

the Oakwood ACORN

A Chronicle Of our News

Seeds for Growth

Pressing On In Faith

Oakwood has been going through a tough season of life. While there are many encouraging things we see God doing in and through us – and I do mean *many*, it is only being true to openly acknowledge that we’ve been experiencing some challenging, even painful changes.

If Oakwood’s ministry were in our complete control, then we would never see one person reject Christ, we’d make a local and a global impact with the gospel unlike any church in history, we’d have unlimited financial resources to accomplish all that we’ve been dreaming of doing, we’d see everyone’s hurts healed, every one of our marriages and family relationships would be healthy, every ministry would be exceptionally fruitful – on and on it would go. But we’re not “Bruce Almighty” or “Brenda Almighty.” God alone is. We not only lack full power, we also lack wisdom and purity.

We all need to learn from our misjudgments and sins. Yet we must also acknowledge God’s sovereignty too – both in our personal life and our life as a church. Daniel said, “May the name of God be blessed for ever and ever, since wisdom and power are his alone. It is he who controls the procession of times and seasons, who makes and unmakes kings ... (Daniel 2:20-21, NJB). Just as there will be hard seasons in our personal lives, so too there will be in our church life. Yet God is in sovereign control guiding events according to His wise and holy purposes.

What God asks each of us to do – what I see our awesome leadership team and so many of you doing – is to press on in faith. “It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger. He kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible,” (Hebrews 11:27, NLT). Let’s press on with our eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) for if we don’t lose heart in doing good, at just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessings (Galatians 6:9).



~ Pastor Paul

Oakwood Community Church
11209 Casey Rd
Tampa FL 33618-5306
813.969.2303
www.oakwoodfl.org

The mission of
Oakwood is to...

Transform ordinary people
into fully devoted followers
of Jesus Christ.

Oakwood is a member of
the Evangelical Free
Church of America.



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Beach Baptism

We will have a baptismal service at Pass-a-Grille Beach (St. Petersburg) on Saturday, June 4, 4:00 PM.

If you desire to be baptized at the beach, please contact the Church Office by May 27. Information about baptism is available on our website at www.oakwoodfl.org – go to bottom of the home page under “Resources” and choose Reference Documents, then scroll down to the Special Observances section and choose the age appropriate information on Baptism.

Maps to the area where we will meet are available at the Oakwood Information Center. We will be out where 8th Ave. ends at the beach—near the Hurricane Restaurant and The Brass Monkey Restaurant. Look for the two white Oakwood canopy/tents with the Oakwood sign attached. Bring quarters or credit card for the metered parking.

Pack up your beach chair and anything else you need for the beach and come out earlier in the afternoon for some fellowship. Bring a picnic and stay for sunset.



Memorial Day

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, May 30, in honor of Memorial Day - commemorating the men and women who have given their lives in service to our country.



TreeHouse Volunteers needed

We have a number of TreeHouse volunteers who give of their time every week to minister to our wonderful children. We like to give this team of workers a break for the summer. Will you give us a hand and teach for a week, a month, or the summer?

Specific needs for June 12, 19 & 26 and August 7, 14 & 21:

9:30 Service:

We need 2 Adults in 2's—4's, and 2 Adults in 5's—3rd Grade

11:00 AM Service:

We need 2 Adults in 2's-3's, 2 Adults in 4's-5's, and 4 Adults 1st—5th Grade

Specific needs for the month of July (only one service @ 10:00 AM):

We need 2 Adults in 2's-3's, 2 Adults in 4's-5's, and 4 Adults 1st—5th Grade

Please contact Dave Dorsey at 813-969-2303 or dave@oakwoodfl.org if you are interested in volunteering your time.



Move Up Sunday

Move Up Sunday is June 12 for all children of the TreeHouse. What is *Move Up Sunday*? All children will move up to the school grade that they will be in this August. This allows them to develop relationships with children that they will be worshipping with through High School.

Graduating 5th Graders will be recognized during the 11:00 AM Worship Service on June 12. They are welcome to join us in TreeHouse and PowerHouse throughout the summer.

Elder note about Chris

With sorrow, the elders have accepted the resignation of Chris Lehmann as Director of Worship Arts. Chris will minister with us through July 2.

The elders, in consultation with others involved with the Worship Arts team, are finalizing a short-term plan for leadership of the Worship Arts Ministry through October. Meanwhile, the elders will be developing a more long-range plan.

