

# October

## GOOD TIDINGS newsletter OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC



Hello Church!

So often, this time of year, I've written about things like the season of fall, harvesting, and the upcoming active life of a church. It seems many churches get really active as fall begins and we continue into Advent.

This October though, I'm going to do it a little different. I just want to tell you a story about something that happened to me recently.

On my recent vacation, I stayed in a cabin up Terry Hill Road in Roxbury, Vermont, surrounded by 40 acres of natural beauty, general solitude, and the Green Mountains. For the first two days, I had as much peace and quiet as I chose to have. I could sit on the deck, look out over the recently mowed meadow, drink a coffee, and read Robert Frost poems. It was sublime.

My hostess had left me some homemade soup, cookies, and a handwritten note. In the note, she invited me to the Tuesday night potluck at the Union Congregational Church of Roxbury (UCC). I thought this invite was sweet. It reminded me of how we've grown spiritually at Oakland Christian UCC by extending more invitations. Think about it: I was in Vermont, traveled from Virginia, and she'd never actually met me. Yet, she invited me to share a meal with her faith family on Tuesday evening. No agenda, no expectation to bring anything or even return one day – just an invitation.

In reality, I thought, this was more than sweet, it was both very brave and also the epitome of hospitality. As if to say, "Dear Stranger, I don't know you, but you've traveled a long way. Here's some food. If you'd like more food and friendship, come on Tuesday. If not, enjoy your stay."

Well, I went to the potluck (see picture on page 4). I even took an Oakland pie I had pulled from my freezer to make the trip. They loved that pecan pie! This very small gathering of thirteen people was exactly what I needed. This community is small. The church gathering is even smaller. The local librarian next door is very concerned with the condition of the church roof. When I looked the next day, I realized he absolutely should be. It's in really, really bad shape. The church floors creak when you walk on them. The fellowship room is a cluttered mess by Oakland's standards. The main sign is a piece of posterboard inside the old sign display case (see picture on page 4). Yet they were sorting through clothes to be donated, discussing care for the local cemeteries, bringing homemade dishes, and holding hands in prayer around the table of food.

Most importantly to me, feeding a stranger – nourishing his soul and his body. For all that I have loved about so many faith communities, I've never felt more welcomed. For all the great and wondrous things I've seen faith communities accomplish, I've never witnessed more important work.

As we head into this busy season, know that as Brad Whitley has reminded me, "it all counts." The big things and the seemingly small. They all provide love into lives.

—Pastor Stump



From the Music Corner:

*When morning gilds the skies, our heart awaking cries; May Jesus Christ be praised!  
In all our work and prayer, we ask his loving care; May Jesus Christ be praised!  
To God the word on high, the hosts of angels cry; May Jesus Christ be praised!  
Let air and sea and sky, from depth to height reply; May Jesus Christ be praised!*

I have always loved the hymn “When Morning Gilds the Skies”! My favorite line, which repeats after each statement, “May Jesus Christ be praised!” sums it all up. As we share in our worship time together, “May Jesus Christ be praised!” indeed! Looking ahead...

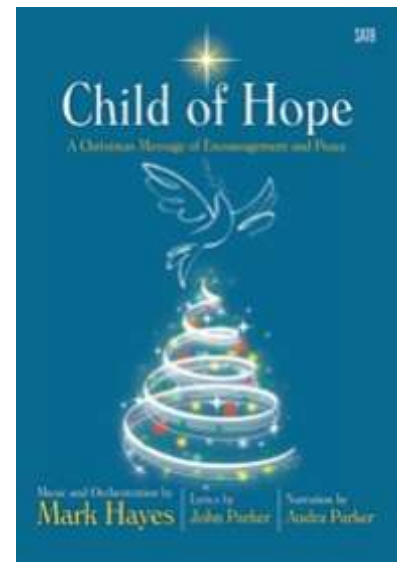
**\*\*Christmas Cantata Announcement\*\***  
Sunday, December 15, 2024  
11 a.m.

Come and sing with us for this year’s Christmas Cantata! We will begin rehearsals on Sunday, October 27 at 9:45 a.m. and continue each subsequent Sunday morning until December 15. In addition to Sunday mornings, we will also review Sunday’s practice during our Thursday evening choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m. Questions? See any choir member for more information or speak with Paul, Minister of Music at church or email [peputnam@yahoo.com](mailto:peputnam@yahoo.com).

We are indeed blessed with a group of people at Oakland willing to dedicate their time and talent to our Music Ministry. May Jesus Christ be praised!

