



The ANCHOR

MARCH 2026

**Oriental United Methodist Church
404 Freemason Street
Oriental NC 28571
252-249-0213
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www.orientalumc.org**



LOVE BOLDLY, SERVE JOYFULLY AND LEAD COURAGEOUSLY

Our Core Values

Since 1887, Oriental United Methodist Church has been and is committed to living out our values of love for God and one another. Guided by John Wesley's Three Simple Rules: do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously. All are always welcome in our OUMC community.

Ponderous Thoughts

“O Lord, make this Lenten season different from the other ones. Let me find you again. Amen.”
—Henri Nouwen

It's Lent again, that 40 days (because Sundays aren't counted) between Ash Wednesday and Easter where sometimes we tend to beat ourselves up a little. Giving up something for Lent was a part of my childhood even when I wasn't regularly attending worship; what I gave up was always something I really enjoyed and it was always really hard and I generally failed at it.

As an adult, and especially after seminary, I've come to learn that Lent is less about sacrificing something I love and more about finding ways to practice being closer to God and more aware of God's presence. In recent years, I've added new spiritual practices like different ways to pray, tried to create new habits to make more room for God in my life, and generally felt much more successful at keeping Lent. Some of them have even made their way into my life as a permanent change.

This year, I'm trying something old, that I tend to fail at, again. Although Lenten practices aren't supposed to be self-improvement programs like New Year's resolutions (or, God forbid, diets), they can help us change our lives for the better. So this year, this is my plan:

For Lent, I'm giving up...being too available.

Don't panic; I'm not going to do anything drastic like turn off the phone or ignore messages. I am, though, going to put some healthy boundaries in place around how I deal with emails, calls and messages during my Sabbath (usually all day Friday), and probably, to a lesser extent, the rest of the weekend.

I'm going to screen everything. And I'm going to try not to be so quick to respond to communications that can wait until Sunday or Monday. And I'm asking that you help me in that, when you can, by waiting until Sunday or Monday to ask questions that can wait that long. I'm going to put my phone down, and walk away from it, something I rarely do.

I absolutely want to know if there's an emergency that I need to respond to. If something is truly urgent, that's cause to interrupt my time of quiet and rest. Please do, ideally by sending a text or leaving voicemail. I promise, nothing will be ignored. And I promise that I will be a better pastor for prioritizing the time I spend with God and in holy rest, and rejecting the temptation to always be available. I really struggle with that one.

I appreciate your help. And I want to encourage you to think about how you can practice being mindful of God's presence and love in your own life. After all, isn't being close to God what we're here for?

Grace and peace,
Pastor Anne

Events that occur weekly throughout **March**

Sunday	Worship Service, OUMC Sanctuary	10:00 am
	Drum'in Dragons Practice in the Fellowship Hall	3:00 pm
Tuesdays	Bible Study	10:00 am
	Beginners Ukulele	12:30 pm
	UHOO's Ukulele Practice	2:00 pm
Wednesday	Community Art	2:00 pm
	Praise Band Rehearsal	5:00 pm
Thursday	PrimeTime Breakfast with Friends at Brantley's in the Back Room	8:30 am
	PrimeTime Prayer Shawl Ministries—Fellowship Hall	10:00 am

Calendar of Events

March 1	Bring PCFLO donations-Boxed Mashed Potatoes	
March 3	Prime Time-Matter of Balance	10:00 am
	Fresh Expressions	7:00 pm
March 5	Women's Bible Study	10:30 am
March 8	Daylight Savings Time-Spring forward an hour!	
	Quaker Silent Worship-all are welcome	2:00 pm
March 9	Mission Team meeting	9:30 am
	Prime Time Digital Workshop	10:00 am
	Sojourners Circle	11:30 am
	Community Youth Group	5:00 pm
March 10	Sara Veal Circle	9:15 am
	Prime Time-Matter of Balance	10:00 am
	Sand Dollar Circle	6:30 pm
March 11	Prime Time Card Making	10:00 am
	Prime Time Game Day	2:00 am
March 12	OUMC Music Planning	1:00 pm
	The Gathering	6:00 pm
March 13	Prime Time-Matter of Balance	10:00 am
March 14	Methodist Men's Fellowship Breakfast	9:00 am
March 16	Trustees' meeting	4:00 pm
March 22	Quaker Silent Worship-all are welcome	2:00 pm
March 23	The Gathering	6:00 pm
March 25	Prime Time Game Day	2:00 pm



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**The Deadline for the April Newsletter
 is March 25!**

Methodist Men's Breakfast

Our monthly Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, **March 14 at 9 a.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. Please text or email Jim Kellenberger by noon on Friday the 13th, if you plan to attend.

