

A close-up photograph of water splashing, with many small droplets suspended in the air, creating a dynamic and refreshing visual. The water is a deep blue-grey color, and the background is dark and out of focus.

Renewed in Mercy

White Oak Witness

From Pastor Amy's Desk

Feb / March 2026

As we turn the page toward another holy season in the life of the Church, we prepare to enter the sacred journey of Lent. Our Lenten walk will begin with our **Ash Wednesday Service at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, February 18th**, and together we will travel the road that leads us to the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus on **Easter Sunday, April 5th**.

Lent has been observed by Christians for more than 1,500 years. The word “Lent” comes from an old English word meaning *springtime*—a season of new growth. In the early Church, Lent was a 40-day period of preparation for new believers who would be baptized at Easter. Over time, it became a sacred season for all Christians, a time of repentance, reflection, prayer, fasting, generosity, and renewal. The 40 days remind us of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness, facing temptation and preparing for His ministry.

Lent is not about guilt. It is about grace.

This year, our Lenten theme is “**Renewed to Mercy.**” Mercy is at the heart of who God is. Throughout Scripture, we see a God who meets wandering people in the wilderness, who provides manna for the journey, who speaks hope into dry bones, and who stretches out His arms in love on the cross. Lent invites us to walk those wilderness roads again, not alone, but guided by God’s promise that God’s steadfast love never fails.

The wilderness is not comfortable. It is a place of honesty. A place where distractions fall away. A place where we rediscover what truly matters. Yet it is also a place of deep grace. In the wilderness, God renews us. In the wilderness, God reshapes us. In the wilderness, God rebuilds us.

You may remember that the word guiding us this year is *Rebuild*. Lent gives us space to rebuild our understanding of God’s plan and purpose for our lives. It calls us to rebuild our trust in His love. It challenges us to rebuild our commitment to live as people who reflect the Kingdom of God in our homes, our church, and our community.

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Renewed in Mercy

To be “Renewed to Mercy” means we receive mercy—and then we become mercy. We forgive as we have been forgiven. We extend grace as grace has been extended to us. We walk humbly, love deeply, and serve faithfully. We remember that we never walk alone. Christ walks with us.

The Spirit strengthens us. The Church journeys together.

As we begin this holy season, I invite you to commit to the journey. Join us for worship. Set aside intentional time for prayer. Consider what you may need to lay down, and what God longs to rebuild in you. Allow this to be more than a season on the calendar. Let it be a season of transformation.

The road to Easter always passes through the wilderness. But the wilderness does not get the final word. Resurrection does.

May this Lent renew our hearts in mercy and lead us together into the joy of Easter morning.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Amy

Town Hall

Our Town Hall Meeting will be on Wednesday, **March 25th, at 6:30 PM** in the Fellowship Hall, with dinner served.

This is an opportunity to hear the latest business of the church and ask any questions that you may have of the leadership, while enjoying a good meal with your White Oak family!

Renewed in Mercy

Lenten Practices

Lenten practices as suggestions, that you may want to follow on this 40-day journey to Renewed Mercy.

Worship - Attend the Ash Wednesday Worship Service, held at 6:30 PM in the sanctuary, on Facebook Live, or on ZOOM. The worship service is a time of intentional prayer, singing, confession and pardon, and the imposition of ashes. The purpose of this service is to help us reflect on our own mortality and the need for us to confess our sins. Make intentional plans to participate in each Sunday worship leading up to Easter. April 5th is Easter Sunday. Look for ways throughout the week to be a part of a small group study to learn more and worship more.

Serve – On Ash Wednesday we remember that we are part of the human family, making it a great day to serve others. If possible, find a place to volunteer for the day. Take an hour and help your elderly neighbor clean up their yard, offer to change the light bulbs in their house, or offer to salt their steps when bad weather is coming. Perhaps you view this Lent season as a season to be in community and look for service opportunities throughout the season to serve others.

Fast/Abstain – “Giving something up for Lent” is a common practice for many Christians. Often, we give up our favorite dessert or try to kick a bad habit during Lent. This fast begins on Ash Wednesday, but don’t confine yourself to just food or habits. Perhaps try to abstain from negative talk or give up your fears and anxiety. These will be a little more challenging to abstain from, but when the “anxiety” arises, pause for prayer.

Be Still - Some find meaning in the stillness. Light a candle and pause before the presence of God. Practice your breathing. Inhale the Holy Spirit and exhale a Praise. Listen for the voice of God.

