

April

GOOD TIDINGS NEWSLETTER OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC



Hello Church!

As I traveled south to Louisiana, it became more and more apparent that despite any last-minute efforts winter would make to hold its position, spring was soundly on its way.

It was South Carolina where it became very noticeable. All of a sudden, there was much more green on the trees and shrubs, bulbs were blooming, and things just looked and smelled like life was coming back. I enjoy winter, and each season for the gifts it brings, but seeing this life return to the earth was so refreshing.

Then, upon my return, Virginia had made its own changes. Buds on the shrubs at the parsonage, blooms from the bulbs, and birds—a lot more birds!

They've been hitting the feeders hard.

While we are still very much in Lent, and I'm so very grateful for the gifts of this season, no matter what, Easter is coming! Easter! The empty tomb. The Good News. Resurrection, life wins! Victory over death and the lifelessness of complacency that we can all fall victim to.

It's going to happen, just like it always does, and I'm so very grateful for that.

We will do the traditional things along the way: palms, cantata, lilies, and community worship services during Holy Week. We will also continue to build upon new experiences or modifications to those: the Maundy Thursday meal, Holy Humor Sunday during the Easter season, a petting zoo at our Easter celebration, and the addition of a new church to the planning of our community services.

Still, I wonder, what will be the truly new thing? What is the thing, the life-giving opportunity, that is coming and we may not realize it?

I don't know for sure. I do know that I truly believe we live at a unique time in the life of Oakland Christian UCC. Our potential to meet the challenges of change, the needs of the world, and the expectation of God's will is greater than ever before. I recently talked with a church member and I stated that I have no idea what "The Church" will be in 50 years, but I firmly believe that with the spirit of Easter, we can be a church that is preparing and prepared to meet all of that.

We aren't there yet—it's a long way to those days, and it's a journey without a real end point, but I'm sure glad that the grace of God has us headed that way together.

"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." —Isaiah 43:19

—Pastor Stump



From the Music Corner:

*When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.
Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;
Love, so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!*

The well-known Lenten hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” has always captivated my attention as a great song of our faith. I’ve included some of the words above for your reflection. When you’re sitting in the pews, look it up, read and reflect upon the words of our Christian faith.

The Chancel Choir is working hard at preparing our Easter Cantata, “God So Loved” by Pepper Choplin. The Cantata will be presented on Sunday, April 13 during our 11 a.m. worship service. This is an incredible pairing of music and words outlining the story of Jesus’ journey to the cross.

I am really excited to share that Linda Boles will be with us on Sunday, April 27. Linda is a retired music teacher turned Christian singer-songwriter-performer. For a preview, feel free to visit her website: www.lindabolesmusic.com. We are so fortunate to have her!



**LINDA BOLES
IN CONCERT**
April 27, 2025
OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC
5841 GODWIN BLVD
SUFFOLK, VA. 11 AM
www.lindabolesmusic.com

Have you been thinking about singing with the Chancel Choir?

We are a group of people who love singing and sharing Christ’s message through music. We all come to choir with different levels of singing ability, but the beauty is in how we work together. If you want to come and try us out without any judgment, please feel free. Want to know more? See me or send me an email to peputnam@yahoo.com.

Be sure to invite friends and family on Sunday, April 13!

Musically Yours,

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

- April 1 Becky Godwin Scholarship applications available—*contact office*
- April 13 Easter Cantata and New Members—Sanctuary (11 a.m.)
- April 15 Jewels—CLC (6 p.m.) *hostesses Beth, Katie, and Mary Anne*
- April 15 Men's Fellowship—Il Paesano Restaurant, 2815 Godwin Blvd. (6 p.m.)
- April 17 Loaves & Fishes Meeting & Food Distribution—CLC (10 a.m.)
- April 17 Tenebrae Community Worship for Maundy Thursday—CLC (6 p.m.)
- April 18 Good Friday Community Worship—Wesley Chapel (7 p.m.)
- April 20 Sunrise Community Worship—St. John's Episcopal Church (6:30 a.m.)
- April 20 Easter Activities—Outside and CLC (following worship)
- April 21 Stewardship Meeting—Godwin Meeting Room (6 p.m.)
- April 25 Deadline for Newsletter Articles
- April 27 Stewardship Sponsored Church Pizza Party—CLC (following worship)
- April 30 Council Meeting—Little Kitchen (6 p.m.)

No Friday Night Fellowship in April. We will resume in May.

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.