919-621-0362/jimkellenberger05@gmail.com

Women's Circle News

Sojourner's Circle: March 9 @ 11:30 at M&Ms

Sara Veal Circle Meeting: March 10 @ 9:30 at Leslie Hammer's house

Sand Dollar Circle: March 10 @ 6:30 in the fellowship hall

PCFLO Food of the Month:

Looking ahead to
 March

Food of the Month is **boxed mashed potatoes**



March's Birthdays

Laurie Sampson	03/04
Sharon Stephenson	03/04
Bill White	03/05
Cathy Dunbar	03/07
Shannon Boone	03/09
Lou Ann Roberts	03/10
Larry Gracie	03/13
Linda Bacon	03/15
Jerry Morgan	03/21
Dylan Dunbar	03/22
Cindy Edwards	03/22
Paula James	03/22
Ken Roberts	03/22
Justin Spruill	03/25
Edna Whorton	03/25
Leigh Price	03/27
Kyle Stevenson	03/27
Olga Jean Herman	03/28
Sandy Van Hook	03/30
John Charles Ricker	03/31

If your March birthday is not listed

Please call the office 249-0213

Daylight Savings Time-March 8th



Announcements continued...

Our volunteer greeters and readers for the 10:00 worship service

DATE	READERS	GREETERS
March 1	Ros Cheetham	Joanne Hurley
March 8	Lynn Rockwell	
March 15	Deb Rodenhouser	
March 22	Carl Crothers	
March 29	Donna Creech	

There will be a beginners ukulele class starting up on March 3, 2026.

Please contact Claudia Bemis at csbemis@yahoo.com to get details for joining the class.



KITCHEN CLEAN UP SCHEDULE—2026

JANUARY—HOUSE CLEAN (Catherine/Leslie H)

FEBRUARY & MARCH—Sara Veal

APRIL—Sojourners

MAY & JUNE— Sara Veal

JULY & AUGUST—Sojourners

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER & NOVEMBER— Sand Dollar



Sand Dollar Circle Egg Hunt—April 4

Mark your calendars! Gather up your children and grandchildren for a morning of fun and fellowship!



Are We There Yet?

Lent is a season of reflection, self-examination and repentance in preparation for Resurrection Sunday. It is as much about the journey as the destination, but it is sometimes difficult not to focus only on reaching the goal. The “arrival fallacy” can lead us to believe that we finally will be happy after reaching a certain goal. But how much better to enjoy the journey and God’s unfailing care for us as we go through it.

OUMC’s Lenten devotional is titled “Are We There Yet? Following God’s Lead to What’s Next.” Its intent is to help us focus on the journey of Lent and God’s presence with us during each step of the way. Each day offers a suggested Scripture, a short devotion, and a breath prayer (with which you can use your globe stress balls from Advent). Be sure to pick one up in the Narthex or download it from the church email.

Please see below for more details on OUMC’s activities and services during Lent and Holy Week:



OUMC Lenten Calendar

Palm Sunday, March 31 – The 10 a.m. OUMC service in the sanctuary will include the traditional palms and special music. This also is a fifth Sunday of the month, and OUMC will host the traditional Fifth Sunday Sing at 6 p.m., with many nearby churches participating.

Maundy Thursday, April 2 – OUMC’s Maundy Thursday observances will include a fellowship meal at 6 p.m. This meal will include first-century foods such as lentil stew, hummus, pita bread and fruit, with OUMC providing the main course and congregants supplying side dishes. After the meal, the sanctuary service will include communion and the stripping of the altar.

Good Friday, April 3 – OUMC’s 6 p.m. service will include repetitive music from the Taizé community along with singing and readings from the traditional Tenebrae service.

Easter Egg Hunt, April 4 – At 10 a.m., OUMC’s Sand Dollar Circle will sponsor a community-wide Easter Egg Hunt with many colorful eggs hidden on the church grounds and nearby, followed by refreshments for young and old alike.

Easter Sunday, April 5 – The Community Sunrise Service will be held at 6:45 a.m. at the river, and OUMC’s Easter service will be held at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary.

