

Pastor:
Tim Harvey

Minister of Nurture
and Music:
Carol Elmore

E-mail:
churchoffice@oakgrove
cob.org

Website:
www.oakgrovecob.org

Phone:
(540) 774-3217

DEADLINE FOR
MARCH
VISITOR:
FEBRUARY 15

NEWSLETTER
COMMITTEE:

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Jonna Detweiler
Nancy Hylton
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Emily Nelson

THE VISITOR

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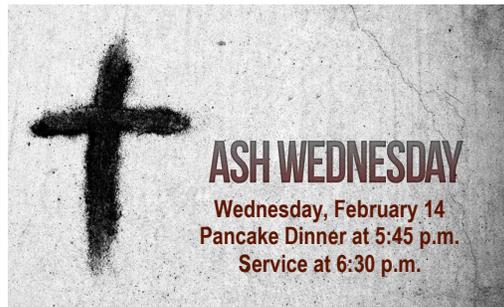
2138 McVitty Road, SW
Roanoke, VA 24018

Winter Bible Study February 7 & 21

Pastor Tim is teaching on *Loving God and One Another in Difficult Times*. You are encouraged to read 1, 2, and 3 John in preparation for the study.

Our evening begins with dinner at 5:45 p.m., and we move on to our study at 6:30. There is also a study for the youth, and childcare is provided for younger children.

Please join us!



Sunday February 4



On Souper Bowl Sunday, the youth will be collecting cans of soup with pull-top tabs for the children in the Backpack Ministry. Bring them to church with you that Sunday morning.

Also on this Sunday, we will have our annual BRETHREN BOWL, a touch football rivalry between students and parents. We will meet at Penn Forest Elementary School at 2:00 p.m. All are welcome to come out — if you don't want to play, you can watch and cheer!



Project WARM Saturday, February 10

We will meet at Chip & Jo's in Salem at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast and from there go to the woodlot at 8:00 a.m. Children (with adult supervision) and youth are encouraged to help.



by Jenn Bise, Missions & Service Commission

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, the Oak Grove CoB Talent Show and Chocolate Extravaganza is fast approaching!

Do you have a talent? (We bet you do!) Want to share it with the Oak Grove Community? (We know you do!) Whether you can cook, play an instrument, sing, or can burp the alphabet, all talents, crafts, and hobbies are welcome!

We ask that you bring your favorite chocolate dessert — or any kind of dessert — to share, and come join us for a night of fun, fellowship, amazing talents, and tasty treats on Saturday, February 17, at 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall.

Show us what you got, Oak Grove!



Sign Up
Today!!

Welcome, New Oak Grove Members!!



Tess Anderson

by Connie Bierly

I have had the pleasure of getting to know one of our newest members, Tess Anderson. We first met in our crafters/quilters group and now in conversation for this article. It is a small world we live in, and I was a bit surprised to learn that Tess and I know several of the same people throughout the Roanoke Valley. If you haven't interacted with Tess yet, I encourage you to do so. You will find an extremely kind, warm, loving lady! We are fortunate that Tess found us, and Tess will quickly tell you she is delighted to have joined us.

Over the years, Tess had been visiting churches around the valley trying to find the place she felt most comfortable and where she could contribute her gifts and talents through service to the congregation. One potential church was offering a women's Bible Study. This group offered great conversations with members from multiple denominations, varying view points, and was an environment where all the viewpoints could be shared openly in a loving and accepting environment.

While this was a wonderful group she enjoyed tremendously, Tess continued to ask people about churches in the area; Oak Grove Church of the Brethren kept coming up in those conversations. She decided to visit us before making a decision on a home church. "I loved it the first day I walked in; I felt such a sense of peace; a genuine friendliness of all the people." It was a feeling that took her back to the days she was visiting with grandparents in New England. Tess's grandparents had a strong Christian faith and were a huge influence on her life. With a reminder of those wonderful times, Tess knew Oak Grove was the church family she had been seeking.

