

The COMMUNITY MESSENGER

Community Church of Oak Orchard
Millsboro, Delaware 19966

February 2025
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A Message from Pastor Allen

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9

In Presbyterian circles there is a theological emphasis on being “chosen” by God, and because they are sometimes characterized as a bit “stuffy”, they have been called the frozen chosen. In fairness to the Presbyterians, most are actually quite warm.

The snow is beautiful, and I know that God sends it for a purpose, but I must admit that I am ready for warmer weather. I look forward to the season of new life and growth.

How is your spiritual temperature? Sometimes we allow the events in our life to dictate our spiritual temperature. Trials and challenges to make us respond with a chill in our attitude toward others and even to God. Have you ever felt like pulling the blanket over your head because you feel overwhelmed, neglected or misunderstood?

Even pastors struggle with such selfish emotions. My predecessor told me that at times he would think, “I’m not coming back to Oak Orchard!”, but before he got home God would say, “Here’s what you are going to preach about next Sunday”! That settled that.

This cold world needs the warmth and light of Christ to radiate from His church. They need to see that warmth in you and me. We are a chosen nation! A royal priesthood. He wants us to proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Rather than being the frozen chosen, let us get closer to Jesus so that we will be filled with fruit bearing life that draws all people unto Jesus Christ as we lift Him up.



“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

John 4:7

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Faith, Food, Fellowship



Look at
all this
food!



FELLOWSHIP
LUNCHEON
JANUARY 5TH





ODYSSEA: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

We Are Living Proof

By Art Schmidt

The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him. Ezra 8:22

When I was sixteen, I hosted a cookout for my church's youth group at my home. When I looked for the charcoal lighter fluid, I couldn't find it, so I grabbed the gas can from the garage. Then, when I attempted to light the charcoal using the gas can—suddenly flames shot up and ignited the can's nozzle. In my panic, I tossed the can away from me but instead of it going into the yard, it landed against the house right under the kitchen window. The impact against the ground caused the can to hop and spin so the fire went out.

Fortunately, nobody was injured and the fire didn't cause any damage to the house. Thank God!

Oh, and Mom never knew it even happened...whew!

I met some friends for brunch at a small café in downtown Baltimore on a windy spring day in 1996. The outdoor tables had been removed due to the high wind gusts so we had to sit inside. Later, as we were leaving, I hesitated for just a few seconds before opening the door—suddenly we heard a loud crash outside! We peered out through the doorway and saw a wooden window lying on the sidewalk and shattered glass. We went outside, looked up, and saw that one of the building's windows three stories above had been blown off its bracket and sent plummeting to the ground below. Had we not hesitated and stepped through the door just a moment sooner or been sitting at an outside table when the window fell, we would have been seriously hurt. Nobody was in the area at the time when the window fell. Thank God!

One afternoon in 2010, I was driving some friends into Rehoboth Beach to have lunch at the Big Fish Grill. I looked to the left and saw the lane was clear so I started to pull out into the eastbound lane of Rt 404—suddenly my friend in the passenger seat yelled “watch out!” I looked ahead and saw an SUV coming towards us in the wrong lane at a great speed as it was passing another vehicle in the westbound lane. I reacted quickly and veered off onto the shoulder as the SUV zoomed by us with barely twelve inches of clearance between us. A serious accident had been avoided. Thank God!

Christians don't believe in coincidence, we believe in God and his presence. But often we can get wrapped-up in the ordinary everyday events that take place and we can take for granted the opportunities we have to experience the true presence of God. It is those extraordinary experiences—big splash events when potential danger is averted leaving us in awe—that should be celebrated because we know the hand of God was present in our midst. At that moment we are living proof that God is with us.

HE IS GOD ☩

*Be still and know that He is God!
Be still and see God in everything! Amen.*

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present
help in trouble. Psalm 46:1*

*But as for me, the nearness of God is my goal;
I have made the Lord God my refuge,
That I may tell of Your works. Psalm 73:28*



Be still in the
presence of the
Lord, and wait
patiently for him
to act.
Psalm 37:7

SCRIPTURE-ENGAGED ADULTS HAVE LESS LONELINESS

The Christian Post - Story by Ryan Foley

The American Bible Society released the eighth chapter of its "State of the Bible USA 2024" report, focusing on "Loneliness." Americans with stronger spiritual lives and those who more commonly offer forgiveness experience less loneliness than those who are less engaged with the Bible or churches and those who don't commonly forgive others, a new survey suggests.