We deeply appreciate Chris and Shannon and are grateful for their dedicated service to the Oakwood family for seven years. Chris has done what we have asked of him, and he has done so with a joyful heart. He has served Oakwood with devotion, diligence and skill. His greatest aspiration has been to honor Christ by leading us in authentic, heartfelt worship.

Please pray for Chris, Shannon and their family that God would give them a sense of His presence and guidance as they go through this significant transition

Worship Leadership

Our Director of Worship, Chris Lehmann, will continue his devoted ministry with us through July 2. The elders, in consultation with our great team of volunteer worship staff are in the process of developing intermediate plans for worship leadership. This leadership will come from among our volunteer worship team for the next several months. Our elder team will also be developing a longer range means of providing for our leadership in worship.

During our transition period, we will be simplifying some elements of our worship music. We will all need to be especially flexible during this time. Our flexibility is required in light of three key factors: 1. Our having lost two key musicians, 2. We had already pre-planned to give some of our volunteer worship staff a summer break, and 3. Some of our worship team members will be representing us in ministry within the Czech Republic for a couple of weeks in July.

Let's elevate our authentic expressions of gratitude for those who lead us in worship including singers, instrumentalists and technicians. Let us also remember that worship is not so much a state of the art as it is a state of the heart. "May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus." ⁶ Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," Romans 15:5-6 (NLT) Let's focus our humble, joyful and even enthusiastic worship upon our Lord; and may we do so in loving unity as brothers and sisters in His family.

New Website

Oakwood's website has a whole new look. Check us out at www.oakwoodfl.org. What can you find on our site?

- Service times & directions
- Listen to past messages
- Meet the Staff
- What we believe
- Online Giving—**NEW FEATURE**
- Oakwood Directory ([we must have your email address in our system to access this info](#))*
- Your personal Giving Statement ([we must have your email address in our system to access this info](#))*



***Oakwood directory - online.** You can access the Oakwood Directory from our website by clicking "Member Login" under the "Directory and Your Giving History" heading on the Home Page? If you haven't registered yet, you will be prompted to do so. You will then have access to your personal records, including your Giving Statement, and you can search the Oakwood directory for addresses and phone numbers. You can make changes to your record, which will then update your records in our office database. If you can't log in, we don't have your email address in our system. Please contact the church office (office@oakwoodfl.org) with your current email address and we will update your records so you can log in.

Please be assured that the only information that others can see are names, phone numbers and addresses. Your other information, including your Giving Statement, are visible only to you.



June PowerHouse Schedule

Sunday, May 29 - Regular Evening Meeting

Sunday, June 5—BUMP training
Regular Evening Meeting

Sunday, June 12—BUMP training
Move Up Sunday
Food Bag Prep
School's Out Party

Saturday, June 18—Baseball Outing

Sunday, June 19—*Father's Day*—No Youth Group

Sunday, June 26—BUMP Training
Regular Evening Meeting + Summer Activity



Fathers Day Rays Baseball Game, Saturday June 18, Rays vs. Marlins @ 7:10 PM. Tickets are Upper Deck—\$15 each. Everyone is invited. If you are interested in attending, please sign up at the Information Center. We will purchase the tickets as a group. Questions? Contact Cam Whipple @ 813-265-9895 or bayareashutters@aol.com

Team Tampa XII

Our Czech Team (Team Tampa XII) would like to send out updates and prayer requests for our team this year via a special email prayer chain. Would you be interested in being part of this prayer support team? If so, please submit your request to join this short-term special prayer chain to office@oakwoodfl.org or indicate this desire on the back of your Connection Card on Sunday.



Prayer 2011



Oakwood is focusing on prayer in 2011. Did you know that you can use your hand to help you remember what to pray for? Pick up a copy of our June Prayer Guide from the Information Center and find out how.

Proposed Bylaw changes

On Sunday, May 22, the elders proposed some minor wording changes to our Bylaws. Copies of these changes are available at the Information Center. At our next Congregational Meeting on Sunday, July 17, members will vote on revising our Bylaws with these changes. Oakwood members may contact the elders with any questions or comments on these changes.

In 2009 the Oakwood members voted to accept the new Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church as our Statement of Faith. On Sunday, July 17, we will also vote to update our Bylaws to reflect this new Statement of Faith.

Voting will be done by email or ballot vote at the Congregational Meeting.

TreeHouse Summer Fun!!!

We've got some fun things planned this summer for the families of our TreeHouse kids!

TreeHouse Family Camp In

All family members welcome!

