



# OAKLAND ACORN

December 2023/ January 2024

Dear Friends,

We begin the season of Advent on December 3. The word Advent means “to come”. This season is a time of hope and expectation. Advent reminds Christians of the coming of Jesus. He is the One for whom the people hoped. He is also the One who comes to us now and who will come at the end of history.

We celebrate Advent during the four weeks prior to Christmas. Advent begins the Church Year in which we follow the life of Jesus from his birth through his resurrection, and then as the Holy Spirit empowers the church of Jesus Christ.

The liturgical color for Advent is violet/purple, which is a symbol of royalty, humility, and penitence. Advent is a time when we reflect on our own lives in light of Jesus’ coming. The mood of Advent is both joyful and somber as we remember what Jesus’ coming has meant for all people. Advent also is a time for us to prepare for his coming anew into our lives.

Advent is a time of hope.....

Thinking about what kind of world we hope for, and how we can help to bring it about.

Advent is a time to pray for peace....

Thinking about those places in our homes, neighborhoods and world where we so desperately need the Prince of Peace.

Advent is a time of love....

Receiving expressions of love from others and demonstrating love ourselves.

Advent is a time of joy...

Being with family and friends, finding concrete ways to make our joy real through music and creative activities.

The four weeks of Advent provide times when all the members of our church family can make special preparations. During worship we will be consider the messages of the angels. The story of Jesus’ birth is full of angels: they announce the birth of John to his parents Elizabeth and Zechariah, an angel of the Lord appears to Mary and to Joseph to announce the birth of their son, Jesus, and angels appear to the shepherds announcing the birth of the Messiah. Have you ever had an encounter with an angel? What is the history of angels and where do we encounter them in the biblical story? What is their purpose? Come join us during Advent as we consider the message of the angels! We will be decorating our sanctuary windows with angels and we would love for you to share one of your special angels to place in a window.

Blessings and peace as we enter into this most holy of church seasons!

Pastor Debbie

Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women’s Circle

Just a reminder that we continue to meet in the Parlor for the study of the PW/Horizons Bible Study of “The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts” by Olive Mahabir. We encourage you to join us at 3 pm whenever you can. We grow together as we study together.

I would like to remind you that the Presbyterian Women have a college scholarship available each year. The process for applying begins January 1, 2024. All graduating seniors who qualify can apply. They should contact me for more information or for the forms.

I would like to finish with this Scripture verse:

**So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. Galatians 6:10 (NASB)**

Linda Pingel  
Moderator of PW



**Minute for  
Mission  
Lighting the Way**

**CHRISTMAS JOY**  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

**Joy Gift Offering**

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and devel-

oping our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

*We will be collecting this offering at the Joy Gift program on December 10th or please feel free to drop yours by the office.*

**Serve Night**

There will be no Serve night in January. We look forward to February 2nd when we will meet again. Please contact the office if you would like more information on Serve Night or getting plugged in to a ministry team.



**December Anniversaries**

- Craig & Paige Kuppler 12/4  
*Celebrating 30 years*
- David & Shannon Gooding 12/10  
*Celebrating 29 years*
- David & Cindy Miller 12/16  
*Celebrating 17 years*
- Lanny & Helen Thomas 12/18  
*Celebrating 52 years*
- James & Brenda Abbott 12/19  
*Celebrating 58 years*
- Rudolph & Elgie Wells 12/22  
*Celebrating 69 years*

- Jimmy & Elaine Benson 12/27  
*Celebrating 53 years*
- Troy & Nata Barber 12/31  
*Celebrating 63 years*

**January Anniversaries**

- Steve & Jane LaRue 1/23  
*Celebrating 59 years*
- Shepard & Amber Barbour 1/24  
*Celebrating 15 years*
- Ed & Deborah Williford 1/30  
*Celebrating 25 years*



## PRAYER REQUESTS

Stuart Anderson  
 Pat and Larry Barbour  
 Karl Barbee  
 Rob Braswell  
 Keith Braswell  
 Eric Brown  
 Norma Blackmon  
 Karen Caruso  
 Phyllis Collins  
 Erica Creech  
 Joyce English  
 Audrey Ennis  
 Benjamin Geary  
 Candice Green  
 Dawson Hammer  
 Carolyn Hobgood  
 Ron Hockaday  
 Kelly Dunn Johnson  
 Donna Kelly  
 Ann Lee  
 Ken McGee  
 Clara Santanta  
 Brian Settle III  
 Randy Talton  
 April Wood Thompson  
 Shirley Watkins  
 Bob Webb  
 Rudolph and Elgie Wells  
 Fannie and Preston Wood  
 Mindy Wood  
 Danny Wood  
 Kris Wilson  
 Lindsey Wilson  
 Bill Yelvington