Terri Howell	3
Sharon Curliss	4
Dani Howell	4
Sandra Johnston	7
Lisa Shearin	10
Charlotte Fly	10
Riley Billings	16
Betty Dickinson	17
Leslie Peterfeso	17
Jule West	17
Deborah Harrell	20
Danna Vroman	20
Rusty Schneider	21
Ray Bunch	24
Lee Langston	26

Johns River Valley Camp workday

Johns River Valley Camp plans to have its next workday on April 12. If any individuals, or a group of folks, would be interested in heading there, lodging and lunch will be provided at no cost.

For more information, please contact Pastor Stump or JRVC Executive Director Kevin Russell at kevin@jrvc.org. Pastor Stump won't be able to attend this workday, but he can give you any information you need.

Help support God's earth with native plants

Our community partners at the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance have informed us of the Throwing Shade VA program through the Virginia Department of Forestry.

or more. Locally, Lady Ferns Native Plants, 4900 Colley Ave., Norfolk, and Southern Branch Nursery, 1412 Benefit Road, Chesapeake, are participating nurseries.

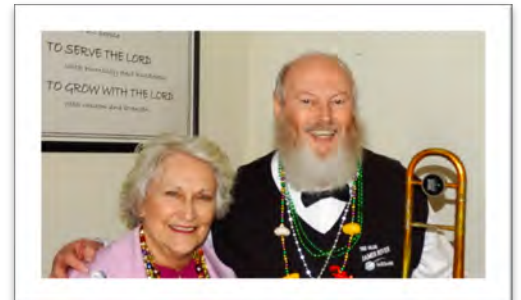
The program incentivizes the purchase of native trees and shrubs by providing a \$25 discount on eligible trees of \$50

For more information, visit the Virginia Department of Forestry or contact one of the nurseries.



Mardi Gras Sunday

Oakland Christian UCC celebrated Mardi Gras Sunday on March 2 with the Olde James River Jazz Band and choir performances.





OAKLAND CHRISTIAN CHURCH

EASTER CELEBRATION 2025

Come and join the fun
with the whole family!



**APRIL 20, 2025 IN THE COMMUNITY
LIFE CENTER AFTER THE SERVICE**

Activities will include a Petting Zoo,
Easter Egg Hunt, Lunch,
and Arts and Crafts

The page features several decorative illustrations of Easter eggs and carrots. The eggs are decorated with various patterns in purple, white, and orange. The carrots are bright orange with green leafy tops. There are also several white four-pointed starburst shapes scattered throughout the design.

OAKLAND CHRISTIAN CHURCH

EASTER DONATIONS NEEDED

Items below are needed
for our Easter Celebration

CANDY

FILLER ITEMS FOR EASTER EGGS

VOLUNTEER FOR EASTER BUNNY SUIT

VOLUNTEERS TO STUFF EASTER EGGS

CLEAN UP CREW MEMBERS

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED ON APRIL 6
AFTER CHURCH TO STUFF EGGS. CANDY
AND FILLER ITEMS ARE STILL GREATLY
NEEDED.**

Come learn life-saving skills in self-defense class

The Suffolk Sheriff's Department will teach a Self-Defense Class at 4 p.m. Thursday, May 15, at Oakland Christian UCC in the Community Life Center. Come learn ways to protect yourself in the event of an attack. There will be demonstrations and plenty of time for guided practice with deputies. Skills

learned will be applicable to many unforeseen situations. Participants must be female and able to stand alone. The class is limited to 25 participants, and the registration deadline is May 1. Please register by signing up on the sign-up sheet located in the Fellowship Hall. You may

also call the church office and ask to be placed on the list. This event is sponsored by Oakland's Outreach Committee.

Contact Pam Saunders at pmsaunders@aol.com or 757-635-8125 for more information.

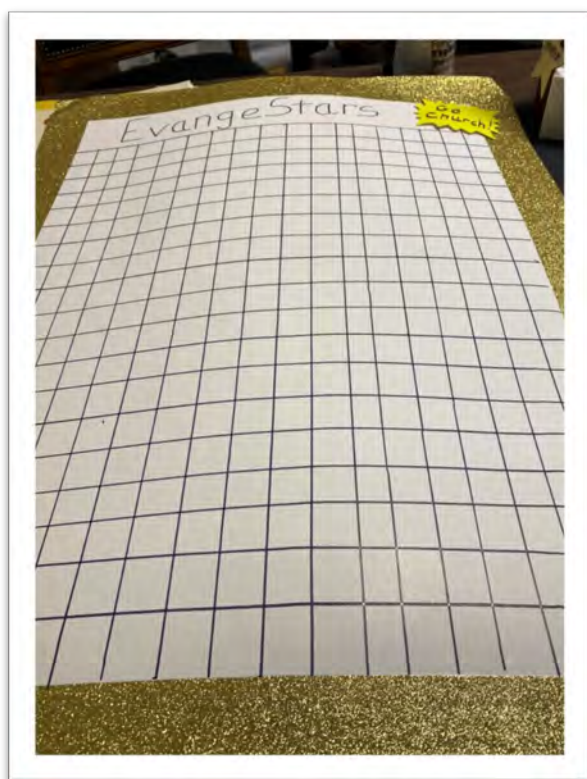
Scholarship applications available now

Oakland's Becky Godwin Memorial Scholarship applications are available beginning April 1 and can be requested by calling the church office at 757-255-4353 or by email request to

office@oaklanducc.com. Completed applications will be due back to the church office by May 1, 2025. **Please note that these dates are earlier than in previous years.**