The research, based on 2,506 responses collected from American adults from Jan. 4-23, 2024, examined the relationship between a respondent's levels of religiosity and how frequently they experience loneliness. The data suggests that nearly three out of four Americans report moderate to high levels of loneliness, with over one-third of Generation Z women ages 18-27 experiencing high levels of loneliness.

"In our surveys, we've seen many ways that Americans benefit from Bible engagement, and we suspect that it might also help them feel less lonely. So, we're testing a hypothesis," the report reads. "If the nation is indeed experiencing an 'epidemic of loneliness,' what happens when people form a meaningful relationship with the God they meet in Scripture?"

The study adopted five questions from the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which asked people how frequently they experienced certain emotions. An answer of "1" was given if respondents "never" experienced an emotion and a "4" was given if they often experienced it. The maximum possible score on the UCLA Loneliness Scale is 20, while the minimum is 5.

Across three of the four generations examined, the "scripture engaged" had lower average loneliness scores than their counterparts in the "movable middle" and "Bible disengaged" categories. Only among the Baby Boomers and elder generations, encompassing those born in 1964 or earlier, did the "Bible disengaged" have a lower average loneliness score (10.5) than their "scripture engaged" counterparts (10.6). Among the oldest group of American adults, the "movable middle" had the highest average loneliness score (11.4). Looking at levels of loneliness based on church attendance, the data suggests those who "never" attend church had the highest incidence of high loneliness (25%), followed by those who had not been to church in at least a month but had gone within the past year (20%), those who last went to church over a year ago (16%), respondents who last went to church within the past month (15%) and those who attend weekly (12%).

The research also found a relationship between an individual's ability to forgive and their levels of loneliness. Thirty-six percent of those who identify as "strongly unable to forgive" experienced high loneliness, followed by 43% who reported moderate loneliness and 21% who reported low loneliness. Among those who consider themselves "somewhat unable to forgive," 22% reported high loneliness, 57% experienced moderate loneliness and 21% reported low loneliness.

Sixteen percent of those who characterize themselves as "somewhat able to forgive" reported high loneliness, along with 56% who experienced moderate loneliness and 28% who felt low loneliness. Those who consider themselves "strongly able to forgive" had the lowest share reporting high loneliness (16%) and the highest percentage experiencing low loneliness (35%) with the rest experiencing moderate loneliness.

"Some experts blame social media for fostering shallow connections that replace deep friendships. Our own research indicates that an inability to forgive could greatly increase levels of loneliness," American Bible Society's Chief Innovation Officer John Farquhar Plake said in a statement: "Regardless of the cause, the need is urgent. Churches should respond with care and creativity, offering a safe space to develop meaningful Christian relationships."



The full report: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/wellness/scripture-engaged-adults-have-lower-levels-of-loneliness-than-bible-disengaged-study/>

CONTAGIOUS FAITH

The Contagious faith spotlight for this month is not a person! But yet the contagious Faith spotlight consists of many people. The souls and spirits of many make up our Contagious Faith spotlight entity this month. This entity is Community Church of Oak Orchard. That is to say the combined souls and spirits of each and every one of you that make up this church together are the spotlight for this month! Here is what brought me to choose C.C.O.O. for this month. Notes and cards have been given to me of late, praising you (the body) for what you mean to them. That's exciting!!!



Picture the church as a living puzzle. Each of you a single piece of the puzzle but when we are all in our intended place we complete the picture! Then all who look at the completed puzzle see the most beautiful sight of all! Our Lord and Savior “Jesus”! Through you, people can experience the love and truth that can only be experienced through the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Here are but a few examples of the work of the Holy Spirit in you:

“In the past two years, I have found a place to be...I have found a family. When I am in this place, I see grandmothers and grandfathers. I see mothers and fathers. I see sons and daughters and grandchildren. This place has opened my eyes to see, cleared my ears to hear, and opened my heart to receive a family of my own. You are my family that God has bestowed onto me. The family that I never knew I could ever have and the love that I never knew could be. The love that is in this place will forever be in my heart.”

