

# The COMMUNITY MESSENGER

## *A Message from Pastor Ed*

### **A New Year, A Renewed Vision**

As we step into January, a month often filled with fresh starts and new resolutions, we are reminded of the power of new beginnings. The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”*

What a powerful truth to hold onto as we navigate this new year! In Christ, every day is an opportunity for renewal and growth. While the world may focus on external changes—better habits, healthier lifestyles, or greater productivity—we are called to focus on something far deeper: the transformation of our hearts and minds through Christ.

This year let’s commit together as a church to live with renewed purpose. Here are three ways we can do this:

#### **1. Deepen Our Devotion**

Set aside intentional time each day to be in God’s Word and prayer. The busyness of life can easily crowd out what matters most. Let’s prioritize our relationship with God, seeking His wisdom and guidance for every step we take.

#### **2. Invest in Community**

Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages us to spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together. This year, let’s embrace the gift of Christian community by participating in small groups, serving, and encouraging one another in love.

#### **3. Share the Gospel Boldly**

As we experience the hope and joy of Christ, let’s not keep it to ourselves. There are people in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools who are searching for truth. Pray for opportunities to share your faith and trust God to use you in unexpected ways.

As we journey through 2025 together, let’s hold tightly to the promise of Isaiah 43:19: *“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”* God is at work in our lives and in our church. Let’s step into this new season with faith, ready to follow wherever He leads.

**Love in Christ, Pastor Ed**



*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come to pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with your heart.”*

**Jerimiah 29:11-13 NIV**

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# Faith, Food, Fellowship



FELLOWSHIP  
LUNCHEON  
DECEMBER 1ST







## ODYSSEA: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

### The Generosity of God's Family

By Art Schmidt

*You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

2 Corinthians 9:11 NIV

Jesus demonstrated generosity throughout His lifetime. His last greatest act of generosity was when He gave His life so that our sins would be forgiven. We struggle to follow in His footsteps and strive to be more like Jesus, but we fall short. Still, we pray for strength to overcome sin and keep our hearts filled with gratitude for all the blessings God has bestowed upon us.

God provides for us in more ways than we realize. He gives us comfort, peace, and hope. He offers us the assurance of our salvation and eternal life. God fills our "spiritual backpack" with all that we need for our journey in this life, including the capacity for compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and humility. He guides our steps and gives us the strength we need to make our way even when the path ahead becomes difficult. God rescues us when we lose our way and also gives us opportunities to share our blessings with others. The well-known expression, *We are blessed to be a blessing*, rings true for each of us, doesn't it?

Sometimes we can miss those opportunities that God offers us to be generous with others especially when we're concerned about our own needs and those of our family. But we must remember that gratitude and generosity go hand-in-hand, so we are called to share our blessings with God's family who also needs our help and concern.

The Community Church of Oak Orchard is very blessed with a generous and caring church family. Yes, the church needs our dollars to pay bills and support our outreach ministries, but our church also needs our time, talent, and participation. God gives us spiritual gifts which means every one of us has something to contribute to the ministry of our church. As we enter into a new year, we want to emphasize God's call to God's people to get involved in God's ministry. God calls us to use our spiritual gifts and there are plenty of opportunities to answer God's call to get involved and share our blessings with others. Some of them are listed on page 6 of this newsletter, but there are many more. And if you are not physically able to volunteer, Pastor Ed says, "It is your duty to now assume the higher calling of prayer warrior."

Let us continue to generously contribute to our church financially, but this year, let's also pledge to contribute more of our time and talents to the ministry of our church. Stewardship goes beyond tithes and offerings. Our church has succeeded in so many ways over the years, and that success was made possible through the dedication, effort, and generosity of our church family. Let's join together in the New Year and put our faith into action.

**Happy New Year! Great things await our church! Halleluia!**

### LIVE YOUR FAITH ☩

*But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."  
Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my  
faith by my deeds. - James 2:28 NIV*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!  
All that God gives us, is ours to share with our  
church family and others in need.*



# BIBLE SALES EXPLODE IN 2024!

by Randy DeSoto—The Western Journal

New sales of the "Good Book," the Bible, grew 21 times more than new book sales overall this year. The Wall Street Journal reported, "Bible sales are up 22% in the U.S. through the end of October, compared with the same period last year, according to book tracker Circana BookScan. By contrast, total U.S. print book sales were up less than 1% in that period."

