



APRIL 2020 CHALLENGER

OAKGROVEBC.ORG

FACEBOOK.COM/OAKGROVEBAPTISTCHURCH. GRAY. TN

CONTACT

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Office Hours
Tuesday – Friday 9AM-2PM

STAFF

Pastor
Sherrel Nave

Minister of Music
Jonathan Casteel

Minister of Students
Joe Baker

Director of Children's Ministry
Tonya Coleman

Financial Secretary/Custodian
Tammy Yarber

Ministry Assistant
Pam Parker

SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

~1 Peter 1:3 NIV

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR SHERREL

Dear Oak Grove Family,

I greet you all in the Wonderful name of Jesus our Savior and hope this letter finds you all keeping well. We are going through a very difficult time here at home and around the world. These past few weeks have been challenging to say the least. The staff and I are so grateful for your prayers, and I know that you have been praying for each other and all those impacted by this global health crisis. It is vitally important that we continue to pray believing that God will see us through this trying time. I know that God is in control and we can trust Him!

I realize that the life and practice of our fellowship has been greatly altered and will likely continue to be for some weeks to come. We are working hard to adapt to the present situation, and I want to thank the staff and our volunteers for the great job they have done. We will continue to do church online each Sunday morning at 11 am. We are currently exploring ways to add teaching and devotional sessions to our online presence. We will inform you when those options become available. I know that this is unusual and different but just remember that everyone is currently facing the same challenge and we will get through this together. So I hope you will continue to be faithful and watch the Facebook Live broadcasts.

The Easter season is upon us and we will celebrate Resurrection Sunday on April 12th. My earnest hope and desire are that we can assemble for worship that day but that may not be prudent and safe. The decision will have been made by the time you receive this newsletter. We do not make these decisions lightly and we take very seriously our calling and responsibility. The health and welfare of our congregation will continue to be our priority. So I ask you to wait and pray and keep one thing in mind. Even if we cannot be together in person we can still rejoice in Spirit because our Savior Jesus Lives! HE LIVES, HE LIVES, MY JESUS LIVES TODAY! HE WALKS WITH ME; HE TALKS WITH ME ALONG LIFE'S NARROW WAY. HE LIVES. HE LIVES, SALVATION TO IMPART! YOU ASK ME HOW I KNOW HE LIVES? HE LIVES WITHIN MY HEART! I wish you all a Most Happy Resurrection Day!

This latest pandemic has brought many challenges along with it, not the least of which is financial strain for many. So I submit this appeal with the utmost humility. We need for you to continue to support this ministry financially with your gifts and offerings. The generous heart and giving spirit of this church is such a blessing to me and I am so honored to serve you. If you are unable to give at this time, I understand, and all I would ask is that you pray that God will meet our needs. You can give online at oakgrovebc.org/donate or simply mail it in to the church at 396 Oak Grove Road, Gray, TN 37615. Thank you and I love you all!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Sherrel



Have you hit the panic button yet? Maybe so, maybe not or maybe never? We are certainly living in some odd, unusual times. We are seemingly being tested with this coronavirus pandemic and all the consequences that have come about and how we are adjusting our lives the best way going forward. I think President Trump and Vice President Pence and the team set aside to deal with these current events are addressing and dealing with the situation as well as possible. Many of these men and women are Christians and are seeking God's will for good decision making. Going forward there is no time for criticism and questioning our leadership or actions that are being taken for such a time as this.

To the contrary I think our faith is being tested and biblical prophecy is coming to fruition on a daily basis. We must not panic but seek God's will for what he would have us do individually and collectively as a church. Our motto should be "Faith over Fear" and we should lean on God's Holy word and his promises to sustain us physically but also to enhance our faithfulness to him while serving others. This social distancing and isolation per se give us a chance to reflect on what we can do beginning with regular prayer and devotion time. And as Sunday School director I would encourage you to continue to read your SS lessons and allow God to minister to you through Bible study and praying for family, friends, neighbors, coworkers and other acquaintances. Our commitment to have a servant's heart is greater than ever before.

