

# E-Connections

*News from* **Oakmont Baptist Church**



## A Word from Our Pastor

**N**ot everyone does so, but some families make a huge deal of birthdays. For some families, it's not a birthday but a birth week celebration, a long season of giving thanks for someone's birth. It's a way of centering our attention on one person, blessing that person, and for the person to receive love.

No birthday in human history has received and continues to receive more attention than that of Jesus, our Savior and Lord, the King of kings and the Prince of Peace. At Christmas we give thanks for Jesus, we offer our praise and adoration to Jesus as we recount the events surrounding his birth.

And we extend the celebration for more than a day, even more than a week, as we celebrate the twelve days of Christmas! Twelve days to marvel at the manger, wonder with Mary at the visit of the Wise Men and the shepherds, and to give our gifts in response to God's greatest gift.

Birthdays at their best orient our lives around the person whose birthday we're celebrating. To fully immerse ourselves in the celebration of another person's birthday is to honor, strengthen, and elevate our relationship with that person. And so we pray that our twelve day celebration of Jesus' birth, and the four weeks of Advent that preceded the twelve days, will serve to anchor us more strongly in Christ, reorient our lives more centrally in Christ, and restore, renew, and revitalize our relationship with Christ. This is a hope for each of us as individuals and for our church.

On our own birthdays, we often look back over the previous year. What did we learn? What were the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs? Who were the people we spent time with, blessed, and were blessed by? As we celebrate Christ's birth, we're invited to look back over the past year and name the moments where we experienced Christ's presence in special ways and where we saw Jesus at work in and through us.

Jesus is always with us, but where have you sensed Christ's presence in a special way in our church in 2025? How have you seen Jesus at work in our fellowship, our worship, our witness, our work in the world? What has God taught us? What has the Holy Spirit taught you? Where have you encountered Jesus in powerful ways beyond our church, and how has Jesus been at work in and through you?

As this newsletter is published, it's only the second day of Christmas; keep celebrating the whole Christmas season! As you celebrate, think back on the work of God in 2025, the gifts received, the lessons learned, the opportunities to serve, and give thanks.

Grace and peace,  
Eric Porterfield





# OBC Updates



## December 28

Isaiah 63:7-9

*Eric Porterfield preaching  
Luke Porterfield, guest musician*

## January 4

Ephesians 1:3-14

*Eric Porterfield preaching  
Celebration of Holy Communion*



The Wise Men are on the move and are taking quite the scenic route to get to the manger! Can you find where they are this week?

## The Wandering Wise Men

Our Wandering Wise Men are continuing their journey to the manger. Be on the lookout for them each Sunday as they travel around the church on their way to the nativity scene in the sanctuary. If you spot them, be sure to let Pastor Ben know; you may just earn a prize for doing so!

## Second Daily Psalms Journey Concludes

From Lent through mid-summer, we read one psalm each day, from Psalm 1 through Psalm 150. We also committed to praying the Lord's Prayer each morning. The experience was enriching for many of us, so we committed to a second daily journey through the 150 Psalms. As the calendar year ends, our second Psalms journey is ending, too. We thank God for the blessings of this daily practice.



*Here's the remaining schedule:*

Friday, December 26: Psalm 146

Saturday, December 27: Psalm 147

Sunday, December 28: Psalm 148

Monday, December 29: Psalm 149

Tuesday, December 30: Psalm 150

# Christmas Eve Offering

## *You can still give until Dec. 31!*



Each December, Oakmont gathers a special Christmas Eve Offering to honor the One who came to us, though “his own did not receive him” (John 1: 11). Each year, the Missions Team prays to discern a current need among our neighbors that this funding might help address. November’s SNAP benefits crisis revealed that food insecurity—hunger—is a widespread issue in our community. As grocery prices continue to increase, many of our children, elderly, and working poor families are struggling to meet basic food needs. *The 2025 Christmas Eve Offering will go to support our local Food Bank so more of our neighbors have access to the food their families need. Please give whatever you are able.*

