

# January

## GOOD TIDINGS NEWSLETTER OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC



Hello Church!

Wishing you a joyful and healthy start to 2025! Time sure does fly.

If you were to look back through our newsletters, emails, and social media from the past year, I'm certain you would find a lot of activity to take stock of for 2024. Some of it might be ministries, missions, or

fellowship that are old favorites. Perhaps Souper Bowl Sunday, the church picnic, a Tides game outing, Salvation Army Angel Tree, or Fall Fest.

You will also find some newer events as well. We've welcomed Deandra Parks as our financial secretary and Tracy Cooper as our communications assistant. It's only our second year of the Prison Fellowship Angel Tree. The same goes for the Maundy Thursday Worship Meal. We held the "Rise Against Hunger" event, which is a return of a much-loved event from the past but new to many of you. Ice skating in downtown Suffolk was a recent hit. There were the Election Day community meals, the American Red Cross blood drive, and the list goes on.

We are starting a new year, and I'm certain we will experience new things again as a church and as individuals. I'm hopeful you will share your ideas on what some of them might be.

I encourage you to approach the new year and those new experiences with hope, love, peace, and joy on your hearts and minds.

Looking forward, Jan. 6 is Epiphany of the Lord, and to celebrate that holy day, we will distribute Star Words again this year, on Sunday, Jan. 12. This Sunday is also known as Baptism of the Lord, and we will do something during worship that you may not have done before, in addition to the Star Words that I hope you have become familiar with and are looking forward to.

God is always doing a new thing! Every now and then, it's good for us to do that also.

Isaiah 43:19: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

—Pastor Stump



From the Music Corner:

*Behold the star!  
Behold the star up yonder.  
Behold the star!  
It is the star of Bethlehem.*

*A star has risen clear and bright—  
Behold the star of Bethlehem.  
It speaks of One who is the Light—  
Behold the star of Bethlehem.*



**The Handbell Choir**

What a gift! We have been blessed with the gift of Jesus Christ! What a wonderful Advent season of preparation for the arrival of the baby Jesus. The scriptures, the candle lighting, the sermons, and the MUSIC! There is nothing like the season of Advent and Christmas music to stir up all the feelings at this time of year.

The Chancel Choir and the Handbell Choir gave it their all preparing and performing this Advent season. The music ministry at Oakland is truly a light in this community. When you see a member of either choir, please thank them for sharing their gifts and talents!

At 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 5, at Lake Prince Woods, the Chancel Choir will perform an encore performance of “Child of Hope.” This Christmas Cantata not only had beautiful music, but the words and stories shared throughout gave it so much more meaning. The performance at Lake Prince is open to the public, and all are welcome to attend.

Have you been thinking about joining the Chancel Choir? Now is a great time as we begin a new season of music-making. We have people in the choir with varying abilities to read music, but we all love singing, worshiping the Lord, and sharing in the fellowship of choir. Feel free to ask any choir member about their experience or speak with me about your interest. You can always send me an email at [peputnam@yahoo.com](mailto:peputnam@yahoo.com).

Wishing you all a beautiful and inspired 2025!

*Peace and Love to you all,  
—Paul Putnam, Minister of Music*

# CHURCH HAPPENINGS

- Jan. 1 Office Closed for New Year's Day
- Jan. 7 Loaves and Fishes Committee Meeting—Sanctuary Hall (10 a.m.)
- Jan. 12 Volunteer Committees Kickoff with lunch—CLC (12 p.m.)
- Jan. 15 Women's Bible Study—CLC (9:45 a.m. to noon)
- Jan. 15 BOCE—Little Kitchen (6:30 p.m.)
- Jan. 16 Loaves and Fishes Drive-Through Food Distribution—CLC (11 a.m.)
- Jan. 19 Deacon Training with lunch—CLC (12 p.m.)
- Jan. 21 Jewels—CLC *with hostesses Denise Spady, Ella Mae Winslow, and Pam Saunders* (6 p.m.)
- Jan. 21 Men's Fellowship—Cazadores Mexican, 1701 Main St. (6 p.m.)
- Jan. 22 Council Meeting—Little Kitchen (6 p.m.)
- Jan. 25 Deadline for Newsletter Articles
- Jan. 29 Women's Bible Study—CLC (9:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
- Feb. 1 Set-up for Souper Bowl Sunday—CLC
- Feb. 2 Souper Bowl Sunday—CLC (12 p.m.)

