

The COMMUNITY MESSENGER

Community Church of Oak Orchard
Millsboro, Delaware 19966

September 2025
Volume 3—Issue 9

Message from Pastor Ed

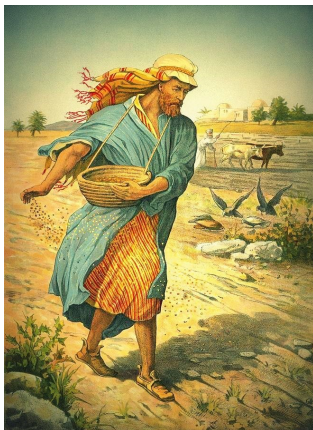
September: The Season of Harvest — A Christian Reflection

September ushers in a quiet shift. The heat of summer fades, and golden hues begin to color the landscape. For many, it marks the beginning of the harvest season — a time of gathering, reaping, and reflecting. In Scripture, harvest is more than an agricultural term. It's a spiritual metaphor, woven through the teachings of Jesus and the promises of God.

Jesus once said, *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"* (Matthew 9:37). September reminds us that God is still calling His people to labor — not in fields of grain, but in hearts ready to receive the gospel. It's a time to reflect on the fruit our lives are bearing. Are we sowing seeds of truth, love, and grace in our families, communities, and workplaces?

Galatians 6:9 encourages us, *"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."* This season, we're reminded that every act of faithfulness, every prayer lifted, every step in obedience — even when unseen — contributes to a harvest in God's perfect timing.

Here is the challenge: As the days grow shorter and the busyness of life increases, don't let the spiritual harvest pass you by. Ask God to



open your eyes to someone in your life who is ready to receive hope, truth, or encouragement — and then step out in faith. Whether it's a word of kindness, an invitation to church, or sharing your testimony, choose to be a laborer in God's harvest field this September.

Let this be the month you intentionally sow seeds that will bear eternal fruit. Because this is not a request from God, it is a command!



"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."

- 2 Corinthians 9:6

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Faith, Food, Fellowship



You caught me double plating!



Go ahead, take my picture, I'll just smirk!



FELLOWSHIP
LUNCHEON
AUGUST 3rd





ODYSSEA: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

People Who Make a Difference

By Art Schmidt

“Good people have good things in their hearts.” Matthew 12:35

“Name the ten wealthiest people in the world. Name eight people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize. How did you do? With the exception of you trivia hounds, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are the best in their fields, but the applause dies, awards tarnish, and their achievements are forgotten. Surprising how quickly we forget, isn’t it? Name ten people who have taught you something worthwhile. Name five people who helped you in a difficult time. Much easier huh? The lesson? The people who make a difference are not the ones with credentials, but the ones with concern.”¹

When I think of people who made a difference in my life, Jan Hayden comes to mind right away. Jan is an active member of the West Baltimore UMC and we met through a mutual friend. Our friendship became much stronger during a difficult time in 2005—my mom suffered her first stroke in January and I moved her to my home in Baltimore. I hired a private duty nursing agency, and the monthly cost for the 24x7 homecare was \$15,000. There was no state or federal financial assistance at that time for homecare, so it didn’t take long to exhaust all my available funds. I needed to sell Mom’s home and Jan was a very successful realtor, so she became my agent and provided professional guidance throughout the process. Then, I became ill with cancer, and Jan stayed in close touch, visited me often, and brought us food. I know that Jan’s prayers and support made a huge difference for my family and me.

I ran out of money just 30-days before the settlement of my mom’s home, so I was in a desperate situation because I knew the agency wouldn’t continue Mom’s homecare without payment. I was able to borrow \$2,000 from my uncle, but that still left a \$13,000 shortfall. I was distraught—the weight of the urgent situation was overwhelming. I prayed to God multiple times a day asking for His help.

But then, one evening the doorbell rang and my prayers were answered. I was surprised to see Ron, Jan’s husband, standing at my door carrying two trays of homemade lasagna that Jan had sent over. Ron stayed to visit with us and sat with my mom for a while. Before he left, Ron turned to me and said, “Jan wanted you to have this,” and he handed me a check for \$13,000. I understood, of course, it was a loan and I repaid Jan after the property settlement, but at the moment I was overcome with emotion by the tremendous gesture of care and concern. I was grateful beyond measure and filled with joy. I could continue listing the many kind and generous things Jan has done since I’ve known her, but this one act of concern stands above the rest—when Jan went far beyond what most people would do.

