

The COMMUNITY MESSENGER

Community Church of Oak Orchard
Millsboro, Delaware 19966

April 2025
Volume 3—Issue 4

A Message from Pastor Allen

Spring Forward

It's time to spring forward again! Well, at least I think it's time. Was I supposed to set my clock ahead one hour, or was it back one hour? Sigh..., I miss the "good old days". Have you ever heard yourself saying something like this? I remember chuckling to myself about the old folks when they reminisced about, "when I was young". For some strange reason, their point of view seems wise now. We all at times wish we could put the brakes on, but time marches on.

The past seems more comfortable because we look back with full knowledge of how it ended. We survived and the anxiety is over. We aren't so confident about the future. That story is still unfinished, and we don't know what will be and we certainly don't know how we will handle it. There may be losses that could be life changing. The future can be pretty scary because of the unknown element. We take out insurance on our homes, our vehicles and our health to help us prepare for the unknown but guarantees are hard to come by.

There is One who knows the future. You know His story. He knows all things past, present and future. He knows everything that is going to happen to you tomorrow and every day for ever and ever. How great is that? We will soon celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. His work of redemption is a greater gift than just "a piece of pie in the sky in the by-in-by". In the words of the old hymn, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand." Psalm 91:4-5 says,

*4 He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.
5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,*

How wonderful to know that He who redeems us is also able and willing to keep us until the day of redemption. *Ephesians 4:30*. Have a blessed season of Easter.



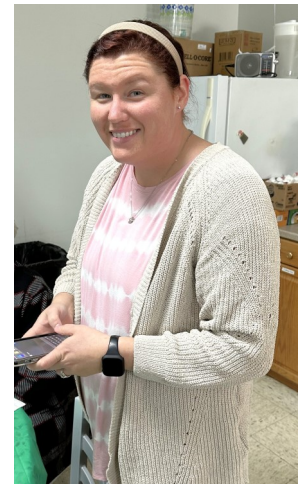
*For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only Son, that
whoever believes in him should
not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

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Faith, Food, Fellowship



FELLOWSHIP
LUNCHEON
MARCH 2nd





ODYSSEA: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Moving Forward

By Art Schmidt

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. Acts 20:28 NIV

Many things are happening in our country and world that are causing the community of faith to brace itself and hold onto the blessings of the past, just as a person would hold tightly to a ship's railing when the seas become rough. But when we focus on the past (*what was*) it hinders our vision for today (*what is*) and also for the future.

Doesn't it seem that God is leading us to something new? But change can be difficult so we hold on to what was. The blessings of the past can become an anchor holding us down, but if we are going to progress, grow, and flourish, we need to be willing to move forward. As we cling to the vine during these times of change, we need to be willing to move forward and have a clear vision of what is and not what was.

The mission and work of our church needs to make a shift from *what was* to a new discipleship that will change with the times to spread God's word of hope, forgiveness, and grace throughout our community. In order to make this happen and for us to fully embrace the present and future, we need to first accept that Christian faith is not a spectator sport—not something to be observed from the sidelines. We are the first-string players who demonstrate our faith by bringing the light of God into this dark world—a world that is not at peace, not in harmony, and where hope for the future is fading.

It was John Wesley who emphasized the servant nature of our witness—to use our gifts to glorify God. He called for the Gospel to enable and empower us to become disciples of Christ—echoing the mission of our church. We are to be active servants of God, sharing our gifts with others and working together as a community of faith to envision and implement our ministry so our church and each of us progress in the name of our Risen Savior Jesus Christ. We are God's caretakers, and in this time of big changes and uncertainty, we need to approach Christian stewardship in a different way from what we've done in the past. We must rely on our faith and the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us. We must make a bold declaration that stewardship is a part of the call and claim of God upon our lives. Stewardship is an act of discipleship and a true response to the grace and love of God. People have great abilities to demonstrate their service to God. But the greatest ability of all is *availability*. If we are not available to God, the other abilities we may have fall short of their potential. Ability and availability go hand in hand.

The Community Church of Oak Orchard has stepped up in the past, gotten involved, reached out to our community, and made a difference. So, now in the present, we must take on a new approach and form a foundation for the future. We need to develop a means to engage those who are new to the area and looking for a church home. As a church family, let us pray for our church as we extend our abilities and make ourselves available to serve God. Great things await our church!

