



December 2025



- To magnify and glorify God in worship, prayer and praise.
- To fellowship, nurture and disciple all members and visitors in the ways of life based on Biblical teachings.
- To take Jesus Christ, His Word, and His Love to all people in our community and the world.

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Was Jesus Really Born in a Barn?

Well, a group of Bible translators was finally brave enough to offer up an alternative to the “traditional” translation of “inn” in the story of the birth of Jesus in Luke 2. Traditionally, English translations of the Bible have read something like this: “And she [Mary] brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” [Luke 2:7, KJV]. In recent years, some modern Bible translations have begun to insert a footnote about the word that has been translated as “inn”. Since 2016, the English Standard Version has included a footnote on the word inn which says, “or guest room”, as “guest room” is actually a better translation of the Greek word *kataluma* than the traditional inn. Since ancient times, the Greek word *kataluma* has been mistranslated as “inn.” In the wake of this, whole traditions emerged about cruel innkeepers and inhospitable Bethlehemites turning away a desperate woman about to go into labor. For years now, scholars have known of this discrepancy in translation. However, the translators were still not brave enough to replace “inn” with “guest room” in the actual text.

In 2019, a British Roman Catholic translation, the Revised New Jerusalem Bible, finally replaced the word “inn” with the word “living-space.” So, what does all this mean? What is the picture here?

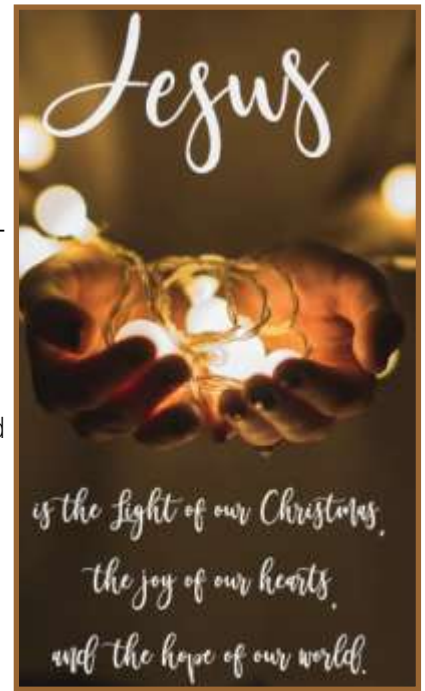
Most Palestinian Jewish homes in the first century A.D. consisted of a single room. One would enter into the house, where by the door there would be a lower area, a place for animals to be brought into the house at night (since most families had very little in the way of livestock—perhaps a goat or a cow or a donkey). The main room of the house would be slightly elevated from the area where the animals would sleep, often by a few steps. So, there would be “mangers” for the animals in the front part of the room, from which they could eat or drink during the night. However, if a family was a little more prosperous, they would build an additional room on the house, a room called a *kataluma* in Greek.

A *kataluma* would be an additional room in the house, suitable for the needs of a larger family, often used as a guest room when family or friends or the occasional visitor showed up. In the case of a woman in the family having to give birth, the woman would certainly be tended to in the *kataluma*, to give a bit more privacy for her and for the women assisting her in childbirth. So, the point that Luke is making is that given all the extra people visiting Bethlehem due to the census, this guest room was full (probably of other relatives of Joseph who had made the same trip). Thus, Mary gave birth to Jesus in the main room of the house. A manger in the front of the room was used as a makeshift crib.

What this means is that Jesus was not “born in a barn.” He was not born in a stable. Jesus was born in the main room of a simple home in Bethlehem, likely the home of a relative of Joseph, a house full to overflowing with relatives and guests. His birth would have been greeted with welcome and joy by Joseph’s extended family, as well as neighbors. Ancient Jewish custom would have demanded nothing less than this.

Don’t worry! I’m not going to alter the Christmas carols we will sing again this year! Perhaps a lesson for us, however, is that just as Jesus would have been happily greeted and received by his extended family, so let us greet and receive him as he comes to us—as we celebrate his birth, as we welcome him into our hearts, and as we prepare for his coming again in glory.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Walter L. Taylor





I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; Let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together! (*Psalms 34 :1-4*)

December 7

Advent 2: Lessons and Carols: Join us for our annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols.

