

## Ponderings From The Pastor

By Nick Garland, Interim Pastor

What a wonderful month of ministry we have experienced at Oak Grove during June! You folks surely do "rise to the challenge" when a ministry event is scheduled. During the month of June, you have given sacrificially, prayed fervently, served willingly, and worshipped mightily!

What a wonderful week the students had at camp and from the report given in the worship service on Father's Day, it must have been inspirational, impactful, and insightful! The testimonies given were all enthusiastic about what



they had experienced, and most were substantive in what God had done in their lives that was life changing.

And from what I have heard about VBS, it has also been a wonderfully planned, executed, and attended event through Oak Grove volunteers who were willing to teach boys and girls about God, His Word, and His

will for their lives. The time that youth and children spend in camp would equal many weeks of Sunday School teaching. Obviously, the advantage of concentrated time together is the attendee's bond with the teachers and counselors by week's end so that adults can speak wisdom and understanding of Biblical truth into the hearts

of a new generation.

Thank you, indeed, to all of you who served during either or both weeks of student and children "disciple making." Thank you to all who gave monetary gifts to make sure that there were funds sufficient to do the work of these vital ministries. Thank you to all who prayed for the power of God to bless the students and all of the planning and succeed of these two ministry events.

Looking forward to this coming Sunday! Praying for a "Heaven come down day!"

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### Children's Church Lesson Calendar

July 6 — "Joseph Helped His Family"; led by Jim and Nancy Onyon

July 13 — "Joseph Forgave His Brothers"; led by Charles and Gayla Pruett

July 20 — "Hannah's Family Worshiped God"; led by Jeana Drew and Cassell Drew

July 27 — "A Couple Helped Elisha"; led by Matt and Jennifer Chambers

# “I Don't Like The Way The Star Spangled Banner Sounds”

Submitted by Brian Holloway, Interim Worship Leader

Most would agree that whoever said this quote should be excommunicated to another country. This is actually a fake quote as I don't think many have the actual mustard to say this out loud. As we remember the birth of our nation, let's dive into the meaning, message and story of our national anthem and explore why it hits so (almost subconsciously) passionately for all Americans.

Yelling rang out as an elderly man was yanked from his home that had been used as an organizational safe house for British forces. The once helpful man towards British forces was now being called a spy. Dr. William Beanes potentially knew the consequences of turning in British men responsible for raids in Washington D.C. and surrounding area. Beanes would be taken to British Admiral



Cochran's ship HMS tonnant and held in its brig. A lawyer and friend of William's, contacted president Madison and offered help in the negotiations to bring Beanes back.

1814 had been a hard and embattled year for America. Britain, frustrated with the growth of America, its ability to trade its goods, and knowing that the fall of Napoleon would isolate any help for America, continued a campaign that started in 1812 that was meant to bring America back under sovereignty.

The lunch had grown cold and frustrations had been more than heated for quite some

time when the crafty lawyer decided to bring in notes of correspondence from British troops who had been helped by Dr. Beanes. As Admiral Codrington looked over the letters his stance on Beanes being a spy subsided and the pair of American negotiators went to work securing the release of the doctor and potentially other non combatant civilians. The details of the release started to manifest as Skinner suggested a quick time frame for the release. Codrington informed the negotiators that their timing was very poor as they had already heard the rumors and wit-

nessed the ships preparing for a major attack. Light details were added about the impending attack on Fort McHenry and the ultimatum that was given to lower its flag to validate a later release. As Condrintons ship got into position with 18 other warships, the two negotiators asked to be sent back to the ship with prisoners to be removed from being on a ship that would be a major part of the Forts bombardment. The request was approved and feelings of success for their objective was overshadowed by a greater sense of sorrow for the future of America and those at the Fort as the pair were escorted back to a truce ship tied to a 38 gun frigate known as the HMS Surprise. They would get a front row seat of what was about to take place to the

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great star shaped coastal fort. The British ships struggled to get into position as the Fort had formidable defenses and the littered American merchant ships created a barrier for safe passage.

