

Stories That Matter*From Pastor Amy's Desk*

April / May 2026

The Season of Becoming

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of a new season. A season not marked by an empty tomb alone, but by a living presence. A season the Church has long understood as a time of *becoming*.

For forty days after the Resurrection, Jesus appeared repeatedly to His disciples and to many others. Scripture tells us that He taught them about the Kingdom of God, opened their understanding, and prepared their hearts for what was to come. These were not random appearances. They were intentional, formative, and deeply relational. This was a sacred in-between time; no longer the grief of Good Friday, not yet the power of Pentecost. It was a season of transformation.

This forty-day period culminates in the Ascension of Jesus, when Christ commissions His followers and promises the gift of the Holy Spirit. But before that moment, He walks with them, speaks peace to them, and gently shapes them into who they are becoming.

We see one of the most powerful examples of this in Gospel of John 20:19–31. The disciples are gathered behind locked doors, fearful and uncertain, when Jesus suddenly stands among them and says, “Peace be with you.” He breathes on them and speaks of the Holy Spirit, a foretaste of what is to come. And then there is Apostle Thomas. Thomas was not present for that first appearance, and when the others tell him what they have seen, he struggles to believe. He wants to see for himself. He wants to touch the wounds. He wants a faith that is real and grounded.

And Jesus meets him there. Rather than rejecting Thomas’ doubt, Jesus invites it into relationship, “Put your finger here... Do not doubt but believe.” In that moment, Thomas offers one of the most profound confessions in all of Scripture, “My Lord and my God!”

Because of Thomas, we are reminded that questions are not the enemy of faith. They are often the doorway into deeper faith. We, too, long to see what we cannot physically see. We wrestle with what we do not fully understand. And yet, the risen Christ still comes to us, still speaks peace, still invites us to trust.

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This season of becoming is not only something we read about in Scripture, but also something we live through in our own lives.

In these next few weeks we will see high school seniors preparing to graduate, standing on the threshold of a new chapter. Families will gather to celebrate accomplishments; to honor long days of study, growth, and perseverance. There is joy in these milestones, but also a quiet ache. Endings and beginnings often arrive hand in hand.

At the same time, creation itself bears witness to this sacred rhythm. The earth is in full bloom. Trees bud, flowers open, and the world seems to come alive again. It is breathtakingly beautiful, and yet, even this beauty reminds us of change, of seasons passing, of life moving forward whether we are ready or not.

This is the tension of Easter. It is a season of both beauty and pain, of celebration and uncertainty, and of resurrection and becoming.

The disciples knew this feeling well. Their world had been turned upside down. They were filled with hope, yet still unsure of what came next. And amid it all Jesus kept showing up.

So how do we encounter the Living Christ in this season of becoming?

We encounter Him:

- In gathered **community**, where Christ is present when we come together in His name
- In **Scripture**, where the Word becomes alive and speaks into our lives
- In the quiet whisper of **peace** that settles our fears
- In acts of **love and service**, where we become the hands and feet of Christ
- Even in our **questions**, seeking leads to deeper knowing

This Easter season is not just something we remember. It is something we embody. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is alive within us. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in Epistle to the Romans 8:11, that Spirit is still giving life, still renewing, still transforming.

We are not the same people we were before Easter. And yet, we are not fully who we are becoming. Like the disciples in those forty days, we are being shaped, taught, and prepared.

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This is the Season of Becoming.

We are becoming a people of resurrection hope.

We are becoming a people who trust even when we cannot see.

We are becoming a people who carry Christ's peace into a changing world.

We are becoming a people filled with the Spirit, ready to live and love boldly.

So, as you celebrate graduations, as you marvel at the beauty of spring, as you navigate both joy and uncertainty know the risen Christ is with you.

Christ is risen, and in Him, we are becoming.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Amy

Sermon Series

“Stories That Matter”

The season of Easter, or Eastertide, is a time of embracing the promise and hope of Resurrection. It is a time of leaning into the stories that matter. Come and gather around the stories of those who wrestled with the Easter event and some of the words of preparation that Jesus gave to help us live the reality of eternity now. It is clear from these stories that Jesus wanted to equip us to thrive in a season of Easter promise. This season, we hope you'll engage in stories that matter.

