

VITAL CONNECTION

Official Newsletter of Oak Forest United Methodist Church
April 2026

Why is it called Good Friday?

Many people probably ask why the Friday before Easter is called Good Friday. The emphasis of most Protestant and Catholic churches is placed on the seemingly senseless suffering of Jesus rather than on the purposeful and planned suffering and humiliation of God through which the saving or redemption of creation is won. Redemption comes from God's plan which involves the willing sacrifice of his only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. We don't understand Good Friday as being good because we have observed Good Friday as if Easter Sunday never happens.

Good Friday is God's Friday because God was in control at Calvary. The crucifixion of Jesus was not a last minute plan by God to redeem creation. The suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus were all a part of the divine plan from the beginning of creation. The cross reflects the selfless love, suffering, and agony of God over God's creation. In Matthew's Gospel, the sky grows black at noon (Matt 27:45) and the earth is shaken by earthquakes (Matt 27:51). The whole creation is in agony along with God but God is in charge.

John's Gospel (John 18:1-19:42) is read on Good Friday to remind us that God planned to save us from our sins and is in charge of our redemption. In the garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus says, "I am he" (John 18:5), the Roman guards fall to the ground. Jesus does not run and try to escape but tells them again, "I told you that I am he" (John 18:8). Jesus is in charge even at his own arrest by the Romans.

Jesus is handed over to Pilate for questioning. When Jesus does not answer, Pilate says, "Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you" (John 19:10)? Jesus replies, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11). Again, Jesus reminds Pilate and us that God is in charge.

While Jesus is on the cross, he turns his mother over to the care of his disciples instead of his family. Again, he exercises his authority by not being held to common customs (John 19:27). When Jesus says, "It is finished" (John 19:30) he is not saying "It's all over now." Jesus is actually saying, "The goal is accomplished." In other words, the eternal purpose of God has been achieved.

God fulfills the divine purpose of saving us through God's suffering, mercy and self-giving love. Good Friday is God's Friday. The faithful gather less to contemplate the pain of a dying man than to rejoice in the purposes of a Creator who willingly suffers for the creation.

Notes adapted from: Calendar, Christ's Time for the Church by Laurence Stookey (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 96-100.

Blessings,

Pastor Rick

This issue:

Pastor's Page
PAGE 1

Easter Party Invitation
PAGE 2

Easter Events
PAGE 3

UMM Fish Fry
PAGE 4

Financial Report
PAGE 5

Building & Development
Funds & Endowment Report
PAGE 6

Sympathy &
Children's Information
PAGE 7

Never Too Old Trip
PAGE 8

Upcoming Events
PAGE 9

Announcements
& Birthdays
PAGE 10

Contact Us
PAGE 11

April Calendar
PAGE 12

Easter Humor
PAGE 13

You're Invited!



**Thursday, April 2nd
5:30-6:30pm
Family Life Center**

Bring your family, friends & neighbors!

Join us for a great night of fun including a
snack supper, lesson, crafts & games!

**RSVP to Margaux Carter, Carolyn Shoaf or
the church office by Monday, March 30th.**



Events



**Thursday, April 2nd
6:30pm**



**Friday, April 3rd
10:00am in FLC**



**Sunday, April 5th
6:30am**



**UMM Breakfast
Sunday, April 5th
7:30am in FLC**



**Sunday, April 5th
9:00am & 10:30am**

Oak Forest UMC



Fish Fry

Saturday—April 18th

4:00—7:00 pm

Menu: Flounder, Baked Potato, Slaw,

Hush Puppies & Drink

Eat-in or Carry Out!

