

Ponderings From The Pastor

By Tom Gragg, Pastor

A New Year, A Faithful God

As we step into a new year together, I want to begin by saying how grateful I am to be serving as your pastor. It is a privilege I do not take lightly, and I thank God for the opportunity to walk with you, pray for you, and open God's Word with you in the days ahead.

A new year often brings reflection—looking back at what has been, and looking forward to what lies ahead. Scripture reminds us that while seasons change, God does not. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). That truth gives us confidence and peace as we move forward together.

As your pastor, my heart is simple: that we would be a church that loves Christ deeply, loves one another faithfully, and lives on mission obediently. We are not called to chase trends or measure success the way the world does, but to be found faithful — trusting God to do His work in His way, in His time.



In this new year, I invite you to join me in three commitments:

- Seek the Lord daily through prayer and His Word.
- Stay connected to the life of the church and to one another.
- Serve and share as God opens doors around us.

I believe God has good plans for this church — not because of who we are, but because of who He is. My prayer is that this year would be marked by spiritual growth, renewed hope, and a deeper dependence on the Lord.

Thank you for welcoming me and my family so warmly. We are excited for what God will do as we walk forward together — by faith.

With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Tom

412 Youth News

Submitted by Matt Shepard, Youth Leader



These youth came for the food, stayed for the gift exchange, and left knowing Jesus loves them! Our Progressive Dinner was a blast, and the youth were very appreciative to our hosts (Paula and Mike Shepard and Nancy and Jim Onyon).

Next month, we will have a youth movie night 6:30-8 p.m., Jan. 25. All 6th through 12th graders are welcome to join.

Dates to know:

Jan. 7 — Youth and Awanas (6:30 - 8 p.m.)

Jan. 25 — Youth Movie Night (6 - 8 p.m.) popcorn, ice cream, floats.

Feb. 15 — 412 Youth's Annual Chili Cook-Off & Silent Dessert Auction (12 - 1:30 p.m.)

Music Director Position Ad

Oak Grove Baptist Church has an opening for a Music Director.

The position is a part-time paid position and plans, prepares and directs music for all services in agreement with the Southern Baptist faith (Sunday worship, holidays and special occasions).

The Music Director will work with the Pastor to select music that supports the sermon and enhances the worship experience.

The Music Director shall recruit, train and encourage volunteers and staff musicians (pianists, organists, praise team).

Applications will be accepted through Jan. 10, 2026.

Applications should be sent to David Curtis, chairperson of the Personnel Committee.



Happy New Year

Submitted by Brian Holloway, Interim Worship Leader



Happy New Year. That phrase is used and thrown around pro forma much like many of our ceremonial responses. Unfortunately, passively stating a response without thinking is a natural part of the human condition. I have to remind myself that this part of the human condition is very dangerous and can lead to a luke-warm passivity in our relationship with God. Agreed, it is difficult to be intentional with ceremonial phrases but this is the mindset pathway to a religion and not a relationship with Christ. What's worse it slows the progress of the gospel through us.

The world makes fun of religions as silly myth believers but when it comes to those who have a relationship with Christ the jokes stop and the serious side of evil acts. What a testament to the validity of Christianity!

We are called to not be luke-warm church attendees the world pokes fun at because of our cute little traditions. Our comfort and traditions don't save and get us closer to God but Jesus does. If our walk with Jesus is a programmed, ceremonial pro forma checklist, we have turned Christianity into nothing more than a casual passing phrase of "How was your day?"

Commit to intentionality this New Year. Commit to intentionality in prayer, service, God time, Bible reading, Bible studying and of course musical worship! Let us get back to our first love and remember the only way we can experience the joy of a Happy New Year is by believing in Jesus Christ and then continuing to run the race. Salvation is not a checklist, it is the New Year of our lives. There's still much more to do!

For someone to come forward for an invitation and accept Christ is a miraculous event, but so is someone coming down and asking for prayer or praying at the altar. This is the demonstration of Jesus still working in people who deeply desire to keep Him close as they continue to run the race.