I’ve learned that people tend to show their true colors in the difficult times of need. The people I thought would be there for me stepped back and did nothing, but the people I didn’t expect to be there for me suddenly stepped forward and did everything they could. I asked my then pastor why people step back in times of difficulty or hardship, and she said, “In times of hardship and especially serious illness, people sometimes don’t know what to do, so they do nothing.” Well, I thank God at least one person stepped forward and did something. I will never forget how Jan helped me and the difference she made. Even though Jan and I live in separate states now, we’ve remained close and in touch.



SHARING OUR GIFTS

Lord, give us the courage to step forward and do all we can when people need our help. Inspire us to share our time, gifts, and treasures with those in need regardless of their circumstances or ours. Empower us to stay connected to the one true vine and bear fruit in all that we do in and with our lives. Amen.



¹ Max Lucado, *Grace For The Moment Vol II*, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006, pg.213

Ministry in Motion!

MINISTRIES & COMMITTEES

Our Church is growing. **PRAISE THE LORD!** As this is happening, we need help! Ministries are an important part of our church. They help our church family to grow in faith, minister to the needs of the community, and provide outreach to those in need.

COMMUNITY EVANGELISM MINISTRY



COMMUNITY CHURCH OF OAK ORCHARD

Community Evangelism Ministry—Engaging our community and drawing people to our church. If you are interested in helping to expand our church's reach, we encourage you to join us. We also support the Visitor Ministry.

Contact: **Elder Art Schmidt**, artisea@msn.com, 443-676-3588

or **Kristi Williams**, emschic17@hotmail.com, 240-841-5959

Home Care Ministry—We need more volunteers who are willing to bring a little cheer to those who are temporarily or permanently homebound. We love each other too much to let anyone be lonely. Contact: **Bonnie Shaw** 724-689-3894 or **Diane Long** 302-945-7627.

Kids Ministry—We would love for you to be part of our Children's Ministry team! We're looking for caring teachers and helpers to serve with kids of all ages (infants through 14 years) on Sundays from 11:00–12:15. Whether you enjoy rocking babies, helping little ones learn Bible stories, or encouraging our older kids, there's a place for you. Your time and heart can make a lasting impact! Our hope is to build 4 teaching teams so that each group only serves once a month. This way, no one carries the load alone, and everyone still has plenty of Sundays to worship and recharge while making a lasting difference in the lives of our kids. "If you feel God nudging you to be part of this ministry, we'd love to have you join us! Just add your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulleting board in the hallway of contact Elder Mike Koly or Pastor Ed Vidzicki directly.

Contact: **Elder Mike Koly**, dmkoly@verizon.net, 610-350-8025

or **Pastor Ed**, pastoredvidzicki@gmail.com 717-940-7433



Men's Ministry—Our Men's Ministry exists to disciple men into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, equipping them to live as godly leaders in their homes, church, and community. We seek to forge a brotherhood where men encourage one another, grow together in God's Word, and sharpen each other through accountability, prayer, and service. By modeling Christ's humility, strength, and love, we strive to raise up men who courageously stand firm in their faith, lead their families with integrity, and impact the world with the gospel.

Contact: **Pastor Ed**, pastoredvidzicki@gmail.com, 717-940-7433



Women's Ministry—The rooted women's group meets on Thursdays at 6pm. The ministry provides a platform where women share experiences, challenges, and insights from a faith-based perspective through Bible and book studies.

Contact: **Kristi Williams**, emschic17@hotmail.com, 240-841-5959

Youth Group Ministry—We want to create a team willing to participate in youth activities.

Contact: **Pastor Ed**, pastoredvidzicki@gmail.com, 717-940-7433

Maintenance—We need volunteers to help with church building and grounds maintenance. No experience necessary.

Contact: **Elder Ted Brown** 302-549-1450 or **Elder Steve Miller**— 302-258-7499
and_you_thought_my_last_e-mail_was_long@protonmail.com

Education—We're excited to offer many Bible Studies and Sunday Elective Classes, and we'd love for you to be part of leading them! If you enjoy sharing God's Word and helping others grow in their faith, consider volunteering to teach a class. Your gifts could inspire and encourage others in a powerful way.

Contact: **Pastor Ed**, pastoredvidzicki@gmail.com, 717-940-7433

Thank you in advance, because I have FAITH that you are more than a pew sitter! If you are not physically able to volunteer then it is your duty to now assume the higher calling of prayer warrior.

