



Oaklette United Methodist Church

"God's Body in this Community"

"Oaklette United Methodist Church through worship, education, and outreach, seeks to make the gospel of Jesus Christ real, as we minister to all people."

May 4 2025

Third Sunday of Easter



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

Loving, sustaining God, like the mighty oak, may our braches at Oaklette church embrace those around us in this community. Use us as an instrument to welcome and shelter your people. Deepen our roots so that our branches are strong. Let the Holy Spirit flow like a river through our church, so that we may do your will. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 [CEB]

¹⁶ So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now. ¹⁷ So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

¹⁸ All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹ In other words, God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, by not counting people's sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation.

²⁰ So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, "Be reconciled to God!" ²¹ God caused the one who didn't know sin to be sin for our sake so that through him we could become the righteousness of God.

PRELUDE

"In Holy Communion"

DANA MOODY

PASSING OF THE PEACE

MESSAGE FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS

CALL TO WORSHIP: (responsively)

Lay Reader: Come, all who long to be made new—God invites us to be born of water and the Spirit.

People: We come, ready for transformation, ready for grace.

Lay Reader: The Spirit moves like wind and water – sometimes gentle, sometimes wild.

People: We welcome the Spirit's work in our lives, no matter how messy.

Lay Reader: In Christ, the old has passed away – see, everything has become new!

People: We are new creations, reconciled and renewed through God's love.

Lay Reader: Let us worship the One who gave us life, and gives us life again and again.

People: With joy and gratitude, we worship the God who makes us whole.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, You invite us to be born anew – to leave behind the old and step into new life through water and the Spirit. As Nicodemus came seeking truth, we come today with open hearts, ready for Your transforming grace.

Though the work of transformation is not always easy, we trust in Your love that shapes us into new creations. Remind us of the vows we made to turn from sin and follow You, and strengthen us to live as ambassadors of Christ in the world.

By Your Spirit, guide us, renew us, and send us. We pray in the name of Jesus, who makes all things new.

Amen.

HYMN

“At the Font We Start Our Journey”

TFWS #2114

1. At the font we start our journey, in the Easter faith baptized;
Doubts and fears no longer blind us, by the light of Christ surprised.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Hope held out and realized.
2. At the pulpit we are fashioned by the Easter tale retold
Into witnesses and prophets, by the power of Christ made bold.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Faith proclaimed, yet still untold.
3. At the altar we are nourished with the Easter gift of bread;
In our breaking it to pieces see the love of Christ outspread.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Life embraced, yet freely shed.
4. At the door we are commissioned, now the Easter victory's won,
To restore a world divided to the peace of Christ as one.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Easter's work must still be done.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION [based on John 20:24-29; Luke 24:36-43]

Wondrous God, we confess that at times our doubts and fears override our hope and faith. Forgive us when we lose sight of the joy of Your love and instead fall into despair and gloom. Lift up our spirits, Lord, and help us to remember the promise of new life here and now, not just the hope of resurrection for the future. We give thanks for Your Son, Jesus the Christ, who continues to offer us new life, who continues to turn us around and upside down, who continues to break down the walls of death in our own life. Forgive us, restore us and renew us. In the name of our risen Savior, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

Silence is kept.

Hear now the good news, Christ our Lord died for us while we were yet sinners, that proves God's love for us. In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven. Amen.

ANTHEM

"Forever"

MONICA WHITEHURST, SOLOIST

SCRIPTURE

John 3:1-16 [CEB]

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a Jewish leader. ² He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could do these miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him." ³ Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born anew,^[a] it's not possible to see God's kingdom." ⁴ Nicodemus asked, "How is it possible for an adult to be born? It's impossible to enter the mother's womb for a second time and be born, isn't it?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. ⁶ Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Don't be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' ⁸ God's Spirit^[b] blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It's the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit."⁹ ¹⁰ "Jesus answered, "You are a teacher of Israel and you don't know these things? ¹¹ I assure you that we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you don't receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Human One.^[c] ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One^[d] be lifted up ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. ¹⁶ God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. Nicodemus said, "How are these things possible?"

