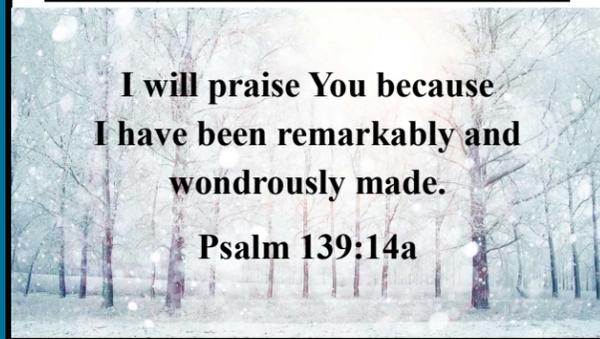




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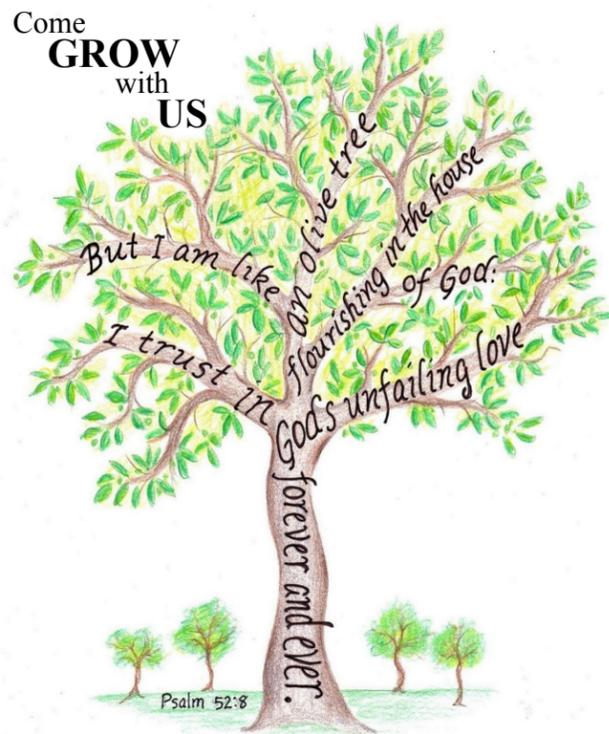
January 2018 : Verse of the Month



I will praise You because
 I have been remarkably and
 wondrously made.
 Psalm 139:14a

WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES AT OAKLAND

- Sunday** 8:30 AM Prayer Meeting
- 9:00 AM Life Groups
- 9:45 AM The Connection Zone
- 10:00 AM Worship Service
- Tuesday** 5:30 PM Backpacks of Hope
- 7:00 PM Jail Ministry
- Wednesday** 6:15 PM Youth Program
- 6:15 PM TeamKID
- 6:30 PM Wednesday Worship
- 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal



CONNECTING TO GOD & ONE ANOTHER

January 2018

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Pastor David's Corner

Why Celebrate a New Year?

At one second past midnight on January 1, the day will change from Sunday to Monday, usually an unremarkable transition of no special significance. But somehow we've decided that this change, which will end one year and begin the next, is different. This unique tick of the clock prompts us to celebrate, reflect, look back, take stock, assess how we did, and resolve to do better going forward. Few other moments in the year get this kind of attention. Why?

Why does the start of a new year carry such universal, widespread celebration? Examine all the energy and resources we invest not just in the festivity, but also our efforts to make good on a fresh set of resolutions (even though we mostly fail to keep them). Surely something powerful must be the guiding force. Some believe that the symbolism we attach to this one moment is rooted in one of the most powerful motivations of all—our motivation to self-preserve.

What about those resolutions? Are they not foundationally survival driven—living healthier, better, longer? New Year's resolutions seem to satisfy the universal human desire to have some direction over what lies ahead, because the future is unsettlingly unknowable. To counter that worrisome powerlessness, we intentionally resolve to take control. We commit to diet and exercise, to quit smoking or drinking, and to start saving. And, yet, it doesn't seem to matter whether we keep them. Resolving to do them, at least for a moment, gives us a feeling of control over the uncertain days to come, releases endorphins, and makes us feel better. And, many do the dance.

A recent study by psychologist Richard Wiseman found that for most of us, nothing really changes on New Year's Day. Of 3,000 people studied for a year, 88% failed to achieve the goals of their resolutions, although 52% had been confident they would when they made them.

