



# ACORN

## Seeds For Growth

### *Random Thoughts*

I am so thankful for many things! We had the privilege of working again at Metropolitan Ministries this year as they blessed so many families with food for Thanksgiving. Several of us also had the honor of participating in the Prayer Chapel. This unique ministry allows us to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and pray with folks about specific needs in their lives and the lives of loved ones. I am so humbled when I hear the simple faith and trust in the Lord by so many who are struggling in this time. Thanks Margaret, Arlene, Ray, Arnie, Paul and Bev for being available to love on the people who allowed us to pray for them.

I am also proud of the many others from Oakwood who came to serve. Stocking shelves, sorting food items, unloading cars, registering the clients were some of the jobs our folks accomplished. I am especially proud of some of the Tree-House “peeps.” Colton Schneider was there with his family to serve refreshments to those waiting to shop. Sofie Mejias and AJ Reyes were there working hard in stocking shelves. They were particularly useful on the lower shelves! Saved wear and tear on the back! I am grateful for the parents who saw the opportunity to teach these kids a good lesson about the significance of blessing others.

Here we go again! We survived Gray Thursday, Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. This past Sunday was “Check Your Heart” Sunday as we were challenged by God’s Word in Luke 18. I am still thinking about some of the items brought to light in this passage especially as we head into a season that seems more than ever bent on the thinking that “stuff” will make us happier. The American culture very overtly tells us to be more consumed by our wants and less about the needs of others. Really, do our kids “need” more toys? Do we “need” more techno toys? The truth of Matthew 25 should be more real to us in this time of year than any other.

Pastor Paul is starting his Christmas series on Sunday, December 9. Even with all the craziness of the shopping season, I believe people are still looking for something significant to make sense of their lives.



This is a great time to invite friends and family members to church with you to hear “A Christmas To Remember!” The Christmas series will be on Sundays December 9, 16 and 23, and conclude with our Christmas Eve bonfire service on Monday evening, December 24.

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Oakwood Community Church  
 11209 Casey Rd  
 Tampa FL 33618-5306  
 813.969.2303  
[www.oakwoodfl.org](http://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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## Christmas at Oakwood

### *A Christmas To Remember*

Make this a Christmas you'll remember for your family, your friends, and yourself. Focus in on the four-part message series that I will present. It begins December 9 and will continue through to Christmas Eve. Ask God to connect you to Him more closely before each Sunday's service. Also invite others to join you in considering along side of you, just how special this Christmas can be. ~ Pastor Paul

Messages in this series include:

- December 9—*The Other Child of Christmas*
- December 16—*The Story Behind the Christmas Story*
- December 23—*Powerful Baby Names*
- December 24—*All I Want For Christmas*

### Christmas Eve Bonfire Service

An outdoor service under the stars—Monday, December 24 @ 6:00 PM

A candlelight service filled with Christmas music. Wear your jeans and bring your own lawn chair and a personal flash light (for reading lyrics)

The service will be located just east of the Teen Center

Ushers will be available to guide you to our location

Contingency plan will be in the worship center (but not a candle light service)



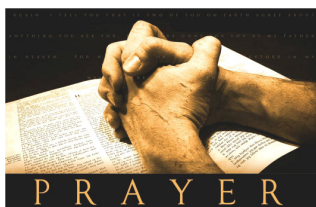
### Schedule Change for December 23 & 30



We will have our regular 10:30 AM Worship Services on **Sunday, December 23 and Sunday, December 30**. There will be no education classes at 9:15 on these two Sundays. We will have our regular nursery care for children birth through 23 months and full TreeHouse Ministry for 2 year olds through 5th Graders during these services.

**Sunday, January 6** we will resume our regular schedule with Education Classes for all ages at 9:15 AM and our Worship Service and TreeHouse ministry at 10:30 AM.