## Global Missions Offering



This year we experienced personally (through Alicia Porterfield!) the fruit of our Global Missions Offering. Alicia traveled to Uganda to serve alongside the Ackers family, who are Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missionaries in the capital city of Kampala. The Ackers lead Refuge and Hope International, a ministry that shares the hope of Jesus through discipleship, job skills training, and pastoral care. Our gifts to the Global Missions offering provide crucial financial support to the Ackers and other missionaries around the world. We are grateful for the honor of participating in this work of God through our prayers and financial gifts. Gifts can also be designated in support of SBC missionaries.

## Global Missions Post Office in Operation!



The Oakmont Christmas Post Office is up in the narthex! Please bring your cards for Oakmont friends to this “post office” instead of paying to send them to friends through the mail. You are invited to give a donation for Global Missions for the time, cost, and trouble you’ve saved through this ministry. Don’t forget to check for cards sent to you by searching the box with the first letter of your last name!



## Baby, It's Cold Outside!

And, unfortunately, the heat is out in the gallery, Friends. There's a plan in process, but it's a complex replacement and will take some time. So the gallery hallway, bathrooms, and narthex will be colder than usual. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

## Thank You for Loving Our Neighbors Through the Giving Tree!



Over 34 individuals from our neighborhood tutoring ministry received gifts, both practical and fun, through the Giving Tree ministry. The final gifts were delivered Monday. Thanks so much for making this possible! From the making of the wish lists, to the tag-picking and shopping, to the wrapping and delivery, this ministry is a congregational labor of love—made possible through the generosity of God's abundant love in Christ Jesus our Savior. It is a humbling gift to see God at work as we serve together to love our neighbors.

## Oakmont Needs You!



What a blessing that we are growing, but that also means that we need new volunteers as Greeters at our entrances prior to our worship services and in our Nursery and Preschool areas during worship. If you are interested and willing to volunteer in one of these areas, please let our staff know by calling the office or emailing Nicole Davis at [nicole@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:nicole@oakmontchurch.com). Serving is a blessing, and we pray that you will consider serving God at Oakmont in one of these capacities in 2026. Thank you!

## Music Ministry Memos



Regular rehearsals will  
resume Wednesday, January 7.

*Have a merry Christmas  
and a happy New Year!*

Contact Laurie Cosby if you are interested in  
joining any of these groups at [laurielee@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:laurielee@oakmontchurch.com).





## Labyrinth at Oakmont

During Advent and Lent—both seasons of preparation—Oakmont provides a labyrinth space for prayer, reflection, and meditation on the presence of God. Going back to the Middle Ages, labyrinths were used in European cathedrals in keeping with the spiritual practice of pilgrimage, an intentional, physical journey to a holy place. In preparation for or in place of such a journey, participants would use the labyrinth to practice walking meditation and prayer to become more present with themselves and with God.

In Advent's time of waiting and watching, walking the labyrinth helps us prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ child. Unlike a maze with multiple paths, wrong turns, and dead ends, a labyrinth has a single path that leads to the center and back out again. In this way, the labyrinth offers us a sense of safety and peace. As we walk, we don't have to worry or plan which way to go. We can simply be present, confident that God is with us on the journey, just as God was with Mary and Joseph on the journey to Bethlehem.



## Drop-In Bible Study

This class will resume the study of Paul's short letters in January. Happy Holidays, and we'll see you in 2026!

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## A New Youth Room Is on the Horizon! Opportunity to Support!



Architectural plans are being finalized, site plans are being formulated, and we think construction on our new Youth Room could begin by March if not before, depending on the winter weather. This is exciting!