If we compare those numbers to each other, the Bible outpaced the average of those sales by 21 times, or a staggering 2,100 percent. Annual Bible sales leaped from 9.7 million in 2019 to 14.2 million last year and 13.7 million through the end of October 2024.

Certainly much has happened since 2019 to make the world feel shaky, including a worldwide pandemic, social unrest, high inflation and overall economic insecurity, as well as major wars in Europe and the Middle East. "People are experiencing anxiety themselves, or they're worried for their children and grandchildren," Jeff Crosby, president of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, told the Journal. "It's related to artificial intelligence, election cycles ... and all of that feeds a desire for assurance that we're going to be OK."

Young first-time Bible buyers are helping boost sales. The surge in interest in the Bible is coming even as those identifying as Christian in the U.S. hit a low of 68 percent last year. Christian leaders are seeing pockets of revival break out in recent years, with mass gatherings on college campuses and beyond. "You have a generation that wants to find things that feel more solid," Amy Simpson of Tyndale House Publishers told the Journal. Bethany Martin, who manages a Christian bookstore in Newton, Kansas, said people are "looking for hope with the world the way it is, and the Bible is what they're reaching for."

Michael Maiden, pastor of Church for the Nations in Phoenix, last fall compared what's happening spiritually in the country to popping popcorn. "Whenever you start popcorn or start heating it, nothing happens. Then all of a sudden a kernel pops, then another one, then a bunch. It's like a multiplying factor takes over, and before you know it, the whole bag is ready to be eaten," he said. "There are measurable signs in the culture, not of a broad, complete revival, but the beginning kernels popping or the first waves of something good happening," Maiden continued, pointing to student-led revivals on many campuses.

President-elect Donald Trump got in on the action by teaming up with singer Lee Greenwood to promote the "God Bless the USA" Bible last spring in time for Easter. "Religion and Christianity are the biggest things missing from this country, and I truly believe that we need to bring them back and bring them back fast," he said. "I think it's one of the biggest problems we have. That's why our country is going haywire. This Bible is a reminder that the biggest thing we have to bring back America and to make America great again is our religion," he added.



## CONTAGIOUS FAITH

This Contagious Faith spotlight for January is Denise Knapp.

Miss Denise is a wonderful example of what contagious faith can be. I believe that Joan (Denise's mom) and Denise have been attending our church for over a year now. We are most certainly blessed by their attendance.

I first got to know Joan and Denise when I met with them for church membership. We had a delightful visit, and I began to learn the history of their family. It was as though we had been friends for a very time. Initially, Joan did most of the talking, but before long Miss Denise began to open up.

The first thing I noticed about Denise is her beautiful smile. We probably visited together for several hours and what a pleasure it was. That was the beginning of my, what I like to call my hug-a-bug with Miss Denise! If you have not received a hug from Denise, you need too! She should be in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest and strongest hugs in all of mankind! Her hugs are genuine and full of compassion! Most importantly, those hugs come directly from the presence of the Holy Spirit! The love that comes forth by the power of the Holy Spirit is contagious! Words are not even necessary. She exudes contagious faith.

God speaks in and through us in different ways based often through the spiritual gifts that he has placed in us. It is simply a matter of us allowing it to flow out of us!

Thank you so much Denise for allowing that to come out through those magnificent hugs!

Miss Denise you are dearly loved! And I am looking for one of those ginormous hugs!

**- Pastor Ed**



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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](mailto:lpmansker1120@gmail.com) 302-448-1004

Teaching a Bible Study or Sunday Elective Class

Contact Pastor Ed [ezicki@gmx.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:dmkoly@verizon.net) 610-350-8025

Or contact Pastor Ed [ezicki@gmx.com](mailto: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. The first activity we are planning will be held on is Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> and we will need many helpers.

Contact Pastor Ed [ezicki@gmx.com](mailto:ezicki@gmx.com) 717-940-7433

Parking Attendant- we need help to assist with parking at the 11am service on Sundays.

Contact one of our pastors.