Sunday, April 12 th	“Sent to Re-Enter”	Luke 24:13-35
Sunday, April 19 th	“Unless I See”	John 20:19-31
Sunday, April 26 th	“Knowing That Voice”	John 10:1-10
Sunday, May 3 rd	“You Know The Way”	John 14:1-14
Sunday, May 10 th	“The Story Abides”	John 14:15-21

Stories That Matter



Bible Study

“What is a Christian?”

By Francis Chan
Series 1 of Essentials of Faith

Ask any group what it means to be a Christian, and we will hear different answers. But what unifies us? What are the basic characteristics of our faith that every Christian affirms? In this six-session series, Francis Chan will lead us in an exploration of key concepts common to all Christians through the centuries. No matter what divides us, we are united by these truths about the God we worship and our relationship with him.

This study will begin Wednesday, April 15th and will run through Wednesday, May 20. Facilitated by Kiley Gunter and Pastor Amy each Wednesday on ZOOM.



Please join us via Zoom

Meeting ID: 423 877 6042 followed by #, followed by our password 6042#.

You can also join by phone at 1-646-558-8656, then put in meeting ID 4238776042 followed by the # (you can expect a few seconds delay before the next prompt).

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Stories That Matter

Prayer Focus

The Power of Unity

John 17:23 as Jesus prayed to God, *“I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.”*



Week of April 19th

Parise be to God for the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus the Christ of Nazarene!

Week of April 26th

Prayers for our Leadership at WOUMC to make wise decisions and follow the will of God

Week of May 3rd

Praises for all the children at White Oak, and prayers for their families. May we as a Church be a strong foundation to help these families raise their children to know the love of God

Week of May 10th

Prayers for those who grieve their mother's passing, and experiencing their first mother's day, without their mother.

New Beginnings



This is the houseless ministry here at the church. They are collecting warmer weather items; t-shirts, shorts, socks, wash cloths, and ChapStick. These items will be distributed after the Worship Service on Sunday, April 26th. You can drop-off items to the church, then if you want to help distribute the items meet Sheldon and Iva Richardson after the service.

Stories That Matter



What's Happening

Sundays

9:30 AM– Sunday School

10:45 AM– Worship in Sanctuary (Zoom & Facebook Live)

*Every 1st & 5th Sundays Holy Communion

*Children's Church (Ages K-5th)- *except the 1st & 5th Sundays*

*Every 5th Sunday, Holston Children's Home Offering

Trustee's Meeting every 2nd Sunday of the month in the Library (immediately after worship)

Mondays

Church Office Closed

Tuesdays

Church office hours 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Church Council Meeting Every 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Library @ 6 PM

Women's Prayer Time on Zoom Only @ 7 PM

Wednesdays

Church office hours 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

6:30 PM Adult Bible Study on Zoom Only

6:30 PM Adult Small Group in Fellowship Hall

Youth Small Group @ 6:30 PM with dinner in Fellowship Hall

Thursdays

Church office hours 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Every other Thursday Girl Scout Troops Meet from 6 – 7:30 PM in the Children's Area

AA Meetings @ 7 PM in the Fellowship Hall

UWF—United Women in Faith (formerly UMW) meet every 1st Thursday of the month
in the Library @ 11 AM

Fridays

Church office hours 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Saturdays

Church Office Closed

Every other Saturday Girl Scout Troops Meet from 3PM – 4:30 PM in the Children's Area

*Food Pantry is open during the Church Office Hours during the week.

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In Prayer For...

- Prayers for Sandra Parker as she continues treatment of infusions for her Liver cancer, the lesions are slightly smaller and the inflammation is improving! Glory!
- Prayers for Annette Palmer, as she is no longer a candidate for a lung transplant, and is battling an autoimmune disorder.
- Prayers for Bre, friend of White Oak, as she recently found out she has a brain tumor, after an MRI from suffering with Bell's Palsy. She will find out more next month when she sees the Neurologist. Please pray for Bre and her 16 month old son, as she awaits further testing.
- Prayers for Mrs. Celia Hill, as she continues to recover from the DMEK Procedure for recovery of her eyesight on Thursday, March 12th.
- Prayers for Tony Martin, as he continues to recover and gain his strength back.
- Prayers for Linda Parker as she continues to recover from a fall on Sunday, March 29th. She has been home bound not able to put any weight on her right leg and foot. Hopeful to start PT soon.
- Prayers for Maddox Gilliam, grandson of Susan and Craig Borum, as he was tentatively diagnosed with Legg-calve-Perthes disease.
- Prayers for the children of Gateway to Victory School in Kericho, Kenya
- Prayers for the Mission team as they make plans to go back to Gateway To Victory in Kenya for a house build and training on Grief Recovery for the school staff. Tentatively September 17-29th

Please keep Chris Nesin and his family in your prayers as the family will host a Celebration of Life Service at 1 PM on Saturday, April 25th at Bethesda Methodist Church located at 800 Hardy Road, Pulaski, TN, in honor of his beloved mother, Janet.