*Choir & Bell rehearsals take place Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., respectively.*

*Minister of Music will communicate exceptions to practice.*



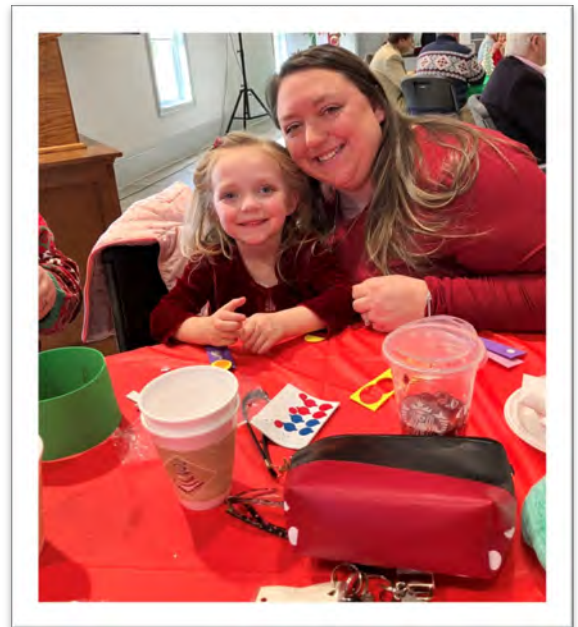
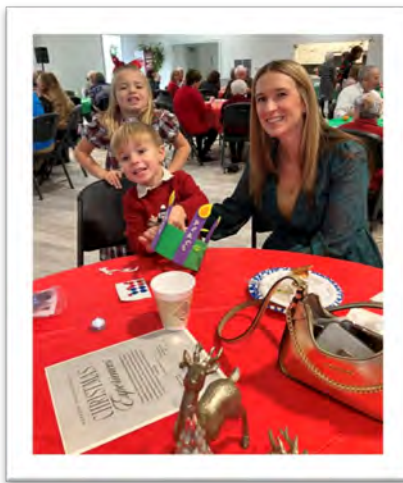
## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

		Kevin Kennedy	19
		Chris Hase	20
		Robert Fly	21
		Gavin Billings	21
		Lisa Arcand	25
		Erin Babler	25
		Connie Edwards	27
		Jesse Burgess	27
		Becky Brennecke	27
		Matt Zydron	28
		Wilma Roth	31
Deandra Parks	5		
Jesse Williams	6		
Alex Shearin	14		
Aubri Wilson	14		
Jackie Pierce	15		
Aurora Thompson	15		
Mary Jane Naismith	18		



Most of the staff of Oakland Christian UCC had a delicious lunch at Smithfield Station on Dec. 3. From left are Pastor Jason Stump, Minister of Music Paul Putnam, Church Secretary Connie Edwards, Financial Secretary Deandra Parks, Sexton Roosevelt Jones and Communications Assistant Tracy Cooper. Not pictured is Nursery Attendant Rhonda Culpepper.

# Church Christmas Party



# Easter Pie project calls for new leaders

For countless years, Oakland has made and sold Easter Pies, with the proceeds helping many worthy causes.