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





# AGAPE!

A group of around 20 people gather each week 9:30-11:00 am on Wednesdays at church for AGAPE Bible Study led by Pastor Allen Miller. Pastor Allen has his own personal meaning for AGAPE:

## Aging with Grace And Peace Everlasting

**Agape** from the Ancient Greek (*agápē*) is "the highest form of love, charity" and "the love of God for [human beings] and of [human beings] for God". This is in contrast to *philia*, brotherly love, or *philautia*, self-love, as it embraces a profound sacrificial love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstance. It is often considered the highest form of Christian love and is often associated with True Will and the central tenet of the religion: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

The verb form goes as far back as Homer, translated literally as affection, as in "greet with affection" and "show affection for the dead". Other ancient authors have used forms of the word to denote love of a spouse or family, or affection for a particular activity, in contrast to *eros* (an affection of a sexual nature).

In the New Testament, *agape* refers to the covenant love of God for humans, as well as the human reciprocal love for God; the term necessarily extends to the love of one's fellow human beings. Some contemporary writers have sought to extend the use of *agape* into non-religious contexts.

***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*** (John 3:16, ESV)



"I believe so strongly in the universality of spiritual gifts. Every Christian has them and every church has them. And spiritual gifts work. They produce effective ministry. If the Bible is clear about anything, it is clear that God (1) wants every Christian to have and use a spiritual gift of gifts; and (2) He wants his lost sheep to be found and His church to grow. When the gifts work together in a church that wants to grow and is willing to pay the price for growth, the church will see God's blessing and it will. The great majority of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible are found in three key chapters:

Romans 12, Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

Romans 12 mentions the following spiritual gifts:

1. Prophecy (preaching, inspired utterance)
2. Service (ministry)
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation (stimulating faith, encouraging)
5. Giving (contributing, generosity, sharing)
6. Leadership (authority, ruling, administration)
7. Mercy (sympathy, comfort to the sorrowing, kindness)"<sup>1</sup>

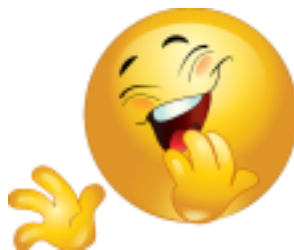
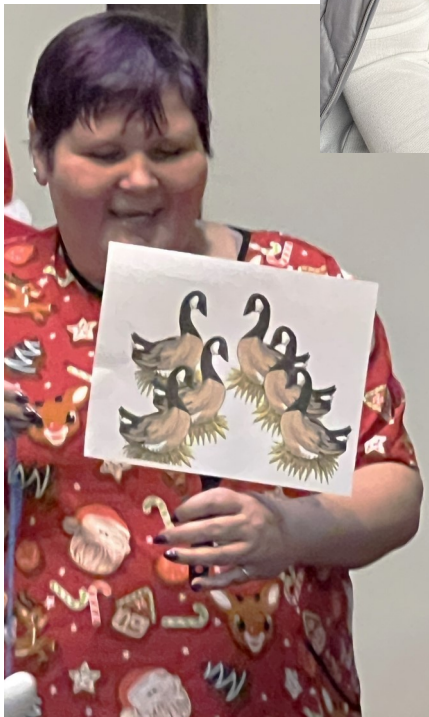
<sup>1</sup> C. Peter Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts, Ventura CA, Regal Books, 1982, pp 52-53

"Agape love is selfless love . . . the love God wants us to have isn't just an emotion but a conscious act of the will—a deliberate decision on our part to put others ahead of ourselves. This is the kind of love God has for us."  
~Billy Graham



Sue Vidzicki—  
while visions of  
cupcakes danced  
in her head!

On the 6th day of  
Christmas, Tara  
Somers got six  
geese a-layin'!



Amelia Conley—  
decked out for  
Christmas!



Sanctuary Christmas tree







The Grinch (Pastor Ed) came to church and thought he'd steal Christmas but Deb and Tara stopped him!

Pastor Ed, Sue, and granddaughter Sky.



Pastor Allen & Carol's daughter Jennifer, her husband Tristan, daughters Kaleigh and Alaina.



Carol made her list and she'll check it twice!