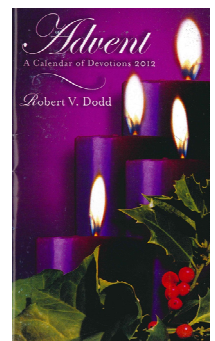
### Sunday Morning Prayer



**Another opportunity to pray**—Every Sunday morning from 10:30 - 10:50 in the Church Library you will find a pair of Oakwoodians leading prayer. Everyone is invited, as you feel led, to join in this guided prayer time.

### Prayer/Devotional Guide

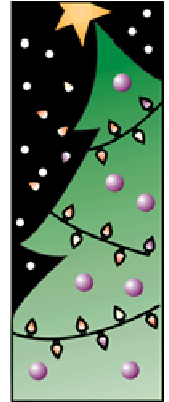
As we enter into this Christmas Season, we encourage each family unit to pick up a copy of the Advent Calendar of Devotions from the Information Center, and use it as your December Prayer Guide to explore the hope that God gives us, especially as it is communicated through the events anticipating and surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ. God's solution to the world's problems is to share in our humanity through the birth of his Son and to infect us with God's contagious love and righteousness.



## Opportunity to *Serve The Church & World*

### Be An Angel

You can help supply the Pregnancy Care Center with items needed for babies and their mothers. Please take an angel from the tree (beginning Dec. 9) in the lobby and purchase the item written on the back. Place the unwrapped gift under the tree by December 23. Pregnancy Care Center is supported through the Missions giving of Oakwood Community Church.



### Naomi's Daughters



This holiday season the Oakwood family has the opportunity to bless the single moms involved with Naomi's Daughters. This year we will be collecting non-perishable food items to build up the food pantry which is the latest addition to the ministry. We will have collection bins in the lobby of the Worship Center and in TreeHouse. The collection will go through Sunday, December 23.

We will also be collecting some personal items for the moms that they may not have the extra budget for, but would be appreciated as well. Thanks for the support of this wonderful ministry.

#### Pantry Needs

Stuffing mix  
Canned veggies (all types)  
Cookies  
Cereals  
Beans  
Rice  
Oatmeal/Grits  
Pasta  
Tomato Sauce  
Canned Tuna/Chicken

Peanut Butter  
Jelly  
Crackers  
Soups  
Foil  
Plastic wrap  
Hamburger Helper mixes  
Water/Juices  
Fruit Cocktail

#### Items for Moms

Shampoos  
Conditioners  
Toothpaste  
Toothbrushes  
Lotions  
Scented Candles  
Gas cards  
Gift cards  
Stationary  
Razors



## Members vote—December 2

This Sunday, December 2, members of Oakwood will be voting on the Proposed 2013 Budget presented at the Congregational Meeting on November 18.



Members will also be voting on the recommendation from the elders that Laurissa Corrales and David Fowle be received into the membership of Oakwood Community Church.

Voting for elder and deacon team members will also be on the ballot.

### Elder Team:

Pete Kluck—2nd Term

### Deacon Team:

Nan Duncan—2nd Term

Ray Ross—2nd Term

Ben Smith—2nd Term

David Young—3rd Term

Ballots will be available on Sunday morning for members to vote, or you can vote via email to [office@oakwoodfl.org](mailto:office@oakwoodfl.org). Emailed ballots must be received by 2:00 PM on Friday, November 30.

## Blood Pressure checks

Blood pressure checks Sunday, December 2, in the kitchen following the Worship Service. Don't miss this important health screening.



## Blood Mobile @ Oakwood

The Blood Mobile will be at Oakwood on Sunday, January 20, 2013 from 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM. If you are at least 16 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, are in good health and haven't donated in the last eight weeks, you are eligible to donate.

Did you know that only 37 % of the U.S. population is eligible to donate blood yet, less than 10% do annually. This is why repeat donors are so vital to our blood supply. January is a critical month for blood donations as blood supplies run low after the holidays.

Will you roll up your sleeves and help us get 7 unites donated for this worthy cause?

## Year End Giving

To assist you in your year-end planning we would like to pass along the following reminder: According to IRS regulations, any checks credited toward your 2012 taxes must be dated on or before December 31, 2012 and post-marked by December 31, 2012. If you prefer to hand deliver, it must be in the church office by December 31. Please contact the office before coming by as staff schedules Dec. 24-31 are not their normal work schedules, due to the holidays.