There have been many leaders, organizers, and workers through the years. Paul and I have enjoyed providing leadership for the past several years; however, we will be on a

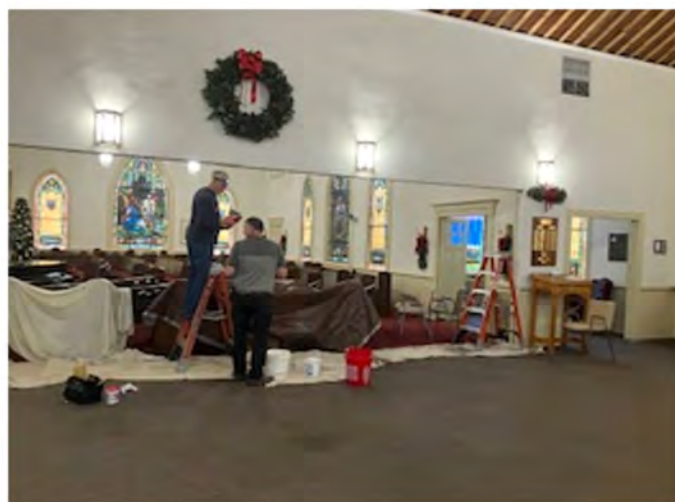
cross-country road trip this year and unable to help.

If you are interested in providing leadership and helping organize pie-baking this year, please let us know. We are glad to share what has worked for us. We will gladly meet with those interested to pass on what we have done in

the past. We would like to call a meeting in mid-January with anyone who lets us know of their willingness to lead. We look forward to hearing from you!

Looking forward to another successful year!

—Pam and Paul Saunders

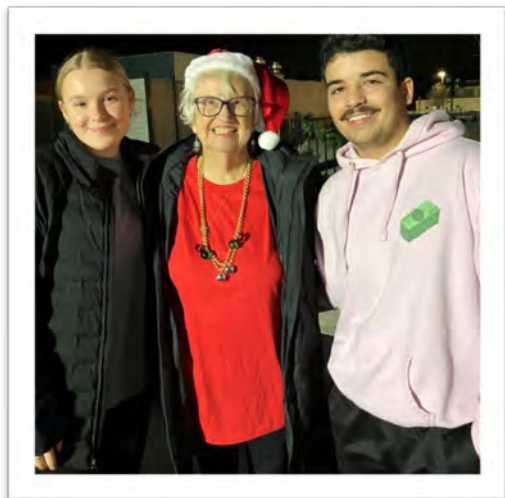
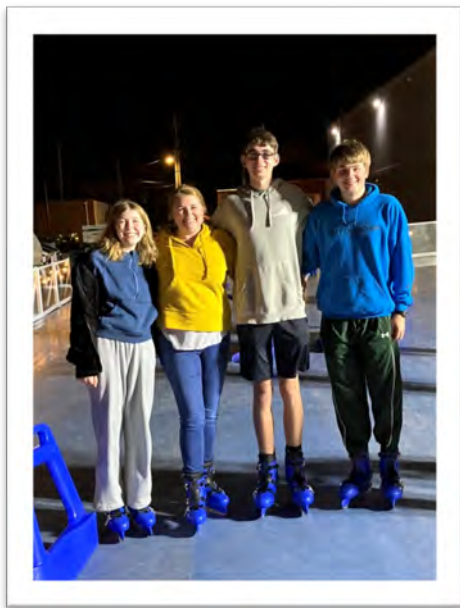
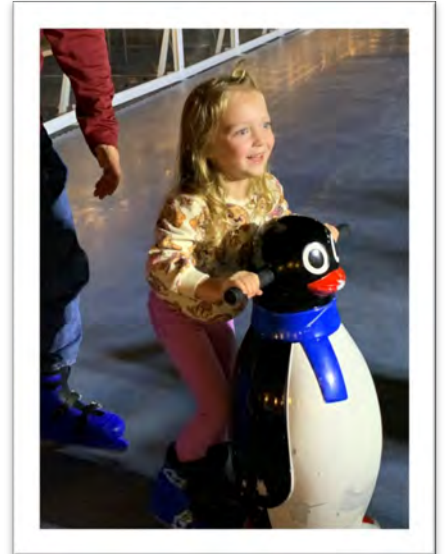