Hymns: 225 **Once in Royal David's City**
 195 Joy to the World
 200 It Came upon a Midnight Clear
 221 **Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming**
 226 As With Gladness, Men of Old
 199 **See Amid the Winter's Snow**
 208 O Come, All Ye Faithful

December 14

Advent 3: Baptism: Matthew 3:13-17: Jesus comes to us, as one of us, in his birth at Bethlehem. Yet, at the Jordan River, Jesus comes as a sinner—not because of his own sins (for our Lord was without sin)—but because he comes to cast his lot with us. What does baptism mean for us?

Hymns: 213 What Child Is This
 216 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
 220 From Heaven High I Come to You

December 21

Advent 4: The World to Come: 1 Cor. 2:6-13; Revelation 21:1-8: **What is "The World to Come"?**
 What is the promise of Everlasting Life?

Hymns: 214 Angels We Have Heard on High
 222 While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks
 Insert I Wonder as I wander

December 24

Christmas Eve: Come and join us for a traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7p.m.

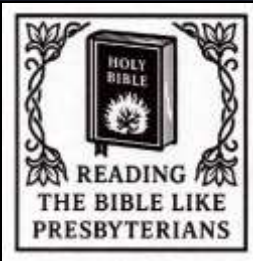
Hymns: 227 On Christmas Night All Christians Sing
 208 O Come, All Ye Faithful
 201 O Little Town of Bethlehem
 210 Silent Night! Holy Night!
 203 Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

*December 28

First Sunday of Christmas

Hymns: 232 O Jesus Sweet, O Jesus Mild
 193 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
 230 Thou Who Wast Rich beyond All Splendor





Oak Island EPC



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAYS AT 9:15 AM

OIEPC Adult Sunday School

The Fulness of Christ for Everyday Life – *Charles Bogardus*

In this Sunday School series, we have been uncovering how our faith in Christ and the Scriptures provides a reliable resource for providing what everyone needs in their everyday lives. These Scriptural provisions will be compared to the temporal and shallow offerings of the world and show that it is ultimately Jesus Christ who offers the most abundant life. We have two Sundays left in this class:

December 7
December 14

Satisfaction
Meaning

We will NOT have Sunday School on December 21st and 28th.



PRE-SERVICE PRAYER

SUNDAYS 10:05 – 10:20 AM

After Sunday School, we meet for a group prayer meeting. Our prayers will be focused on God's glory, our worship service, and our spiritual growth as a congregation.

Everyone is invited to join: elders, deacons, church members and regular attendees! Whether you have previously participated in a church prayer meeting or not, please join us, even if it is to pray silently.

Psalms 29:2 – “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.”

Hebrews 12:28 – “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.”



Women's Bible Study

Monday's at 7:00 p.m. ~ Conference Room ~

Our Women's Bible Study group is studying "Luke in the Land: Walking with Jesus in His First Century World" by Kristi McLelland.

With this study, we travel through Israel in video sessions filmed in Bethlehem, the Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem, and more to see the gospel

story in a whole new way. Through the videos, the book and our discussions, we will gain a deeper understanding of stories of Jesus's life from a first-century point of view and explore cultural and historical concepts that will give new perspective on well-known biblical stories. Kristi McLelland will deepen the way we read the accounts of Jesus. We will spend a couple of weeks exploring each chapter together.

It is never too late to join! Buy a book (Amazon, Christian Book Distributors) and join us!! You will be surprised how many new insights you will gain! For more information, contact Pastor Agnes Taylor @ 910-278-9741.



We will NOT meet on Monday, December 15, 22 and 29.



**Upcoming
Communion:
January 4**



**January
Newsletter
DEADLINE:
December 15**



Funds raised will cover the placement of a limited number of *Christmas flowers* in the sanctuary. Balance will be used for outreach efforts assisting members in our congregation and others in the community who are in need.

Your heartfelt contributions are greatly appreciated. Acknowledgement will be in the Christmas December 21 worship service bulletin.



Cutoff date: *Sunday, December 14*

Thank you. from the Worship Committee.

Name: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Donation: \$ _____

Check #: _____

In Honor Of: _____

In Memory of: _____



Our From the Heart Women's Group invites you all to help bring some Christmas cheer to the shut-ins of our congregation!

Get your Santa hat or reindeer antlers, and join us on Friday evening, December 19 at 6:00 p.m. in the church parking lot. We will carpool to the shut-ins on our list, sing some familiar Christmas carols, and finish our time together in the church's Fellowship Hall with some coffee or hot cocoa, and of course some Christmas goodies.