MISSION ARTICLE – March 2026

On March 23rd and 24th Backpack Blessings volunteers will have their third packing session of the year by filling weekend food bags for over 1,000 students in Pamlico, Craven, and Jones County. If you would like to join in the fun and fellowship of participating in this wonderful program, we would be glad to share the details with you! Please contact Nancy or Steve at steve.nancy72@yahoo.com.



Our February Mission Budget giving of \$1,000 was sent to Project AGAPE. This will assist with the salary for our missionary in Armenia, Nara Melkonyan. She works diligently to provide care for the children in this country. Did you know that Armenia was the first country in the world to establish Christianity as their state religion in 301 A.D.?

OUMC will once again be a sponsor for Hope Clinic's largest fundraiser of the year, the **Hope Regala**. Our donation of \$2,000 from our Mission Budget will provide a full year of care for at least two patients. Mark your calendars for May 8th and 9th and come enjoy the fun, great food, auction and music. Your support of Hope Clinic will help bring relief for those in our county who cannot afford health care.

Many thanks to **NCO** (Nautical Co-op of Oriental) for contributing \$1,500 to the local Mission Fund for swimming lessons this year!

An additional donation was given by the **Sand Dollar Circle** for \$918 from their annual Soup and Sandwich Fundraiser, which was greatly enjoyed by all who attended! With this donation, the Mission Team voted to send \$500 to 1st Choice Pregnancy

Resources.

Together in His service,

Nancy and Steve Duttry

OUMC Mission Team



Finance Update

from your treasurer, Marjorie Dufek

To meet our total expected expenses for 2025, our contributions needed to total about \$260,000, or about \$5,000 per week.

Total Offerings as of Dec. 31 2025 = \$250,934

Total expenses as of Dec 31, 2025 = \$255,804

Surplus / shortfall = \$4,870

Our budget for 2026 is \$259,000.

You may recall that almost each month in 2025, the monthly Finance update showed a shortfall in our budget. I am so happy to report that with generous year-end giving, our congregation made up the shortfall almost completely! We have enough in our savings account to cover this shortfall. Thank you to each and every one of you that contributed

to the church's ongoing work.

Some of you choose to give a large annual gift in the final month of the year. If you are one of those givers, the Finance Committee asks you to consider if it would be possible for you to smooth out your giving throughout the year, to help us better manage our cash flow. There may be no way you can do that, and that's fine. But if you can, please consider it.

When cash gets tight, we don't have a choice about paying monthly salaries or insurance and electricity bills. There is really only one "controllable" expense that we can cut and that is our missions and outreach spending to the community. And we really don't want to cut that.

Our committee meetings often wrestle with our concern about having enough cash in a given month to meet our budget. This year, we chose to not make any cuts in the budget, draw from our savings accounts if we ran short of cash, and trust that God would meet our needs. And of course, God did, as God always does. Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow!

PCFLO End of Year Report

Pamlico County Fishes and Loaves Outreach (PCFLO) had a challenging year in 2025, with decreased government support and increased demand for food. Individuals utilizing the Food Pantry on Straight Road increased 10.47% over 2024, with a high of 1,082 utilizing the pantry during the month of November. And individuals utilizing the monthly Mobile Food Pantry at St. Peter the Fisherman Catholic Church increased 19.92% over 2024, with a high of 207 in October 2025.

At the same time, the value of food donated by the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina (FBCENC) to PCFLO decreased by \$3,524 in 2025 compared with 2024, as the food bank received less government support. However, individuals' donations of food increased in 2025, when PCFLO instituted its "Food of the Month" program.

Community food donations to PCFLO during 2025 increased in value by an estimated \$1,810 as compared with 2024. This increase helped to somewhat offset the reduction in food donated by FBCENC.

Fortunately, community financial support of PCFLO was strong, with total cash contributions and fundraising monies of \$99,728 during 2025, an increase of \$10,759 over 2024. PCFLO's sponsoring organizations donated \$29,740 in cash contributions during 2025, \$1,700 more than in 2024. These contributions were supplemented by donations made on the new PCFLO website.

Those who donate to PCFLO can be sure their money is well spent. Almost 94% of every dollar contributed to PCFLO during 2025 went directly to food operations, and 4% went to office expenses. If you would like to donate to PCFLO, checks can be mailed to: PCFLO, P.O. Box 771, Oriental, NC 28571. Food donations can be brought to the narthex anytime and also to the large bin at the food pantry at 108 Straight Road, Oriental, NC 28571.