**The Buildings and Grounds Committee is always busy. Recent work has included replacing lights and maintaining the outdoor areas of our property.**



Above left, most of the staff of Oakland Christian UCC lit the first Advent candle on Dec. 1. From left are Pastor Jason Stump, Financial Secretary Deandra Parks, Church Secretary Connie Edwards, Communications Assistant Tracy Cooper, Sexton Roosevelt Jones and Minister of Music Paul Putnam. Nursery Attendant Rhonda Culpepper was serving in the nursery. Above right, Pastor Stump gave an effective object lesson for the children with Oatmeal Crème Pies on Dec. 1.

# Ice Skating in Downtown Suffolk



# 'Imagine Together' with Stewardship

What an amazing congregation we have here at Oakland Christian UCC!

While many churches are struggling with attendance and giving, Oakland is prospering. We are truly a "family," sharing our Time, Talents, and Treasures for the good of all.

The results are in from our recent Stewardship Campaign, and you have done it again—we received 49 pledges totaling \$164,056, plus an additional 17 pledges to give as much as

possible, surpassing the 2024 numbers of 44 pledges for \$161,586.

Thank you for your generosity! With these resources, let's continue to...

## ***IMAGINE TOGETHER***

what we might achieve this year in our church, our community, and our world!

We thank each of you for sharing your Time, your Talents, and your Treasures



with Oakland and beyond!

—*Your Stewardship Committee*

## **Souper Bowl event returns this February**

"Here comes Souper Bowl, here comes Souper Bowl, right down Oakland Lane."

Wow, Christmas has passed, and Souper Bowl festivities are in our sights. The annual favorite Souper Bowl event will take place on Feb. 2, 2025.

We need eight teams to sign up to provide a couple of large pots full of soup. We sell 100 tickets (which usually sell out early). Soup teams are allowed free tickets for four of their members. Last year, we had a donor give money to each team to help offset the cost of ingredients. If anyone is interested in donating this year, please contact Cheri Babler.

Tickets to attend are \$10 each, with a cap of \$40 for immediate family of 5 or more. This event is a lot of fun. The soup cook-off is judged by independent judges with highly coveted trophies and bragging rights.

There will be super raffles, so bring some extra cash. Dress in your favorite team attire or make up your own "team." You can wear it to church that day. This is all about FUN!

Ways to participate:

1. Sign up ASAP to become one of the eight teams.
2. Buy your ticket to attend. They'll be for sale before and after church.
3. Donate items for raffle baskets.
4. Bring canned goods to donate to Loaves and Fishes.
5. Come and have a great time!

Did I mention all profits are donated to a worthy cause?

As promised last year, I have a "replacement" for my annoyingly shrill whistle from the past. Thanks for your continued support of this event. A good time is had by all.

# Christmas Cantata, 'Child of Hope'





# Women's Bible Study Invitation



A seven-session study of six prayers in the Bible will take place from Jan. 15 through Feb. 26 from 9:45 a.m. to noon every Wednesday.

Sign up by Jan. 5.

Contact Julie Hase at 757-373-4255 or MaryAnne Riddick at 757-377-8353.