## Financial Update

### September : Revenue

\$14,646

Expenses

\$24,237

Difference

(-\$9,591)

### October: Revenue

\$25,703

Expenses

\$21,770

Difference

\$3,932

YTD Difference (-\$19,056)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH AT 5:30PM

## Joy Gift Program

Robin Braswell 12/1  
 Keli Adams 12/3  
 Craig Hamer 12/3  
 Sue Braswell 12/4  
 Bill Yelvington 12/4  
 Kelly Luter 12/5  
 Amy Corbett 12/6  
 Blake Gooding 12/6  
 Catherine Hall 12/11  
 Catherine Mulhern 12/13  
 Daisy Duncan 12/17  
 Sam Leonard 12/20  
 Jimmy Hatcher 12/21  
 Ann Lee 12/22  
 Heidi Doerner 12/26  
 Shelia Adams 12/27



Katrina Johnson 12/29  
 Bret Luter 12/29

Regina Wright 12/29  
 Carl Bjorling 12/30  
 Christy Thomas 1/1  
 Kayla Moore 1/3  
 Philip Velie 1/3  
 William Watkins 1/4  
 Kendall Pflum 1/4  
 Jamie Thomas 1/8  
 Deborah Williford 1/9  
 Stephen Pingel 1/10  
 Joshua Williford 1/11  
 Jonathan Bjorling 1/12  
 Christian LaRue 1/13  
 Ashley Nappen 1/14  
 Craig Kuppler 1/16  
 Jane LaRue 1/17

Arthur Watkins 1/17  
 Hillary Beach 1/20  
 Elaine Benson 1/20  
 Jim Tabler 1/21  
 Cameron Crowe 1/23  
 Kristin Partin 1/23  
 Henri Therriault 1/23  
 Richie Boyd III 1/24  
 Reece Braswell 1/26  
 Rebecca Douglas 1/30  
 Dennis Blackmon 1/31  
 Pam Heath 1/31

# NEW

## **Chris Doerner**

Christopher Doerner is married to the lovely and talented Coleen Doerner since March 31, 2023 and together they have eight children: Kali(29), Carson(28), Wyatt(23), Cameron(22), Cole(21), Colin(19), Cole(14), and Heidi(11). Chris' Mother, and sister all reside in south Louisiana, where he was born and raised. Chris has been a North Carolina resident since May of 2004 and moved to our area in August of 2013.

Chris and his family began attending Oakland in 2014 and joined formally in 2015. They found, having attended Catholic churches and other nearby churches, that Oakland was the perfect blend of Tradition, family, and youth activity. Chris has been involved with the OPC youth mission trips in the past several years. Chris, additionally, has served on the Session previously, the Property committee and the Mission & outreach committees.

Chris attended Catholic schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade. He then enrolled at LSU(1994) and later transferred to NC State(2006). Chris served on active duty in the Marines from 1998 until 2001. He graduated in 2009 from NC State with a degree in Environmental Technology and a minor in Environmental Toxicology. He currently owns a small construction company (New Creation Builders LLC). He has volunteered locally building wheelchair ramps, working for Habitat for Humanity, and House of Hope. He enjoys attending weekly Bible study facilitated by the Foors.

Some of his favorite hobbies include: spending time with family, hunting, fishing, kayaking, camping, exploring, and volunteering.



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## **Robert (Bob) Foore**

Bob was born and raised in Harrisburg, PA and attended Dickenson College in nearby Carlisle, PA. While he sold encyclopedias door to door, served in the military, played professional baseball, and acted on the stage and in movies, his primary work life involved 40 years as a radio personality and 28 years in the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. (PEMA) (Yes, those two careers overlapped a bit)

He retired as Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency 9-1-1 Coordinator in 2005. It was as a PEMA instructor where he met his wonderful wife, Janet. They moved to the Carolines in 2005 to be near children and grandchildren. His church life started early. He sang in his first church choir as a six-year-old soprano. He and Janet have always been active in the churches they have attended, serving in a variety of capacities wherever they have lived. Bob is honored to have been selected to serve on Session at Oakland Presbyterian Church.





# ELDERS

## **Linda Pingel**

I was born in Coffeyville, Kansas. My parents took a detour when I was four and moved us to Midland, Texas. I lived there for all my Elementary, Jr. High and High school and college years. It was toward the end of my second year at Odessa Community College, that I met my husband, Steve. He was in training at Webb AFB, in Big Spring, TX. We married before he went to Vietnam, and we will have been married for 53 years in 2024.

We have raised four children, and all live here in NC. I have a simple faith. I believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit. My baptism took place in Goldsboro, NC. Since that time, I have been a member of three churches. I have served all my life in one way or another; out of church or in church. I genuinely believe that the process of studying the word and serving the church and community is where you grow stronger in your faith as you depend on the Lord for your strength.