✠ OPENING OURSELVES TO GOD

Oh Lord, our True Vine, we pray that as a church we will remain in You and that You would remain in us so that we may bear fruit for your Kingdom. We know that apart from you we can do nothing. Lord, we are thankful that when we remain in You, and Your Word, we can accomplish great things in Your Name and for Your Church. Amen.



THANK GOD FOR THE MAN ON THE MIDDLE CROSS

... I heard the preacher talking
About three wooden crosses
Upon a hill for everyone to see
Two sinners on the outside
Couldn't save themselves if they tried
All I could think is man, that sounds like me

... I've been the one on the left, full of guilt and regret
Long-gone on the wrong side of living
I've been the one on the right, always looking for a fight
Thinking I could never be forgiven
I'm standing here today, overwhelmed by grace
'Cause I know who paid my cost
Thank God for the Man on the middle cross

... He didn't have to do it
But for me, He went through it
A love like that, I'll never understand
Lord knows I don't deserve it
And I know I couldn't earn it
Let mercy rain down on this desperate man

... I've been the one on the left, full of guilt and regret
Long-gone on the wrong side of living
I've been the one on the right, always looking for a fight
Thinking I could never be forgiven
I'm standing here today, overwhelmed by grace
'Cause I know who paid my cost
Thank God for the Man on the middle cross

... The cross is where He went (He went)
Oh, but that ain't where He stayed (He stayed)
He brought me back to life
When He rose up outta that grave (that grave)
Someday I'll stand before Him
And I'll see Jesus face to face
I'll worship and adore Him
For a life forever changed

... I've been the one on the left, full of guilt and regret
Long-gone on the wrong side of living
I've been the one on the right, always looking for a fight
Thinking I could never be forgiven
I'm standing here today, overwhelmed by grace
'Cause I know who paid my cost
Thank God for the Man on the middle cross



Songwriters: Matthew West / Matt Jenkins / Rhett Walker / Aj Pruis

EASTER DAY

Poet: Christina Rossetti

Words cannot utter
Christ His returning:
Mankind, keep jubilee,
Strip off your mourning,
Crown you with garlands,
Set your lamps burning.

Speech is left speechless;
Set you to singing,
Fling your hearts open wide.
Set your bells ringing:
Christ the Chief Reaper
Comes, His sheaf bringing.

Earth wakes her song-birds,
Puts on her flowers.
Leads out her lambkins.
Builds up her bowers:
This is man's spousal day,
Christ's day and ours.

THE DAY WAS SO DARK

Poet: Catherine Pulsifer

The day was so dark and gloom
It seemed The Way was totally doomed.
So many believed in Him
Now the light had turned so dim.

A sad day for those who believed
Their eyes could not bear to see
Gone were their hopes, their dreams
Now evaporated like steam.

They could not foresee
Any hope or how it could be
They didn't understand the plan
That God had for man.

Good Friday was a solemn day
But we now know God had His way
On this day we should reflect
And thank God who is perfect.

CONTAGIOUS FAITH

This month's contagious space spotlight is **Ted Brown**.

We all come to the table with different gifts. God has made us that way on purpose for a purpose. When I think about Ted, I think about how God has gifted him over his lifetime honing him to be the man he is. Each step of his life being a piece of the puzzle in what the Lord has for him. From his time working in the hospital system, to providing for family, to caring for Char lovingly and unconditionally even as he has health issues of his own. His love for the people of our church, not so much in words but in action!

With all that he has in caring for the love of his life he finds time for the tedious work of Elder emeritus, the operation/ manager of Community Church of Oak Orchard, many of these things that Pastor Allen and I are not equipped for. I am always amazed at how he calmly goes about dealing with tasks that I would struggle with. Ted is methodical in providing leadership to our church.

Thank you, Ted, for your commitment to our church and to our people! We love you and are forever grateful for who God has made you to be with your purposeful gift mix!



Ted with Char, the love of his life.



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



PAY IT FORWARD

By Blake Beattie

What does pay it forward mean?

Pay it forward is an expression for when the recipient of an act of kindness does something kind for someone else rather than simply accepting or repaying the original good deed.

Where does pay it forward come from?