## GOOD DEEDS BUILD REWARDS!



By Sandie Wysocki

Whenever you are able, do good to people who need help. “Do not withhold good from those whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Come back tomorrow and I’ll give it to you’ - when you already have it with you.” **Proverbs 3:27-28 NIV**

“The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously.” **Psalms 37:21 NIV**

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, the prophesy in accordance with your faith.” **Romans 12:6 NIV**

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. **Hebrews 11:6 NIV**

Every day is a chance to perform a good deed for someone. We have opportunities to show our Christian love and commitment every day. There is no such thing as a small good deed. God is keeping a record of how we walk amongst each other. What we say is just as important as what we do. We are surrounded by people who need our help in word and deed. Don’t just talk the talk but also walk the walk. It matters more than you can imagine.



## A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and grace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* **Romans 15:13 NIV**

God of hope and mercy, you are the God who restores. As we greet the New Year 2025 with anticipation, may we find our joy and strength in you. We know that true joy is more than happiness in daily events and material things. True joy and peace comes from trusting you. May the spirit of Emmanuel, God with us, abide in our hearts and lives as we seek you daily and strive to live according to your purposes, sharing the light and love of Christ with others. In Jesus’ name we pray—  
Amen!







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REMEMBER THAT NEW YEAR RESOLUTION YOU MADE TO TRY NEW THINGS?

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 David Quigley  
4 Sue Vidzicki  
5 Dave Rossington  
8 Char Brown  
13 Kristin Hoelzle  
15 Janice Timmons  
21 Dave Hammer  
28 Marge Hurt

## The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



DEAR CRABBY - An online Christian Advice Service created by Velma Crabtree offering 'grace free' blunt advice that makes a Baptist Blush, and Catholics cringe.

# FUNDRAISER

A Dinner Fundraiser was held in Fellowship Hall for the Little Starfish Children's Home on Friday, December 13. Our goal was \$1,500 but we raised \$2,239. There are over 100 children in Thrive Vision's Organization in Costa Rica.



The food was delicious. Open faced roast beef, mashed potatoes, candied carrots, green bean casserole, and a variety of homemade cheesecakes. Many thanks to all the volunteers!





# Kid's Korner



Pastor Allen and Carol's granddaughters who live in Texas came to visit for Christmas!

Kaleigh (19) is our oldest grandchild. She is currently a sophomore at the University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a degree in architectural engineering. She enjoys playing soccer and watching fantasy movies such as Narnia and Lord of the Rings. She is also very introverted and prefers reading to socialization.

Alaina (10) is her younger sister. She is a 5th grader at Founders Classical Academy in Frisco, Texas. She loves playing soccer as well and is on a team called F.C. Rebels. She relishes doing hair, nails, and makeup. And she is always up for playing different sports from time to time. She is very extroverted and loves communicating with other people and just talking in general, unlike her sister.



Alaina & Kaleigh Boyd



Hey kids, color this picture of Abraham!



## Community Church of Oak Orchard

*Where Friends Become Family!*

32615 Oak Orchard Road, Millsboro, DE 19966



### NEWSLETTER STAFF

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Pastor Ed, Ted Brown  
Design: Art Schmidt



### ONLINE DONATIONS

Use the portal on  
our website:

[oakorchardchurch.com](http://oakorchardchurch.com)

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

**Thank you**  
for supporting our  
mission and for your  
faithfulness in giving!

Scan the QR Code below  
to visit our website.



SCAN ME

### UPCOMING EVENTS

1/5 *Fellowship Luncheon*

Following the 11am service

1/6 *Board Meeting 5:30pm*

1/7 *Church Friends Night Out*

6:30pm at Two Meat Balls.

Please call Kayla to RSVP by 1/5

1/8 *AGAPE Resumes*

No meeting on Jan 1

1/9 *Kingdom Prayer Meeting*

Meets on Thursdays at 3pm  
and led by Rachel Rinas

1/18 *Movie Matinee 12pm*

1/20 *Dinner & Discussion*

Countering the Culture 6pm

1/24 *Meals 4 Missions 3-6pm*

*Chicken & Dumpling Dinner*

2/2 *Special Day of Services*

10am: Combined Services

11am: Congregational Meeting

12:30pm: Fellowship Lunch



### 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  
Prayer 6:00 PM

Watch our services on:  
Facebook—  
[@oakorchardchurch](https://www.facebook.com/oakorchardchurch)

YouTube—  
[@CCOakOrchard/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@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 PM C.D.A.

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