Our Christmas Caroling means a lot to the church members we visit. And of course it is fun for the carolers, so plan on coming out on Friday, December 19! We provide booklets with Christmas carols.

If it is raining, we will cancel the caroling!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

6:00 PM



OIEPC Christmas Dinner
Thursday, December 25
1:00 p.m.

Ham will be provided.
Please plan on bringing a dish
and/or dessert to share.

Don't forget
to sign up!

Sign Up Sheets:
Fellowship Hall, Narthex, Office Foyer

Contact: Lynne Barmore 910)278-6126

Let us know if you would like for us to
deliver a plate to you.



Shoebox Season is here!!

Let's partner with Samaritan's Purse to spread joy and bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to boys and girls around the world. You can pack a traditional shoebox as you have done in the past or you can choose to 'Build a Shoebox' online.

*Our goal is to pack or build online approximately 100 or more shoeboxes **by 12/31/25.***

Build a Shoebox Online

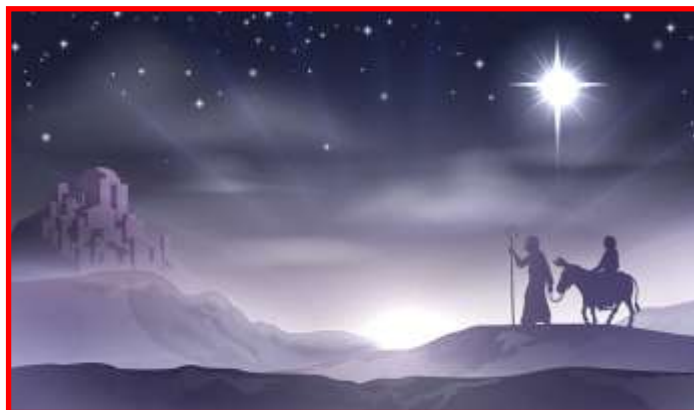
Building a shoebox online starts now by using the OIEPC goal page. This option allows you to pick and choose certain essentials (school supplies), a 'Wow' toy (doll, stuffed animal or soccer ball with pump), small toys (necklace, jump rope, harmonica, frisbee and yoyo) and accessories (flashlight, calculator, socks, shirt, flip flops, watch, etc.). The cost for building a shoebox online is \$30 total. There is no additional charge for shipping.



OIEPC goal page keeps track of the number of shoeboxes that are built online.

<https://build-a-shoebox.samaritanpurse.org/view/d496f8eb-a26e-474a-a8a6-74d6c2d6d393>

Or click onto: [Build A Shoebox](#)



Prayer Requests

If you have a need or prayer request, please call the church office or email us.

All urgent prayer requests will then be shared through email to all church members. This will allow your prayer requests to be shared universally with your church family. Due to privacy laws, hospital admission information is not available to your pastor. Thank you.



Many families in the Oak Island community have a great need for our help, especially at this time of year. How can we assist? The OIEPC Missions Committee is coordinating with the Oak Island Resource Center to provide gift cards to families who have been identified to be in need of support. The Resource Center staff evaluates each families' request to determine whether they qualify for this outreach program. Many families have been recognized as requiring assistance. Last year our gift card donations supplied local needy children with shoes, coats, hats, gloves and the purchase of food, blankets and other necessary items for families.



We need your HELP! Our **Angel Tree** Program has gotten off to a slow start this year. We have only received 26 gift cards as of Sunday, November 30th. Any amount will be greatly appreciated. Let us remember those that are less fortunate and have fallen on hard times, especially at this time of year. The box to place your gift cards is located in the Narthex on Sunday mornings and outside of the church office during the week. Please be sure to identify the of each gift card.

Monday, December 8th is the last day to donate gift cards. Won't you help?

Matthew 25:40 Jesus said: "Whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of Mine, you did it for Me." Blessings, **Paula Paxton**, for the OIEPC Missions



Oak Island EPC

ACTIONS OF THE SESSION

November 19, 2025

Special Order: John Duncan made a presentation regarding the work of Foundations for the Nations.

Personnel Committee: Bill Neeb reported that All About Cleaning was hired to provide custodial services.