Small \$8, Medium \$12, Large \$15

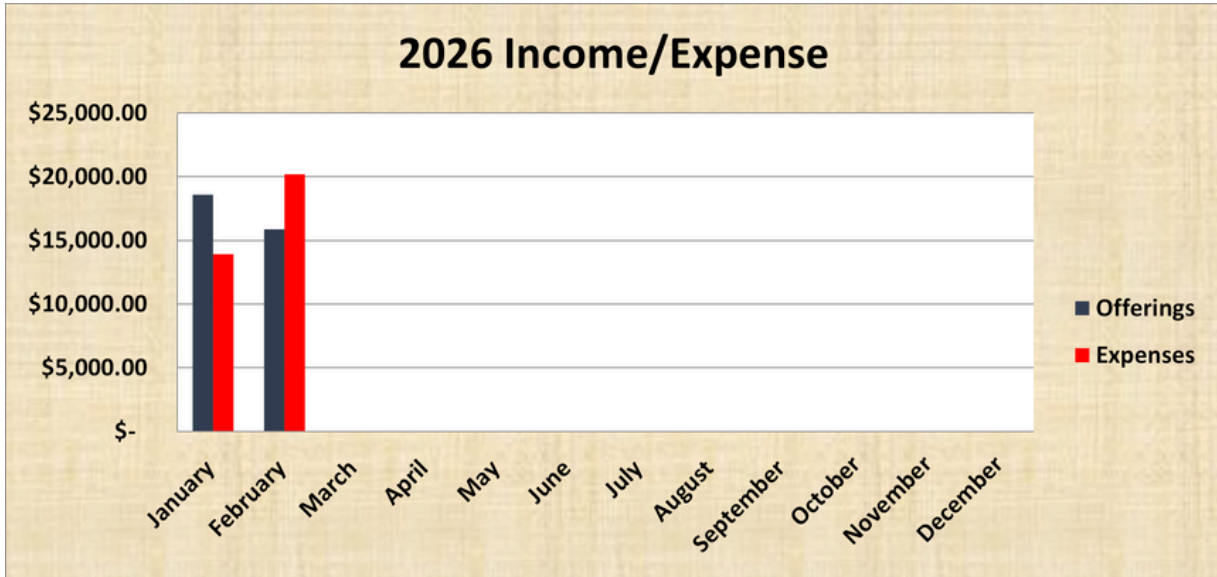
Hot Dog Plate \$8

We collected 73 units of flour and sugar for the grain offering in March. Thank you for your donations!



Finance Report

Finances for the month of February 2026. Income from tithes and offerings was \$15,875.39 and our expenses were \$20,203.54. The total cash flow for the year of positive at \$364.20.



Higher than normal utility costs due to extremely cold weather, unexpected repairs to church vehicle, and double payment on Conference Health and Pension benefits (January and February) are some of the causes for higher expenses in February.





Building Fund Report

The building fund balance as of the end of February is \$22,794.13.

Endowment Report

The current value of the Endowment Fund as of the end of February is \$123,831.41.

Development Fund

The current value of the fund as of the end of February is \$72,055.11.

Submitted by Gil Hill, Finance Chair



Ways To Give

In person on Sunday morning.

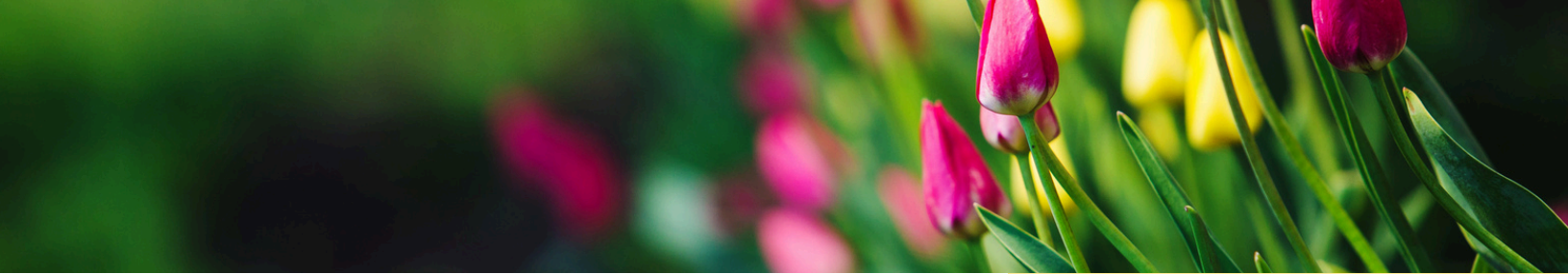
Mailing a check to OFUMC 11461 Old US Hwy. 52, W-S, NC 27107

From our web site - ofumc.org - *Giving On Line.*

Direct payment from your financial institution.

