

## Oak Trees Planted by Streams of Water

From Pastor Jim

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! <sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup>He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers. <sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.



turns into a seedling which grows to become a sapling and continues to develop into a mature oak tree that keeps extending its roots and branches and keeps adding rings to its circumference.

One practical reminder we should glean from our name as members of Oakridge Community Church is that we are to be continually growing. As Peter declared in the closing words of his letter, we are to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). As Paul admonished in Ephesians 4:15, “we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ.”

We have a responsibility to grow spiritually, just as an oak tree grows taller, bigger and stronger year after year. The question is, how is our responsibility fulfilled?

Acorn sprouts turn into seedlings that turn into saplings that turn into oak trees that continue growing taller and bigger and stronger through only one means. They do not do so by will power and sheer determination. They do not do so by force. They do not do so through their own ingenuity or intelligence. They do so by taking in the nourishment God gives them. They drink in the water He provides in the rain. They absorb the nutrients from the soil around them. They soak up the rays of the sun He placed in the heavens above them.

We grow in the same way. We do not do so by our own means or in our own strength. Rather, we do so by feeding on what God has provided for us. “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord” (1 Peter 2:1-3).

Psalm 1:1-6

Isaiah 61:1-3 gives us our basis for attaching a high degree of significance and meaning to our name *Oakridge Community Church*. We recognized this last month as we saw that oaks of righteousness are produced by God alone through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. By His grace shown through Jesus, He brings good news to the afflicted, liberty to captives, freedom to prisoners, comfort to mourners and praise to the lips of the fainting. He plants acorns that are dead in sin and turns them into oaks of righteousness!

That leads us to consider a vital observation: ***healthy oaks are in a state of continuing growth***. Oak trees do not suddenly appear. Rather, when a dead acorn lies in the ground, God gives it life and causes it to sprout. As God supplies it with water and nutrients from the soil, that sprout

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# *Oak Trees Planted by Streams of Water* (continued from page 1)

Our name should serve as a constant reminder that we are to be growing in Christ—as individual believers and as a church body. This growth cannot happen apart from an infant-like craving for the Word of God that leads us to read it, study it, memorize it, meditate upon it, speak it, submit to it and consistently live it out. This is what oaks of righteousness do in every stage of growth.

As we grow in Christ together, it is important to keep in mind the fact that this growth is in stages. First there is the acorn, then the sprout, then the seedling, then the sapling, then the oak tree. Once the oak tree is mature, there is continuing growth. None of the stages can be bypassed, and the order of them is set and unchangeable. A seedling is an oak tree in the making, but it is not yet a mature tree. A forest contains acorns, sprouts, seedlings, saplings and trees in a variety of different stages of maturity.

The point is that in our forest, this body of Christ called Oakridge Community Church, we who comprise this forest are at different stages of development and maturity. This is true in at least two ways: age-wise and in terms of spiritual growth.

Age-wise we have acorns in our nursery, sprouts among the toddlers and preschoolers, seedlings among our children, saplings in our youth and oak trees at various levels of maturity among our adults. In terms of spiritual growth we have some who have been believers in Jesus Christ for a short time and those who have been growing in Christ for decades—and believers at various stages of maturity in between.

The thing to remember is that we are all to be heading toward the same goal: greater and greater Christ-likeness. We are all to be doing so with the same motivation: the glory of God. In other words, we are all walking along the same path to the same destination. The fact that some are further down the path should be no discouragement for those who have not gotten that far yet. Rather, this

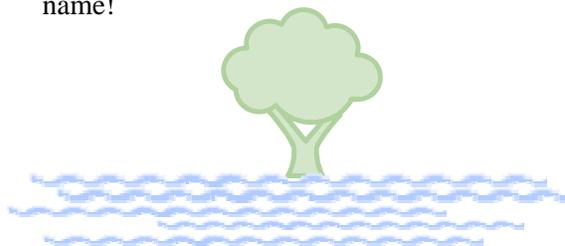
should be an encouragement, in that those who have reached a deeper level of maturity can be examples, advisors and helpers.

By the same token, those who are further along the path of maturity have no grounds for pride in themselves or for looking down their noses at those who have not yet reached their level of maturity. Their growth in Christ is no credit to themselves, but solely due to the grace of God. Their maturity gives them greater responsibility, not a reason for arrogance. They have a God-given responsibility to serve those who are less mature by being examples, advisors and helpers (1 Peter 5:1-4; Titus 2:3-5).