In Christ’s Love,

—Paul Putnam  
Minister of Music



# CHURCH HAPPENINGS

- Oct. 1 Loaves & Fishes Meeting—Sanctuary Hall (10 a.m.)
- Oct. 2 Candy Making—CLC Kitchen (9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.) See Carole Matt
- Oct. 3 Prison Angel Tree Committee—CLC (6 p.m.)
- Oct. 6 Worship (11 a.m.)
- Oct. 9 Candy Making—CLC Kitchen (9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.) See Carole Matt
- Oct. 13 Worship (11 a.m.)
- Oct. 13 Orientation for Confirmation Classes—immediately following worship
- Oct. 14 Office Closed for Columbus Day
- Oct. 15 Jewels—CLC (6 p.m.) Hosted by Danna Vroman and Kirsten Creely
- Oct. 15 Men's Fellowship—Mod Olive, 115 N. Main St. (6 p.m.)
- Oct. 16 Candy Making—CLC Kitchen (9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.) See Carole Matt
- Oct. 17 Loaves & Fishes drive-through—CLC portico (11 a.m.)
- Oct. 17 Red Cross Blood Drive—CLC (1 to 6 p.m.)
- Oct. 20 Worship (11 a.m.)
- Oct. 21-25 Setting up for Fall Fest
- Oct. 23 Council Meeting.—Little Kitchen (6 p.m.)
- Oct. 24 Prison Angel Tree Committee—CLC (6 p.m.)
- Oct. 25 Deadline for Newsletter Articles
- Oct. 26 Fall Fest—CLC (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.)
- Oct. 27 Worship (11 a.m.)



Diane Johnson	6	Grace Haddad	21
Lincoln Wilson	8	Otto Wegman	22
Gayle Nelms	11	Janet Harris	24
Bill Csisar	12	Harvey Saunders	24
Doug Naismith	12	Kylee Langston	25
Harvey Doyle	13	Ashley Zydron	26
Tommy Arthur	13	Sadie Boyer	27
Elizabeth Nelms	16	Charlie Langston	27
Sharon Winslow	17	Ann Saunders	28
		Benjamin Hardison	28



Above, the potluck gathering in Vermont during Pastor Stump's vacation. At left, the posterboard sign at the church.

### Exciting News from Our Community!

We are thrilled to announce that our beloved Pastor, Rev. Jason Stump, has been honored as the "Best Pastor" in our city in the Locals Choice! With over 180 churches in Suffolk, this accolade is a testament to the unwavering dedication, compassion, and inspiring leadership that has resulted from God's call for

our pastor and our congregation. We invite everyone to join us at Oakland Christian United Church of Christ to celebrate this wonderful achievement and experience the warmth and spirit that makes our church a special place for all. Come share in the joy and see why our Pastor, and our congregation, shines so brightly!



### Church Thank You

You may have noticed a new addition to the church grounds at the cemetery entrance by the playground. For my Eagle Scout Project, I led the task to return a part of the memorial brick path that was removed prior to construction of the CLC.

Thank you to all who supported me on this venture, including those that

stopped by with encouraging words and motivation. A very special thank you to Pastor Jason Stump, Connie Edwards, Pam and Paul Saunders, and Carl Lancaster for their extended support on my project in the form of guidance and mentorship, brick delivery, water connectivity, snacks and drinks, tool sharing, and construction assistance. Thank you all so much!

—Clark Brennecke

Spreading God's Love  
Through the  
Prison Angel Tree Program

Prison Fellowship® is a nationwide nonprofit that supports those affected by the criminal justice system. One of its ministries, *Prison Angel Tree*, allows churches to buy Christmas gifts for children of incarcerated parents who register for the program.

Participating in *Prison Angel Tree* is a powerful way to share God's love. Parents in prison send heartfelt messages, which are attached to the gifts. Here's an example from Christmas 2023, written by a father to his nine-year-old child:

*"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Daddy loves you with all my heart. There's never a*



# ANGEL *tree*

*second in the day that I don't think about you and pray for my return to you. From this day and every day after, you are forever loved. Loving you always, Daddy."*

The Oakland Christian Prison Angel Tree program helps strengthen family bonds during challenging times. Despite a brief two-month window, (early October to mid-December) much is accomplished. In 2023, our

church provided gifts for ten children, and this year, we plan to serve twenty.

Our ministry involves four roles: Contacting Caregivers, Shopping for Gifts, Wrapping Gifts, and Delivering Gifts. Each role is led by a volunteer, and the tasks are accomplished with lots of fun and teamwork!

We would love to have you involved! Please contact Mary Haddad to become one of our volunteers.



The Stewardship Committee hosted a Tax Law and Investment Seminar with financial planner Kyle Arcand on Sept. 8.

## Men's Fellowship



*Please join us!*

The men meet the third Wednesday of the month at 6 pm. All are welcome. The October 15 gathering will be at the Mod Olive, 115 N. Main St. Any questions, contact Roger Burton at 757-373-2817 or 757-373-4080.