Friday June 17, 6:30 PM — Saturday, June 18, 10:00 AM

We'll be camping inside TreeHouse



Do Bring

A tent (let us know if you need one)
Sleeping bags & pillows
Battery powered lanterns
and/or flashlights



Fun



Scavenger Hunt
Campfire Stories
Night Hike
Much more...

Grub

Smokey's Hot Dog Dinner
Campfire Smores
Sunrise Pancake Breakfast



Don't Bring

Electronics of any kind
Propane lanterns
Bad attitudes

Cost

\$20 per family campsite
\$25 for premium campsite (incl private bath)

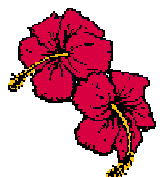
Please sign up at the TreeHouse Welcome Station
or at the Information Center in the lobby.
Got questions? Contact Sandy Wyatt @ 813-960-8168

On July 8, we will be having a Game Night for all the 1st through 5th graders. You will be able to drop your kids off in TreeHouse and enjoy a date night (or a nice quiet evening) on us! While you are doing what you do(!?!), our kids will be having a blast with a night of planned activity. The time for this event will be 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.



Get prepared for July 22!! We are planning a Family Game Night. Some of our folks have been inspired by the game show, "Minute To Win It" so we have decided to have an Oakwood version of the same. We will be laughing from the time we get here at 7 PM until we finish at 9 PM.

Get ready to wear your best island garb as we are planning the first annual TreeHouse Luau on **August 12!** More details on that and the other dates will be coming soon.






Mark your calendar! Join us for some great fun!!

Kids Corner



Make a treat for a Special Person in your life.

You will need:

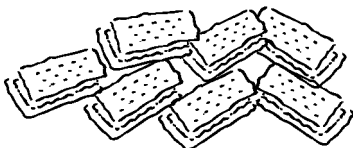
-  honey graham crackers
-  a can of ready-to-spread frosting — choose your favorite flavor or a color to fit the occasion!
-  a table knife

How to make:

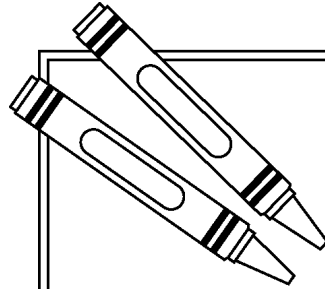
Open a package of crackers. Break cracker along marked lines into sections.

Spread with frosting. Put an unfrosted section on top.

Make as many "Sweet Treats" as you need!



Serve on a pretty plate for a special occasion.

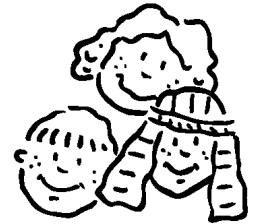


Just for KIDS

Bible Parents and Children

All of the men and women that we read about in Bible stories were once children — just like you! Here are some Biblical parents. Can you name their children?

A verse to look up and one letter of each name is give to help you.



PARENTS

- Zechariah & Elizabeth (Luke 1:11-14) **B** _____ **I** _____
- Ruth & Boaz (Ruth 4:13-17) _____ **B** _____
- Adam & Eve (Genesis 4:1-2) _____ & _____ **L** _____
- Jacob & Rachel (Genesis 35:23-24) _____ **E** _____
- Isaac & Rebekah (Genesis 25:24-26) _____ **C** _____ & _____
- King Saul (1 Samuel 18:1) _____ **H** _____
- Abraham & Sarah (Genesis 21:2-3) _____ **I** _____
- Elkanah & Hannah (1 Samuel 1:20) _____ **L** _____
- Jesse (1 Samuel 17:12) _____ **D** _____
- Laban (Genesis 29:10) _____ **R** _____
- Mary & Joseph (Matthew 1:18) _____ **E** _____
- _____ **N** _____

John the Baptist, Obed, Cain & Abel, Joseph, Jacob & Esau, Jonathan, Isaac, Samuel, David, Rachel, Jesus, Samson

For Better or For Worse By Ginger Kolbaba

Two couples who have faced tragic, unforeseen circumstances—together.



Lt. Col. (Ret.) Brian and Mel Birdwell
 Married: May 16, 1987
 Hometown: Manassas, Virginia
 Children: 1 son

“I was run over by a 757,” retired Lt. Col. Brian Birdwell explains as he lifts his scarred arms and hands and points at his singed ears. “Whenever we drive past a KFC, we laugh that I’m the extra crispy kind.”