If you have a **PRAYER REQUEST** you can fill out one of the **Purple** papers in the pews and drop it in the plates during worship service on Sunday, or email it to the church office. (whiteoakchurch@epbf.com)

Stories That Matter



Financial Update

TEXT Tribe to 73256 and go directly to our Realm Giving App.

--Generosity comes from the heart, not the pocket.--

For more than 95 years, White Oak United Methodist Church has worked to proclaim Jesus Christ to the masses in Red Bank and in Samaria. The support of our donors like you helps us create and steward the ministries that God has called us to. But the challenges that lie ahead demand that we measure success not by days, months, or even years, but by GENERATIONS. A gift from your Will, Living Trust, Donor Advised Fund (DAF), or via a beneficiary designation will preserve and protect this church and the impact that we have on our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

This is worth knowing: while not technically a tax deduction, a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) may help reduce your taxable income. If you're age 70 1/2 or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 directly from an IRA to a qualified charity like White Oak United Methodist Church, and that amount may be excluded from your taxable income. Talk to your financial advisor or call me [229-886-2376](tel:229-886-2376). Possibly you want to contribute to a new church van?!?

Thank you!!!!!!!!!!!! to everyone who contributed to the HEAT fund. We collected \$8525 out of the \$10,208 for the new heat unit. Everyone thanks you. The small difference was made up out of the operating budget from contributions from everyone who didn't specify the HEAT option. This is absolutely wonderful. NOW, we need to turn our attention to COOL. Our Sanctuary cooling unit is 25 years old. Normal life is 15 years. Praise God we have made it this extra long! But it is TIME to replace it so we don't have to throw good money over a bad situation. Please be in prayer for this! The price tag is in excess of \$35,000. There is a drop down in Realm called, you guessed it, COOL.

Thank you for your continued support of our tribe! You are treasured.

Any time you have a question about the church's finances, please ask us.

Thanks,
Chuck/Lynn/Pat
Treasurers- White Oak United Methodist Church

We are committed to being open and transparent. More detailed reports available upon request.

Email whiteoakfinance@epbf.com

Thank You

With grateful hearts, we give thanks to all the incredible volunteers of White Oak UMC, our dedicated Trustees Committee, and Liz Robertson, Church Operations Coordinator, for making our recent events such a blessing!

Our Church Workday on Saturday, March 21st was a tremendous success, with our best attendance ever of 43 people. We came together in service, fellowship, and care for our church home. What a joy to see so many hands and hearts at work!

And just one week later, the Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 28th was filled with laughter, excitement, and community spirit. The cold wind did not stop us, and over 1500 Easter eggs were hidden, and found!! Thank you to everyone who helped plan, prepare, and bring that day to life for our children and families. Also, thank you to White Oak bicycle co-op for setting up their rodeo and their giveaway of bikes. You guys are amazing.

Your time, energy, and love do not go unnoticed. You are the hands and feet of Christ in action.

Glory!



Egg Hunt 2026



Trustees Update

Thank you again families, couples, singles, and everyone that participated in the workday. The church looked great for Easter!

Exterior: We have some shingles missing from our roof and we are in the process of getting three quotes to correct that issue. We are also having someone look at our gutters and downspouts and some rotten wood that needs repairing.



Youth Group

We truly appreciate those volunteers who are dedicated to helping our Youth program! So many of you donate money, provide a dinner, ride in the van as a chaperone, or help lead on Wednesday nights. We are thankful for our tribe!

Youth group (6th grade-12th grade) meets on Wednesday nights from 6:30pm-7:30pm. Dinner is provided each week. Transportation is available. Contact **Maddy Easterly** at maddy.easterly@gmail.com for more details.