Before I end this article, I would like to thank Pastor Sherrel and Johnathan for the Facebook live streaming of our services especially during this time when church services are cancelled. Also, Brother Bryan Jeter, Travis Mathes, Pam Parker and others that may be helping with the social media and the sound system, we are truly grateful.

Also, as far as SS I am abundantly grateful for Brother Rodney Hale helping with teaching duties in the auditorium class. Also, Brother Kevin Rice has been filling in as a teacher in the Adult men's class. I am much appreciative of all our SS teachers and their weekly commitment. Hopefully we can get back to regularly scheduled services soon and worship together praising and glorifying our Lord and Savior.

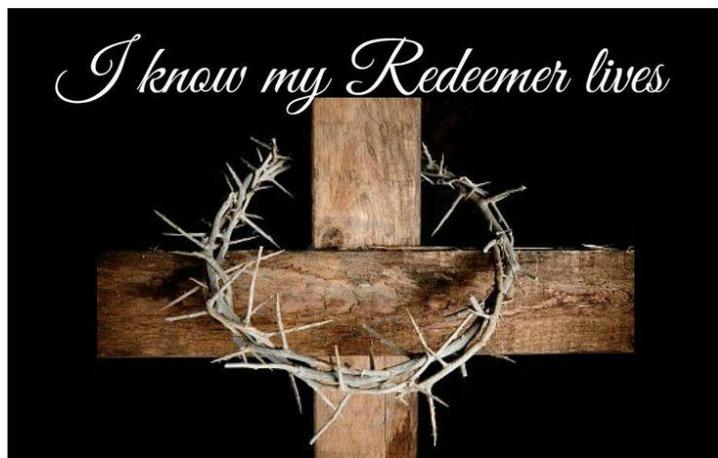
For the cause of Christ,
Jesse

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 5 Palm Sunday
- 10 Good Friday – Office Closed
- 12 Easter
- 16 Ladies Fellowship at OGBC
- 22 Newsletter Articles Due
- 26 Deacons' Meeting



Your church family is here to help during the Covid-19 health crisis. Please call (423) 477-3141 Tuesday - Friday from 9AM to 2PM if you have a need. We have volunteers ready to pray with you or to assist with food or pharmacy deliveries, etc. Please call if you need us!





This has been an extremely trying past several weeks, and the next several weeks ahead will be no different. The good news is, God is still in control and in Him, we have nothing to fear! I'm thankful that I serve a God who is real, and who is ALWAYS ahead of every challenge that life throws our way. God knew about this pandemic before we did, and He has a plan to carry us through. I pray you are still tuning in to our services held each Sunday via Facebook Live. If you have any song requests or ideas, please feel free to share them with me or Pastor Sherrel. Regarding our Easter Cantata, the current plan is to hold a few practices once we are all cleared to return back to being able to meet together again; and we are planning to still do the Cantata for the church once things are back in session. So to the choir members, keep listening to your CDs and learning your parts, because we WILL still do the Easter Cantata once things are back to normal. Until then, keep praying for each other, and keep reaching out in ways we are able to. Tune into our services online, and if you need anything at all, please reach out to Pastor Sherrel, your deacon, or myself. We will be happy to help you in any way we possibly can. Take care, stay safe and healthy, and God bless!

~Jon Casteel

Peace I leave with you;
MY PEACE I GIVE YOU.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and
DO NOT BE AFRAID.

JOHN 14:27 NIV

HOW TO TRUST GOD THROUGH THE STORM

You lose your job. You're failing a class. You find yourself without friends. You're stripped of someone you love. You can't attend church because of the quarantine. In stormy seasons like these, it can be hard to maintain hope.