Missions Committee: Mary Margaret Carman reported that Operation Christmas Child and Angel Tree Giving are in progress. The Inter-church Fellowship will hold meeting and have lunch at OIEPC in December. Those who went on mission trip to Peru will provide information on their experiences at a lunch following services on December 7, 2025.

Worship Committee:

Dr. Taylor reported that Lessons and Carols has been rescheduled to December 7, 2025.

Dr. Taylor reported the request from Committee to change the next two dates for Communion to November 30, 2025, and December 28, 2025.

Stewardship and Finance Committee: Ken Eagle presented budget which was approved pending approval of Terms of Call by the congregation at Congregational Meeting on December 14, 2025. Slate of officers will also be presented for vote at this time.

Clerk's Report: Sid Hart died on November 5, 2025.

Pastor's Report: Dr. Taylor reported that the annual Session Retreat will be held on a Saturday in January.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Hall; Clerk



Oak Isl and Evangelical Presbyterian Church

CAFÉ NOEL

Sunday, December 14
5:00 p.m.

It won't be long now until Café Noel will once again open its doors right here at OIEPC! Our Fellowship Hall will be transformed into a stylish Christmas restaurant, where we will enjoy a delicious dinner, once again catered by Fixins OKI, followed by musical entertainment, featuring talented musicians from our own congregation.

Our Buffet:

Grilled Chicken Cordon Blue
Beef Tips & Mushrooms
Rice Pilaf

Local NC Honey Glazed Carrots
Fresh Steamed Green Beans
Dinner Roll

Water, Sweet Tea, Unsweet Tea, and Coffee

SOLD OUT



Don't forget: Café Noel's famous and delicious dessert buffet!

The doors will open at 5:00 PM and the buffet will open at 5:30 PM. This will give us all some time to find a seat and get something to drink before dinner.

Please enter through the side door to the Disciples Room. The door of the Fellowship Hall will remain closed. You will be greeted at the **side door. Don't forget to bring your ticket! You will be able to put your coat in the Disciple Room before you go into Café Noel.**

We hope you are just as excited about this yearly Christmas party as we are!

The Christian Education and Nurture Committee

NOEL

NOEL



NOEL

NOEL

SOLD OUT



MONTHLY REPORTS OF ALL CONTRIBUTIONS
Oct 2025

October	
Contributions Received Year To Date For General Funds	\$ 289,449
Budgeted Monthly	\$ 28,854
General Fund Contribution For Oct2025	\$ 24,214
<u>Special Funds Contributions</u>	
Paths of Hope	\$ 100
Missions General	\$ 100
Pastor Appreciation	\$ 250
Human Needs	\$ 630
Scholarship Fund	\$ 150
New Organ 2025 Fund	\$ 3,579
Total Special Funds	\$ 4,809
Total All Funds Received in Oct2025	\$ 29,023



Nursing/Rehab Homes:

Gene Stark	Southport Health & Rehab Center, #202A, 630 Fodale Ave, Southport, NC 28461
Suzan Fogle	Southport Health & Rehab Center, #605, 630 Fodale Ave, Southport, NC 28461
Margaret Pettrey	Lexington Country Place, #213B, 700 Mason Headley Rd, Lexington, KY 40504
Shelvy Pasour	Peak Resources Gastonia, #302, 2780 X-Ray Drive, Gastonia, NC 28054

Our homebound, hospitalizations, those suffering with long-term illnesses, and other prayer requests:

Jennifer Davis (daughter of Phyllis Hendrick); Chris DeArros; Pat Kelly; Allen Walts; Louis Perry (friend of Bob and Jane Wydra), treatment for prostate cancer; Mary Ann Whitley (friend of Eagle family), undergoing cancer treatment; Bonnie Diana (friend of David and Paula Paxton) treatment for brain tumor; Lynne Barmore, chemo treatments; Jose Pena, ongoing health concerns; Gary Taylor (son-in-law of Bonnie Pendergast), ongoing cancer treatment; Charlene Harding (mother of Kent Winrich), in memory care with Lewy body dementia; Nate Winrich (son of Kent Winrich), non-believer; Jim Gerlach, in remission for multiple myeloma; Tony Dellinger (cousin of Jane Wydra), recovering from a heart transplant; Walter and Jane Moore, hospice; Evelyn Reynolds, hospice; Vickie Potter (friend of Glenda Dennis), cancer treatment; Shawn Gray (friend of Ken Eagle), recovering from kidney transplant surgery; Bob Jenkins, under treatment for cancer; Merle Scherle, under treatment for acute lymphocytic leukemia; Angie Myers (daughter-in-law of Ann Myers), leg infection; Dan Bressler (brother-in-law of Patricia Bressler), ongoing cancer treatment; Glenda Dennis, retina issues.