## Seeds For Growth—*continued*

Martha and I have been reading the Chronological Bible this year and are enjoying it very much. We are finishing our reading in Romans this week. One of the passages that I saw as a prayer for Oakwood is Romans 15:5-7. “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*. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.” I pray this will continue to be a mark of Oakwood as we head into the holiday season and new year.

That is all I am saying today.

Dave Dorsey  
Director of Ministries

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## Oakwood Mill

The Oakwood Mill is the Adult Education Ministry of Oakwood Community Church. We currently have three classes meeting on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM in the Education Center. They are:



*The Five Love Languages of Teenagers*—facilitated by Brian & Terri Johnson in room 108 (final class Dec. 2)

*This We Believe*—a look at the Statement of Faith of Oakwood Community Church and the EFCA—facilitated by Guy Sas in room 102/104

*The Epistles of Peter*—led by Bill Clarke in room 106





## PowerHouse Schedule

Dec 2—Regular Sunday evening—5:00—7:30

Dec 9—Regular Sunday evening—5:00—7:30

Dec 16—Christmas Party

Dec 23—No Meeting

Dec 28 (Friday) - Holiday Lock-In

Dec 30—Regular Sunday evening—5:00—7:30

### Christmas Party

Sunday, December 16  
5:00 PM

**Gift exchange**



**party  
games**

**free food**

Come this Sunday, December 2 to help plan the party!

### Lock-In

**Come join the fun and games**

**Friday, December 28—7:00 PM  
'til  
Saturday, December 29—7:00 AM**

**Cost \$25**

**Mystery field trip involved!**



## Food Bag Ministry

Did you know that our PowerHouse students have a monthly fundraiser assembling food bags that are distributed to medical clinics in Tampa, Lakeland, Haines City and Winter Haven? These bags are distributed to indigent patients at the clinic to provide some basic food needs of the patients and their family.

PowerHouse teens can raise money for summer mission/conference trips by participating in our monthly Food Bag Ministry, typically on the third Sunday of each month. Our next Food Bag Prep day is **Sunday, December 16** right after the Worship Service.

Teens can raise extra funds by helping shop for the food and/or helping with delivery of the food bags to the medical clinics. Shopping for the next fundraiser will be Friday, December 14. Meet at Aldi at the corner of Bearss & Florida Ave. at 5:00 PM (or contact Cam Whipple) if you want to help. For more details contact Sandy Clarke at 931-0668.

**Delivery drivers needed**—We are also in need of people who can help with delivery of these food bags, especially to Lakeland, Haines City, and Winter Haven. If you can help deliver, please contact Sandy Clarke at 931-0668.



## You Can Have Healthier Holiday Relationships with Your In-Laws

By Jenny Schermerhorn



As this holiday season arrives, perhaps you long for healthy family relationships even more than the perfectly set table and crisply roasted turkey.

Extended-family relationships, especially those with our parents-in-law, often seem fraught with complications and challenges. We want things to go well; we long to honor our in-laws and celebrate the holidays with humor, joy, and intentionality ... but every year *that* issue or that *person* pops up and things go downhill quickly. Is this sounding familiar? Let's talk about some practical ways to create a healthier holiday for everyone involved.

**First make a plan with your spouse.** Not with your mom or your siblings—with your husband or wife. Robert Wolgemuth, author of the marriage guide *The Most Important Year in a Woman's Life*, says, "Parents, without trying, can set you against your spouse ... you and your husband need to talk through [your plan]. If you don't, questions can be raised that can turn you against each other." So make some quiet time for you and your husband to outline a plan together and then present it as a united front to both of your families.

**Be empathetic.** The holidays are full of expectations and hopes that have deep emotional meaning to each individual. Take a minute to imagine that someone you love is telling you that things aren't going to be as you had hoped this Thanksgiving or Christmas. Be empathetic, and give your parents or in-laws a chance to express their feelings. This can root out issues that might fester if not addressed. Wolgemuth suggests using language like "My guess is that this is a very hard thing for you to understand or deal with." This can effectively open the door to an opportunity for sharing.