Clean something - Ash Wednesday is a good day to get a jump on your spring cleaning. Spend an hour with the junk drawer, that cabinet at work, or organizing the files on your computer. As you remove things you no longer need and reorder those you do, be mindful of the ways God "cleans" us. The Bible tells us, "As far as east is from west—that's how far God has removed our sin from us" (Psalm 103:12, CEB). As we get things in order, we remember that Jesus gave his life so that we might be free from our sins and know new life.

Burn something - When you finish cleaning, take some of the papers you no longer need to the fireplace or fire pit in the back yard. Light them and watch as they turn to ashes. The ashes in the fireplace are not the same as the ones used in worship but can serve as a similar reminder that your sins are forgiven. As the smoke rises-up the chimney, know your prayers are rising to God as well.

Forgive and seek forgiveness - As we pray for God's grace, we should also seek forgiveness from those we have wronged. Ash Wednesday is a great time to go to those you have hurt. It is also a wonderful day to forgive another. Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us" (Matthew 6:12 CEB). Maybe while you are burning those old papers, you might also burn a grudge. If appropriate, let the person know you forgive them. Remember, however, that forgiveness has much more to do about us than the one who offended us.

**The seven practices of lent are used with permission from the UMC.org, for more information on the Lent season visit UMC.org*

Renewed in Mercy

Sermon Series

“Renewed in Mercy” Sermon Series

The Lenten journey may seem overly familiar. Indeed, we have been here before. There is comfort in the familiar. Many of the rituals and practices of this season are comfortable. They give us a sense of place, like being home again. This can be a good starting place for the season, an invitation to walk the paths we have walked before.

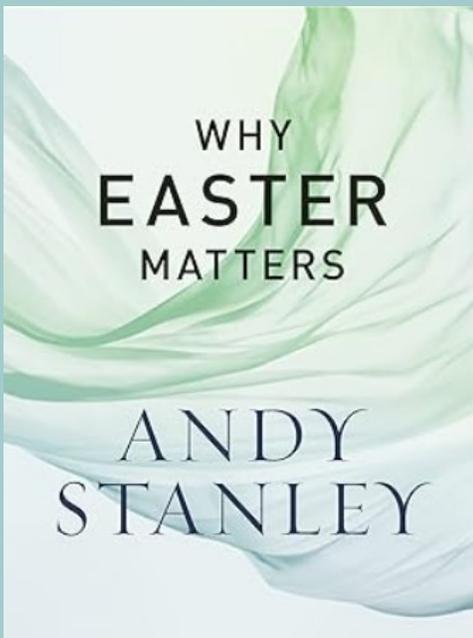
Yet, the Lenten journey and our discipleship path encourage us to grow, to go deeper, to climb higher, to reach further than we may have before. Lent is a time of introspection, but also a call to action as we seek to be the pilgrim people of God, seeking God’s kingdom and shaping God’s kingdom in worship and in service. This Lent, I invite you to experience the renewal that comes from God’s never-ending mercy and then to walk with our Lord on a journey to new life.

Sunday, February 22 nd –	“Mercy on the Wilderness Road”	Matthew 4:1-11
Sunday, March 1 st – <i>*Holy Communion Celebrated with Family Worship</i>	“Guided by the Promise”	John 3:1-17
Sunday, March 8 th –	“Companion for the Journey”	Psalms 95
Sunday, March 15 th –	“Journeying in Grace”	Psalms 23

Ash Wednesday
February 18th @ 6:30pm

Renewed in Mercy

Bible Study



Wednesday, Zoom Only at 6:30 PM

New Lenten Bible Study Wednesdays on ZOOM

“Why Easter Matters” by Andy Stanley

In this 4-week Easter Study, Andy Stanley looks at some of the people whose lives intersected with Jesus in the weeks leading to his crucifixion. Each of them had an agenda that put them at odds with God and Jesus. As you'll see, there's a little bit of them in all of us.

New study begins on Wednesday, February 25th at 6:30 PM on ZOOM, facilitated by Pastor Amy & Kiley Gunter.

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).

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.

Renewed in Mercy

What's Happening

Sundays

9:30 AM– Sunday School

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

*Every 1st Sunday 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

AA Meetings @ 7:30AM in the Fellowship Hall

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

United Methodist Women of 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

Renewed in Mercy

Prayer Focus

February/March – Our Relationship with God

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the Lord, with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”

Week of February 15th Praise for the Lenten season of renewal of mercy, that comes from God’s never-ending mercy to walk on this journey of lent with our Lord.

