



The Oakletter, May 17, 2026

There are a lot of things I want to do before I leave, and I need to get to the first things this weekend.

The very first is this: I want to make sure that those of us in the “Embracing an Adverbial Faith” Sunday school class plan to go out to eat. Sunday is the last class in the series [see the graphic above], and based on a recommendation by the late Phil Maynard, all such classes and groups in a church should go out for a meal once every six weeks and also help with a service project every six weeks. I have neither a restaurant nor a service project in mind, and I’ve put a bug in the group’s ear about where we may go eat. I invite all classes and small groups at Oaklette to adopt this recommendation. I’m sorry I have not been more intentional about observing it myself.

Secondly, I get to teach the last two series in the confirmation class that Oaklette started with Community and Salem UMCs last month. Teresa Woodworth from Community taught the first two weeks and Mandy Midgett of Salem UMC taught the last two. I can’t begin to match Mandy’s creativity, so I appreciate your prayers as I prepare.

The subject of the May 17 class, United Methodist Polity, sounds like death on toast, but the lesson is anything but. The plan includes stories of Paul and Timothy from Acts and of Jesus’ asking his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Some compelling activities are included, and my choices may well be drawing a diagram that reminds us that our membership calls us to support the church with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our services, and our witness, and one that asks us to move around a room based on what we believe about God. If this sounds compelling, please join us. We’ll meet in the social hall at 5 p.m.

The class takes a break for Memorial Day weekend and then meets for its final lesson, on the United Methodist Social Principles, May 24. The proper title of the lesson is “Connect with Neighbor and Community,” and its content is probably too great for me to introduce at the end of a column here. Since that class is two weeks, maybe I can discuss it in *The Oakletter* after next. There may be other news to share in this space next week. Whatever could it be?

Prayerfully,

Ned

Ascension Sunday Epistle lesson, Acts 1:1-11, NRSV

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Birthdays: Joshua Miles and Wayne Springer, May 18; Ethel Hickman, May 20; Sonya Pacilio, May 22

Anniversary: Danny and Kelly Castellow, May 21

Reminders: Mission of the month [blessing box]: canned vegetables;
UMW collections for kits for conference, through May 31

This Week at Oaklette:

Sunday, May 17: Sunday school and SOTM @ 9:30 a.m.; worship service and children's church [J. Basnight/J. Rooks] @ 11 a.m.; confirmation class @ 5 p.m.

Monday, May 18: Food pantry [N. Helsel/S. Sprice] @ 10 a.m.; HRM Band @ 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 20: choir practice @ 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 21: Bible study @ 10 a.m.; Friends of Indian River @ 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 23: food distribution at the Community Feed at Berkley, 701 S. Main St., Norfolk, 9 a.m.-noon

Sunday, May 24: Sunday school class and SOTM @ 9:30 a.m.; worship service and children's church @ 11 a.m. [**Note: volunteers needed**]

Our prayer list includes: Pastor Tyrone Armstrong, Donna Baker, Preston Basnight, Barbara Bennett, Tanya & Steve Benton, Chris Carney, Sandy Carraway, Megan Carroll, Chesapeake Fire Dept., Coastal Va District & DS Givens, Kaylee Cuccorillo, Rylee Amelia Dimitry, Bille East, Jay Eckert, ForKids, Joyce Gaston, Freekind Virginia, Bill Gilliam, Kaye Herndon, Ethel Hickman, Debbie Hodges, Home School Out of Box, Earl Jenkins, Teal Jenkins, Pat Johnson, Karon Hardy, Brian Lincoln, Dave Lorence, Rose Marie Madu

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