Using the Vanco Mobile Faith Encouragement app.





WITH DEEPEST
Sympathy

The Moffitt family at the passing Dan Moffitt on January 12th.

Susie Hershberger and family at the passing of her brother, James Keene on March 9th.



Oak Forest Preschool
 Registration is currently underway for the 2026-2027 school year. Don't miss out on preparing your little one for the future.
 For more information or for a tour Please contact:
 oakforestpreschool@gmail.com

AFTER SCHOOL Program

For more information, visit www.oakforestchildcare.org to register.

Nursery

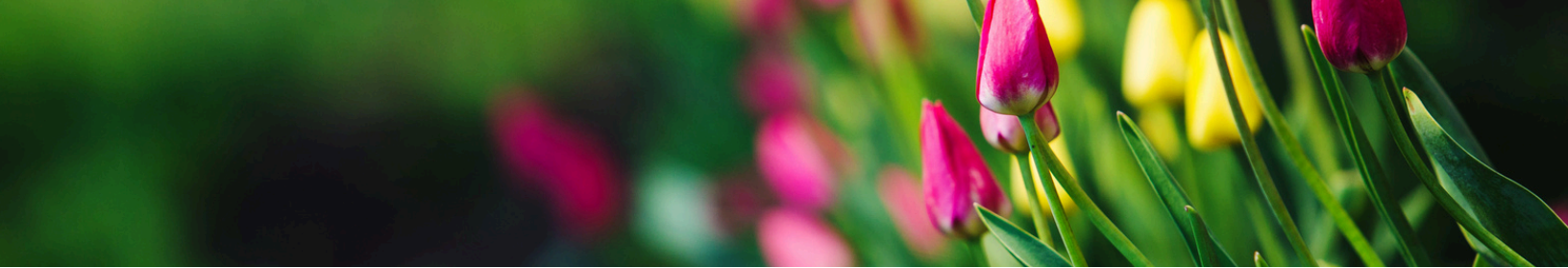
Nursery Care is provided during our 9:00am and 10:30am worship services for Infants through 4 years old.

Children's CHURCH

Children's Message at the 10:30am service.

PRESCHOOL

Preschool School Year 2026-2027
 Call 336-764-2991 or email oakforestpreschool@gmail.com for more info or to register.



NEVER TO OLD CLUB



**SHILOH
GENERAL STORE**



UPCOMING EVENTS



Sunday, May 10th



Sunday, May 17th
Finance Committee - 5:30pm
Church Council Meeting 6:30pm



Monday, May 25th
Office Closed



Sunday, May 31st
10:00am - FLC



Announcements

Ushers

April 5 - Team #4
April 12 - Team #5
April 19 - Team #6
April 26 - Team #7

Children's Time

April 5 - Rev. Dave Kelley
April 12 - Casey Mancilla
April 19 - Linda Anthony
April 26 - Betty Hughes

10:30 Worship Leaders

April 5 - Rev. Dave Kelley
April 12 - Casey Mancilla
April 19 - Casey Mancilla
April 26 - Casey Mancilla

Nursery Volunteers

April 5 - 9:00 - Dianne Johnson
10:30 - Carla Dry
April 12 - 9:00 - TBD
10:30 - Lorraine Marovich
April 19 - 9:00 - Carleen Hill
10:30 - Cheryl Cope
April 26 - 9:00 - Tracy Powell
10:30 - Nancy Spence

Greeters

April 5 - 9:00 - Dianne Johnson
10:30 - John & Owen Vannoy
April 12 - 9:00 - Cathy Messinger
10:30 - Jay & Jane Vannoy
April 19 - 9:00 - Dianne Williams & Donna King
10:30 - Rodie & Lorraine Marovich
April 26 - 9:00 - Ron & Debra Chandler
10:30 - Nancy Spence



The Wednesday Weekly Prayer Service at 6:15pm until 6:45pm in the church sanctuary.