In Mark 4:35-41, when Jesus and His disciples sail across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was resting in the stern of the boat, when a sudden storm erupted, pounding the boat with waves that nearly sank their boat. All the disciples were scared and ran to Jesus and asked, "*Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?*" Jesus responded by simply getting up, rebuking the winds, and demanding that the waves come to a stop. With the storm at a standstill, He then turned back to His disciples and asked the following: "*But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?'*"

Like the disciples, we often become so blinded by the storms in our lives that we forget the power and the love of the God we serve. Our present circumstances take our attention away from His eternal promises – His promises to provide for us, to strengthen us, to sustain us until the end. We wind up running to him in a panic, begging for Him to do something, when in fact He's been faithfully by our side all along. So how can we better trust God through the storm?

We need to turn to scripture for His promises. Whenever life seems to be spiraling out of control, let God's Word be the thing that anchors you in place. Trust the Bible for His promises to you and let these words become the very foundation of your days. When things get darker or more chaotic, repeat these scriptures to yourself to remind yourself of the reality of the situation and see things from His perspective. Remember that:

- He is in control and is stronger than your problems, **John 16:33**
- He loves you and has plans to prosper you, **Jeremiah 29:11**
- He works all things together for good in your life, including what you're going through now, **Romans 8:28**
- He will give you the strength you need to get through the storm, **Isaiah 41:10**
- His timing is perfect, **Ecclesiastes 3:1**
- He never leaves your side, **Psalms 145:18-19**

Take everything to the Lord in prayer. Rather than letting yourself sink deeper into fear or pain, pray. Pour out your heart to God from the moment you start your day to the moment you go to bed. Tell Him what's worrying you and ask Him to bring you peace. "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything." Tell God what you need and thank him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

As Brother Sherrel preached March 22 on Faith (by Facebook livestream), we will learn that your faith is not just a list of things you believe, or how you think, your faith determines what you do, what you say, what you experience, and what you get out of life. May the Lord Jesus refine our faith and increase and put into action our faith in a way that pleases God!

Brother Rodney Hale

THE FINAL WORD

Anonymous



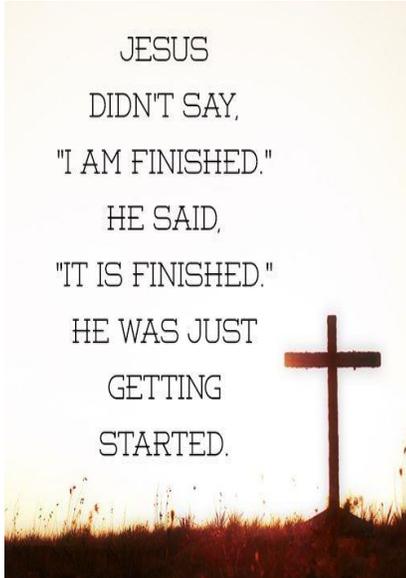
When wildfires ravaged Paradise, California in 2018, dozens were killed, and thousands lost homes, irreplaceable mementos and personal connections. School, work and church routines were upended.

If life has both “cross-like times” and “resurrection-like times,” as a pastor once said, this certainly was a cross-like time. But God never lets death, sorrow or suffering have the final say. To bring light to dark times, God works through countless good-hearted helpers.

One was 90-year-old Bob Wilson, a Los Angeles man who quickly decided to give people he’d never met “something...to lift their spirits.” That “something” was a \$1,000 handwritten check for each of the 1,085 students and staff members at Paradise High School. The checks, which came with no restrictions, were presented at a gathering that felt like healing to many.

While we may not be equipped to help in the same way in a crisis, sometimes just a call to check on someone is all that is needed to lift a spirit. Reach out and reassure someone that this too shall pass.

Cross and resurrection times are interwoven in this life, but the cross does not win. God promises that one day resurrection will have the final word.