The concept of *pay it forward* is ancient. We can find it explored in literature ranging from Ancient Greek comedies to Benjamin Franklin's letters. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for one, developed a theory of it in his 1841 essay "Compensation": "*In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody.*"

The actual phrase *pay it forward* was coined in 1916 by author Lily Hardy Hammond in her novel *In the Garden of Delight*, where she wrote a bit of wordplay: "You don't pay love back; you *pay it forward*." Celebrated sci-fi author Robert Heinlein is credited with popularizing the term in his 1951 book *Between Planets*. Heinlein later started a humanitarian organization, the Heinlein Society, known for abiding by a *pay it forward* philosophy. It is dedicated to teaching it to others.

The phrase and concept inspired an award-winning 1999 novel by Catherine Ryan Hyde, which features a young protagonist who launches a *pay it forward* campaign. Hyde then established a foundation called "*Pay It Forward*" committed to spreading various acts of kindness around the globe. Her novel was adapted into a major motion film in 2000, further helping to make *pay it forward* a household phrase and inspiring ***Pay It Forward Day, April 28th***, organized since 2007.

Does the pay it forward concept appear in the Bible?

Jesus taught in Matthew 18:21–35, that paying it forward is a requirement for those who have received God's forgiveness. He told a parable of a man who had been forgiven a huge debt by the king, because the debtor had begged for mercy. However, after being freed from the debt, he found a fellow who owed him a very small debt, by comparison. Although he had been shown a great mercy, he refused the same consideration to his fellow who had pled for more time to pay. When the king found this out, he was angry, and threw the original debtor into prison until he paid the entire debt. Jesus summarized the story by saying, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

What is the theory of pay it forward?

If you're new to the concept, then think of it as this: the receiver of a good deed repays it to others instead of to the original benefactor and asks their recipients to do the same. Meaning one good deed or act of kindness can have ripples felt far and wide beyond its starting point.

What are the three rules in pay it forward?

- #1 It has to be something that really helps people.
- #2 Something they can't do by themselves.
- #3 I do it for them, they do it for three other people.

This concept has been misinterpreted and misused by people who think doing good deeds for others is a way of "paying your way into heaven" which is wrong!



NATIONAL NEWS

United States—Where Christianity Is Surging, Falling

Story by Sophie Clark

The share of Americans who identify as Christian continues to fall across the U.S, with the exception of two states. However, the decline appears to be leveling out, as younger Americans buck the trend of being less religious than the generation above them, according to a Pew study. Its Religious Landscape 2023-24 study found 62% of American adults identified as Christian, down from 71% when it was last conducted in 2014.

Why It Matters

The U.S. has seen a steady decline in practiced Christianity across generations since the 1950s; however, while Christianity might not be practiced as much as it was a decade ago, younger generations may be returning to church. Christianity has declined since 2014, but other religions have also grown. In 2014, 0.9% Americans identified as Muslim, now 1.2% of Americans do. Hinduism has also grown from 0.7% of the population in 2014 to 0.9% today.

What To Know

Pew Research's Religious Landscape study surveyed more than 35,000 randomly selected adults from across the country in 2023 and 2024, ten years after its previous study on the subject. The state with the largest reduction in people calling themselves Christians was Oregon, down 18%, followed by Missouri and Iowa, both down 15%. The only two states where the share of the population identifying as Christian rose were Alaska, up 6 percent, and Delaware, up 1 percent. The survey found that each age group sees itself as less Christian than the last, with the exception of people born between 2000-2006—the youngest age group surveyed. That cohort were also less likely to view themselves as Christian, but bucked the trend by appearing no less religious than those in the second-youngest cohort, born in the 1990s.

In each group, 46% identified as Christian in the latest study—the first generation as likely to identify Christian as the previous. "Time will tell whether the recent stability in measures of religious commitment is the beginning of a lasting shift in America's religious trajectory," the study said. "But it is inevitable that older generations will decline in size as their members gradually die."

The most practiced form of Christianity in the U.S. is Evangelical Protestantism, with 23% of all Americans identifying as Evangelical. The second most practiced form of Christianity is Catholicism, at 19% of the population, followed by Mainline Protestant, with 11% of the population. The two most popular forms of Christianity for young people are Evangelical Protestantism and Catholicism, as 14% of all Evangelicals and 14 percent of all Catholics in the U.S. are between the ages of 18-29.

