



The Oakletter, Feb. 1, 2026

Bishop Will Willimon is a courageous writer. In his 2022 book *Don't Look Back*, he took the United Methodist Church to task, saying that we neither make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world nor have open minds, open hearts, and open doors. He asserted then that the median age in the UMC is 63 and added that any organization whose median age is 63 is automatically in decline. He surmised that the church should not look back – specifically not look back at where we were before COVID – and instead look to Jesus Christ for the future and ministry of the church.

Bishop Willimon's focus on the future and ministry of the church is addressed in his latest book, *The Last Supper: Conversations That Led to the Cross* [above]. Willimon delves into Jesus' parables in this Lenten study, which starts at Oaklette Tuesday, Feb. 24.

Salem United Methodist Church joins us in the study, which meets at both churches in alternating fashion and will also be offered on Zoom. The schedule for the class is as follows:

Feb. 24, Oaklette
March 3, Salem
March 10, Zoom only
March 17, Oaklette
March 24, Salem
March 31, Oaklette

All meetings take place at 6:30 p.m. Participant books cost \$17.99 and will be ordered by the church next week so that they can be passed out before worship on Sunday, Feb. 15. Please let the office know by Monday, Feb. 9, if you'd like for us to order a book for you. Kindle copies of the book are available from Amazon for \$9.99.

Please keep this study and all our services and worship for Lent in your prayers.

*Thanks,
Ned*



**This week at
Oaklette**

Sun., Feb. 1
6:30 pm
Beverly
Hillbillies Bible
study

Mon., Feb. 2
10 a.m. Food
pantry [Kay
Hill and Paige
Weifert]

7 p.m. HRM
Band

Tues. Feb. 3
10:15 a.m.

Providing lunch
for WesleyODU

Wed., Feb. 4
6:30 p.m.
choir practice

Thurs., Feb. 5
8:30 a.m.-3:30
p.m., HSOBX

10 a.m. Bible
study

Fri., Feb. 6
10 a.m. shelf-
stocking at the
Community
Feed in Berkley

Sat., Feb. 7
8:30 a.m.
District
Training at
Community
UMC

Sun., Feb. 8
9:30 am Sunday
school/SOTM

11 am Fifth
Sunday After
the Epiphany
worship

6:30 pm
Beverly
Hillbillies Bible
study

Birthdays: Samantha Hincks – February 3
Richard Tucker – February 7

Today's Gospel, Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."



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