Each recipient must be a member of Oakland Christian UCC.

Scholarship Sunday will be celebrated on June 1, 2025.



EvangeStars return

EvangeStars are back! As you may recall, Pastor Stump has once again challenged us to share the Good News of Jesus by inviting people to gather with us at Oakland Christian UCC.

Each time you invite someone, you can place a star-shaped sticker on the EvangeStars board. Once

the board is completely filled, the entire church will enjoy a pizza party!

It's just that simple. Invite folks, tell them why you are a part of Oakland, and whether they come or not, you get to fill a spot on the EvangeStar board.

Who thinks we can fill up this board before June 1?

Give with ease by trying online giving

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." – 2 Corinthians 9:7

Online giving makes supporting our church easy, secure, and convenient. Whether you're traveling, out

of town, or prefer a hassle-free way to give, electronic giving allows you to stay faithful in your generosity. Benefits include:

- **Consistency** – Set up recurring gifts to ensure your giving continues even when you're away.

- **Convenience** – Give anytime, anywhere through our website or mobile app.
- **Security** – Your donations are processed safely and securely.

Visit oaklanducc.org/give or contact the church office to set up online giving.



Women's Bible Study

The Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study concluded with an enjoyable luncheon after several weeks of studying prayers in the Bible.



Pastor Stump shares thoughts on Order of Naucratius retreat

Hello Church!

As you know, I recently gathered with folks from across the country for the fourth annual Order of Naucratius Retreat in Clinton, Louisiana.

This retreat is so very unique. In its current form it is run out of The Episcopal Church Diocese of Southern Ohio. There are chapters in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Indiana.

Focusing on the values of Saint Naucratius, who gathered fish and wild game to feed the poor, this particular retreat gathers folks to harvest feral wild hogs in Louisiana and then properly process the meat so that it can be used as physical and spiritual nourishment.

The landowners in Louisiana are grateful for our help in trying to control the wild hog population, which causes erosion, damages agricultural resources, threatens livestock, and brings other detrimental side effects due to their ability to survive and reproduce at a rapid rate. Make no mistake, this is not the fault of the animals we seek to harvest. Each of us who gather understands this. We take great care to harvest ethically and efficiently and to ensure that the animal's life can provide nourishment.

Each day, we held noonday prayer from the Episcopal Book of Worship, held a blessing before the daily hunt, and gave thanks in the field for each animal harvested.

On Sunday morning, we gathered for worship and Holy Eucharist outdoors on The Brady Farm, the



property of our very gracious hosts.

In between all of this, there were meals prepared and shared, campfire stories, laughter, deep sharing, and the many benefits of spending the bulk of the time under God's sky in all its colors. I even got to experience a severe Louisiana storm in the midst of a crawfish boil. Unexpectedly, I was able to meet the author of one of my favorite books, "The God of Wild Places" by Tony Jones. I now consider Tony a friend and look forward to being with him and many others again next year. In just two years, it has truly become a community of real value for me.

As an extra benefit to this trip, after our retreat, I was able to visit with our church member Andy Brenneke, who is serving in the U.S. Coast Guard in New Orleans. We shared wonderful conversation and even a little adventure together. I was even able to meet his parents. They are as nice as you would imagine they would be! What a Joy! Seriously, their names are Joy and Bob.

All this is to say, "thank you!" Thank you for respecting my time while I was away. Thank you for



understanding the value of all of this. Not just for me, but for all the other good that comes from it. Relationships, nourishment, charity, conservation, and community building. We all came from diverse beliefs and yet cared for each other as equal children of God. Thank you for caring for each other. Thank you for welcoming Pastor Newsome. Thank you for welcoming me back!

As I've shared, I was so fulfilled and busy in my time away that I wasn't able to begin to miss you all, but it was also so good to see all your beautiful faces when I returned.

If you'd like to hear more, just ask. I'm happy to share how this experience refreshed, strengthened, and deepened my spiritual formation.