—Love in Christ, Pastor Ed



GET INVOLVED

*Where Friends
Become Family!*



WORLD NEWS

Why Gen Z is Flocking to Strong Religion

By William Fletcher

For decades, religious affiliation across the West had been in free-fall. However, recent developments suggest that post-pandemic, Gen Z is leading the charge to amend things. According to a recent report from the Bible Society, 16% of 18–24 year olds in the United Kingdom now attend church monthly — a notable rise from just 4% in 2019. These churchgoers feel less depressed, closer to their local community, and have deeper hope for the future. The kids may just be alright yet.

This is not a return to a bland and therapeutic Christianity that many mainline denominations peddle. As First Things editor R.R. Reno describes, this generation seeks “Strong Religion:” faith that demands something of them. They accept accountability, sacrifice, and formation. In exchange, they find spiritual purpose and a life quest.

This generation has grown up in a thoroughly broken world: family collapse, digital alienation, and intense institutional distrust. As a result, Gen Z (born 1997-2012) is acutely aware of the ills of pervasive secular progressivism, and many are choosing another path.

Theirs is a cultural paradigm that insists that tradition is akin to bondage and that liberation comes through complete rational autonomy. It assures them that they are in control of their reality. Reno contends it is a “broken, dysfunctional world that a sane and reasonable person would reject.” This gospel of fulfillment, however, has led them not to happiness or contentment, but to a deep rootlessness. Yet, even when this desire for order veers into post-liberal extremes — integralism or traditionalist zealotry alike — it signals the same thing: a radical refusal to return to the spiritual desolation that largely characterized their upbringing.

This strict revivalism concerns youths who see a fundamental chance to take charge of their life. Instead of the hollowed-out institutions they perceive to have failed them, Gen Z seeks the enchantment of permanence, the challenge of virtue, and the refuge of a real community.

Generation Z is having a JESUS REVOLUTION

Especially in a society where men feel increasingly alienated and families are fractured, the “serious” church offers more than doctrine. It offers a cadence to life, an intergenerational civil society, and a place to nourish the soul. With it comes an escape from cultural nihilism present elsewhere in their lives. This renewal, however, is not self-sustaining and requires real work. If Gen Z's encouraging spiritual seriousness is to continue, then churches aspiring to win the hearts of younger people must offer more than Instagram sermons and platitudes. Rather, they must provide a package of formation, beauty, discipline, and truth. Gen Z has been remarkably resilient thus far and may just go a long way toward healing the cultural sins of the recent past.



Digital natives with a strong awareness of social issues.



Source: <https://www.newsbreak.com/share/4058280500197-why-gen-z-is-flocking-to-strong-religion?>

The Story Behind the Religious Sand Sculptures on the Ocean City Boardwalk

By Alex, MCS Staff

For decades, visitors strolling the Ocean City, MD boardwalk have been captivated by the intricate sand sculptures that line the beach. Prominently displayed in front of the Plim Plaza, between 1st and 2nd Streets, these sculptures are more than just art— they represent a unique ministry outreach by Randy Hofman.

Randy Hofman, an ordained minister, has been the primary creator of these sculptures since the early 1980s. First training under Mark Altamarc in the early 1970s, Hofman eventually took the reins and has consistently realized his vision on Ocean City's sands ever since. His work, a blend of artistic skill and spiritual mission, began in the early 80s and continues every year from Good Friday through early October.

Each sculpture is a labor of love, typically taking a full day – or sometimes even two days – to complete. Hofman employs a unique technique that involves treating the sand structures with a biodegradable glue and water mixture. This process forms a protective crust, allowing the sculptures to withstand wind and rain and persist on the beach for approximately one month. Despite this impressive durability, Hofman often creates new pieces on a weekly basis, ensuring a continuous display of evolving art and message.

For Hofman, sand sculpting is more than an art form. His work serves as a ministry outreach, inviting passersby to experience both beauty and spiritual reflection. Each sculpture, particularly the religious-themed ones that have become well-known landmarks in Ocean City, is an expression of his faith and dedication. Through his work, Hofman reaches out to the community, providing a blend of visual art and sincere ministry to locals and tourists alike.

Randy Hofman's enduring presence has made his sand sculptures a beloved and integral part of Ocean City's cultural landscape. Whether admired for their aesthetic beauty or their underlying message, these sculptures continue to draw attention and inspire reflection on the boardwalk each season. As visitors enjoy the sights and sounds of the beach, Hofman's work stands as a testament to the power of art and ministry combined along the iconic Maryland shore.