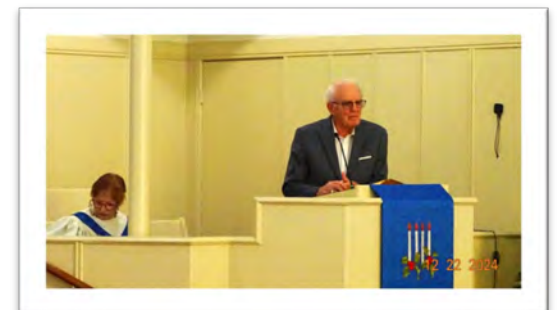
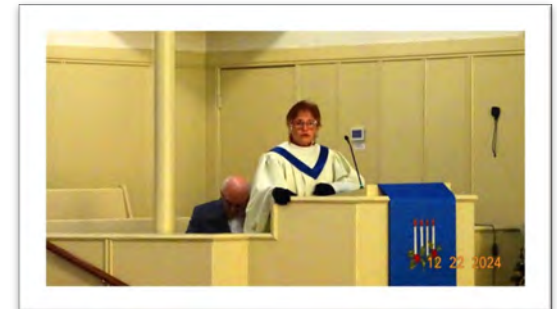
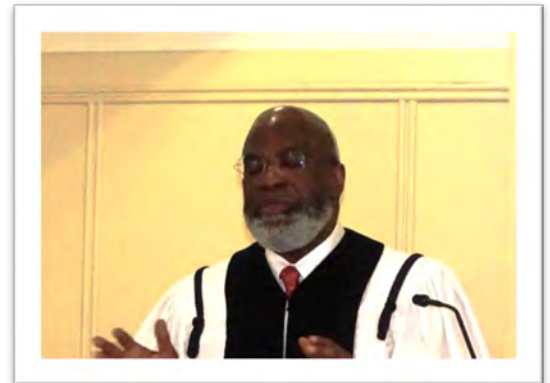


Members of Oakland Christian UCC rang the bell for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign.

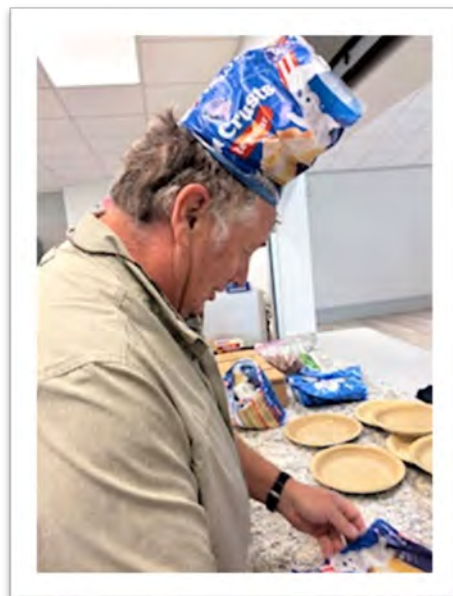
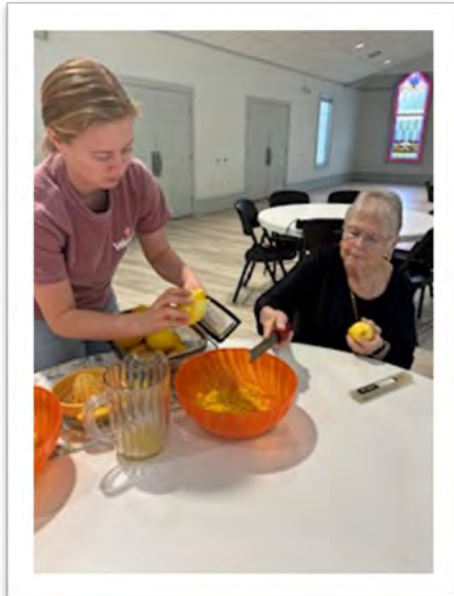


# Dec. 22 Sunday Service

The Dec. 22 Sunday service featured readings and the lighting of the Advent candle as well as beautiful performances by the handbell and chancel choirs.



# Extra pie sales benefit hurricane recovery



At left, a beautiful cornucopia arrangement on our altar reminded us of the season of Thanksgiving.

At right, the nursery and children's church made reindeer snacks with Rhonda Culpepper during our annual cantata.



We wish to thank Ronnie Kelly of Kelly's Nursery for helping and donating fresh wreaths to decorate the outside of the church this Christmas season.



Oakland Christian UCC had a great group attend the Virginia Choral Society's Holiday Concert on Dec. 15 at Temple Baptist Church. Our Minister of Music, Paul Putnam, sings with the chorus.

# Christmas Eve Service



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

**JANUARY 2025**

**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)