The spray of Chesapeake Bay blanketed the deck of the ship as lightning raced against dark clouds on the morning of September 13th 1814. At 6:00 am thunder not made from the storm but a fleet of British frigates released its greatest and most damaging cannons with the sole purpose to force the Fort to surrender and acknowledge the sovereignty of Britain. With horror the negotiators watched helplessly as the shelling began. "It seemed as though mother earth had opened and was vomiting shot and shell in a sheet of fire and brimstone."

Those who raised the storm flag of Fort McHenry had not thought that they were also raising the flag to take on the storm that the British fleet was to unleash. The ultimatum was sent and they knew that if that storm flag lowered it was a sign of surrender. As the storm waged the two sides struggled to inflict much damage on otherside. The British ships were ranged too far as they tried to account for the storm, American cannons and the littered merchant ships. After six hours of shelling the fleet decided to gamble and push closer to the Fort.

Within minutes the American cannons became dangerously precise and the fleet decided to take its chances moving back. The lighting, water spray, thunder, cannon fire and destruction lingered into the night as the both storms had run their course early in the morning of Sept. 14. As the storms lifted the storm flag was replaced not with a not a union jack but an even larger 15-star American flag. In the dim light that beacons out to illuminate a gravely anticipated tense scene of heavy fear and uncertainty, the pair looked intently to find the banner of American with its 15 stars and red and white stripes. As if a promise from Heaven, a beam of morning light lit up the Banner of America. The exhausted, eager, drenched negotiators came to tears as the weight of the storms lifted and revealed freedom and hope once again. As tears streamed down remembering the 1500 shells launched from 19 British ships, one was instantly compelled to write a poem with the tune of Anacreon to Heaven in the back of his mind. He knew the gravity of the event and wanted to pen an everlasting memorial to its miraculous outcome. The lawyer wrote the thoughts which would later form the poem called the Defense of Fort McHenry.

O say can you see, by the dawn's early light, What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleam-

ing, Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming? And the rocket's red glare, the bomb bursting in air, Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there, O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes, What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep, As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses? Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam, In full glory reflected now shines in the stream, 'Tis the star-spangled banner - O long may it wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore, That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion A home and a Country should leave us no more? Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution. No refuge could save the hireling and slave From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave, And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

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# July Daily Bible Reading Plan

July 1 Obad 1, Ps 82-83

July 2 2 Kgs 1-4

July 3 2 Kgs 5-8

July 4 2 Kgs 9-11

July 5 2 Kgs 12-13, 2 Chr 24

July 6 2 Kgs 14, 2 Chr 25

July 7 Jonah 1-4

July 8 2 Kgs 15, 2 Chr 26

July 9 Isa 1-4

July 10 Isa 5-8

July 11 Amos 1-5

July 12 Amos 6-9

July 13 2 Chr 27, Isa 9-12

July 14 Mic 1-7

July 15 2 Chr 28, 2 Kgs 16-17

July 16 Isa 13-17

July 17 Isa 18-22

July 18 Isa 23-27

July 19 2 Kgs 18:1-8, 2 Chr 29-31, Ps 48

July 20 Hos 1-7

July 21 Hos 8-14

July 22 Isa 28-30

July 23 Isa 31-34

July 24 Isa 35-36

July 25 Isa 37-39, Ps 76

July 26 Isa 40-43

July 27 Isa 44-48

July 28 2 Kgs 18:9-19:37, Ps 46, Ps 80, Ps 135

July 29 Isa 49-53

July 30 Isa 54-58

July 31 Isa 59-63

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O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation! Blest with vict'ry and peace may the heav'n rescued land Praise the power that hath made and preserv'd us a nation! Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto - "In God is our trust," And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Originally unsigned, this poem would later be signed by Francis Scott Key, the lawyer friend of a doctor who loved God's people no matter what side. Christians in action gave us a nation. Christians in action protect our nation. May we never take for granted God's provision and think carefully how we are called be that morning light of hope to a lost world. May we be the peacekeepers of the beatitudes as we reflect how the freedom our soldiers past, present and future