I do love the people that have come into my life, and I know they are placed there by the Lord. I look forward to seeing how the Lord will answer prayers and lead us in these next three years.



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## **Matt Duncan**

I have lived in Clayton since 2013 with my wife Sarah and our two children Daisy and Riley. We enjoy traveling to visit family, going on vacations to the beach or the mountains, and spending time together whenever we can. I work as a mechanical and process consultant for Novo Nordisk Engineering (NNE). In my spare time I enjoy fixing, restoring, and racing cars.



### A Park at Oakland, really?

The Holy Cow Team, the Property Team, and the Session have spent considerable time studying the Holy Cow survey and what it reveals about our church. Despite our many missions and outreach to the community by allowing worthy groups like Scouts, AA, Board of Elections, neighborhood HOA meetings, and on and on to use our facilities, we still come up short. The survey results reflect that our Church is still more inward focused than outward focused. So, what can we do to spread the Gospel to more families within our community? One idea that we are seeking member input on is this:

Adjacent to and east of our church facilities is a 1-acre field where our storm water retention pond is located. This area is sparsely used by members and mostly forgotten. It could be used for future expansion, but that doesn't seem necessary in the near term. So, the idea is to build a nice picnic shelter, clean up the retention pond, design a walking trail around the property and the church grounds, install picnic tables, a few park benches and a grill, and other amenities that might make sense such as a horseshoe pit or a butterfly garden or a fire pit. The area has beautiful maturing trees that will enhance the experience of walking or picnicking or playing on this site. But if we do all that, how do we make it community focused and how in the world could a picnic shelter help us spread the gospel?

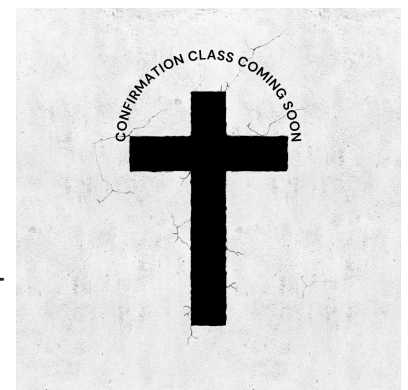
By allowing community access. We could install attractive signage to inform the public that "Oakland Park" was built by Oakland Presbyterian Church and can be used by Cleveland Community families and small groups to enjoy at no cost (donations welcomed) simply by reserving the space through the church office (or online). We could place other signage such as "A quiet place to enjoy God's creation and use everyday moments to connect our lives to Jesus." Could we install short prayer plaques along the walking trail? What is your idea? A small task force has been organized to begin studying the idea and developing a budget. Members so far are Sarah Leonard, Kitty Nappen, Tammy Pflum, Lanny Thomas, Wanda Watkins, Ed Williford, and Denton Lee. Larry Bailey, longtime Parks & Recreation Director in Clayton, has agreed to assist us. Some cleanup around the pond may start this winter, but the majority of the planning is ahead of us. Would you like to join us?

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### Confirmation Class Coming Soon!

Pastor Debbie will be holding a Confirmation class starting in February for all youth who are interested in officially joining Oakland as adult members. Confirmation offers attendees the opportunity to dive deeper into what they believe and why through study and experiences where they will get to explain their faith to other people. The class will take place throughout the months of February and March, and will consist of four classroom sessions as well as a mission project to put their faith into action.

We will have an interest and information session with Pastor Debbie on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> right after worship (around 11:45am) in the church Parlor. Please make plans to join us for this meeting if your youth are interested in attending the Confirmation class.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Joy to the World

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

O	B	W	I	S	H	A	B	P	P	L	X	S	I	V	F	A	I	M
I	A	F	L	O	T	T	N	I	E	C	U	G	G	S	F	D	C	M
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F	T	N	E	V	D	A	E	F	V	D	A	I	M	L	O	S	M	K
A	G	I	C	G	T	A	M	Y	D	I	T	S	M	B	L	J	E	E
N	C	I	N	F	L	C	A	M	E	L	S	S	K	A	K	L	P	J
T	F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	B	T	B	A	M	R
R	E	J	O	I	C	E	X	M	N	A	I	L	H	S	I	N	Y	Z
T	F	G	Z	H	D	S	T	A	L	D	E	B	Q	Y	R	G	R	U
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ADVENT  
ANGEL  
BETHLEHEM  
BIRTH  
BLESSINGS  
CAMELS  
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT  
JESUS  
JOSEPH  
MAGI  
MANGER  
MARY  
MIRACLE