“The (Out) Flow of the Dough”

Last month, we explored the inward “Flow of the Dough” through a look at how OUMC receives and handles funds with care and transparency—but that’s only part of the story.

Once the dough flows into the Oriental United Methodist Church coffers, where does it go? Not surprisingly, by far the largest amount goes to staff compensation, including housing allowances, travel, continuing education, and health coverage. Upkeep and maintenance of the church properties, along with utilities, also makes up a sizable chunk of the OUMC 2026 budget.

Much of the rest of OUMC’s budgeted funding goes to helping others in the community and around the world, in one way or another. After all, “serve joyfully” is a big part of the OUMC mission, and that means helping those less fortunate than we are, financially as well as through other acts of service.

The Missions budget itself is set at \$12,500 for 2026, the same as it has been for the past two years and less than 5% of the total budget. But OUMC’s charitable spending goes far beyond the Missions Team’s budget. Budget items such as Prime Time programming support of \$4,000 per year helps many older people with programs that offer vaccines, balance exercises and meal planning. Such services are offered at no cost to recipients. Another \$2,000 is budgeted for evangelism and member care. And \$400 is budgeted for upkeep and programming at the Community Labyrinth, which serves all residents of Oriental and beyond.

And as Pastor Anne Sims points out, nearly all of OUMC apportionments to the Annual Conference and General Conference, which will total \$26,582 this year, go toward missions. In addition to national and international missions, the North Carolina Conference supports local non-profits ranging from the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina (which helps supply Pamlico County Fishes and Loaves Outreach) to the MERCI Warehouse in Goldsboro, instrumental in disaster response efforts, as in Hurricane Florence. Finance Committee Chairman Jim Kellenberger is proud of the fact that OUMC pays the full requested amount of apportionments.

Furthermore, church groups and individuals give generously to the OUMC local missions fund and directly to local non-profits. During 2025, the United Women in Faith gave \$8,891.80 to local charitable causes, and the United Methodist Men gave \$750. In addition, individuals donated \$6,455 through OUMC to local charities such as the Jerusalem Fund, PCFLO, Heartworks and Thanksgiving dinners for local families. The generosity of the OUMC family is a boon to many charitable groups.

All told, the generosity of OUMC donors allowed us to give more than \$55,000 to missions in 2025.

There is a group who is creating a new songbook for the river shore service. The hope is to have our favorites in one song book. We would like to include as many of your favorites as possible, but we can’t do this without your input. Please send your requests via email to Claudia Bemis at csbe-mis@yahoo.com or given to her in writing in person or leave in her mailbox in the hallway of the church by the end of March. Thank you for helping us make this songbook meaningful for everyone.

Prime Time Pancake Dinner & Silent Auction: A Community Coming Together

Prime Time hosted its Pancake Dinner & Silent Auction on January 29th at the Oriental United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, and the evening was filled with warmth, generosity, and community spirit. We are grateful to the many individuals who made donations or purchased tickets and enjoyed a delicious dinner featuring plain or blueberry buttermilk pancakes, along with bacon, sausage, and apple cranberry oatmeal.



Guests also had the chance to browse and bid on an impressive selection of silent auction items. From homemade pies, cakes, soups, and lasagna to a CD player, framed prints, oyster excursion, dog training sessions and much more. There was truly something for everyone. The creativity and generosity of our donors made the auction both fun and meaningful.



This year's event also featured a special fundraising opportunity that began back in the fall. At the Ol' Front Porch Festival, Prime Time invited festival-goers to support our mission with the help of Nautical Wheelers, who generously donated a Polywood Adirondack chair with ottoman. The chair became a familiar sight around town—appearing at the Neuse Neighbors Network / Prime Time Friendraiser at the Village Brewery, Spirit of Christmas at Nautical Wheelers and finally at our Pancake Dinner & Silent Auction. At 7:00 p.m., the winning name was drawn. Congratulations to Ron Eva of Bahama! For those not familiar with Bahama, NC it is north of Durham. Ron visits Oriental often, has participated in many of our Lunch & Learns, and has even donated items for our yard sale. We are delighted that the chair found a home with someone so connected to our community.