This is where the analogy of a forest breaks down for us. In a forest you don't see trees helping each other. A forest does not have an organic connectedness—a oneness. A forest is just a bunch of trees that all happen to be growing in the same area. For the trees in a forest, it's a matter of every tree for itself—get all the water and sun and soil nutrients you can for yourself, and who cares about the tree next to you.

A church, on the other hand, is a body in which there is a vital, organic connectedness. For this reason there is an interdependence in a church body that does not exist in a forest. A church functioning as God designed is a united body working together hand in hand, helping one another and helping the body as a whole grow toward greater and greater Christ-likeness through a single-minded love of Christ and unreserved loyalty to the Word of God.

May Oakridge Community Church be such a body. Then we will be worthy of our name!



# Jeanne Wynn—

*Teaching chemistry in Asia*

**One of the most important tools** of a chemist is the Periodic Table. The name comes from the word *periodicity*, which means a pattern of repeating order. This order is not only seen in the elements that make up our universe but also in our daily lives. Every year March brings several of these reoccurring events for me.



*Jeanne teaching a chemistry class*

The first is the start of another semester. It is actually the second semester in the school year, but for me it is always a new beginning. For the next year, I will have the privilege of teaching two courses (Scientific English and Instrumental Analysis) to the about sixty sophomore chemistry majors. This month is always a challenging month for me as I try to learn all the names and corresponding faces of my students, but it is also a time of expectation, as I know that some of these students will become friends for many years to come.

Every week I have times outside of class for students to visit and practice their English. Each semester a few students become regular participants in these meetings. A variety of topics come up, including sports, movies, current events, future goals, culture and values. As we chat each week I often have opportunities to share about my beliefs and values. Most students are curious about my beliefs, and as they hear more some begin to consider how these apply to their own lives.

Another reoccurring event that occurs this month is my birthday. My students are always happy to help me celebrate, and it gives me another opportunity to spend time with my students in an informal setting. Last year we all



went out to eat for lunch and then spent the evening eating cake and other snacks and playing games. We all had a great time and are looking forward to celebrating again this year. The only drawback is my waistline. The students all know that I love chocolate, so they tend to give me way more than I should be eating! :)

Another event that occurs every March is that the heat is turned off on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The worst of the winter is usually over by then, but it still gets quite uncomfortable if you are sitting indoors working at your computer (which is how I spend most of my day when I am not in the classroom). This period can last for a few days to a month, depending on the year. However, one advantage to the end of the heat is there is usually an improvement in the air quality. Since pollution has been particularly severe this winter, I am actually not dreading the loss of heat as much as usual.



*Typical view for most of this winter (Jan. 2013)*

In spite of the familiar patterns, I know many things will be different. Every class has a different personality and every student has a unique story.

Thanks for your continued support and prayers that allow me to be part of these students' stories.

# March Bible Reading

- 1 Deuteronomy 5-7
- 2 Deuteronomy 8-10
- 3 Deuteronomy 11-13
- 4 Deuteronomy 14-16
- 5 Deuteronomy 17-20
- 6 Deuteronomy 21-23
- 7 Deuteronomy 24-27
- 8 Deuteronomy 28-29
- 9 Deuteronomy 30-31
- 10 Deuteronomy 32-34
- 11 Joshua 1-4
- 12 Joshua 5-8
- 13 Joshua 9-11
- 14 Joshua 12-15
- 15 Joshua 16-18
- 16 Joshua 19-21
- 17 Joshua 22-24
- 18 Judges 1-2
- 19 Judges 3-5
- 20 Judges 6-7
- 21 Judges 8-9
- 22 Judges 10-12
- 23 Judges 13-15
- 24 Judges 16-18
- 25 Judges 19-21
- 26 1 Samuel 1-3
- 27 1 Samuel 4-8
- 28 1 Samuel 9-12
- 29 1 Samuel 13-14
- 30 1 Samuel 15-17
- 31 1 Samuel 18-20