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Walter L. Taylor, Pastor	Rev.W.L.Taylor@gmail.com	Oak Island
Rev. Agnes Taylor, Assistant Pastor	oakislandpcdce@gmail.com	Evangelical
Sherry Hardison, Office Administrator	oakislandpc@gmail.com	Presbyterian Church
Michael Byers, Bookkeeper	oiepcbookkeeper@gmail.com	1503 East Oak Island Dr
Donna Winrich, Director of Music	donna.winrich@gmail.com	Oak Island, NC 28465
Ann Myers, Organist		910)278-9741
Keena Knox, Nursery Coordinator		www.oipres.org





December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:00 Womens Bible Study	2 10:00 Books and Coffee 6:30 Missions Committee	3 3:00 Choir Practice	4	5 8:00 Emmaus	6
7 9:15 Sunday School 10:05 Pre-Service Prayer 10:30 Worship Lessons and Carols Noon Fellowship Lunch	8 11:00 Martha's Circle 7:00 Womens Bible Study	9	10 4:00 Deacons Mtng 7:00 Outreach	11	12	13
14 9:15 Sunday School 10:05 Pre-Service Prayer 10:30 Worship Noon Congregational Meeting 5:00 Café Noel	15 11:00 Martha's Circle	16 9:00 Finance Committee	17 1:00 Craft Club 7:00 Session	18	19 8:00 Emmaus  6:00 Christmas Caroling	20
21 10:30 Worship	22	23	24 Office Closed  7:00 Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed  1:00 Christmas Dinner	26	27
28 10:30 Worship and Communion	29 Office Closed 	30	31 			



12/3	Bob Abel
12/3	Amanda Jackway
12/9	Lynne Barmore
12/12	Miles Lloyd
12/14	Bill Home
12/22	Allison Pickard
12/23	Don Smith
12/23	John Crawford
12/26	Bonnie Pendergast-Jacques
12/28	Dee Weaver
12/28	Bill Neeb





Seven members of OIEPC traveled to Lima, Peru this month on the first-ever vision trip sponsored by Paths of Hope. Paths of Hope (POH) is a ministry that began right here on Oak Island in 2017, growing out of the heart and calling of church member, Susan Smith. After its initial organization and the securing of its 501-(c)(3) status, the board of directors held a launch event at the Southport Community Center in 2019. Many of you participated in that original gathering and have remained interested and involved in the ongoing work of POH.



At the same time, many of you have joined our church since 2019. As a member of both the missions committee and the POH board, I wanted to take a moment to spotlight this ministry that OIEPC faithfully supports.

By partnering with the local church, Paths of Hope can walk alongside **youth who are aging out of children's homes through a mentoring relationship**, teaching valuable life skills, and assisting with educational opportunities. We exist to help these young people discover the calling God has on their lives and pursue the path on which He is guiding them.



Having led many mission trips in the past, including two OIEPC trips to Peru, I knew it would be so meaningful to experience our ministry firsthand. But reality exceeded my expectations. The trip gave participants a chance to dive deeply into understanding our mentoring **ministry with teens from children's homes, while also enjoying a taste of Peruvian culture and its amazing food**. The biggest benefit, though, was the deepening of friendships within our group—something that naturally grows through shared experiences and spaces! I think that we would all agree that there is something powerful about seeing ministry in person, meeting the people behind the mission, and **seeing the impact of God's work**.



Please join us for a Peruvian lunch after church on December 7.

We will enjoy some traditional dishes and hear a more in-depth report from the group who traveled to Lima.

(Did you know that Peruvian cuisine is considered one of the best in the world?) Our team is excited to prepare lunch for you, and we hope **you'll come and share in the experience!**



Susan Smith, OIEPC Missions Committee Member
President, Board of Directors, Paths of Hope Ministries



Click onto this link:

[Our First Vision Trip: Witnessing God's Work Up Close](#) ☐ ☐



Oak Island

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Caroling

Friday
Dec. 19 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday
Dec. 24 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Dinner

Sunday
Dec. 25 1:00 p.m.