Additionally, although the survey found that rates of Christianity have declined, the vast majority of Americans share spiritual beliefs, as 86% of survey respondents believe they have a soul or spirit as well as a physical body, 83% believe in a God or a universal spirit, and 70% believe in an afterlife.

Hent de Vries, Professor of Religious Studies and Affiliated Professor of Philosophy at NYU, spoke with *Newsweek* about how data-driven studies of church membership or attendance may not capture the full picture of how religion shapes our lives. He said: "A reduction in active participation in forms of organizational religion may, paradoxically, very well go hand in hand with a deepened and broadened awareness of existential and political questions and concerns for which the so-called archives of historical religion continue to provide the most profound normative and imaginative resources." He added that digital media may play a role in diffusing older dogmas and teachings that in the past were less alluring to younger generations.

What Happens Next

Christianity, or some form of organized religion, appears to be appealing to young people in the U.S. again. It is unclear at this time if it is a trend, or if the number of Christians in the U.S. will level out, or even grow, in the next decade.

By The Numbers

70.6% of Americans are Christian—1.9% Jewish; <3% Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim.

22.8% of Americans do not affiliate with a specific religion.

53% of Utah residents attend church at least once a week (highest rate in the US).

21% of Vermont residents attend church at least once a week (lowest rate in the US).

64% of people surveyed by Gallup in 2020 said that religion is "losing its influence" on American life, and 47% said they were part of a church or synagogue which is down from 51% in 2019.



Young church followers and musicians gather before going on the stage at Hillsong Church in New York. Photo by Andres Kudacki

Source:

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/map-shows-us-states-where-christianity-is-surg-ing-falling/>

CELEBRATE

J E S U S
U T A P I
S E L O N
T R V N N
I N A E
F A T R
I L I S
E O
S N

By Sandie Wysocki

EASTER EVENTS

Combined Good Friday Service at
New Covenant Presbyterian Church
6:15 pm

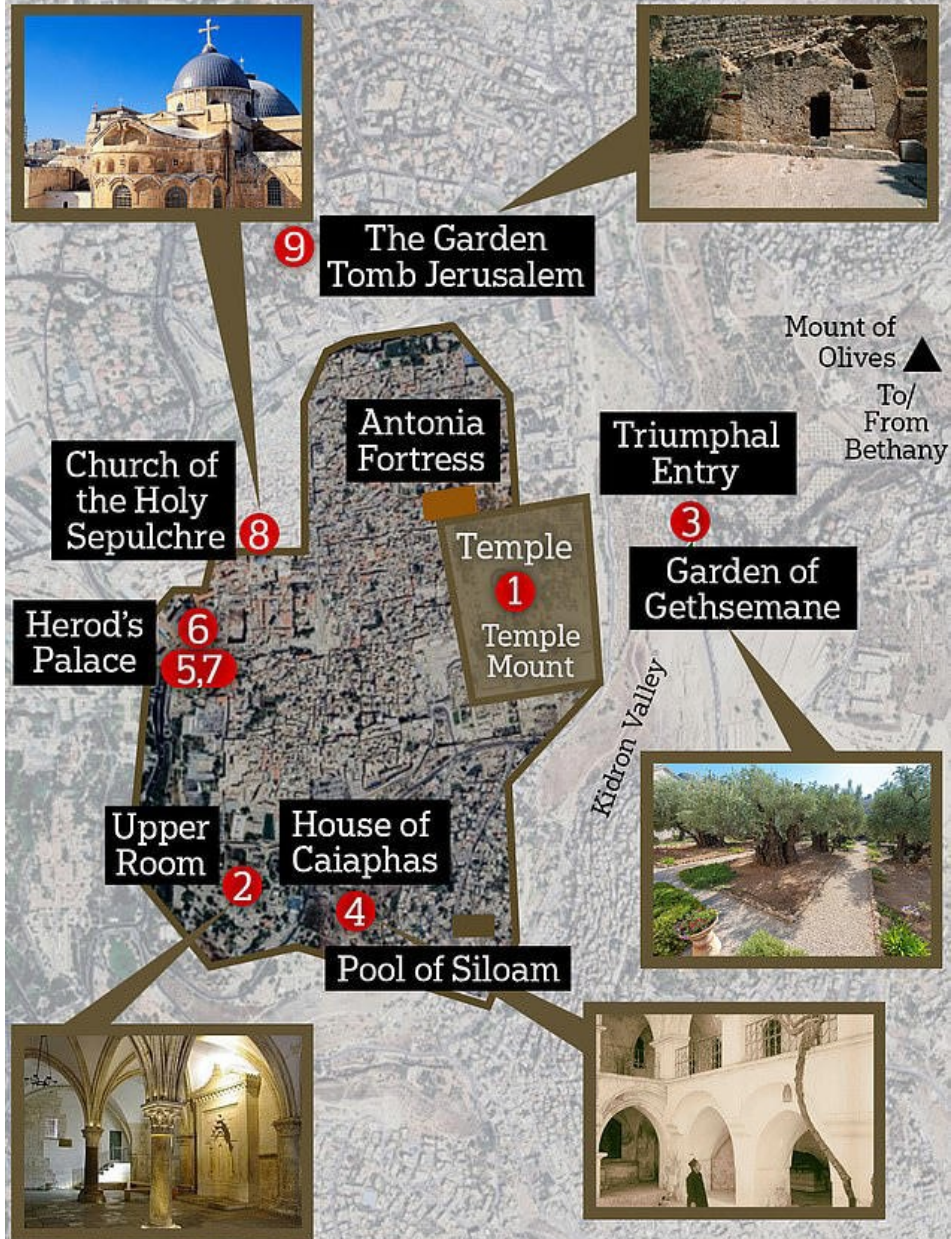
Easter Sunday Sunrise Service
at CC00 6:00 am
Fellowship Breakfast 7am
Followed by the regular
11 am Worship Service