Save the Dates

- Tuesday, **April 21st**— Church Council Meeting at 6pm in the Library
- Thursday, **April 23rd**— Chattanooga “Moth Ball” - Downside Up Inc. is the local Non-profit Organization whom it will benefit.
- Sunday, **April 26th**— “New Beginnings” meeting after worship to take warm weather items to the Houseless.
- Thursday, **May 7th**— United Women in Faith (UWF) meets at 11am in the Library
- Sunday, **May 10th**— Trustees meets after worship service in the Library.
- Sunday, **May 17th**— Senior Recognition Sunday

Get Connected!

Join In-Person, on ZOOM or Facebook Live for Worship!

Topic: White Oak UMC Worship

Time: **Sunday 10:45 AM EST in the sanctuary.**

You can also join using the Zoom information below or on Facebook Live

Meeting ID: 423 877 6042 followed by #, followed by our password 6042#

You can also join by phone at 1-646-558-8656, then put in meeting ID 4238776042 followed by the # (you can expect a few seconds delay before the next prompt). You will be prompted to enter the participant ID, just hit # and then you will be prompted for a password, you will enter 6042# and you will hear that you have been joined to the meeting.

SMALL GROUPS

- The Hilander Class meets in the Chapel at 9:45 AM with rotating teachers of Mary Alice Thomas, Pauline Howard and Frank Parker.
- The Women's Group is meeting in the HEM Ministry classroom on the 2nd floor at 9:30am with Hillary Morgan leading.
- The Men's Discipleship Class is lead by Bill Fetherolf in library at 9:45 AM
- Children's Sunday School is meeting on the 2nd floor at 9:45 AM with Adelaide Weaver.
- Women's Prayer Time is meeting on Tuesday's at 7:00 PM Zoom Only
- Bible Study is meeting on Wednesday's at 6:30 PM on Zoom Only
- Adult Small Group is meeting on Wednesday's at 6:30 PM in the Fellowship hall
- Youth is meeting in person on Wednesday's at 6:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall, dinner provided.

Please FILL OUT a Connection Card and drop in the offering plates to get more connected.

Our website is up and running!

Ministry Partnerships

Have you experienced a loss, and you now carry the weight of Grief?

You are not alone. Our center offers **The Grief Recovery Method**; an evidenced based program to help you understand and process the emotions of Grief.

Individual and group classes are available.

- Grief Recovery Method
- Helping Children with Loss
- Pet Loss



For more information, email, call, or text

Karen Sarnosky Adv.GRMS, CPC

karen@griefchatt.com

423-888-7322 www.griefchatt.com

The Family Justice Center of Chattanooga, TN 423-643-7600

The FJC serves residents of Hamilton County and the City of Chattanooga by co-locating services in a trauma-informed environment to:

- Address intimate partner and family violence
- Address abuse of older adults through elder justice services
- Address human trafficking

All services provided at the FJC are **FREE and confidential** -- no appointment is necessary during regular business hours.

We also have bilingual staff to serve the growing Hispanic/Latino population.

Services provided:

- Assistance in creating a personal safety plan
- Help finding a safe place for you, your children, and pets
- Education and awareness regarding domestic violence, elder abuse, and human trafficking
- Referrals to services available in Chattanooga
- Civil Legal services and help with obtaining Orders of Protection
- Personal support in court appointments
- Emotional support

**LOCAL Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
CRISIS HOTLINE 423.755.2700**

Available 7 days a week,

Downside Up Inc.

We help children with disabilities and their families build community through our creative spaces and experiences.

- **Theresa Nix**, founder & CEO
- downsideupinc@gmail.com
- downsideupinc.org



White Oak Bicycle Co-Operative

The White Oak Bicycle Cooperative is a volunteer-run non-profit 501(c)(3) community bicycle organization that provides free access to bicycles, repair services, and safety

education to schools, partner organizations, and communities across Southeast Tennessee.

P.O. Box 15102
Red Bank, TN 37415

contact@whiteoakbicycle.org
<https://www.whiteoakbicycle.org/>



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<i>Monday:</i>	<i>Office Closed</i>
<i>Tuesday:</i>	<i>9:00-4:00</i>
<i>Wednesday:</i>	<i>9:00-4:00</i>
<i>Thursday:</i>	<i>9:00-4:00</i>
<i>Friday:</i>	<i>9:00-12:00</i>