## JEWELS



*Please join us!*

The women meet the third Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. All are welcome. The October 15 gathering will be hosted by Danna Vroman and Kirsten Creely in Oakland's Community Life Center. *"Joyfully Enjoying Women's Encouragement and Loving Support"*

## STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

### IMAGINE TOGETHER

Our annual Stewardship campaign will begin later this month, consisting of a sermon, a skit, our outreach, and then Commitment Sunday on November 17.

As we prepare for this Stewardship campaign, let's "Imagine Together" what we may be able to accomplish in our church, our community, and our world.

Imagine a world made whole. Imagine enough food at every table. Imagine communities of belonging. And there is so much more....

We may not be able to accomplish these things by ourselves, but we can certainly make an

impact toward these types of goals. We can:

- Pray Together—worship, children's education, visitation
- Play Together—fellowship, church events
- Serve Together—service projects, youth mission trips, support of outside partners



Remember, when you share your resources with Oakland Christian Church, you are helping to make all these things possible! As we approach Commitment Sunday, let's open our hearts to what God has planned for us.

Be the change.

Help change a life. Give blood.



American  
Red Cross

**Blood Drive**  
**Oakland Christian UCC**

Community Life Center  
5641 Godwin Blvd  
Suffolk, VA 23434

**Thursday, October 17, 2024**  
**1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter: oaklandchristian to schedule an appointment.

Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.



Scan to be directed to  
RapidPass®

**Treat yourself: Come give blood in October for a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. PLUS, automatically be entered for a chance to win a \$5,000 gift card, there will be three lucky winners! Terms apply: [rcblood.org/treat](https://rcblood.org/treat)**



Scan to schedule  
an appointment.

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) | Download the Blood Donor App

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## **FALL FEST 2024 IS COMING!**

Please save Saturday, October 26, as a Red Letter Day on your calendar, as our annual Fall Fest is around the corner! A festive air in our Community Life Center will feature a silent auction, delectable treats (Oakland's Famous Acorns, pimento cheese, chicken salad, ham biscuits, Brunswick stew, baked goods, canned goods, jams, jellies, pickles) and vendors of all sorts. Who knows what other ideas might emerge?

Please consider what talents you might share with the silent auction i.e. art work, local eggs, two hours of yard work, electrical work, window washing, cleaning, a dessert a month, a prepared luncheon for six? Your imagination is the limit, and we are open to suggestions.

Candy making, under the leadership of Carole Matt, began September 18, and the week before the event we will be busy decorating and making pies, pimento cheese,

and chicken salad and chopping veggies for the stew. A sign-up sheet for candy is already in place, and there will soon be one for other jobs.

Many hands make light work, and there is a job for you! (Actually, there are many jobs for you!) But the real bonus is the fellowship shared and friendships forged as we work together to make the event a success.

Proceeds go to our Christian Service Committee, which disperses money to local folks in need and many worthwhile organizations such as the Salvation Army, Oakland Elementary School, and the Christian Outreach Center.

Questions? Call or email Pam Saunders at 757-635-8125 or [pmsaunders@aol.com](mailto:pmsaunders@aol.com) or Denise Spady at 757-651-6273 or [dhspady@charter.net](mailto:dhspady@charter.net).





Cynergy Pressure Washing cleaned the entire building recently.

### Begin the Confirmation Journey

On October 13, there will be an orientation offered for those wishing to begin the Confirmation journey. This journey is called “A New Path for an Ancient Journey.”

It is open to those who are 14 years old or older. Exceptions for 13-year-olds can be offered depending upon special circumstances.

There will be group work, classes, trips, and experiences offered to assist on this journey. However, it will be more of an individual journey than in the past. More information on that will be offered on October 13.

Please reach out directly to Rev. Stump with any questions and to sign up for this orientation.

## New Member Sunday at Oakland Christian UCC



Oakland Christian UCC was blessed to bring in five new members on Sept. 8. From left with Pastor Jason Stump are Jule and Cynthia West, John Mazur, Peggy Shackelford, and Yolanda Jackson.

JOIN US ON LIFE'S  
JOURNEY

OUR ROOTS ARE  
PLANTED FIRMLY ON  
FAITH, HOPE, AND  
LOVE

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**

OCTOBER 2024

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Pastor:** Rev. Jason Stump  
**Minister of Music:** Paul E. Putnam  
**Secretary:** Connie Edwards  
**Financial Secretary:** Deandra Parks  
**Nursery Attendant:** Rhonda Culpepper  
**Communications Assistant:** Tracy Cooper

**Telephone:** (757) 255-4353

**Office Hours:** 10 AM to 3 PM Monday - Thursday

**Email:** [Office@OaklandUCC.com](mailto:Office@OaklandUCC.com)

**Website:** [www.OaklandUCC.org](http://www.OaklandUCC.org)