have given is a beautiful picture of the freedom Jesus offers those under the tyrannical control of Satan and his weaponized sin. It's funny how Francis Scott Key thought that the best way to immortalize this miraculous providence of God with song. Even if the Star Spangled Banner isn't a preferred style of music for an individual, almost all can agree it not only strikes a chord in the hearts of Christians but in the hearts of humanity.

A few considerations can be made from the last statement. Those who don't like the style of the Star Spangled Banner don't focus on the style it brings as much as the message it delivers. Those who like the style of the Star Spangled Banner don't focus on the style it brings as much as the message it delivers. When hearts are tuned to the message the distractions of our desires tends to be like the peace that surpasses all understanding.

I pray and go to God in my quiet time often and thank God I enjoy my worship music but I also pray for Him to help me open my heart to the message of all Christian music. I love hymns, classical, modern, folk, rock styles of worship music. But some I struggle with but also bring a great message. I have noticed I have to be careful that my connection to certain songs sometimes are connections to certain memories and not truly focused on God. Sometimes I worship great God moments in my life, or even great christian mentors and those have created a barrier for growth. Sometimes I am convicted that I worship the song and not who the song is about. Through God's providence I pray my heart is tuned. May the chords I play and sing resonate greater to the God who created me and not my feeble, imperfect ears. As always Glory be to God and may we all have hearts that desire continued sanctification whether old or young.

# July 2025

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

		1 Jennifer Lee bday	2 Tori Lovett & Ava Pruett bdays	3	4 Joe Eastham bday; No Adult Game Night	5
6 Margaret Gaulding bday; Andrew Holloway recital, 5pm	7	Children's Day Camp			11	12
				Crafty Christians, 10am		
13 Family Game Night, 5pm	14 Jim Onyon bday	15	16	17	18 Charles Young bday	19
20 Business meeting, noonish; Youth water games, 5pm	21	22	23 Pauline Ellis, Paul Travis Roberts & Chris Whitlock bdays	24 Crafty Christians, 10am	25	26
27	28 Bryan Zugelder bday	29	30 Cuma Hardison bday	31		

# 412 Youth News

Submitted by Matt Shepard, Youth Leader

Almost 11 years in youth ministry (Am I old yet? My youth seems to think so!) and 11 trips to Falls Creek and God continues to show how good He is!

Falls Creek 2025 was a great one. We had nine decisions made out of the 20 students that went! Our youth appreciate all the support we received and continue to receive through prayers, financially and donations. We are truly blessed with the church family we have.

If you missed our Falls Creek Recap and would like to watch it, you can find the service on our church YouTube (Oak Grove Baptist Church Catoosa).

Just a reminder: We do not have Awana or vans running through the summer. Youth schedule for July and beyond is listed below.

Dates to know:

**July 2** - No church (4th of July week); **July 6** - Andrew Holloway Recital at 5 p.m. (Come support one of our



2025 graduates!); **July 9, 16, 23** - Church 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.; **July 20** - End of Summer Splashdown (water games, volleyball, and food); **July 30** - No church (week before school starts); **Aug. 3**

(Sunday) - Promotion Sunday! 5th to be 6th graders are promoted to youth! **Aug. 6** - Regular Wednesday night services start back up! (Awana and Youth 6:30-8 p.m.; vans will be running)

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## Awana starting August 6

Awana starts back up 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 6. Volunteers are needed! If interested, see Kimberly Roberts or call 918-346-5559.

Oak Grove Baptist Church  
P.O. Box 1358  
307 South 273rd East Ave.  
Catoosa, OK 74015