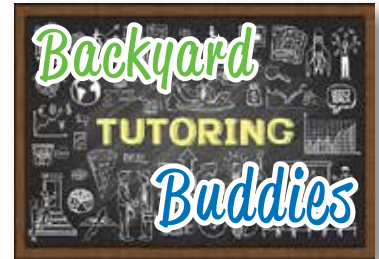
Add to the excitement an unanticipated and much appreciated gift of \$150,000 to our Building Fund from Immanuel Baptist Church! As Immanuel continues the long process of bringing their formal ministry to a close, and as many of their members have joined us at Oakmont as we together continue Immanuel's wonderful legacy, we're so grateful that part of the Immanuel legacy will be experienced every time a teenager walks through the doors of the new facility.

With Immanuel's gift, the eventual sale of The Branches property, and our healthy reserves, we do not anticipate a capital campaign for this new construction, currently estimated at \$950,000. But the Immanuel gift reminds us that when something wonderful happens, people want to be part of it and support it. If you would like to make a financial contribution to the new construction, we encourage you to do so! We're not asking for sacrifices or for anyone to divert their end of year giving from missions or the Ministry Action Spending Plan. But we do want to give people an opportunity to participate in this project through special giving.

Throughout our construction journey, we invite people to give as they feel led.



## Backyard Buddies After-School Ministry



*We're enjoying a Christmas break  
from tutoring until January 5!*



## Clothes Closet

WE ARE NOW ACCEPTING WINTER DONATIONS! The best time to drop off clothes is when the Closet is open: the first and third Tuesdays (no fifth Tuesdays) from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Our next dates are in January 2026: the 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

If you can help, please contact Robin Congleton at [rebecca.congleton55@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.congleton55@gmail.com)  
or Alicia at [alicia@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:alicia@oakmontchurch.com)!

## Backpack Pals!



Thanks to Liz Evans, the Backpack Pals team, and several others, food boxes went home with our friends at Eppes to make sure they would have additional food for the break. Please pray for these children and their families to have what they need in these days. Thanks for making this ministry possible!

### MULTI-MEDIA

Our 10:45 a.m. worship service is recorded each week and shown on Cable 7 at 12:15 p.m.

Live streaming of our service and service archives are available in the Media section of our website.

# The Village Update



Please pray for our moms and kids at the Village as some of them return home to be with family for the holidays. Sometimes old patterns and challenging situations can bring stress that makes the recovery journey harder. Please pray for supportive surroundings, peace within, and safety for all.

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## Tuesday Meals Ministry

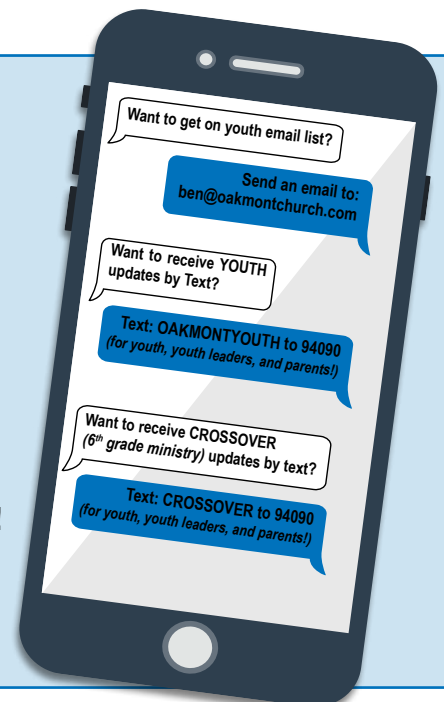


## Tuesday Night Meals

Our meal team is on break until January (no meals December 30 for the fifth Tuesday break). We look forward to resting and celebrating Christ's birth. We'll be back in the kitchen January 6, 2026, with hot, tasty meals for our homebound and neighbors in need.

# YOUTH CONNECTIONS

**STAYING IN THE KNOW** with all that's going on with our youth is easy!  
Just sign up for our email and texting lists,  
**AND GET INVOLVED NOW!**





# Spiritual Formation at OBC

## Prayer Team at Oakmont



Oakmont, you have a prayer team that wants to pray for the issues in your life that challenge you! We have set up four prayer boxes around the church; two at the back of the sanctuary, one in Grand Central, and one in the back hallway near the choir suite. There is no issue too small; it would be our honor to support each of you this way. Please put us to work!

