



The Oakletter, May 3, 2026

Hearing Lillian Daniel [above] was not the reason that I went to the fall 2021 convocation at Perkins School of Theology. I was there in part because I wanted to go back to Dallas for a visit and primarily to hear another speaker, Amy-Jill Levine. Levine is a rockstar among Bible-study authors and I was happy that I got to teach her Lenten study, *Entering the Passion of Jesus*, here last year.

As much as I love Levine, Daniel is the one I came away from the convocation quoting; Daniel was the one who said, “We have to be serious about the God talk.”

Daniel was right. She contrasted being “serious about the God talk” with more familiar descriptions of churches, such as, “We’re nice people,” and “We have a great choir.” Daniel’s point was that nice people and great music can be found in lots of places and that what distinguishes churches is our seriousness about the God talk.

Daniel went on to say that at that time in 2021, post-COVID, the church had a chance to reach two groups we hadn’t reached in the past, namely those who had never been to church and those that hadn’t been burned by the church. She concluded that these groups don’t come to church for nice people or for a great choir but to hear how we talk about God.

I was appointed to High Street UMC in Franklin in 2021, and since I had just started a Bible study there just like the one we have at Oaklette on Thursdays, I suggested that we call that the God talk Bible study. I’m happy to say that that name has stuck.

To me, the way to be serious about the God talk is for us to immerse ourselves in God’s word and to discuss God’s word with others and to apply what we learn. I hope that I have encouraged immersion in God’s word at Oaklette with worship, Christian education, and Breakthrough Prayer videos that often include scripture for the week.

Please let me know of other ways you can think of to encourage immersion in the God talk, and please share your thoughts about God’s word with your new pastor when they arrive.

Thanks,

Ned

Sunday's Gospel lesson, John 14:1-14, CEB

"Don't be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. My Father's house has room to spare. If that weren't the case, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you? When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too. You know the way to the place I'm going."

Thomas asked, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you have really known me, you will also know the Father. From now on you know him and have seen him."

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father; that will be enough for us."

Jesus replied, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don't speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me does his works. Trust me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on account of the works themselves. I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father can be glorified in the Son. When you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it."

Birthdays: Linda Tandy, May 4; Kade Carroll and Walter Wilson, May 7; Amber Wilson, May 8; Darby Basnight and Sherri Foley, May 9

Births: Evelyn Mae Ingold, born April 25 to Samantha and Mike Ingold.
Grandparents include Curtis and Renee Buchanan and great-grandma is Barbara Denny Buchanan.

Reminders: Mission of the month [blessing box]: canned vegetables;
CAP fund donations for communion Sunday, May 3;
UMW collections for kits for conference, through May 31

This Week at Oaklette:

Sunday, May 3: Sunday school and SOTM @ 9:30 a.m.; worship service and children's church [N. Hesel/J. Rooks] @ 11 a.m.; confirmation class @ 5 p.m. at Salem UMC

Monday, May 4: Food pantry [Ann and Jimmy Lee] @ 10 a.m.; HRM Band @ 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 5: choir practice @ 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 6: HSOBX @ 8:30 a.m.; Bible study @ 10 a.m.

Saturday, May 9: Food distribution at the Community Feed at Berkley, 9 a.m.-noon

Sunday, May 10: Sunday school class and SOTM @ 9:30 a.m.; worship service and children's church @ 11 a.m. [C. Gallop/L. Gallop]

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