Celebrate the
resurrection of
our Lord!

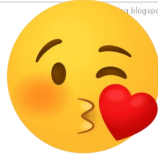
Happy
EASTER



JESUS' JOURNEY IN JERUSALEM



- 1** Seven days before death: Cleansing of the Temple - Jesus drove out merchants
- 2** Three days before death: Last Supper - dined with the 12 apostles
- 3** Three days before death: Garden of Gethsemane - arrested by Roman soldiers
- 4** One day before death: House of Caiaphas - stood trial for treason and blasphemy
- 5 6 7** One day before death: Herod's Palace
 - Trial before Jews • Trial before Romans • Sentenced to death
- 8** Day of death: Church of the Holy Sepulchre - crucified
- 9** Death: The Garden Tomb: Jesus laid to rest



St. Patrick's Day—March 17

Art, if you take another photo of me I'll have Marie put a spell on you!



Kayla being incognito.



Kayla entered a dessert competition held on Feb 26th by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. There were many participants and 4 categories that were being judged on. Kayla placed 1st in two categories, 2nd in one category, and 3rd in the other category. She said, "I was totally shocked and couldn't believe that I actually placed in any of the categories." She is our resident baker and if you have ever had any of her desserts you know her trophies were well deserved. Kayla says, "I have had a passion for baking since I was a child and to see my passion displayed and awarded was a dream come true."



Strawberry
Lemonade Cookies
2nd Place - Best Flavor



Turtle Cheesecake:
1st Place- Best Theme
1st Place- Appearance
3rd Place- People Choice



Decadent Dessert Bakeoff

Wednesday, February 12th 26th

4 pm - 6 pm @ The Hampton/Rehoboth

Theme - Decadence Unwrapped

All entries will be judged on presentation, taste & representation of theme.

Amateur & professional categories





**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
SAM!**



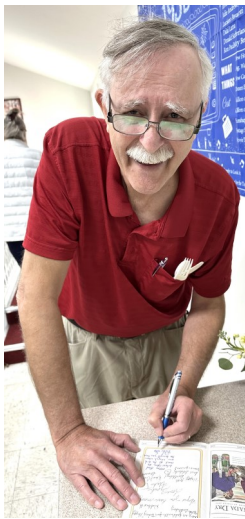


*Help celebrate
Sam Mood's
90th Birthday!*

Please NO Gifts!