## Care Team Update



The CARE (Connecting, Appreciating, Responding, Engaging) Team provides a ministry of love and support to some of our members who are not able to attend worship and other church activities on a regular basis. The team makes visits, phone calls, and remembers birthdays, just to name a few things. If you are interested in being a part of this ministry, please contact Lynne James at [lynnej@suddenlink.net](mailto:lynnej@suddenlink.net) or Kimberly Williamson at [kfwilliamson@suddenlink.net](mailto:kfwilliamson@suddenlink.net).

## Join us on Sunday mornings!

**IN-PERSON WORSHIP**  
this Sunday at 10:45 a.m.

**LIVE-STREAM WORSHIP**  
at 10:45 a.m.

**WATCH US ON CABLE CHANNEL 7**  
at 12:15 p.m.



## Watch our worship services online!

You're invited to subscribe to Oakmont's YouTube channel to watch our worship services online! Access it via YouTube by typing in the channel's name: "Oakmont BC Greenville NC." You can also access it by clicking [here](#) or on the YouTube logo above.



**Join us for live-stream using the QR code above!**





# Small Group Connections AT OAKMONT



## **Life Lessons Bible Studies**

Co-ed Small Group

Teacher: Sharron Edwards

Location: Room 607

## **\*Formations Adult Bible Study**

*(Smyth and Helwys)*

Co-ed Small Group

Teacher: Cal Hayslip

Location: Room 606

## **Nurturing Faith Bible Study**

Co-ed Small Group for adults in 40s–50s who may have children in middle and/or high school

Teacher: Mac Williamson

Location: Room 501

## **Young Adults**

Co-ed small group for young adults, 30s–40s, who may have children

Teacher: Lauren McGee

Location: Room 502

## **\*Formations Adult Bible Study**

*(Smyth and Helwys)*

Potter's Clay

Co-ed ongoing class for middle/older adults

Co-teachers: Tim Britton, Ed Congleton, Bill Gaston

Location: Room 300

## **College/Young Adult Class**

A class for college-age coeds

Teacher: Michele Mazey

Location: Room 506

## **\*Formations Adult Bible Study**

*(Smyth and Helwys)*

Disciples

Co-ed ongoing class for older adults

Co-teachers: Dot Seay, Doug Strickland, Fred Daniel & Wayne Taylor

Location: Fellowship Hall

## **\*Connections Adult Bible Study**

*(Smyth and Helwys)*

Messengers

Co-ed ongoing class for senior adults

Teacher: Carol Foor

Location: Room 307

## **\*Formations Adult Bible Study**

*(Smyth and Helwys)*

Pathfinders

Co-ed ongoing class for senior adults

Co-teachers: Tom Durham, Gerry Jolly

Location: Room 609

## **Koinonia**

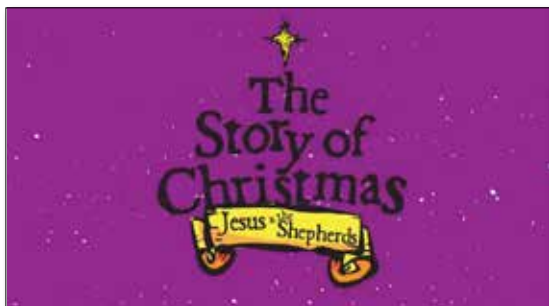
An ongoing class for women who are single, divorced, widowed, or women who do not attend a class with their husbands.

During the summer, this small group chooses a contemporary book on a relevant subject, often written by a female author, to study together.

Teacher: Bridgette Williamson

Location: Room 610 (and off-campus on occasion)

# Children's Connection



FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, WE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS STORY AND THE AMAZING BIRTH OF JESUS! AS WE GET READY TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS, WE WILL TALK ABOUT HOW GOD LOVED THE WORLD SO MUCH THAT GOD GAVE US JESUS! JESUS IS WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT! FOR THIS MONTH, LET US SHOW OTHERS GOD'S LOVE THROUGH OUR ACTIONS AND OUR WORDS. WHEN WE DO SO, THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS IS CELEBRATED EVEN MORE!