Source: <https://mocoshow.com/2025/06/13/the-story-behind-the-religious-sand-sculptures-on-the-ocean-city-boardwalk/>

VBS 2025

MONDAY JULY 28—FRIDAY AUGUST 1



**JESUS
TO THE
RESCUE!**





THANK YOU
VOLUNTEERS!



Shadrack



Mary Magdalene



Elijah



Noah



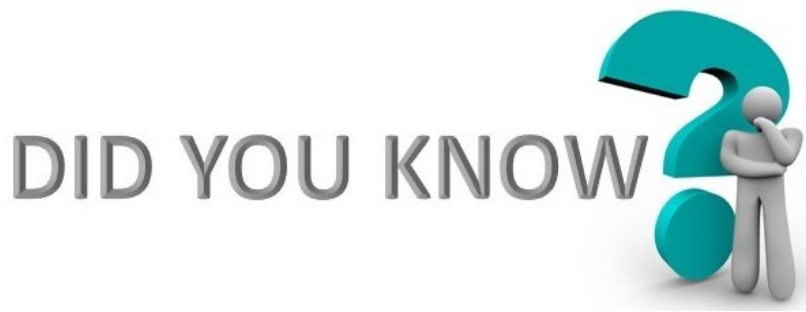
Queen Esther



VBS 2025

Closing Ceremony—Sunday, August 3





What Are the Seven 'I Am' Statements of Jesus?

By Traci Rhoades

The following "I Am" statements are quoted from the New Living Translation (NLT) Bible:

1. "I Am the Bread of Life"

There was a crowd looking for a sign, a miracle so they could believe. Maybe manna, as in the days of Moses. Jesus told them about the true bread of God: *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty"* (John 6:35).

2. "I Am the Light of the World"

He was speaking to the people once more, at the Feast of Tabernacles, where there would have been a huge menorah on display in the temple courtyard, when Jesus announced: *"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life"* (John 8:12).

3. "I Am the Gate for the Sheep"

Here, Jesus was telling a story. There was a thief trying to steal sheep, and a shepherd who enters through a gate, one recognizable both to the gatekeeper and the sheep. This good shepherd knows the sheep by name and guides them, because the sheep come to know and trust his voice. *"I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep"* (John 10:7).

4. "I Am the Good Shepherd"

The image of Jesus as Shepherd is a common metaphor used throughout the life of Jesus, one Jewish people in first century Judea and Galilee would have understood well. In the same story we looked at above, Jesus goes on to identify with another character in the story, *"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me"* (John 10:14).

5. "I Am the Resurrection and the Life"

Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, was sick, and he died before Jesus could get to his house in Bethany. His sisters, Mary and Martha, knew that if Jesus had been there, their brother would not have died. At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus shouted for Lazarus to come out, and he did. It's in the middle of this powerful story that Jesus declared, *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (John 11:25).

6. "I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"

It's a more intimate setting when Jesus made this "I Am" statement. He was dining with his disciples, hours before being arrested. Jesus explained he was leaving, but would prepare a place for them. The disciple, Thomas, wondered at this (likely just asking the question everyone had on their mind). Jesus told him, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6).

7. "I Am the True Vine"

Jesus is still sharing his final words with the disciples, those who walked closely with him in his earthly ministry. He again turns to metaphor, painting a word picture those in an agrarian society would have understood well. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Source: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/what-are-the-7-i-am-statements-of-jesus/>



Let us sing praises to our God!



Amelia was given a book during VBS, "Gideon's New Testament," and she has enjoyed reading it.

When I was a kid, I'd talk back to my mom, so to punish me, she'd make me eat soap. Let me demonstrate...



Pretty in PINK!



CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE 2026

We will be updating our pictorial church directory and plan to publish the 2026 edition in December. Kayla will be coordinating the update process and please be sure to let her know about any contact updates or revisions when you have your photo taken.

Photo sessions will be held in October and November (schedule below) and the photos will be taken by Art Schmidt, church photographer, for church use only. If you'd like to update your directory photo, please attend one of these sessions. Questions? Please contact Kayla.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19TH
9:15 – 10:30 AM
12:30 – 1:30 PM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9th
9:15 – 10:30 AM
12:30 – 1:30 PM

— in the YOUTH CENTER BUILDING —

Just smile and say cheese!

The God Who Blesses Us

Jesus Christ led a blessed life, and He and the Father desire the same for us. God gave His ancient priesthood specific words for blessing His people that assure us of His loving intentions toward us, encouraging us to press on in living according to God's will. Occasionally we hear say they're blessed instead of being lucky. This usually refers to belief in God's care for them—their words a lens into their hearts. How about you? Do you acknowledge being lovingly blessed by a Heavenly Father and Son?