Week of February 22nd Praises for all the Sunday School teachers and small group leaders

Week of March 1st Prayers for the Youth Leaders as they lead and minister to our youth

Week of March 9th Praises to all the people that God will send to our Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 28th

Save the Dates

Wednesday, February 18th	Ash Wednesday Service @ 6:30pm
Sunday, February 22nd	Centennial Committee Meeting after worship in the Chapel
Sunday, March 1st	Legacy Photo Shoot in Fellowship Hall after worship
Wednesday, March 4th	Thrivent Charitable workshop @ 6:30pm Fellowship Hall (dinner provided)
Sunday, March 8th	Trustees Meeting immediately after Worship & Day Light Savings
Friday, March 6-20th	Hamilton County Spring Break
Tuesday, March 17th	Church Council at 6pm
Saturday, March 21st	Church Workday 9-12pm
Sunday, March 22nd	Thrivent Charitable workshop @ 12:30pm Fellowship Hall (Lunch provided)
Wednesday, March 25th	Town Hall @ 6:30pm Fellowship Hall—(dinner provided)
Saturday, March 28th	Annual Easter Egg Hunt 11-1pm
Sunday, March 29th	Palm Sunday– followed by Holy Week
Sunday, April 5th	EASTER!!!

Renewed in Mercy

In Prayer For...

- Please hold Janet Nesin, mother of Chris Nesin, and her loved ones in prayer as she ended her earthly journey earlier this week. May her family be surrounded by God's peace and comfort, and may they feel the strength of God's loving presence during this time.
- Prayers for Linda Kirkland as she recovers from having a heart ablation.
- Prayers for Beth Comer as she recovers from an Upper Respiratory Infection.
- Prayers for Linda Parker as she seeks relief from lower back pain that is affecting the sciatic nerve, caused by Arthritis.
- Prayers for Susan Borum, as she recovers from her hip replacement surgery, she is currently in Physical Therapy.
- Prayers for Maddox Gilliam, grandson of Susan and Craig Borum, as he was tentatively diagnosed with Legg-calve-Perthes disease.
- Prayers for Alan Robertson, father of Liz Robertson, as he was diagnosed with stage 4 Cirrhosis of the Liver.
- Prayers of gratitude that Debbie and Alan Hayes are safe and uninjured after their Woodshop burned on Monday, February 9th.
- Prayers for Mrs. Celia Hill and her eyesight.
- 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 pastors training on Grief Recovery. Tentatively September 17-29th.
- Prayers for the children of Gateway to Victory School in Kericho, Kenya.
- Our deepest sympathy extended to Mrs. Celia Hill as her siter in law, June Cooley Mahan, passed away on New Years Day, January 1, 2026. A memorial service will be held at the chapel at Dalton United Methodist Church on Sunday, February 15, at 3pm, with family visitation at 2pm. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to North Georgia Community Action, which works to improve the quality of life for low-income, elderly and home-bound populations in the region.

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)

Renewed in Mercy

Financial Update

TEXT [Tribe](#) to [73256](#) and go directly to our [Realm Giving App](#).

Thank you for your generosity and your constant prayers. If you have been shying away from Sunday church because of a cold sanctuary, come back!! The sanctuary is now warm, 70 degrees. We have paid for that heating unit from your generous donations! GLORY!

We are current on all bills including all the bills that were presented to us in January. Last month we received about the same amount that we spent. There is money in the bank and money in reserves. God has been so good to us because you have been so faithful to HIM.

We have a new water cooler in the hallway across from Liz's office and we have a new water cooler upstairs next to April's office. Again, Thank you!

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@epbfi.com

Renewed in Mercy

Youth Group



THANK YOU for supporting our youth in so many ways. The Valentines fundraiser was a big success thanks to the many donations we received. A big shout out goes to Vickie Putnam for making the beautiful flower arrangements! With your donations, we will be planning activities for our youth in the upcoming months.

We made the tough decision to cancel the Resurrection Trip in January due to the forecast of ice and snow in the Pigeon Forge area. We still used all the snacks and supplies that were brought in. Each youth received a snack bag to take home, and we were able to provide 2 Wednesday night meals!

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.

Trustees Update

As everyone probably knows, we have heat in the sanctuary. Glory! The trustees had a meeting on Sunday, February 8, and in the meeting, we set a date for the Church workday, Saturday, March 21st from nine till noon. Please put it on your calendar. This is an important workday because it prepares our campus for Easter Sunday. We need every person in the church to attend, and there will be tasks for those who cannot stand long, and there will be tasks for those that are very strong. We plan to have childcare for those young families. Another item of interest, we are repairing the rope on the baby swing in the playground.

Thank you.