So, powerless to know the future, and to control it beyond the temporary, we resort to good luck charms & rituals. The Dutch, for whom the circle is a symbol of success, eat donuts. Greeks bake special Vasilopita cake with a coin inside, bestowing good luck in the coming year on whoever finds it in his or her slice. Fireworks on New Year's Eve started in China millennia ago as a way to chase off evil spirits. The Japanese hold New Year's Bonenkai, or "forget-the-year parties," to bid farewell to the problems and concerns of the past year and prepare for a better new one.

It's fascinating, really, to see how common so much of this is: fireworks, resolutions to give us the pretense of control over the future, good luck rituals. Everywhere, New Year's is a moment to consider our weaknesses and how we might reduce the vulnerabilities they pose—and to do something about the scary helplessness that comes from thinking about the unsettling unknown of what lies ahead. So, how do you reassure yourself against the scariest things the future holds? What is your survival strategy, unto eternity? Let me offer that while we are weak, He is strong, and His Word promises that "He is making all things new," (Rev. 21:1-5). Also, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God" (Isa 41:10).

PRAYER

January Prayer Schedule

Mike Camp
Jeff Lunsford
Rich Majewski
Jack Hinson

TITHES & OFFERING

December 2017 Offerings to Date
\$18,364.62

Budget Needs for January:
\$21,616.66

Church Council & Quarterly Meetings 2018

We'll draw names for a \$40 Longhorn gift card for one lucky attendee at the Church Council meeting, Thursday, January 11th at 7 PM.

Church Council Meetings (7 PM)

January 11
April 12
July 12
October 11

Quarterly Meetings (4 PM)

January 21
April 22
July 22
September 9 (combined with the yearly meeting)

December Attendance

(Worship + Children & Youth)

Sunday, December 3rd (63 + 21 = 84)

Wednesday, December 6th (17 + 19 = 36)

Sunday, December 10th (88 + 24 = 112)

Wednesday, December 13th (21 + 15 = 36)

Sunday, December 17th (71 + 21 = 92)

Wednesday, December 20th (17 + 15 = 32)

Sunday, December 24th (70 + 19 = 89)

Wednesday, December 27th (No Activities)

Sunday, December 31st (65 + 18 = 83)



Prayer Requests

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

Join us on Sundays at 8:30AM in the choir room for prayer time.

Eddie & Candy Anderson
Steve Brown
Bob Murray
Lory Parker
Lawanna Price

Operation Christmas Child 2017



Check out our local missions board located in the hallway near the Church Offices for more volunteer opportunities!

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering 2017 Goal: \$5,300 Received: \$5,470





TEAM KID LEADERS

January 3

Nursery

Nancy Chapman

Pre-School

Irene Welch

Grades K-5

Tina McSheehan

January 10

Nursery

Leigh Ann Elsey

Pre-School

Irene Welch

Grades K-5

Tina McSheehan

January 17

Nursery

Renee Helms

Pre-School

Irene Welch

Grades K-5

Tina McSheehan

January 24

Nursery

Sandy Richardson

Pre-School

Irene Welch

Grades K-5

Tina McSheehan

January 31

Nursery

Lela Crump

Pre-School

Irene Welch

Grades K-5

Tina McSheehan



Monroe Middle School Laundry Ministry

Ministry opportunities include: writing encouraging notes to place in laundry bags for students and praying over the school.

Volunteers needed weekly on Wednesdays and Fridays for 1 hour spots between 9am and 1pm to help wash school uniforms and/or organize the school closet room. You can sign up at heartformonroe.com.



Heart for Monroe 5K - March 24, 2018



If you are interested in serving on the 5K leadership team please contact Ginger Walle at 980-722-7241 or ginger@heartformonroe.com

Backpacks of Hope

Each week during the school year, students in our area receive a grocery bag with food for the weekend. While you are out grocery shopping, consider picking up some extra items for these students and placing them in the white carpeted Sunday school room on the 2nd or 3rd Sunday of each month. We are suggesting the following items for the next several weeks. Thank you in advance for your support!

January: Snack Items

pudding Cups, Applesauce Cups, Individual Serving Boxes of Raisins, Peanut Butter (28 oz), Saltine Crackers (box of 4 sleeves)



JANUARY 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Church Office Closed HAPPY NEW YEAR	2	3 TeamKID	4	5	6
7 1 PM Deacon's Mtg	8	9	10 TeamKID Choir Practice Resumes	11 7 PM Church Council Meeting	12	13
14	15	16	17 TeamKID	18	19	20
21 4 PM Small Group Kickoff & Quarterly Meeting	22	23	24 TeamKID	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 TeamKID			