Our story this week comes to us from Matthew 2:1–2, 9–11. In this story we learn about the Magi who came to visit Jesus. The Magi, or “Wise Men,” were a special group of people from a faraway land. These men traveled a great distance to come and worship baby Jesus. They followed a star to the place where Jesus was and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts showed that the Magi knew that Jesus was God’s Son, and that they knew Jesus was a very special baby. The journey of the Magi is truly incredible because they traveled a very far distance during a time when planes and cars were not around. This means that they either walked or rode on the backs of animals to get to their destination. However,

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“The Wise Men” | Click [HERE](#).

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## **PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN**

### **December Bible Study Lessons**

*(Bible story video & resources emailed out each Friday)*

## **DECEMBER THEME: CHRISTMAS SHAPES: GOD GAVE US JESUS**

Christmas is such a special time of year. It's filled with wonder and excitement! There are so many things to see and do at Christmas that it's easy to miss what Christmas is all about. That's why we want to use shapes that children already know to help them remember the most important thing they will ever know: God gave us Jesus.

The shapes we're talking about this month are so much more than just hearts, squares, circles, and stars. They are fun ways to help our children remember the true story of Christmas. Hearts remind us that “God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son” (John 3:16, GNT). Squares look like a gift, and Jesus is the best gift ever. Circles remind us of fluffy sheep, and God sent angels to announce His great gift to shepherds who were watching their sheep. Then God put a special star in the sky to lead wise men to come worship young Jesus.

This month, let us all pray that Christmas will become a time when we remember that God gave us Jesus. In doing so, our hope is that our children will begin to see reminders everywhere of the true story of Christmas.

### **December Memory Verse**

*“God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.” – John 3:16 GNT*

## Continued from previous page

despite the length of the journey, the Magi did it because they knew that seeing Jesus was worth it! They trusted that the birth of Jesus was a gift from God, and they were not going to miss out on that!

—Ben Gurganus,  
Associate Pastor for Youth & Christian Education  
Resources and ideas are from Orange Curriculum.

## First – Sixth Grade

### 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Grade December Bible Study Lessons

(Bible story video & resources emailed out each Friday)

## DECEMBER THEME: EXTRA! EXTRA! Celebrate the Good News of Jesus' Birth

### GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TRUTH AND GOD'S CREATION, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

God didn't need cable news or social media to broadcast the greatest birth announcement of all time. Instead, God sent an angel to Mary and to Zechariah and a full-on angel choir to the shepherds. And then, because it was no-big-deal, God placed a brand-new star in the sky to share the news with the wise men. Throughout history, the extraordinary news of Jesus' birth has been spread in every way imaginable, which is why we're shouting it out through this month's theme: "Extra! Extra! Celebrate the Good News of Jesus' birth."

### — Weekly Bottom Lines for December —

#### December 7

Jesus is good news for everyone.

#### December 21

Jesus is the greatest gift.

#### December 14

God always had a plan to send Jesus.

#### December 28

Celebrate Jesus all year long.

### December Memory Verse

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord." – Luke 2:11, NIV



## Children's Ministry Text Group

For any parents of children who would like to be added to the Children's Ministry text alerts, please text "oakmontkids" (no quotation marks needed) to 833-744-0524. *Stay informed!*

## **— Children & Youth Updates —**

***Stay tuned for updates in our children  
and youth ministry for 2026!***

***Our Wednesday night youth gatherings are done for the year!  
We will resume in 2026.***



# — This Week's Events —

## Sunday, December 28

9:40 a.m.  
Bible Study/Sunday School

10:45 a.m.  
In-Person & Live-Stream Worship

12:15 p.m.  
Worship on Cable Channel 7

## Monday, December 29

6:30 p.m.  
Celebrate Recovery

## Tuesday, December 30

10:00 a.m.  
Oakmont Handcrafters Group

## Thursday, January 1

Church Office Closed  
for the New Year's Day Holiday



*Don't forget that year-end gifts must either arrive to the church office or be postmarked by December 31, 2025 in order for the gift to be counted towards gifts given in 2025. Thank you for helping us finish out the year strong!*