Consider Jesus Christ's words in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) as He declared blessing after blessing to those who would follow Him and seek to reflect His "spiritual DNA," even as He revealed what His own Father, our Heavenly Father, is like (Matthew 11:27; John 14:9). He not only "talked the talk" but most importantly practiced it to His last human breath. As he died, Jesus was confident in proclaiming, "Father, into your hands I commit My Spirit." (Luke 23:46). For through His perfect sacrifice would come the greatest blessing of all—the "brick wall" of death would crumble, and the "door" of life (John 10:9) framed by Jesus' sacrifice would open wide our access to God's throne in heaven.

As disciples of Christ today, we must heed our Master's invitation of "Follow Me" (Matthew 4:19; John 21:22) as we internalize His commitment to accept God's will—not by happenstance or "luck," but by blessings from above that we share and pass on to others.



(Source: *Beyond Today*, March-April 2025, Robin Webber, Page 28)

Kid's Korner



On August 17th, Grayson went back home after spending the summer with the McDonald family. He had such a great time hanging out with Aunt Kayla and Uncle Tommy, spending time with his Pap (Charles Williams), and having fun with Aunt Kristi. We did so many things together, we went to the Delaware State Fair, The Ocean City Boardwalk, the Eastern Shore Threshmen's Steam Engine Show, 2025 Wags-Wings & Wheels Show in Cambridge MD, and so much more!

Grayson's two favorite things he did this summer were Off Shore Fishing with Tommy and chasing trains. Grayson loves outdoors stuff and has a passion for photographing trains on the move. We made so many sweet memories together, and while we'll miss him, our hearts are full from the time we got to share. Can't wait until the winter holidays when he will be back down to see us! He will be ready to go hunting with Uncle Tommy by then!

—Kayla McDonald



COMING EVENTS

9/6 **Labor Day Holiday**

9/6 **Community Day**

7am-Yard sales

10am-Hotdogs, French Fries & more

12-1:30pm-Pulled Pork

9/7 **IRVFC Breakfast**

9am at the Fire Hall

No Sunday Elective or

Fellowship Lunch

9/8 **Church Board Meeting 5:30pm**

9/15 **Secret Sister Reveal Party 6pm**

Fellowship Hall; Salad & Pizza

9/18-21 **Women's Conference in PA**

No Rooted Women's Group

9/26 **Meals 4 Missions**

\$15 Spaghetti & Meatballs (AUCE)

4-7pm or until sold out

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 Faye Holley

2 Pat Conley

3 Mike Koly

4 Phyllis Lowman

6 Dillon Newport

18 Martha Lins

20 Amelia Conley

25 Veronica White

26 Oliver Wheeler

29 Peggy Rossington



FIRST DAY OF FALL MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22





Community Church of Oak Orchard

Where Friends Become Family!

32615 Oak Orchard Road, Millsboro, DE 19966



Church Weekly Activities

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8am or 11am
in person or online.

Morning Elective- 9:30am
Open Prayer- 6pm

Watch our services on:

Facebook—

@oakorchardchurch

YouTube—

@CCOakOrchard/streams

Tuesdays 6:30pm

Zoom Bible Study
(From Home)

Wednesdays 9:30-11am

AGAPE Bible Study
(Followed by lunch outing)

Thursdays 3pm

Kingdom Prayer Meeting

Thursdays 6pm

Rooted Women's Ministry
The Forge Men's Group

Church Monthly Activities

1st Sunday

Fellowship Luncheon
12:30pm

1st & 3rd Monday (Oct-Mar)

Dinner & Discussion:
Countering the Culture
5:45pm

Special Series:
U.S. Constitution

4th Monday

Zoom Bible Study Dinner
at Captain's Pizza

Other Activities

Tuesdays 10am

T.O.P.S. Meeting
(Take off Pounds Sensibly)

Wednesdays 8pm

C.D.A.

CHURCH BOARD of ELDERS

Chair: Ted Brown

V/Chair: Steve Miller

Pastor: Allen Miller

Assoc. Pastor: Ed Vidzicki

Dave Hammer

Mike Koly

Art Schmidt



NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor: Kayla McDonald

Layout: Art Schmidt

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Pastor Ed, Ted Brown



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oakorchardchurch.com

Scroll down to the
bottom and click on
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for supporting our
mission and for
your faithfulness
in giving!

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to visit our website.

