

May

GOOD TIDINGS NEWSLETTER OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UCC



Hello Church!

Some time ago, I used a quote in worship that I learned from listening to a podcast with Brené Brown, Adam Grant, and Simon Sinek. All of them are known for their research and work on topics such as leadership and growth at the individual and organizational levels.

The quote was from Adam, whose particular expertise in organizational psychology has made him a bestselling author and professor at the prestigious Wharton School. I quoted him by telling you, “I have very high expectations, and I’m sure you won’t disappoint me.”

Not only am I not disappointed, but my expectations as the pastor of Oakland Christian UCC continue to be exceeded. You’re leading me to set my expectations, hopes, vision, and goals for our congregation even higher.

While the numbers tell a great story, they aren’t what leads me to continue to believe in the potential for spiritual growth, effective ministry, increased missions, and truly being on the forefront of the future of the Christian faith in our region, all while maintaining our values and the dignity that bringing tradition along provides.

It’s you! It’s your spirit, smiles, hugs, handshakes, generosity, care, love, and passion. Think about the ways so many of you joyfully joined in the parade of palms, stayed to enjoy the petting zoo, and actively engaged in delivering our Holy Humor Sunday sermon with your renditions of roars, clucks, howls, and trumpets.

It’s quite astounding! I hear and read so much about dying churches. Yet, here we are, Oakland Christian UCC, in Suffolk, VA, on the bend in the road on Godwin Boulevard, thriving. We are lifting each other, loving neighbors, welcoming strangers, comforting those feeling down, assisting the poor, and so much more. We are growing into something that I don’t think I’m able to imagine yet. I love that!

I don’t know what we are becoming, but the world needs it. I know I do, and it appears you all feel the same.

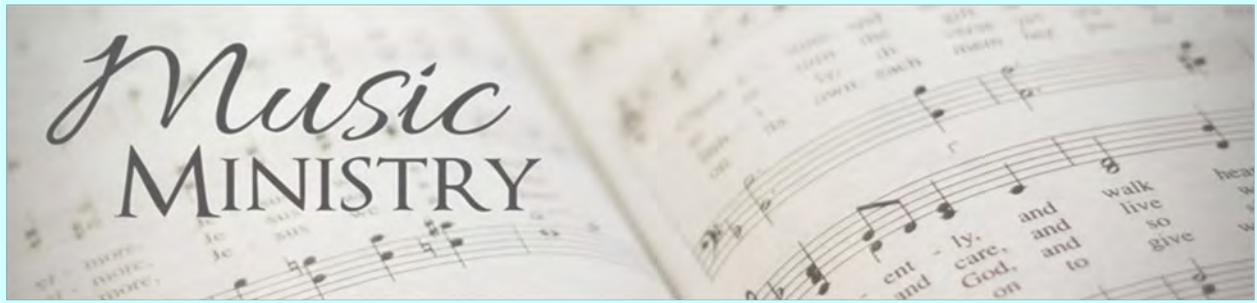
So, let’s keep being who we are while looking to become something even better.

I’ll bet many of you didn’t realize you’d ever be making animal sounds in church, and I’ll bet you enjoyed it. I promise you that God did!

What’s the next thing we don’t expect to be capable of, or don’t see coming, but we are headed for? I’d love to hear what you think.

—Isaiah 43:19, *"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"*

—Pastor Stump



From the Music Corner:

In The Bulb There is a Flower
By Natalie Sleeth

*In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

*In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

“In the Bulb There is a Flower” has been a favorite post-Easter hymn of mine for some time now. The gentle melody with text revealing different ways we can see Jesus’ resurrection in nature all around us feels like a nice warm hug!

The month of April was filled with wonderful music at Oakland! The Cantata, “God So Loved” was truly the highlight as we shared a beautiful message of God’s love shared with us through Jesus’ life. The Easter anthems brought out the best from our Chancel Choir. Linda Boles came and shared her music with us on April 27. What a joy that was!

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? Just ask a choir member! They will tell you all you need to know.

Musically Yours,
—Paul Putnam, Minister of Music



CHURCH HAPPENINGS

- May 1 Deadline for turning in Becky Godwin Memorial Scholarship applications
- May 15 Loaves & Fishes Meeting and Food Distribution—CLC (10 a.m.)
- May 15 Self-Defense Course for Women—CLC (4 p.m.)
- May 20 Jewels—CLC (6 p.m.) *hostesses Dana M, Sandra J, and Mary Jane*
- May 20 Men's Fellowship—George's Steakhouse, 1260 Holland Road (6 p.m.)
- May 25 Deadline for Newsletter Articles
- May 28 Council Meeting—Little Kitchen (6 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.*



Ralph Howell	2
Brian Helms	5
Rainell Rowell	7
Kelsey Blanks	8
Karen Schine	9
Kirsten Creely	9
Connor Zydron	9
Alaina Smith	11
Rhonda Culpepper	13
Michael McNerny	14
Charles Johnson	15
Gary Macklin	17
Pat Branche	20
Marguerite Butler	20
Molly Nelms	21
Paul Putnam	22
Jane Arthur	22
Isabelle Langston	25
Lorraine Gayle	26
Gabe Hathaway	26
Nancy Spady	26
Erin Whitley	27

The Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program Food For Thought literacy initiative is in need of **new and gently read books** for distribution to Isle of

Wight children, ages 3-5! If you are able to donate books, please bring them to the church and place them in the donation box in the sanctuary hall.



Pastor Jason Stump and Carole Matt work together to prepare soup for Maundy Thursday and for shelter meals.

Easter SUNDAY

Oakland Christian UCC celebrated Easter with worship and fun activities such as crafts, an Easter egg hunt and a petting zoo.



Stewardship shows thanks with a pizza party!

Oakland UCC is very blessed to have YOU as a member of our congregation!

As you know, Rev. Jason Stump has been voted Best Pastor in Suffolk.

There should be an award for Best Congregation; we would win that, hands down.

Our Stewardship Pizza Party was held on Sunday, April 27. We wanted to celebrate all of YOU for giving so generously of your time, talents, and treasures.

We are very appreciative that Oakland UCC has funds to meet all our needs.



And whenever we need help in whatever form, there are always willing hands and hearts.

You make our job as a committee very easy.

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!!!

Your Stewardship Committee



The Oakland Christian UCC choir presented its Easter cantata, "God So Loved" by Pepper Choplin, on Palm Sunday.



Five new members — Scottie Ludlum, Gail Mathews, Susan Saunders, Gini Semler, and Kevin Sheets — were brought into the church on Palm Sunday.



JEWELS Easter Bonnets

The JEWELS enjoyed making Easter bonnets out of paper plates during their April get-together.



Community Garden plants seeds of hope

The Chuckatuck Community Garden planting season has begun. Our first workday and planting took place on Saturday, April 19. We have 10 raised beds, and already six of them have been adopted! During our work session, two of our gardening families were on hand to tend to their beds.

Our young gardeners (with the assistance of their parents) cleaned their beds and planted a variety of vegetables. They did an excellent job, and we wish them great success!



We have several projects scheduled for this season, to include:

- planting to attract native pollinators
- adding two raised beds designated as “You Pick” that will be open to anyone to pick fresh vegetables (thanks to Dana and John Mitchell)
- painting a garden-themed mural on the storage shed

We are extremely grateful for the continued support provided by Oakland Christian UCC and Healthy Suffolk!



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

MAY 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

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