Events like this are only possible because of the many hands working behind the scenes. We extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped set up, cook, serve, and clean up—your time and dedication made the evening a success. A special thank you goes to Nancy Welles, who chaired the event with enthusiasm and shared her beloved blueberry pancakes with attendees.

We are also deeply grateful to Oriental United Methodist Church, whose steadfast support of Prime Time since 2001 continues to make our programs possible. And finally, thank you to our event sponsor, Ray's Creekside Marina, for their generous partnership.

Together, our community once again demonstrated what can happen when people come together with kindness, purpose, and a shared commitment to supporting older adults in Pamlico County.

Once again thank you!



March 2026

To RSVP call 252.675.0909 or email director@primetimepamlico.org

Breakfast with Friends
Brantley's Restaurant
Thursday's
March 5, 12, 19, 26
8:30 am



ALL ARE WELCOME Please join the group at Brantley's (Center Room) for breakfast. The breakfast will continue every Thursday at 8:30. (Except for when they are closed). Come as you are able. Breakfast is on your own.

Prayer Shawl
Thursday's
March 5, 12, 19, 26
10:00 am
Oriental United Methodist
Church – Fellowship Hall

Share Comfort Through Knitting & Crocheting

Crochet or knit shawls and lap robes to share warmth, hope, and prayer with those facing illness, grief, or loneliness. Your handmade gift becomes a tangible reminder that someone cares—and prays—for them. For questions or to arrange delivery, please call 252-675-0909. Let's wrap our community in love, hope, and prayer—one stitch at a time.



Creative Card Making Class
Wednesday—March 11
10:00 am – Noon
Oriental United Methodist



The card making class meets monthly on the 2nd Wednesday. The class is led by Cheryl Mcaskill, a Stampin'Up demonstrator. Cost for is \$25/month. Advance Registration.

Game Day (2nd & 4th Wed)
Wednesday—
March 11 & March 25
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Oriental United Methodist
Church – Fellowship Hall



Join us for an afternoon of fun-filled board games, cards, and fellowship! All skill levels are welcome! We've been playing Rummikub, but it's always exciting to introduce new games and learn from others. If you have a favorite game, this could be an opportunity to share it with others and maybe even inspire new enthusiasts.

Digital Skills Session
iPad and Hotspot Basics Learn how to navigate and use iPads and hotspots.
Monday—March 9
10 am—12pm



Smart Phone 101 Class

Learn to navigate your smartphones, download apps and use various communication tools.



Oriental United Methodist Church

P.O. Box 70

Oriental, NC 28571

THE ANCHOR: YOUR LINK TO OUMC



Prayer List:: HELEN BLAND, MARY BOUDREault, JENNIFER BURKE, MARTHA JO CAMPBELL, ALDO CRISTIANI, LINDA DAIL, NANCY & DENISE DiNUNZIO, PETER DRIPCHEK, BRANSON DUNN, JILL ENSLEY, DAVID FILIPIAK, MARVIN FRIEL, JODIE GEIGER, JOHN HALLINAN, KELLY HITCHCOCK, PATTI HIGGINBOTTOM, JOAN HORICK, JOAN JOHNEN, CAROL JOHNSON, WARREN JOHNSON, MARTHA KEEFE, SUSAN KLEMM, GRACIE KNOWLES, KAYLA KRELIE, PEGGY LAURICELLA, JENNIFER LAWRENCE, GREG, GARY & PAT LEONARD, MATT MCINTYRE, DIANA MIDYETTE, SUSAN PANDICH, LILLY PEARSON, DIANNE PILAND, CLAIRE PITTMAN, DEBBIE PRICE, SALLY CROTHERS RAMIREZ, LINN RAYE, ANTOINETTE RIZZI, WYATT ROHRMAN, KATHY SCIORRA, DEBBIE SEVELIO, BEN & ANNE SIMS, CAROL SMALL, ERNIE SMITH, JOAN ULVOG, JEANNE URBAN, KAREN VANGAMPER, HAROLD & ARLENE WALTER, HATTIE WERNER, EDNA WHORTON, GLEN WIBLE, MISSIONARIES, OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL

OUR CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Anne Sims: Pastor
 Catherine Baxley: Lay Leader
 Tracy Peterson: Office Staff

PRIME TIME STAFF

Debora Steenson: Director
 Prime Time Number: 252-675-0909
director@primetimepamlico.org

OFFICE HOURS

9 am to 3 pm Monday through Thursday
 (Except Holidays)

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