CHILDREN'S LEADERS

January 7

Nursery

Renay Moore &
Nancy Greene

Pre-School

Frank Lunsford &
Brooke Pridgen

Children's Church

Rich Majewski &
Leigh Ann Elsey

January 14

Nursery

Brandy Eudy &
Pam Majewski

Pre-School

Josh & Mandy Cox

Children's Church

Dianne Avery &
Leigh Ann Elsey

January 21

Nursery

Sandy Richardson &
Maggie Horne

Pre-School

Ruth Outlaw &
Haley Beard

Children's Church

Stephanie Okada &
Leigh Ann Elsey

January 28

Nursery

Lela Crump &
Janet Griffin

Pre-School

Mark & Stephanie
Okada

Children's Church

Tina McSheehan &
Leigh Ann Elsey

Upcoming Sermon Series based on Bible Studies For Life:

JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING

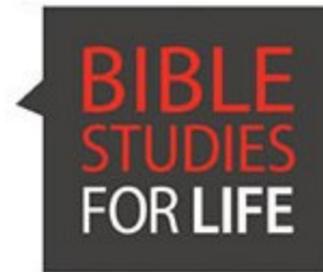
January 7: Jesus Provides

January 14: Jesus Corrects

MADE FOR SOMETHING MORE

January 21: I Am Wonderfully Made

January 28: I Am a Child of the King



Made for Something More

Introduction

Who are you—really?

“Identity” is a buzz word in our world—that question of what makes us who we are. The world tells us our identity is determined by a bunch of different factors, including:

- How we see ourselves,
- How we feel, and,
- What others expect us to be.

But if you’ve tried to define yourself based on those factors, you know they’re ultimately hollow; they shift around like sand, leaving us with nothing solid to hold on to.

So, we get back to the basic question: *who are we really?*

Thankfully, there is an answer: we are who God says we are! And when we come to Christ, our identity is shaped—reshaped—into the image of Christ. He brings us back to what He intended us to be in the first place.

In these upcoming six sessions, we’ll gain a deeper understanding of who we are in Christ, why we’re here in this world, and what our purpose is supposed to be. Far from how the world wants to define us, we’ll see that we were made for something more.

Season to Sow

By Lori Looney Keene

I have often been asked by well-meaning people, “How can I share my faith in a natural setting?” Typically, this question arises after we have spoken across a coffee table or discussed a shared prayer request for a lost family member or friend. Once they have prayed about and discussed a scenario concerning someone they know and love, it’s not unusual for someone to say, “I wish I could be more evangelistic toward people I don’t know.” This is when the word “natural” seems to find its way into the conversation. I always laugh because I can’t think of anything more unnatural than sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with someone!

In order to be true to Scripture, the gospel must begin by helping someone realize that he or she is a sinner and in need of a Savior. Therefore, we’re more likely to feel unnatural, or even uncomfortable, in this process.

An important aspect of sowing the gospel naturally into the lives of those around us requires that we first acquire spiritual sight. Before I put on my contacts each morning, I fumble around the room using my out-stretched hands as my guides. Without corrective lenses, I would most assuredly bump into things. Just as my physical sight is impeded without the help of appropriate aid, my spiritual sight remains blurred until I access clarity through prayer.

Scripture assures us that God is at work. (See John 5:17.) Daily, God is drawing people to Himself through His Word, circumstances, and other people. However, we will stumble past these works in progress unless our vision has been sharpened through prayer. Taking the time each morning to ask the Lord to show us where He’s already at work will help open our eyes to circumstances in which we can share our faith. God is already moving in the lives of people. We simply have the joy of sharing in the action. This can be as simple as looking around our daily list of activities and noting who normally walks across your path.

For example, let me introduce you to my former neighbor, Laura. The Lord kept Laura on my heart for several months after I moved into my new apartment. On any typical day, I would see Laura jogging around the neighborhood by herself. One afternoon with a thousand to-do lists swirling around in my head. In the midst of the nagging list, I heard God simply say, *Go talk to her.* Within minutes I heard her call my name and turned to see her walking behind me. As we talked, I realized that she lives alone and carried the weight of the world on her shoulders. She shared some of her fears about being able to financially survive and her loneliness. I asked her if she went to church anywhere. She didn’t. I shared with her about my church and invited her to attend with me sometime. This opened the door for several future conversations.

Situations such as this occur regularly, not only in my life, but in the lives of those who simply stop to pray and ask the Lord to grant spiritual sight to see He’s at work. The only requirements to share your faith naturally is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a desire to share Him with others. When we ask God to show us where He’s moving, we will begin to see opportunities to sow seeds of the gospel as we go about our daily lives.