Renewed in Mercy

Disciples Path Class

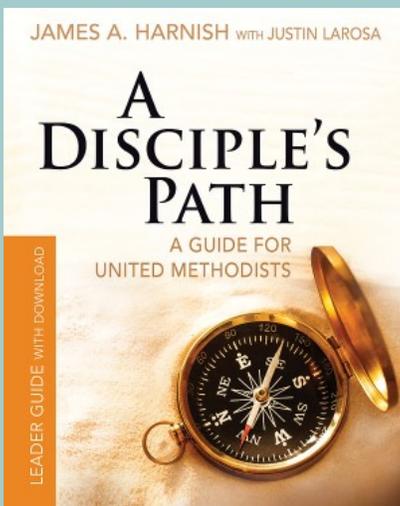
New to the Methodist Church? Seeking to learn more about White Oak UMC and the beliefs we adhere to? This study will be perfect for you!

We will begin a new 6- week Small Group Study beginning, Sunday, February 22nd immediately following the worship service. We will meet in the Women's Classroom on the second floor of the church. At this first meeting, we will set the times for the following weeks of the class depending on the needs of the participants.

A Disciple's Path is an engaging approach to discipleship from a distinctly Wesleyan perspective that is perfect for a new member or for those seeking to learn more about the Church. The six-week program guides individuals to take the next step in discipleship and become dynamic followers of Jesus Christ and engaged, vital members of the local church.

The study combines a Wesleyan understanding of our growth in God's love and grace with the time-tested practices of spiritual discipline expressed in the membership vows to uphold the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Participants will develop spiritual practices, discover their unique gifts, and become engaged in ministry that brings transformation in their own lives, the lives of others, and the world.

The cost of the Daily Workbook is \$12, to reserve your copy and enroll in the small group, please contact Pastor Amy at Whiteoakpastor@epbfj.com or by calling the church office at 423-877-6042. The class will run for 6 weeks, consecutively beginning February 22 – and will conclude on Sunday, March 29th, just in time for Easter on Sunday, April 5th!





JOIN US FOR

WHITE OAK UMC: A LIVING LEGACY PHOTO SHOOT

SUNDAY MARCH 1:
12:30 PM



Get a professional photo for yourself, or with family members to celebrate your legacy at White Oak.

As part of the White Oak United Methodist Church family, Thrivent wants to thank you for your living legacy with a discounted photo shoot. **Isabel Mendoza**, member of White Oak, and Thrivent Financial Advisor, will give you tools to start a conversation about leaving a legacy for your family and church.

You will also receive an invitation to two workshops, called **"Charitable Strategies to Maximize Impact"** at the church coming up March 4 and 22.

Each family will receive one professional digital photo and 1 printed 8 x 10 photo by professional photographer, **Jose Loza**.

Cost is \$30 per household, a 60% discount. Payments will be collected through White Oak UMC, but reserving your spot is free.

Thrivent Charitable

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

6:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 22, 2026

12:30 p.m.

White oak United Methodist Church
2322 Lyndon Ave
Red Bank, TN



Scan to RSVP.

Attend our free workshop, Charitable Strategies to Maximize Impact, to learn how a charitable fund works, different ways to give, and solutions tailored to your financial circumstances. If you're thinking about incorporating a charitable strategy into your financial plan, this event is for you.

- Understand the three simple steps to a charitable fund: Give, Grow, and Grant.
- Learn the difference between Give Now, Give Later, and Give & Receive gifts.
- Leave with the concrete steps to get started.

These sessions are hosted by Isabel Mendoza. Presented by Jason Schiltz, Gift Planner with Thrivent Charitable.

Reserve your spot.

Please call Isabel Mendoza at 559-433-7554 or email isabel.mendoza@thrivent.com.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

White Oak United Methodist Church
COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT

MARCH 28TH FROM 11-1 PM

Easter Egg Hunt Starts at 11:30 PM

FREE TO EVERYONE

White Oak
Bicycle Co-Op
-Bike Rodeo-
Giving Away
Bikes & Helmets

Want to Volunteer
Scan the QRcode Below!



Next Meeting will be held in the Chapel after worship service on **Sunday, February 22nd!** All are welcome to attend!

White Oak is turning

100! ... in 2027.

It's time to start planning now!

We are looking for **THINKERS** and **DOERS** to join the

Centennial Committee!

This is a family celebration, so we would love to have many members bringing ideas and carrying them out.

Some ideas are time sensitive like interviewing long standing members.

If you are interested contact **Paige Walker** (901) 355-0623.

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/>



April Nesin

423.271.9878 april@truenorthts.com

Mary Vassar Hitchings

423.271.9879 maryv@truenorthts.com

Melissa Gonzalez

(423) 271-9839 mgonzalez@truenorthts.com



Phone: 423-877-6042
Email: whiteoakchurch@epbfi.com
whiteoakumc.org

2232 Lyndon Ave
Chattanooga, TN 37415

<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>