*A birthday card from you would be a
special keepsake for Sam and the family.
Sam's address:*

*Mr. Samuel Mood
31364 River Rd
Millsboro, DE 19966*



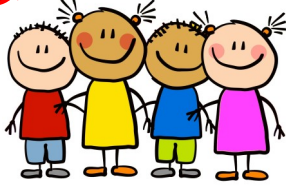
*You're invited to a
birthday celebration on
Sunday, March 23rd at the Community
Church of Oak Orchard, 32615 Oak
Orchard Rd, Millsboro, DE, 19966*

*Church service at 11 a.m.
immediately followed by
a luncheon in the
Church Dining Hall.*

*Cards are welcome, but
please NO gifts!*



Kid's Korner



Sky Olweiler

A Beacon of Joy and Inspiration — By Sue Vidzicki

In the heart of our family, there shines a light that illuminates with love, laughter, and endless charm. This light is Sky Olweiler, the Daughter of Amber & Jason, and Granddaughter of Pastor Ed and Sue. She is also an Aunt to six boys. In addition to Sky, there are also 1 brother Justin, and 2 sisters, Alexandra and Brianna. And we cannot forget the furry friends Ginger, the elder dog and Star, the puppy who is full of energy.



Sky enjoys soccer, tumbling, and is a member of American Heritage Girls. She knows Tae Kwon Do and has also done competitive cheer. She loves to talk with other classmates and friends about Jesus. As she once said, “Our Church is the best church in the world.” She also loves to hand out the “Little Jesus” to friends.

Another aspect of Sky is her artistic talent. From a young age, she showed a natural ability to express herself through various forms of art. She loves to draw, paint, or craft and her creations always show the beauty of the world around her.

Beyond her talents and achievements, what truly sets Sky apart is her heart of gold. She possesses a deep sense of empathy and a genuine desire to make the world a better place. Whether it’s simply offering a listening ear, she is always ready to lend a hand. Her kindness and generosity have been mentioned by many teachers. As stated from her teacher, “Sky has a positive energy and is kind and respectful to her fellow classmate.” Sky is a beacon of joy and inspiration. Her light shines brightly, touching the lives of those around her in many profound ways. She is a testament to the beauty of the human spirit





APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 11 Ted Brown
- 12 Gary Coleman
- 13 Jackie Grant
- 13 Sandy Kring
- 15 Dianna Atkins
- 19 Chuck Hurt
- 20 Michele Smith
- 20 Nancy Walker
- 21 Carol Miller
- 26 Lana Short
- 27 Bonnie Shaw
- 27 Madeline Hauenstein
- 27 Tommy McDonald
- 30 Kaitlyn Conley



WELCOME.. WELCOME
 Saints to my **RIGHT** Sinners to my **LEFT**



Pastor Allen makes the best usher!

**It's April Fools' Day.
 Seems like some folks
 have been practicing all year.**





Community Church of Oak Orchard

Where Friends Become Family!

32615 Oak Orchard Road, Millsboro, DE 19966



NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor: Kayla McDonald
Advisors: Pastor Allen,
Pastor Ed, Ted Brown
Design: Art Schmidt



ONLINE DONATIONS

Use the portal on
our website:

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.



UPCOMING EVENTS

4/1 *Church Friends Night Out* 6:30pm
Nicolas Pizza (Lewes) RSVP to Kayla.

4/2 *Special Class during AGAPE*
Topic: Alzheimer's Disease

4/3 *Alzheimer's Disease Class*
Full Class; same info as 3/26 & 4/2

4/6 *Special Love INC Guests*

4/9 *AGAPE stuffing Easter eggs*
11-12pm

4/11 *Meals 4 Missions* 4-7pm
Homemade chicken and dumplings
\$15 dine in/carry out

4/12 *Easter Egg Hunt*
12pm; candy donations needed

4/13 *Palm Sunday & Communion*

4/14 *Board Meeting* 5:30pm

4/18 *Combined Good Friday Svc. New*
Covenant Presbyterian Church 6:15pm

4/20 *Easter Sunday at CCOO*

6am—Sonrise Service

7am—Fellowship Breakfast

11am—Worship Service

(no 8am service)

4/21 *Dinner & Discussion*
5:45pm *Countering the Culture*

4/26 *Men's Ministry Breakfast*
8:30 am, *more info to come*

4/26 *New Member Class*
3:00-6:00pm

4/28 *Zoom & Summer Series Dinner*
6:30pm, *Captains Pizza Longneck*

5/17 *CHURCH YARD SALE*
in the Community Center; donations
start on April 13.



CHURCH BOARD of ELDERS

Pastor: Allen Miller
Chair: Ted Brown
V/Chair: Steve Miller
Assoc. Pastor: Ed Vidzicki
Treasurer: Art Schmidt
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