This service is led by members of our congregation. April leaders are below. This will be a time of praises and prayer requests.

Speakers for Wednesday Night Prayer Services for the month of April

April 1 - Rev. Rick Carter
April 8 - Judy Clodfelter
April 15 - Donna White
April 22 - Carl Matthews
April 29 - Chris Wall

F.Y.I.

Finance Committee & Church Council meet quarterly on the 2nd Sunday at 5:30 & 6:30pm in the FLC

United Women in Faith (UWF) Meetings
2nd Monday of every month at 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.

United Methodist Men (UMM) Meetings
2nd Monday of every month at 6:30pm in the FLC Sunday School Classroom

Trustees will meet every 1st Thursday night at 6:30pm in the FLC Sunday School Classroom

Men's Bowling

The men of Oak Forest will meet at Creekside Lanes for bowling every Wednesday at 9:30am.

Women's Bowling

The women of Oak Forest will meet at Creekside Lanes for bowling every Tuesday at 9:30am.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1. Cynthia Davis
5. Justin Brooks
8. Casey Mancilla, Victoria Brooks
9. Shannon Lindsay
13. Butch Barber, Tina Gregory
14. Zachary Wall
15. Janet MacKay, Donna White
18. Mark Hutson, Emily Beach, Patt Tucker
20. Scott Shoaf
23. Whitley Freeman
24. Kayla Joyce, Louise Thompson, Sylvia Sink
25. Janice Cagle
30. Billie McGuire

Happy
Birthday

If you have a birthday that isn't listed, or know of a name that should be removed, please let the office know.

Many Ways to Give to Oak Forest:

In person on Sunday mornings with a check or cash.

Using the Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app. (*Vanco Mobile*)

From our web site – www.ofumc.org

(Select – **Ways to Give** from the bottom of each webpage)

Using your banking institute's check writing service to automatically send a weekly or monthly check to the church.

Send a check to the church office through the mail.



Announcements for the Vital Connection are due on the third Friday of the month.

Connect with us!

Meet our Staff!

Rev. Rick Carter

Contact at Office: (336) 764-2949

Cell: (336) 457-4316

Email: rick.carter@ofumc.org



Kim Barnes

Administrative Assistant

Office: (336) 764-2949

Email: kim.barnes@ofumc.org



Mandy Quesinberry

After School Program Director

Office: (336) 764-2991

oakforestaspm@gmail.com



Tabitha Jones

Preschool Coordinator

Office: (336) 764-2991

oakforestpreschool@gmail.com



YADKIN VALLEY DISTRICT STAFF

Rev. Dr. Mark Conforti

District Superintendent

Office: (336) 725-4502; Fax: 336-723-6341



<https://www.facebook.com/oakforestumcnc/>



<https://www.instagram.com/oakforestumcnc/>



<https://www.flickr.com/people/oakforestumcnc/>



<http://www.ofumc.org/>



"For where two or three
gather in my name,
there I am with them."

Matthew 18:20



Calendar of Church Events for the month of April 2026

Wednesday, April 1

- 9:30am Men's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:15pm Wednesday Night Prayer Service - Sanctuary
- 6:15pm Children's Bible Lesson - Nursery area
- 7:00pm Choir Practice - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Praise Band Practice - FLC

Thursday, April 2

- 5:30pm Family Easter Party - FLC
- 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Service - Sanctuary

Friday, April 3 (Good Friday)

Office Closed

- 10:00am Midway Cross Walk - FLC

Sunday, April 5 (Easter Sunday)

- 6:30am Sunrise Service - Sanctuary
- 7:30am UMM Breakfast - FLC
- 9:00am Adult Sunday School Class - Builder's classroom
- 9:00am Contemporary Worship Service - FLC
- 9:50am Sunday School Class - FLC large classroom
- 10:30am Traditional Worship Service - Sanctuary

Tuesday, April 7

- 9:30am Women's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:30pm Disciple 1 Bible Study - FLC large classroom