Recent days and weeks have brought drastic changes to our world, our nation, and our church. One of the most painful decisions our pastor and deacons had to make was to temporarily cancel our services until April 5th. This decision was hard but none of us would want to be the cause of someone acquiring what could be a deadly disease. Our church loves you, but we join with others in seeking to limit interaction with others as much as possible. Awana will resume Wednesday, April 8th (we pray) for our Easter Celebration. Of course, you can always keep posted on our website.

Please encourage each other by contacting clubbers, leaders, and other volunteers in our club. Know that I love you and look forward with great anticipation to the time that we can return to a normal schedule. In the meantime, be safe and stay healthy and know that I’m praying for you.

Below is a letter of encouragement that one of our volunteers sent to clubbers in her club when she found out that the church activities were dismissed for now.

Patricia

Hi Emmi and Lakin,

Pam and I send you greetings and love in the Lord. These are interesting days unfolding before us. As the elder woman in this letter group, I can tell you that God has told us how things are and will be. For you, and even for Pam, there will be days of surprise (no school, no trip, no Awana, no ...).

Let me share where my comfort starts. It's in understanding that we live in a sin-cursed world. Maybe you remember a lesson from Genesis 1, 2 and 3 and how sin entered this pristine and beautiful and peaceful world and basically upset the apple cart. To this day, things that are happening were known by God before the foundation of the earth. But He made a plan then. A forever plan that will happen. The Bible teaches this earth is not our home.

Why? Mary Ann? Why? Girls, we have been learning this year that God is ... The Bible is ... The Seven “I AM” statements of Jesus and now we are learning how to be godly agents.

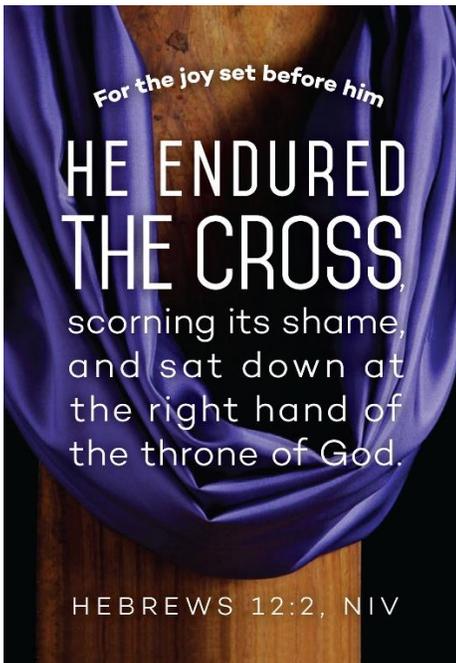
I'll share one review: God is ... Our Peace. John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

And one: “I AM” The Good Shepherd. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Our lesson this week is about being Agents of Wisdom. You may be wondering how can people hoard toilet paper? How can ball games be cancelled? How can church / school / Awana be canceled. Our verse is James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

There is no reason to fear Coronavirus but there is every reason to exercise wisdom, even tho it may seem painful for a while. To stay at home, out of crowds, to wash our hands again, to get good rest ... that's wisdom and may be just the right protection from this ugly virus. This will pass. Be strong in the Lord. Trust Him and know that we love you and are praying for you. See you soon!

Mary Ann and Pam (and Miss Patricia and Donna)



The Ladies Fellowship had to be cancelled in March due to the threat of inclement weather. We will try again on Thursday, April 16 at 6:30 if we're free to gather socially at that time. Our special guest speaker is Carol Seggio. We love her and are always excited when she comes. If you've never heard her, you're in for a wonderful blessing as I know we all will be! Please be in prayer for her as she prepares what God has in store for us. Bring a friend and a covered dish. Patricia and I will be saving you a seat.