He and his wife, Mel, are able to bring lightness to their situation now. But on September 11, 2001, Brian’s life hung in that delicate balance between life and death.

At 9:37, Brian was walking toward his office when American Flight 77 smashed into the Pentagon, 20 yards from where he stood. Immediately, Brian was doused in flames and jet fuel.

“I knew I was going to die,” says Brian. “The thought of never seeing Mel or my son, Matt, again was the worst feeling in the world.”

Mel was watching the horrific scene on television as the flames shot from her husband’s office. “We prayed he wasn’t in there,” she says. “But I feared the worst.”

Miraculously, Brian was able to get to safety. But he was burned over 60 percent of his body (40 percent were third degree burns), and had to endure months of excruciating therapy and more than 30 surgeries.

When he arrived at Georgetown University Hospital, minutes from death, the physician told him they had to operate immediately.

“I knew this could be it,” says Brian. “So I asked for a chaplain to pray with me. Then I gave my ring to a friend and told him, ‘Give this to Mel. And tell her, I always loved her.’”

“The first time I saw him [after he was rescued], I didn’t recognize him. He was incredibly swollen and ghastly white,” says Mel. “I knew my Brian would never be the same.”

Neither would their marriage.

“I instantly became a full-time caregiver,” says Mel. “It wasn’t a happy time—his pain was often unbearable, and he was like a baby—I had to do everything for him. Yet as frustrating as it got, we always realized that the worst could have happened.

“What most surprised us, though, was the number of people who’d say, ‘Wow, I can’t believe you stuck it out. I’m not sure I would have.’ But we’d committed to each other. There were no other options.”

“You can’t cut and run when it gets tough,” says Brian. “That’s when you learn the most.”

What they learned were blessings in disguise: “God gave me the opportunity to serve my husband,” says Mel. Mel became Brian’s advocate, communicator, primary caregiver. “Loyalty taught Mel servanthood—her part in our marriage during that time,” says Brian. “But loyalty called me to humility and a deep appreciation for being served and what that cost Mel.”

While life is mostly back to normal—and Brian has recently become a state senator for Texas, the Birdwells have changed. “We’ve realized that loyalty and commitment come with a price you can’t appreciate until they’re challenged,” says Mel. “But it’s worth it. I can’t imagine my life without Brian.”

Brian Birdwell On Commitment Challenges:

“We get caught up in the day-to-day issues and lose sight of the big picture of marriage. Commitment calls us to step outside our comfort zone, to serve the other person. That’s the big picture.”

Blessings:

“There are things Mel does for me that I don’t do well, talents she brings to the table that I don’t have. Our abilities complement each other. Loyalty is the only way we can discover how God makes two one.”

For more on Brian and Mel Birdwell, read their recent book Refined by Fire (Tyndale), or visit them at Face the Fire Ministries, www.facethefire.org.

Next issue—Part 2—When Disease Strikes.

Originally published in: *Marriage Partnership*, 2004, Winter

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Oakwood Community Church
 11209 Casey Rd
 Tampa FL 33618-5306
 813.969.2303
www.oakwoodfl.org



Our Staff

- Lead Pastor - Dr. Paul B. Phair
- Director of Ministries - Dave Dorsey
- Director of Worship Arts - Chris Lehmann
- Coordinator of Youth Ministry - Dr. Paul B. Phair
- Coordinator of Children's Ministry - Dave Dorsey
- Office Manager - Martha Dorsey
- Secretary - Mary-Lynn Reilly

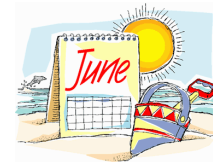
Office hours:

Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Calendar at a Glance



May 30—Memorial Day - Church Office closed



- June 4—Beach Baptism—Pass-a-Grille Beach
- June 5—Graduate Recognition
—Blood Pressure checks
- June 12—Move Up Sunday
- June 14—MISCOM Meeting
- June 17-18—TreeHouse Family Camp IN
- June 18—Father's Day Rays Baseball Game
- June 19—*Father's Day*

The Oakwood *ACORN* is a bi-weekly E-newsletter from Oakwood Community Church, published to keep our church family and friends informed about events and people at Oakwood. Articles may be submitted via e-mail to Office@oakwoodfl.org. Article deadlines and publication schedule is:

Deadline	Publication date	News for dates including...
June 3	June 8	June 11—June 24
June 17	June 22	June 25—July 8

Do you know someone at Oakwood with a noteworthy achievement? Send the information to Office@OakwoodFL.org and we'll include it in a future article.

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