Our Record of Our  
**FINANCIAL**  
*Sunday*



*December 21, 2025*  
**FAITHFULNESS**

### 2025 MISSIONS AND MINISTRY SPENDING PLAN: \$1,276,650

Receipts (This Week) .....	\$37,070	Building Fund (This Week) .....	\$7,225
(\$9,640 Online, \$27,430 Mail)		Building Fund (Month-to-Date) .....	\$15,709
Receipts (Month-to-Date) .....	\$95,925	Building Fund (Year-to-Date) .....	\$204,168.50
Receipts 2025 (Year-to-Date) .....	\$1,162,946.87	Baptist Children's Home (This Week) .....	\$100
Receipts 2024 (Year-to-Date) .....	\$1,084,185.68	Baptist Children's Home (YTD) .....	\$2,840
Communion Offering (This Week) .....	\$420	Global/LM(International) (This Week) .....	\$705
Communion Offering (MTD).....	\$1,925	Global/LM(International) (YTD).....	\$2,465
		Christmas Eve Offering (This Week) .....	\$1,900
		Christmas Eve Offering (YTD) .....	\$2,080



# The Worship of God at Oakmont

## GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

WELCOME

Rev. Eric Porterfield

HYMN

*"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (He Has Come for Us)"*

TESTIMONIES

Rev. Eric Porterfield

## PRAYERS AND OFFERINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

MORNING PRAYER

Rev. Alicia Porterfield

HYMN

*"In the Bleak Mid-Winter"*

OFFERTORY SENTENCES

## PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP TIME

Rev. Alicia Porterfield

SPECIAL MUSIC

*"Come Darkness, Come Light"*  
*Luke Porterfield, vocals and guitar*

SCRIPTURE READING

*Isaiah 63:7-9*

Rev. Eric Porterfield

SERMON

*"Remembering God's Gracious Deeds"*

Rev. Eric Porterfield

HYMN

*"Go Tell It on the Mountain"*

## SENDING FORTH GOD'S PEOPLE

LIFE AT OAKMONT

Rev. Alicia Porterfield

BENEDICTION

Rev. Eric Porterfield

# All People of Oakmont Baptist Church Are Ministers *and serve alongside*

**Rev. Eric Porterfield**  
Senior Pastor  
[eric@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:eric@oakmontchurch.com)

**Dr. Laurie Cosby**  
Minister of Music  
[laurielee@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:laurielee@oakmontchurch.com)

**Rev. Ben Gurganus**  
Associate Pastor for Youth  
& Christian Education  
[ben@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:ben@oakmontchurch.com)

**Rev. Alicia Porterfield**  
Minister of Missions  
[alicia@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:alicia@oakmontchurch.com)

**Dr. Greg Rogers**  
Pastor Emeritus

**Ms. Lauri Johnson**  
Pastoral/Music Ministry Secretary  
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**Mrs. Nicole Davis**  
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**Mrs. Caroline Bissette**  
Technical Assistant  
[techteam@oakmontchurch.com](mailto:techteam@oakmontchurch.com)

**Mr. Jackson Bunch**  
**Mr. David Horvath**  
**Mr. Jimmy Weaver**  
**Mr. Phillip Williamson**  
Sextons

## Worship & Music Leadership

**Mrs. Alisa Gilliam**  
Pianist

**Mr. Jim Gilliam**  
Music Assistant

**Mrs. Karen Meetze**  
Organist



1100 Red Banks Road | Greenville, NC 27858 | 252.756.1245 | [oakmontchurch.com](http://oakmontchurch.com)  
Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