¹⁰ "Jesus answered, "You are a teacher of Israel and you don't know these things? ¹¹ I assure you that we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but

you don't receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Human One.^[e] ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One^[d] be lifted up ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. ¹⁶ God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life.

SERMON

“New Birth”

Rev. Stephanie Kimec-Parker

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (responsively)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. *The pastor may lift hands and keep them raised.*

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,

Father Almighty (*almighty God*), creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey,
and set before us the way of life.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection

you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

By your great mercy we have been born anew
to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead
and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

Once we were no people, but now we are your people,
declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ,
who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

On the day you raised him from the dead
he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread,
and in the power of your Holy Spirit your Church has continued
in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body
of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and
glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and for ever.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be
done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our
trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

HYMN

“As We Gather at Your Table”

TFWS #2268

1. As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
Help us know, O God, your presence;
Let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
Teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love’s victory known.
2. Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
Send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
may we still be hold your image in the world you died to save.
3. Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
Where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us nor will pride our peace destroy,
As we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As it is written in Deuteronomy: “Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you ‘Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor...’” Through our tithes and offerings, we can give generously and remember the poor. As we open wide our hands, we attend to Christ himself, who is present especially among those considered the least and the lost. Let us offer to God these gifts for ministry in Christ’s name.

Beu, B.J., Scifres, Mary. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2019: Worship Planning Resources for Every Sunday of the Year (p. 72).

Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

OFFERING PRAYER

Abundant God: You cause water to flow in desert places. You give wine to flow at a wedding feast, and food to feed five thousand on a grassy mountainside. Your generosity astounds and humbles us. We bow before you in gratitude and awe, asking you to receive what we have brought in response. May these gifts be a pleasing and fragrant offering, for the sake of the world you came to save. We pray in your holy name. Amen.

Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1 © 2012 Westminster John Knox Press

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

HYMN

“Lord I Want to be a Christian In My Heart”

#402

1. Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.
In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.
2. Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.
In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

3. Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.
In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.

4. Lord, I want to be like Jesus, in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.
In my heart, in my heart, Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

SENDING FORTH

GOING FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE

POSTLUDE

“ETUDE”

DANA MOODY

Today's service is being broadcast on Facebook Live at 11:00 am. You can access the service through the Oaklette Church Group on Facebook. You can also access the sermon through the Oaklette UMC Facebook page. If you are unable to use Facebook Live a link can be sent to you by email after the Facebook Live Worship has been recorded, but we will need your email address to do this. The Facebook Live service will also be downloaded to our website on Monday morning.

*The flowers on the altar today are presented to the glory of God.
The Food Basket on the altar is presented to the glory of God.*



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY TODAY

Members of the Church

Prayer Partner: Lisa & Brooks Ryno

Lay Reader – Debbie Rippard

Audio–Visual Operator – Rob Castellow

Facebook Live Recorder: Bright Tsevi

Greeter: Joanne Rooks

Pastor: Rev. Ned Alderman

Guest Pastor: Stephanie Kimec–Parker

Administrative Assistant: Eileen Ballance

Financial Secretary: Edna Bess

Coastal Virginia Dist. Superintendent: Rev. Beth Givens

Resident Bishop, Richmond Area: Bishop Sue Hauptert–Johnson

STEPHANIE KIMEC-PARKER

I was loved and raised at St. Mark's UMC in Midlothian, Virginia. This church made a commitment to love children and youth and I was blessed to receive that love and support. I graduated from Virginia Wesleyan University and then Wesley Theological Seminary. After seminary, I served as a US-2 young adult missionary in Los Angeles, California. For the last 11 years I've been blessed to serve as a pastor in this area, serving first at New Creation UMC as an Associate Pastor and most recently at The Gathering at Scott Memorial UMC. I'm married and we have a dog, Cheddar. I'm an ordained elder and very excited to serve as the Coordinator for Church Revitalization in our district.