This New Year let's drop the resolutions and put first the kingdom of God, and you will find Jesus will give you all you need to be truly happy and provided for.

My strength to change me always fails but Jesus never does. May the phrase "Happy New Year" be a reminder that only one can give us true happiness and we should be intentional with all things.

Children's Church Lesson Calendar

Jan. 4 — "Jesus Healed the Official's Son," led by John and Cindy Tittle

Jan. 11 — "Jesus Calmed a Storm," led by Kimberly Roberts and Sylvia Monreal

Jan. 18 — "Jesus Fed the People," led by Nancy Onyon and Brittaney Day

Jan. 25 — "Jesus Walked on Water," led by Audrey Brannon and Taylor Shepard

January 2026 Daily Bible Reading Plan

Theme: “Abide, Walk, and Build”

WEEK 1 (JAN 1–4) — BEGINNING WITH GOD

- January 1 – Psalm 1 A blessed life begins with delighting in God’s Word
- January 2 – Proverbs 1 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge
- January 3 – Genesis 1 God is Creator, sovereign, and purposeful
- January 4 – Genesis 2 God’s design for work, rest, and relationship

WEEK 2 (JAN 5–11) — ABIDING IN CHRIST

- January 5 – John 1:1–18 Jesus: the Word made flesh
- January 6 – John 3 New birth comes from above
- January 7 – John 6:35–51 Jesus is the Bread of Life
- January 8 – John 10 The Good Shepherd who knows His sheep
- January 9 – John 13 Servant leadership shaped by love
- January 10 – John 15 Apart from Me you can do nothing
- January 11 – John 17 Jesus prays for faithful, unified disciples

WEEK 3 (JAN 12–18) — WALKING WISELY

- January 12 – Proverbs 3 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
- January 13 – Proverbs 4 Guard your heart
- January 14 – Proverbs 16 Commit your work to the Lord

- January 15 – James 1 Faith that endures trials
- January 16 – James 2 Faith proven by works
- January 17 – James 3 Taming the tongue
- January 18 – James 4 Humility before God

WEEK 4 (JAN 19–25) — BUILDING A GODLY LIFE & CHURCH

- January 19 – Acts 2:1–13 Empowered by the Spirit
- January 20 – Acts 2:42–47 Marks of a healthy church
- January 21 – Acts 4:32–37 Unity and generosity
- January 22 – 1 Timothy 3 Character before position
- January 23 – Titus 1 God’s design for leadership
- January 24 – Ephesians 4 Equipping saints for the work of ministry
- January 25 – Colossians 1:15–23 Christ is supreme

WEEK 5 (JAN 26–31) — FINISHING FAITHFUL

- January 26 – Psalm 37 Trust the Lord and do good
- January 27 – Psalm 73 God is enough
- January 28 – 2 Timothy 2 A faithful servant of Christ
- January 29 – 2 Timothy 4 Finish the race
- January 30 – Hebrews 12 Run with endurance
- January 31 – Revelation 21 God makes all things new

January 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2	3
4	5	6 Brittaney Day bday	7	8 Crafty Christians 10am	9	10
11	12 Cindy Johnson & Frances Orndorff bdays	13	14	15 Michael Curtis bday	16	17 Mary Ann Walker bday
18 Jeana Drew bday	19	20	21	22 Crafty Christians, 10am; Virginia Brannon bday	23	24 Brandon Drew & Kathleen Henry bdays
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



The Seekers Sunday School class dropped off 40 snack bags to the John 3:16 Mission in Tulsa. Each bag also included a dental gift bag from Cedar Creek Dental.

“It was a wonderful experience,” said Cindy Tittle.



Sunday Morning Services are no longer streaming via FaceBook live. The live stream has moved to YouTube@OakGroveBaptistChurchCatoosa. A YouTube account is not needed and you can watch for FREE!

The link is: <https://youtube.com/@oakgrovebaptistchurchcatoosa?si=XB8x6oa7oyBn0PgB>.

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