# March Birthdays

March 3 - Dan Parker

March 4 - Jonathan Leslie

March 9 - Victor Mancina

March 25 - Susan Mueller

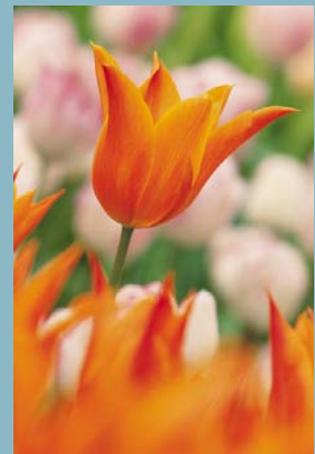
March 27 - Tiana Leslie

March 28 - Vicki Patten

*This year the order of the Old Testament readings is similar to Israel's Hebrew Bible. The New Testament readings are based upon non-conclusive research regarding the order in which the books were authored.*

*“Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the Lord your God.”*

*Joshua 23:11*





# March 2013

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<p><b>'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief cornerstone; This came about from the LORD, And it is marvelous in our eyes.'</b></p> <p><i>Mark 12:10-11</i></p>							
<b>3</b>	8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship 12:00 p.m. - Youth Planning Meeting	<b>4</b>	6:30 p.m. - Missions Committee Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Piecemakers 7:00 p.m. - DeCaro Care Group - Women	<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>	9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 6:30 p.m. - <b>Connecting in Prayer</b> 7:30 p.m. - Women's Bible Study
<b>10</b>	8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship 3-5:00 p.m. - O Death, Where Is Thy Sting? Exhibit	<b>11</b>	1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit 4:00 p.m. - Elders and Deacons Meeting 7:00 p.m. - DeCaro Care Group - All	<b>12</b>	1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit	<b>13</b>	9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit 6:30 p.m. - <b>Conn. in Prayer</b> 7:00 p.m. - Youth Meeting 7:30 p.m. - Women's Study
<b>17</b>	8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship 3-5:00 p.m. - O Death, Where is Thy Sting? Exhibit	<b>18</b>	1-3:00 - ODWITS Exhibit 4:00 p.m. - Elders Meeting 6:30 p.m. - Piecemakers 7:00 p.m. - DeCaro Care Group - Men	<b>19</b>	1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit 7:00 p.m. - Worship Team Practice	<b>20</b>	9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit 6:30 p.m. - <b>Conn. in Prayer</b> 7:30 p.m. - Women's Bible Study
<b>24</b>	8:30 a.m. - Prayer Time 9:00 a.m. - Sunday School 10:20 a.m. - Worship 3-5 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit	<b>25</b>	1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit 7:00 p.m. - Elders & Wives Meeting 7:00 p.m. - DeCaro Care Group - All	<b>26</b>	1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit	<b>27</b>	9:00 a.m. - Prayer Time 1-3:00 p.m. - ODWITS Exhibit 6:30 p.m. - <b>Conn. in Prayer</b> 7:00 p.m. - Youth Meeting 7:30 p.m. - Women's Bible Study
<b>31</b>	<b>Easter Sunday</b> 10:20 a.m. - Worship			<b>28</b>	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group	<b>29</b>	7:00 p.m. - Good Friday Service
		<b>7</b>	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group	<b>8</b>	6:30-8:30 p.m. TOGGA O Death, Where is Thy Sting? Reception	<b>15</b>	
		<b>14</b>	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group	<b>21</b>	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group	<b>22</b>	6:00 p.m. - Friday Night Light
		<b>21</b>	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group	<b>28</b>	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group	<b>23</b>	
		<b>28</b>	6:30 p.m. - Butler Care Group	<b>30</b>		<b>31</b>	

# Youth News

Submitted by Jeremy Misener

**What do an overconsumption** of sugar, lack of sleep, good conversation, worship and living in damp, smelly winter clothing have in common? If you guessed “just another night at the Misener household,” you would be partially correct. If you guessed “another youth weekend retreat at Camp Lebanon,” you would be correct. Susan and I had the opportunity to take 8 young girls and 1 young boy up to camp in January. It was the first time many of



our current students

were able to get away together as a group, and yes, it was cold! But it was a great time to get to know some of our youth and their friends in a deeper way by spending some extended time together. We were blessed to have some meaningful conversations as a group about who Christ is and what difference this makes in our lives. Thank you for your prayers for safety, and continue to be praying that the seeds of the gospel that were planted at camp will take root in the lives of those who attended. Also be praying for our next Friday Night Light, which will be on Friday, March 22, at the Maglers.



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## OCC Vision

The vision of Oakridge Community Church is to spread a joyful passion for the absolute, eternal supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things, to all peoples.

## OCC Mission

The mission of Oakridge Community Church is to glorify God by delighting in, declaring and displaying the gospel of Jesus Christ.