Love in Christ Jesus,
Patricia and Sharon



"A Walk through Holy Week"



LONELINESS AND LONGING

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:"
Isaiah 53:3

Years ago, as I journeyed through the last days of Jesus before the crucifixion, I developed an alliterative outline (before I knew the word alliterative). It started: Leafy-lined Road; Looming Betrayal; The Lord's Supper, Loyal Peter, the Lowly Kiss; The Last Breath; the Laying to Rest; Loneliness and Longing; and last: Light of Day, Living Lamb. The title Loneliness and Longing has struck a chord.

Let's first walk with Jesus in His loneliness and longing. We'll journey through the Passover Week as Jesus and the disciples entered Jerusalem. Passover was always a week of family and fun and fellowship and findings. Look at what Jesus found. He found the people receptive in the beginning, and ready to murder in the end. He found the disciples loyal in the beginning, and disloyal in the end. He found one of the twelve chosen would betray Him in the end. He found all that He knew from before the foundation to be true and yet He came with much love! It was a lonely journey to the cross!

Now, Jesus has been crucified. It was long painful hours from the Upper Room to the Garden. To the arrest. To the beatings. To the cruel cross. To His last breath. His battered and bloody body has been laid in a grave. His disciples have retreated. The women followed Jesus to the sepulcher and then left to rest and prepare spices for His anointing. It was a dark day according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

The priests, Pharisees and Pilate continued to plot. They rolled a huge stone over the grave so Jesus could not be stolen.

There was loneliness for some. There was a longing in the hearts of some. There were questions everywhere. Jesus knows loneliness and longing. His prayer to His Father in John 17 reveals His longing heart for us. Jesus did not pray for the world but for those that the Father had given him ... believers! He prayed that we might be one, that we would have joy, that we would be kept from evil, and that we would be sanctified through truth. Then He prayed for the "not yet's." Jesus knows longing.

Victory reveals that He lives to ever make intercession for us. He wants us to look to Him and trust Him. What has happened that goes back to Genesis 3 (we live in a sin-cursed / broken world) is not the end. I want you to know that this is not the Tribulation. In this time of solitude approaching Easter perhaps we can walk with our Lord through suffering to victory. Share what you know of Jesus. Remember your first love. Embrace longing! Pray that the Spirit of God would use us in this time to point man to Jesus! Break out of the loneliness and longing and rejoice that Resurrection Sunday is coming and worthy of a celebration either alone or with many.

Jesus came. He died. He rose again the third day according to Scripture. He is coming soon!

Submitted by Mary Ann Stout



We are truly enjoying seeing Jesus throughout the Old Testament. The youth are listening and asking some really good questions. It's a pleasure to work with them. On May 16th we are planning another service project. We are going back to Second Harvest Food Bank to help them stock their shelves. I'm very proud of our youth for wanting to reach out and help others in need. Please be in prayer for us, as we continue to learn and grow in God's Word and to serve others.

Love in Our Savior,
Sharon

SEE(K) FIRST

On Facebook, I can "follow" as many people as I want, viewing their messages, photos and activities. But I can choose only 30 to "see first" – that is, to prioritize in my news feed. As of this writing (Facebook changes often), if my "see first" list is full and I want to add someone new, I must "unprioritize" someone else.

That leads me to ponder bigger matters: I often claim to follow Jesus, but what might I need to "unprioritize" to make him not just a priority but THE priority in my life? To what do I devote time and attention but ought to let go to follow Christ more closely? What activities, behaviors and values do I need to not just bump from my "see first" list but "unfollow" or "block" entirely?

Perhaps they are antithetical to discipleship or simply take too much time away from prayer, Scripture and service.

This dilemma isn't unique to the digital age. Facebook parlance is about what we "see first," but in Matthew 6:33 Jesus says, "SEEK first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (ESV).