— Jenn Quigley

“I wanted all of you to know you are the center of my heart. All your prayers and cards encouraged me and made me feel so loved. You all mean s much to me. I pray for all of you daily as you struggle through your tough times. May God continue to hold us in His loving arms. Love you all.”

— Josie Reitnauer



Every day of our lives, we need to be *intentional* and *prepared* for the opportunity to share about the love of Jesus. With practice and time it will become second nature to be able to do this. You will grow in *intimacy with Jesus* and with those around us!

In Christ, Ed Vidzicki

Ministry in Motion!

Ministry NECESSITIES & Updates

Our Church is growing. PRAISE THE LORD! As this is happening, we need help! I could sugarcoat this request, but I won't! The Lord says there is a COST of discipleship and ministry work, but the rewards are out of this world!!!

Maintenance- we need volunteers to help with church building and grounds maintenance. No experience necessary. Contact one of our pastors.

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 Linda Mansker for details lpmansker1120@gmail.com 302-448-1004

Teaching a Bible Study or Sunday Elective Class

Contact Pastor Ed ezicki@gmx.com 717-940-7433

Women's Ministry- those interested in participating as well as leading the ministry at church.

Contact Kayla McDonald kayla@oakorchardchurch.com 302-945-0633

Men's Ministry- those interested in participating as well as leading the ministry at church.

Contact Pastor Ed ezicki@gmx.com 717-940-7433

Community Evangelism- We need ideas that will draw our community to church.

Contact Elder Steve Miller are_all_the_good_ids_taken@yahoo.com 302-258-7499

Kids Sunday Ministry- We are in desperate need of class teachers and helpers for different age groups from infants- 14 yrs old on Sundays from 11am-12:15pm

Contact Mike Koly dmkoly@verizon.net 610-350-8025

Or contact Pastor Ed ezicki@gmx.com 717-940-7433

Youth Group Ministry- we are looking to create a team who is willing to participate in youth activities on a regular basis.

Contact Pastor Ed ezicki@gmx.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



ANCIENT MOSAIC WITH BIBLE VERSE FOUND

Scientists find 1,500-year-old mosaic with Bible verse that 'blesses all who read it'.

Story by Gina Martinez - 1/12/25



Archaeologists have discovered a 1,500-year-old monastery near Israel with an intricate mosaic floor that features a Bible verse blessing all who read it. At the center of the intricately designed floor there is an inscribed verse in ancient Greek that reads: "Blessed are you when you come in and blessed are you when you go out." The discovery was made near the Israeli city of Kiryat Gat, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) announced Monday.

The monastery dates back to the fifth through sixth centuries CE, which was during the rule of the Byzantine empire. Those years saw the spread of Christianity and the construction of significant religious sites such as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, DailyMail.com reported. "This is the largest and most significant Roman and Byzantine period site uncovered in this area," excavation leaders Shira Lifshitz and Maayan Margulis said. The mosaic floor also features crosses, lions, doves, an amphora (a ceramic maritime shipping jug), flowers and geometric patterns- a first-of-its-kind discovery.

"The mosaic discovered in Kiryat Gat is one of the most unique ever found in Israel," Mark Avrahami, head of artistic conservation at the IAA, said in the statement. It is so unique because of the incorporation of very small stones into its geometric pattern, which served to highlight the cross-shaped decorations, according to the researchers.

"Transferring mosaics is a complex process that requires great skill and precision," Avrahami said, but the floor will soon be moved to the IAA's mosaic workshop for preservation before being put on public display in the city of Kiryat Gat. The dig also uncovered remains of at least ten buildings, a wine-press and a large warehouse building. As well as a treasure trove of artifacts from the monastery and the surrounding site, including imported wares, coins, marble elements, and metal and glass vessels.