**Say it.** Wolgemuth suggests, "More often than not, these kinds of things break down based on what is *not* said, not what is said." Think about that huge tirade that you save up for your spouse as soon as the car door shuts and you're pulling out of the driveway at your in-laws' home. Examine the recurring themes, and prayerfully consider what you might need to address with your in-laws. None of us like conflict, but without conflict and resolution, healthy relationships do not exist!

**Deal with it early.** November and December are not the times to spring plans or sit down for a "discussion" with your in-laws. Let your in-laws know about your holiday plans in the late summer or very early fall. If you have issues that need to be addressed, make a phone call or write a letter now so you can spend the holidays celebrating.

**Adjust your expectations.** Let's be realistic: none of us will have a "perfect" holiday. The turkey might not be done on time, a child might have a grand mal tantrum, and Uncle Toney might show up with his "special friend." If you picture a Hallmark movie going into the holidays this year, you are going to be disappointed. Instead, make room for reality and look for things at each celebration that you can laugh about and be thankful for.

**Create a backup plan/code word.** Hopefully neither of these will be necessary. But if things get particularly hairy, it can be helpful to have a backup plan in place. One husband I know felt frayed after about six hours of holiday celebration at his in-laws', and his wife knew he needed some "alone time," so she suggested he go get some ice. Now "getting some ice" is his way of taking 20 or 30 minutes to be alone, reset, and come back to the family restored. Marathon holiday weekends can lend themselves to stress in a contained environment, so if you need to, pick a code word that will let your spouse know you need a break. Love your family, but also take care of each other. This isn't about escapism, hiding out for hours at a time, but a chance to recharge and then reconnect.

Deliver your plans with empathy and love to the people who love and raised you and your spouse! Prayerfully consider an honest conversation or letter that could clear up some misunderstandings or standing issues that crop up every year. Decide to expect and accept what the holidays will actually be like, not what you dream they will be like, and put a little plan in place for when things get, um, too "real."

*Jenny Schermerhorn is seeking to live an abundant life in motherhood, ministry, and marriage. She's a freelance writer and communications director at her church.*

Kids Corner

# Make Shining Stars

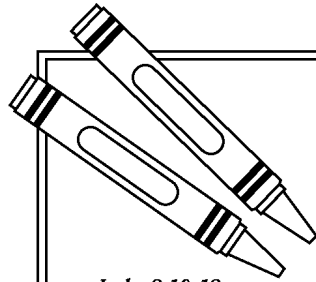
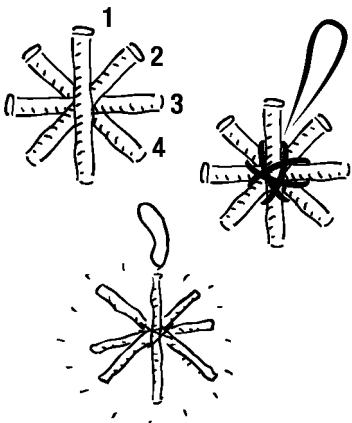
Hang some shining stars on your Christmas tree!

You will need:

- ★ 2 plastic drinking straws for each star
- ★ glitter
- ★ string or yarn
- ★ scissors
- ★ white glue

How to make:

- ★ Cut each straw in half.
- ★ Cut a piece of yarn 18" long.
- ★ Lay the 4 straw pieces in a star shape.
- ★ Wrap the yarn around the center of the straws.
- ★ Tie securely, leaving some yarn to use as a hanger.
- ★ Spread glue on the star and sprinkle with glitter.
- ★ Shake off excess glitter.