~Heidi Mann
(newsletternewsletter.com)

April is here and we all know what that means...Easter!! Although we are going through a time of quarantine, we can still celebrate. Easter doesn't mean you have to go to a huge egg hunt or be in a church building. It means being thankful that Jesus died for us and He arose on the 3rd day! It means telling our kids the true meaning of Easter and about the huge sacrifice our Lord made for us when He died on the cross. We may not know if the church doors will be reopened and ready for Easter Sunday, but we can be thankful for the online church services we have and a pastor that loves our congregation so much that he decided to take our health into consideration and keep us safe. We can read from the Bible to our children, bake cookies with them, color eggs at home, do an Easter craft and have quality family time. Here's a little activity I do with my kids. It's become an Easter tradition in my home, and I hope it becomes one of yours!

~Tonya

EMPTY TOMB COOKIES

READY IN: 8 hours 30 minutes

YIELD: 1-2 dozen

INGREDIENTS

1 cup whole pecans, in a plastic baggie
1 teaspoon vinegar
3 egg whites
1 pinch salt
1 cup sugar

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 300 degrees - you MUST do it now. Also, gather a cooking mallet, kitchen mixer, masking tape and Bible.
- Read John 19:1-3 ~ Jesus was beaten for our sins; beat the nuts with a cooking mallet; set aside.
- Read John 19:28-30 - Jesus drank something like vinegar (gall), sniff the fragrance, dip finger in and taste; place the vinegar in a mixing bowl.
- Read John 10:10-11 - Egg whites symbolize Jesus' holy, innocent life; add whites to the bowl with the vinegar.
- Read Luke 23:27 - the bitter tears of the women; taste a few grains of salt, remember your own sins; add the salt to the bowl.
- Read Psalm 34:8 and John 3:16 - Sweet salvation! Taste sugar and see; add to the bowl.
- Crank up the mixer and let it go while you read from Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3; let the mixer go for about 12-15 minutes; this needs to be VERY stiff!
- Read Matthew 27:57-60 - Fold the nuts into the egg-sugar mixture; this symbolizes the rocks in the garden.
- Using a scoop or knife and spoon, drop by spoon into mounds (to resemble a rocky tomb); put into the oven and turn it OFF!
- Read Matthew 27:65-66 - The tomb is sealed; use two pieces of tape (5-6 inches long) to "seal" the door edges (symbolically).
- Read John 16:20 & 22 - Consider these passages, then go to bed!
- NEXT MORNING: Read Matthew 28:1-9 - Jesus is risen! Behold--the empty tomb! Unseal the oven door, take out the cookies, break or bite one in half - it should be hollow inside - empty - just like the Tomb!

❖ He is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!



APRIL 2020

Dates on the April calendar are subject to change. We will keep you updated as soon as decisions are made about cancellations.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3  Vergil and Mary Ann Stout	4
5 11:00 AM DiscipleTown Children's Church 4:45 PM Choir Rehearsal 5:00 PM Discipleship Training 6:00 PM Youth SOS 	6	7	8 6:45 PM AWANA 7:00 PM Bible Study & Prayer Meeting 7:00 PM Youth	9	10  No Meals  Church Office Closed	11
12 Easter – He is Risen! 11:00 PM DiscipleTown Children's Church NO Evening Service	13	14	15 6:45 PM AWANA 7:00 PM Bible Study & Prayer Meeting 7:00 PM Youth	16 6:30 PM Ladies' Fellowship at OGBC	17  Dickie Rice & Vergil Stout	18
19 11:00 AM DiscipleTown Children's Church 4:45 PM Choir Rehearsal 5:00 PM Discipleship Training 6:00 PM Youth SOS	20	21 Newsletter Articles Due	22 6:45 PM AWANA 7:00 PM Bible Study & Prayer Meeting 7:00 PM Youth	23	24  Lee & Jessie Bowser	25
26 11:00 AM DiscipleTown Children's Church 4:45 PM Choir Rehearsal 5:00 PM Discipleship Training Deacons' Meeting 6:00 PM Youth SOS	27	28	29 7:00 PM Wonderful Wednesdays 7:00 PM Bible Study & Prayer Meeting 7:00 PM Youth	30	31  Benny & Linda Gardner	

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Return services requested