the last year has been for us facing the Covid-19 pandemic, nothing is as powerful as what Jesus faced for all of us over 2,000 years ago.

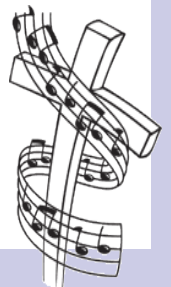
As we begin to gain confidence that more and more of us have been vaccinated, we need to be reminded that the virus has not magically disappeared because some of us have been vaccinated. I know we are anxious to return to "normal" hymn singing, choir, etc.... as am I, but nothing has been declared "normal" yet. Everything is still at "how much risk are we willing to take?" place. As more recent guidelines have been issued for school music programs (band & choir participation) I look at those as a good place for us to follow.

Singers masked with 6 ft. distance between each person, and not to sing together (rehearsal) for more than 30 minutes at a time is the recommendation of the CDC and the National Association for Music Education. It is my sincere hope and prayer that we are back to more "normalcy" as we move into the summer and fall with more and more people vaccinated.

In the meantime, enjoy the musicians who will be joining us for April. Joseph Brown will be singing as part of the Maundy Thursday service. Peggy Muse will be playing and singing with me for Easter Sunday. Alex Spady will be playing violin on April 11th. Wayne Gardner will be filling in for me while I am away on April 18th, and Robert Fly will be singing on Sunday, April 25th.

We are indeed blessed! Happy Easter to all of you!!

In Christ's Love,
Paul





Sharon Curliss	04	Riley Billings	16	Christian Taylor	21
Dani Howell	04	Betty Dickinson	17	Bobby Richardson	24
Mindy McCann	08	Debbie Harrell	20	Tim Griffin	25
Wanda Gerard	10	Nathan Winslow	20	Sammy Copeland	26
Lisa Shearin	10	Danna Vroman	20	Wendell Sodergren	27
Charlotte Fly	10	Melanie Kelly	21		

Charlotte is turning one this month! We can't believe this sweet girl is one!

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



Lincoln James Wilson

Baptized March 12th

Parents - Kasie and Stephen Wilson

Grandparents - Kathy and Larry Bounds

Big Sisters - Aubri and Harper

We have a new addition to our Oakland family!



Congratulations to Sonora Curliss and Grandparents, Sharon and Troy Curliss

Clayton James Curliss
Born March 12, 2021

Again we are heartbroken that we are unable to open the nursery and welcome him. Soon my friends very soon!



Flashback to Titanic –
Do you remember the song “My Heart Will Go On”?

*Far across the distance
And spaces between us
You have come to show you go on.*

*Near, far, wherever you are
I believe that the heart does go on.
Once more you open the door
And you're here in my heart
And my heart will go on and on.*

We know Oakland is in your heart. And just like your heart – our expenses “will go on and on”. So “near, far, wherever you are”, please don’t forget us.

This would be a great time to consider e-giving, if you haven’t already tried it. Don’t know how? We have prepared two videos on how to give electronically, through REALM, or directly from your bank. To find these videos, go to Oakland’s website, oaklanducc.org. There are links at the bottom of each page, under ONLINE GIVING. Click on the link for instructions. Call Connie, if you need more help getting started. Once you have it set up, it’s very easy and convenient. You’ll wonder why you didn’t do it sooner.

Otherwise, if you’re still worshipping online, with “spaces between us”, please remember to drop a check in the mail or stop by the office – until we can be together again. We hope to see you soon!

P.S. We recognize that many of you have continued giving faithfully, either in person, or by sending in your contributions. Many have also generously given to those in need during these diffi-

Activities Committee preparing Easter Bags for our Youth

*happy
Easter*



***Jean Keeling, Suzanne Langston, Connie Burgess,
Sandy Butler, and Kirsten Creely***

Thank You Notes from Local Institutions We Support Annually

Dear Oakland Christian UCC

On behalf of all of those that the Genieve Shelter serves, we thank you! our goal is to end the cycle of violence afflicting our community. With the continuing support of people like you, we will succeed.

Sincerely,
Marleisa Montgomery, MPH, MSW
Executive Director - Genieve Shelter



Dear Oakland Christian,

As always, and especially now; we are eternally grateful for your generosity and unwavering support of our Mission and those we serve. We are appreciative for the community support we have received during our time of need.

With all my gratitude,
Angelica M. Yankauskas
Executive Director - Suffolk Meals on Wheels



Thank you!

Pam Saunders, Danna Vroman, Larry Bounds and Aubri Wilson for sprucing up the flower beds!

Thank you!

Ronnie Kelly (Kelly's Nursery) for donating the mulch!



We are blessed

Thank you! For Helping CAPS Night Stay Program - Meals for the Homeless

Thanks to each of you and your generosity this week as we served the homeless more than 100 bags of food (breakfast, lunch, and dinner in each bag). With the overflow of donations, we will also be able to contribute to Oakland's own monthly drive-thru pantry that will begin in the coming months. Please continue to pray for the families of our community who are without homes and that the CAPS program can continue to give them support and resources that are needed now more than ever. ~Dani



OUTREACH

The Outreach Committee, comprised of Dori Mitchell, Mary Jane Naismith, Mindy McCann, Mary Anne Biggs, John Biggs, Kim Waller and Pam Saunders, is charged with recommending a yearly mission outreach project to the church and soliciting mission gifts as needed. We recently met and have decided to sponsor *Food for Hungry Souls*. This mission is to help alleviate hunger in our local community. We plan to sponsor drive through food distributions at church, on first and third Thursdays, from 2:00 - 3:30, starting Thursday, May 6.

How can you help? We will be purchasing some food and hope to get some donations from local grocery stores. Checks with *Food for Hungry Souls* in the tab would be very helpful. We need volunteers to help pick up, package and give out food boxes. If you can volunteer, please contact Pam Saunders at 635-8125. As the project develops, we will be exploring other options for funds and food acquisitions.

We believe this to be a much-needed ministry at this time. As we grow, we will keep you posted. In the future, we plan to work on national and global mission efforts.

Wish us well and be sure to lend whatever kind of help you can!

... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me...

Blessings,

The Outreach Committee



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

APRIL 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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