



## The Oakletter, June 7, 2026

The picture above is one that I gave Dana Moody of me to put on the board outside the fellowship hall. Dana vetoed it, saying that every other picture up there shows someone wearing at least a tie and a sportscoat. I chose this picture because it shows me at work. Specifically, it shows me at the Easter 2006 sunrise service on the flight deck of USS RONALD REAGAN. We performed full-immersion baptisms that morning in an engine aircraft casing, but that's not what I'm doing in this picture. Doug, the helicopter pilot coming out of the water, is a United Methodist, and, as such, he was baptized as an infant. We reaffirmed Doug's baptism that day.

Of baptism, let me tell you something that my chaplain recruiter had told me years before: He said that the Navy could use me because I was a liturgical Protestant. "A what?" I asked. "A baby baptizer," he replied. I didn't realize that baptizing babies makes one a liturgical Protestant.

I'll claim the labels of baby baptizer and liturgical Protestant and here's another I'll claim: experiential theologian. I likewise did not know that I am an experiential theologian until someone explained that experiential theology means reading the Gospel and finding yourself in it. I think this is vital. I need scripture to understand my relationship with God in Jesus Christ, and I have to read the Bible to understand that relationship.

I hope that every believer reads the Bible in order to understand our relationship with Jesus Christ. I've been thinking about this since I heard Jason Stanley, the Conference Director of Call and Candidacy, say in a coaching class last week that the church does what the church has been taught.

I hope that the church teaches us that we all need to read the Bible for ourselves, and I hope that we all understand that this is true. I can't understand Jesus Christ just based on what someone else tells me, not when reading the Gospel is something that we all need to experience.

In Christ,

*Ned*

Our mission statement: Oaklette United Methodist Church, through worship, education, and outreach, seeks to make the Gospel of Jesus Christ real as we minister to all people.

### **Sunday Gospel lesson, Matthew 9:9-13, 18b-26**

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well.

When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

**Anniversaries:** Bob and Judy Carter, June 11

**Birthdays:** Stephen Friedel, Oakley Meharg, and Marvin Murden, Sr.; June 8; Patti Moulton, June 9; Rose Marie Enlow and Sydney Greene, June 11

**High-school graduations:** Slater Templeton [Princess Anne, 6/12]; Kacy Bailey [Kempsville, 6/13]

**Collections at present:** \*Mission of the month [blessing box]: canned fruit [June]

\*Annual Conference offering benefiting the M.J. Kim Fund and Center for Advocacy and Belonging, through June 14

### **This Week at Oaklette:**

Sunday, June 7: Sunday school class and SOTM @ 9:30 a.m.; worship and children's church @ 11 a.m. [Linda and Calvin Gallop]

Monday, June 8: Food pantry @ 10 a.m. [B. Swoope/T. Webb]; HRM Band @ 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9: Food distribution at the Community Feed at Berkley, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 10: Bible study @ 10 a.m.; choir practice @ 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 11: Model A Club @ 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 13: United Methodist Women @ 11 a.m.

Sunday, June 14: Sunday school and SOTM @ 9:30 a.m.; worship and children's church [**note: volunteers needed**] @ 11 a.m.

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