The Building and Grounds committee, tired of the eyesore of unsightly trash cans, recently undertook a beautification project. There were discussions on the type of fence and its overall look, but compromise led to a vinyl fence, chosen for both its visual appeal and durability. We hope you love it! If you see John Matt and Rusty Schneider, please let them know how much their time and talents are appreciated!

Stewardship Committee plans party to celebrate blessings

This Easter, let's reflect on how Christ's resurrection has empowered us to be faithful stewards, using our time, talents and treasures to serve others. In January, our committee was overwhelmed when we saw how many of you had signed up for the 12 committees we have here at Oakland for its members. These last three months have shown your love of our church, your friendliness to each other, your welcoming of visitors, your helping new members become involved, and your willingness to serve in many different ways. Last, but not least, you give financially in one of two ways:

through a pledged amount, or as much and as often as you can. We are also fortunate to have the "Best Minister in Suffolk," Jason Stump, who not only won this citywide award, but shows it through his "Let the Children Come" message, his thoughtful and easy-to-follow sermons, plus his ability to relate to people of all ages. Jason has also been seen in a coffee shop with his sign saying, "I am a pastor; please interrupt me." It is easy to see that our members and pastor make the job of your Stewardship

Committee so much easier than in most churches. **So let's have a party to celebrate our many blessings! Our 11 members promise to make it special with food and fun! We'll hold the party on April 27 immediately after church in the Community Life Center.**

Your Stewardship Committee:
 Mary Jane Naismith, Kyle Arcand, Sandy Barton, Susie Eaton, Ginny Fly, Lynn Knight, Mary Anne Riddick, Paul Saunders, Betsy Wegman, Otto Wegman, and Ella Mae Winslow

News from the Legacy Committee

Our church has recently received a Legacy Gift from the estate of Nick and Margaret Sarick. Margaret passed away on April 5, 2020 and Nick on Nov. 26, 2024. They were the epitome of a loving couple, who were both long-time, active, vital members of Oakland, and will always be missed by many of their friends here.



The Legacy Committee has now moved Margaret and Nick Sarick's names from the list on

our Oakland Legacy Friends plaque to the permanent Legacy Angel plaque.

At our recent Legacy Committee meeting, we decided the following:

- Move our two Legacy plaques, Oakland's Legacy Friends and Oakland's Angels, from the vestibule to the Sanctuary Hall where they will be more visible.
- Put information about our Legacy program on our church website.
- Quarterly, put "Frequently Asked Questions" about Oakland's Legacy Angel program in our church newsletter.



- Have Oakland's Legacy Angels Recognition Sunday on Memorial Sunday. Parker Howell will be our speaker and reader of Oakland's Legacy Angels.

Legacy Committee: Chair Mary Jane Naismith, John Gayle, Pam Saunders, Parker Howell, Betsy Wegman, and Pastor Jason Stump



Friday Night Fellowship on March 21 saw the church and community gather for fun and getting to know one another.

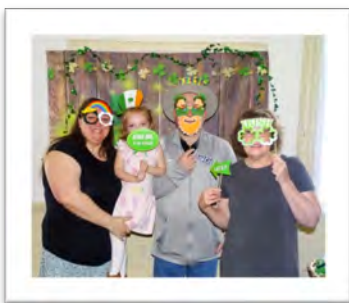
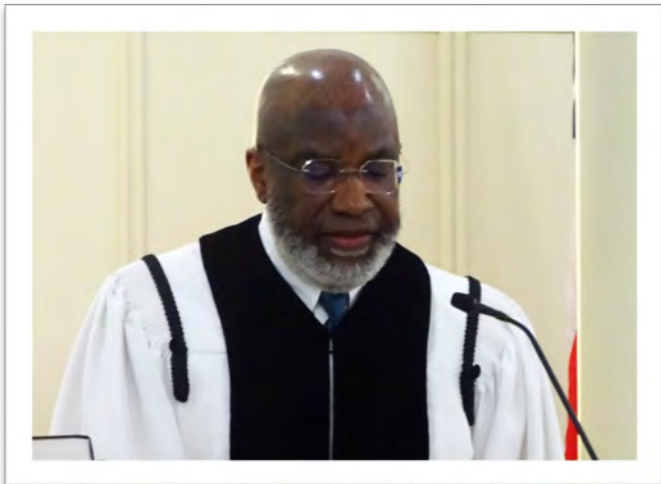


Pastor Stump administered ashes to about 20 people under the portico on Ash Wednesday through the "Ashes to Go" program.



Oakland held its annual Deacon's Shepherd Meal on March 23. Each "flock" of members sits together along with their Deacon and gets to know each other a little better.

St. Patrick's Day fun at Oakland



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

APRIL 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

Website: www.OaklandUCC.org