"The findings indicate a succession of settlement starting from the early Roman period (1st century CE) and through until the end of the Byzantine period (end of the 6th century CE)," the team said. The settlement is situated on a central road junction connecting the mountain region to the coastal plain and apparently served the area's smaller settlements as well as travelers passing by.



<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world>



Joshua Miller—a fun time sledding after the season's first snowstorm.



Amelia Conley—a volcanic creation by a future scientist and making snowballs to throw at grandma!





My beloved spoke to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. **SOS 2:10**

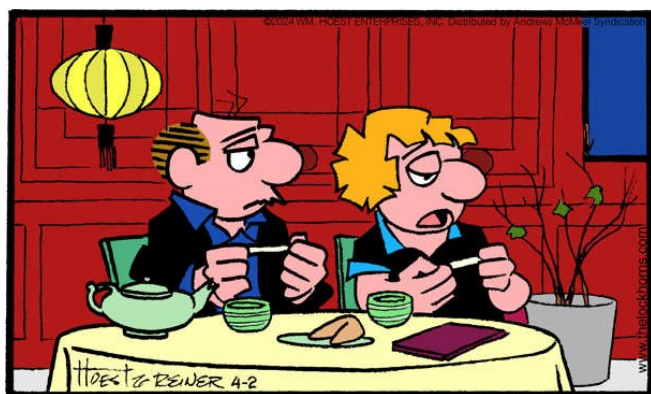
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Thanks to Benoit Paquette

02-14-2002

REALLY ADAM ... A VALENTINE'S DAY
FRUIT BASKET ... IN THE GARDEN OF
EDEN???



"THIS MUST BE YOURS ... YOU WILL COMPLAIN ABOUT THE
MEAL, THE SERVICE, THE PRICES AND THIS FORTUNE."




FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

3 Glen Conley
4 George Bush
5 Carol Messina
8 William (Bill) Oettel
15 Jay Mood
18 Brenda Fluharty
21 Wayne Miller
22 Cindy Hammer
22 Kayla McDonald
22 Vicki Sirota
23 Norm Brooks
28 Mabel Vansant



"He'll take a dozen long-stemmed roses."

LIVING LOVED



God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world...This is real love.
1 John 4:9 NLT

Apart from God, “the heart is deceitful above all things” (Jer. 17:9 NIV) A marriage saving love is not within us. A friendship-preserving devotion cannot be found in our hearts. We need help from an outside source. A transfusion. Would we love as God loves? Then we start by receiving God’s love. The secret to loving is living loved.

—Max Lucado



PASSWORDS 101

Would you like to learn how to create strong passwords for any application that are easy to remember?

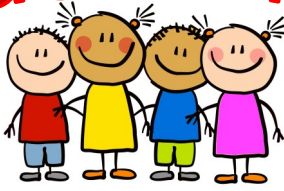
If you said YES, then plan to attend the class being held on February 9 9:30-10:30 am in the Bible Study Room led by Art Schmidt.



EXPLORING CHRISTIANITY'S TEN TOUGHEST QUESTIONS

This elective is led by Pastor Ed and based on a book by Lee Strobel and Gary Poole. There are 10 sessions that run from February 16 through May 4, 9:30-10:30am in the Bible Study Room. Each session includes a short video of leading Christian and non-Christian voices engaging in a forceful but fair debate. Our group will consider and discuss what we’ve heard. The *Participant’s Guide* books are \$10 that is due on the first day of the class. All are welcome to join. For more information: Pastor Ed 717-940-7433.

Kid's Korne



THE STORY OF NOAH

The story of Noah includes a family, all the animals of the earth, a huge boat, a flood and why there are rainbows. Noah was 500 years old when his story began and he was the only one that was righteous (which means that he did things right) and he walked with God.

One day, God could see that all the people had become very bad, so bad that they stopped thinking of anything good. God was so sad and hurt that he wanted to get rid of every person and all the creatures that He had made. He wanted all the evil to stop.

The thing about God is that He gets very angry at our sin and all the bad stuff in the world, but we also know that God is love. **God is love**, so that means that He can be disappointed when we do bad things, but He still loves us, and that's why He remembered Noah.