Wednesday, April 8

- 9:30am Men's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:15pm Wednesday Night Prayer Service - Sanctuary
- 6:30pm Choir Practice - Sanctuary
- 6:30pm Praise Band Practice - FLC

Thursday, April 9

- 7:00pm Refit - FLC

Sunday, April 12

- 9:00am Adult Sunday School Class - Builder's classroom
- 9:00am Contemporary Worship Service - FLC
- 9:50am Sunday School Class - FLC large classroom
- 10:30am Traditional Worship Service - Sanctuary
- 4:00pm Handbell Practice - Fellowship Hall

Monday, April 13

- 6:30pm United Women in Faith - Fellowship Hall
- 6:30pm United Methodist Men - FLC large classroom

Tuesday, April 14

- 9:30am Women's Bowling at Creekside Lanes

Wednesday, April 15

- 9:30am Men's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:15pm Wednesday Night Prayer Service - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Choir Practice - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Praise Band Practice - FLC

Thursday, April 16

- 6:00pm Refit - FLC

Friday, April 24

- 8:00am UMM Fish Fry Prep - FLC/Kitchen (All Day)

Saturday, April 18

- 4:00pm UMM Fish Fry - FLC/Kitchen

Sunday, April 19

- 9:00am Adult Sunday School Class - Builder's classroom
- 9:00am Contemporary Worship Service - FLC
- 9:50am Sunday School Class - FLC large classroom
- 10:30am Traditional Worship Service - Sanctuary
- 4:00pm Handbell Practice - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, April 21

- 9:30am Women's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:30pm Disciple 1 Bible Study - FLC large classroom

Wednesday, April 22 (Earth Day)

- 9:30am Men's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:15pm Wednesday Night Prayer Service - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Choir Practice - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Praise Band Practice - FLC

Thursday, April 23

- 6:00pm NTO Game Night - FLC large classroom
- 7:00pm Refit

Sunday, April 26

- 9:00am Adult Sunday School Class - Builder's classroom
- 9:00am Contemporary Worship Service - FLC
- 9:50am Sunday School Class - FLC large classroom
- 10:30am Traditional Worship Service - Sanctuary
- 4:00pm Handbell Practice - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, April 28

- 9:30am Women's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:30pm Disciple 1 Bible Study - FLC large classroom

Wednesday, April 29

- 9:30am Men's Bowling at Creekside Lanes
- 6:15pm Wednesday Night Prayer Service - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Choir Practice - Sanctuary
- 7:00pm Praise Band Practice - FLC

Thursday, April 30

- 7:00pm Refit - FLC





Happy Easter

Atheist Holiday is April Fool's Day

An Atheist in Florida brought a case to court against the upcoming Jewish Passover and Christian Easter holidays. He hired an attorney to bring a discrimination case against Christians and Jews and observances of their holy days. The argument was that it was unfair that atheists had no such recognized days. The case was brought before a judge. After listening to the passionate presentation by the lawyer, the judge banged his gavel declaring, "Case dismissed!"

The lawyer representing the Atheist immediately stood up objecting to the ruling saying, "Your honor, how can you possibly dismiss this case? The Christians have Christmas, Palm Sunday, Maudy Thursday, and Easter. The Jews have Passover, Yom Kippur and Hanukkah, yet my client and all other atheists have no such holidays."

The judge leaned forward in his chair saying, "But you do have a holiday for Atheists! Your client is woefully ignorant." The lawyer spoke again saying, "Your Honor, we are unaware of any special observance or holiday for atheists." The judge said, "The calendar says April 1st is April Fool's Day. Turning in the Bible to the Book of Psalms the judge stopped and read Psalm 14:1. "Psalm 14:1 says, 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God.' Thus, it is the opinion of this court, that if your client says there is no God, then he is a fool. Therefore, April 1st is his day. Court is adjourned."





He is risen! He is risen indeed!
Matthew 28:6

Oak Forest United Methodist Church
11461 Old US Hwy 52
Winston-Salem, NC 27107