MYRRH  
NATIVITY  
REJOICE  
STABLE  
STAR  
THREE KINGS  
WISE MEN

## The Acorn is going paperless in 2024

Beginning with the February 2024 edition of the Acorn newsletter, we will begin only sending this via email. Times and prices are changing and we have gotten feedback that most people would prefer it paperless rather than through the USPS. We want to take this opportunity to be sure that we have everyone's updated information as well. If you would like to continue to receive the Acorn in your actual mailbox rather than your email inbox, please email Kate and let her know that you would like to continue to receive the newsletter via the USPS. If you would like to get the Acorn via email and you currently get the weekly email with no problems, then you do not need to take action. This transition will take a little time so please be patient with the office staff as we make the transition. If you have any questions, please email Kate ([secretary@oaklandpresbyterianchurch.org](mailto:secretary@oaklandpresbyterianchurch.org))





Dear Oakland Family,

It is with a heavy heart that I am submitting my resignation as the Family and Youth Ministry Coordinator at Oakland. Through much prayer and deliberation, I have accepted a position with First Priority of Johnston County as the Ministry Director starting on January 8, 2024.

My family and I will still be members and attend Oakland Presbyterian. I have loved working with the youth, and it is my hope that I will be able to continue to serve in a volunteer capacity as the leader of the PYC youth group and Be Bold pre-teen group. While I know this decision may come as a surprise, it is clear to me that God has been preparing me for this new role.

I understand that Oakland has faced a lot of transition and change the last couple of years, but I fully believe that God has a reason for leading to me to this new role at this time. Nothing comes as a surprise to God, and He will use every situation for His glory. I still plan to serve at Oakland on the Discipleship Team and in the youth ministry program. Serving with the youth and adult volunteers has been such a joy, and I want to continue leading these groups and using my skills to help the youth grow stronger relationships with Jesus.

As the Johnston County First Priority Ministry Director, my main responsibility will be to manage and grow the three programs of First Priority in Johnston County which are connecting the churches to First Priority clubs through church engagement and community outreach, providing adult and student leader development, and ensuring the elementary through high school First Priority clubs remain student-led. I am so excited for the new opportunities this role will provide me to share the hope of Christ with the students of Johnston County and to build connections between the clubs at our local schools and churches in the area. While I will no longer be a paid staff member at Oakland, I will gladly continue to serve Oakland in every way that I can. I am excited to see the plans that God has in store for me and for Oakland in the coming months. As we work through this transition, I look forward to seeing you all around Oakland, and I would be happy to share with you the incredible ways God has led me and Oakland to this point.

Serving in Christ,



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### **JOY GROUP UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Sunday Dec. 3** Singing Christmas Tree concert at Snyder Memorial Baptist Church in Fayetteville at 4:30. Leave the church at 3:00. Dinner at Huske Hardware Restaurant in Fayetteville following the concert.

**Thursday Dec. 14** Senior Lunch @ Providence Presbyterian Church at noon. Hwy 210, Angier.



# Oakland Happenings

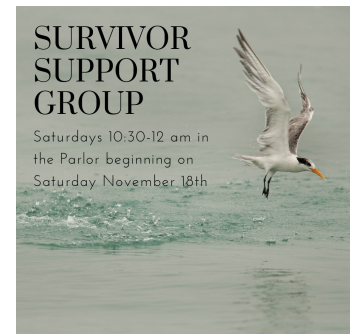
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## **Survivor Support Group**

Gary Howell will be starting a survivor support group. The goal of this group is to provide support for survivors grieving the death of a loved one and is open to the community as well as OPC. This may be a spouse, a child, a parent or other loved ones. This group will begin meeting every Saturday from 10:30-am 12 pm on November 18th in the Parlor. If you have any questions, please reach out to Gary. His email is [ilm401@gmail.com](mailto:ilm401@gmail.com)



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## **Office Closed**

The church office will be closed December 25th- January 2nd for the Christmas and New Year Holidays.



The Christmas Cantata will be on December 17th during morning worship. We hope you can join the choir and the rest of Oakland as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!

Need a kid-free night to Christmas shop or just go out?

Our Parents night out has you covered!

Drop your kids off with us for the evening for a worry-free night. We will have pizza for dinner, play Christmas themed games, enjoy hot cocoa while watching a movie, and more!

It is sure to be a fun night for the kids while you take some time to breath before the rush of the season hits.



The American Red Cross will be at Oakland on **January 19th in the Fellowship Hall from 1:30 -6:30**. Please check the bulletin and the weekly emails for more information.

### Christmas Caroling

Jennifer Wells will be leading some Christmas Caroling on December 19th. Save the Date and be on the lookout for more information in the weekly email and bulletin.





The Oakland Acorn  
Oakland Presbyterian Church  
8927 Cleveland Road  
Clayton, North Carolina 27520

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**January 19th in the Fellowship Hall from 1:30  
-6:30.**