God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all the people because the earth is full of evil. I am going to destroy them and the earth." God then gave Noah instructions on how to build the boat. He told him what kind of wood to use and how big to make it. He also told him to put a door on the side of the ark and to make it with three floors. The ark was humongous!

The Bible says that next God told Noah that He would make a covenant with him. A covenant is an agreement with a promise. God was going to flood the whole earth and everything else would die, but He would save Noah and his family—they would be safe in the ark. What's going into the Ark? Noah and his family, two of all living creatures, male and female (boy and girl), and two of every kind of bird and every creature that moves along the ground. Plus, the food for each of them for as long as they were on the boat.

It's hard to describe how big the ark was but if you think of some of the biggest animals you know (elephant, moose, buffalo, giraffe, rhino, gorilla) and make sure you have 2 of each of those plus all the other little animals that couldn't be stepped on...they needed a lot of room! Some people think it took over 100 years to build the ark and the Bible says that Noah was 600 years old when the flood waters came.

When the ark was done God gave Noah 7 days warning before the flood started to get his family, all the animals, and food on board. Once everyone and everything was in the ark, the door was closed and then the rain started. The rain waters flooded the earth for 40 days and 40 nights, and every living thing died on the earth that wasn't in the ark. The waters flooded the earth for one hundred and fifty days, which is about five months. The Bible tells us that Noah, his family and the animals were in the ark for just over a year or 370 days!

After the rain stopped, Noah and the animals couldn't just leave the ark because there was too much water and no land for them to walk on, everything was covered. God sent a wind to help dry the earth and the ark came to rest on the top of a mountain. When the earth had dried up enough God told Noah that everyone could get out of the boat. Then Noah built an altar to thank God for keeping them safe. When God saw that, He told Noah that he would never again curse the ground even if people became very bad.

Then God gave them a sign for everyone to see – He put a rainbow in the sky and that's to remind us of the promise God made to Noah, the animals and even us today! So, whenever you see a rainbow, say a little prayer and thank God that He loves us and that He keeps His promises.

*Adapted from a story by
Sharla Guenther*





Community Church of Oak Orchard

Where Friends Become Family!

32615 Oak Orchard Road, Millsboro, DE 19966



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oakorchardchurch.com

Scroll down to the
bottom and click on
the "GIVE" button.

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for supporting our
mission and for your
faithfulness in giving!

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to visit our website.



SCAN ME

UPCOMING EVENTS

2/2 *Special Day of Services*

10am: Combined Services

11am: Congregational Meeting

12:30pm: Fellowship Lunch w/
Turkey and Ham

2/4 *Church Friends Night Out*

6:30pm Location announced

2/6 *Kingdom Prayer Group*

3:00pm every Thursday

2/9 *Passwords 101 Class*

9:30-10:30am- How to develop
and remember passwords.

2/10 *Board Meeting* 5:30pm

2/16 *Faith Under Fire*

Elective class led by Pastor Ed
begins: Sundays, 9:30-10:30 am
in the Bible Study Room.

2/17 *Dinner & Discussion*

6pm Countering the Culture

2/28 *Meals 4 Missions*

3-6pm Spaghetti & Meatballs,
Salad, Bread, and Dessert \$15

♥ *happy* ♥
Valentine's
♥ *day* ♥

CHURCH BOARD of ELDERS

Pastor: Allen Miller
Chair: Ted Brown
V/Chair: Steve Miller
Assoc. Pastor: Ed Vidzicki
Dave Hammer
Mike Koly



SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00 or 11:00 AM
in person or online.

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Watch our services on:

Facebook—

@oakorchardchurch

YouTube—

@CCOakOrchard/streams

BIBLE STUDY

Tuesdays 6:30 PM

Zoom Bible Study

Wednesdays 9:30-11 AM

AGAPE Bible Study

ACTIVITIES

Tuesdays 10:00 AM
T.O.P.S. Meeting
(Take off Pounds Sensibly)

Wednesdays 8:00 pm C.D.A.

Thursdays 3:00 pm
Kingdom Prayer Meeting

Fellowship Luncheon
1st Sunday of the Month
at 12:30