# Just for KIDS

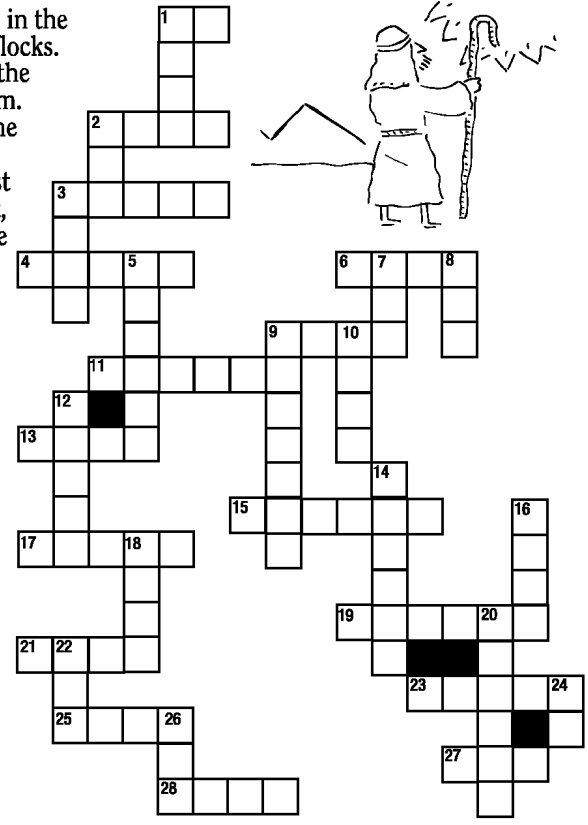
## The Angel Appeared

Luke 2:10-12

There were shepherds in the fields watching their flocks. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them. Find the words that the angel spoke. First fit the words from the list into the squares. Next, write the words on the correct lines.



- |      |         |
|------|---------|
| Do   | This    |
| be   | sign    |
| has  | find    |
| all  | baby    |
| for  | lying   |
| not  | bring   |
| you  | great   |
| joy  | Today   |
| town | David   |
| that | afraid  |
| good | people  |
| news | Savior  |
| will | Christ  |
| been | cloths  |
| born | manger  |
| Lord | wrapped |



“ \_\_\_\_\_ . I \_\_\_\_\_ of  
 24 26 1A 5 3A 8 13 18  
 the \_\_\_\_\_  
 4 27 16 9A 1A 2D 7 15 12  
 in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_  
 28 23 20 22 1D 3D  
 to \_\_\_\_\_ ; he is \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ .”  
 8 19 10

Answer: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."



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 Tampa FL 33618-5306  
 813.969.2303  
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**Our Staff**

Lead Pastor - Dr. Paul B. Phair  
 Director of Ministries - Dave Dorsey  
 Director of Worship Arts - Andrew Reilly  
 Coordinator of Youth Ministry - Dr. Paul B. Phair  
 Coordinator of Children’s Ministry - Dave Dorsey  
 Office Manager - Martha Dorsey  
 Secretary—Melanie Hoglievina

**Office hours:**

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

**Worship:**

Sundays - 10:30 AM

**Our Elder Team**

Jose Cariaga—Chair  
 Pete Kluck  
 Paul Phair  
 Eric Pratt

**Our Deacon Team**

Nan Duncan  
 Arnie Mejias  
 Bob Mendenhall  
 Ray Ross  
 Ben Smith  
 Dave Young—Chair

**Calendar at a Glance**



Dec 2—Members vote on 2013 Proposed Budget & Membership recommendations  
 Blood Pressure checks following Worship  
 Dec 9—Board Meeting for elders & deacons  
 Dec 11—PowerHouse Leaders Meeting  
 Dec 16—Compassion Offering  
 PowerHouse Food Bag Ministry

Dec 23—No Education Hour – Worship @ 10:30  
 Dec 24—Christmas Eve Bonfire Service  
 Dec 25—*Christmas Day*  
 Dec 30—No Education Hour – Worship @ 10:30

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](mailto:Office@oakwoodfl.org). Article deadlines and publication schedule is:

Deadline	Publication date	News for dates including...
Dec 7	Dec 12	Dec 15—Jan 4
Dec 28	Jan 2	Jan 5—Jan 18

Note—this is a 3 week edition\

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

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