Tess is also very appreciative of Tim's sermons. Every Sunday she leaves feeling she has heard the good news and has had the opportunity to grow. Even when Tim's sermons challenge our thinking, Tess finds in them the opportunity to grow. It's a chance to reflect and perhaps revisit a long-standing mind set. I suspect many of us share this reflection with Tess.

In addition to the crafters/quilters group, Tess is active with the Peace and Justice Committee, is exploring our various Sunday School Classes, and hopes to be able to attend upcoming Bible Studies.

A current passion for Tess is working on genealogy. After taking several stabs at expanding her family tree, about a year ago she found a picture on the internet of her great grandparents' headstone in a church cemetery in Sweden. Using google earth maps, she's been able to zoom in and look around in the church

grave yard, and even emailed the church which confirmed living relatives in that village in Sweden. Through DNA testing, she has found relatives in both the US and Sweden and has had a wonderful time helping everyone expand the family tree.

Another current passion is working to train Juno, a very exuberant new dog. Juno is a rescue from one of the kill shelters in Louisiana. While Juno loves to meet new people, she tends to think that jumping on those new people is the best form of introduction. Juno is very smart and catches on to most lessons quickly – meeting new people is just taking a little extra work.

Tess is very grateful for the warm welcome she has received at Oak Grove Church of the Brethren. And I'm sure everyone at Oak Grove is very grateful that Tess chose to join our congregation.



Milton & Janet Hartman

by Mary Wilson

Have you had a chance to meet Janet and Milton Hartman? They're a beautiful couple who were recently married at Oak Grove on November 4. Milton's favorite pastime and sport is golf. He and Janet play every possible Saturday morning when the temperature is above 50 degrees at Great Oaks in Floyd. Now they have a way to spend Saturday mornings when it's below 50 degrees by splitting firewood for Project WARM. They were some of the last volunteers to leave the woodlot on January 13, a very cold and windy day. They're hard workers and happy to help.

Milton grew up in Rocky Mount and moved to Roanoke about 30 years ago. He holds his Master Card in HVAC/Gas Piping and works as a sales consultant/estimator for Bower Heating & Air Conditioning. Janet is an insurance account manager at HAWK Advisers and has both CIC (Certified Insurance Counselor) and AAI (Accredited Advisor in Insurance) designations. I don't know much about the Master Card for contractors, but I do know how tough the CIC and AAI designations are. Their certifications demonstrate their knowledge and experience in their professions.

Janet works in downtown Roanoke now, but her office used to be located on Carriage Drive (behind the McDonald's a few blocks from the church). She shared, "In 2004 I began visiting area churches and prayed daily for God's help in finding the right one. After Milton and I began dating, he helped in our search as well. I had always attended church with friends so this was an unexpected blessing.

"In early 2015 I expanded my daily walk at lunch to the neighborhood surrounding Oak Grove CoB. As I walked the parking lot many times, I felt God was giving me the answer to my prayers. I resisted the idea until April 2017 when we made our first visit. I was overcome with emotion as I saw The Upper Room books on the table and heard old familiar hymns. Pastor Tim married us on November 4, 2017. Less than a year after our first visit, we are new members and are thrilled to be here."

We are thrilled to have them here, too!



Bob & Sherry Milliron

by Bernard Morgenstern

The Seekers Sunday School class has been blessed with several new members in the past months.

Two of these are Bob and

Sherry Milliron. The whole church was blessed when Bob and Sherry joined the Oak Grove family on Sunday, January 7, 2018, by letter from Summerdean CoB.

Bob and Sherry are natives of Virginia. Bob is from Callaway and graduated from Franklin County High School. Sherry grew up in Salem, where she attended Andrew Lewis High School. Bob retired as Executive Vice President from Lanford Brothers, Inc., after 40 years. Lanford builds and repairs bridges in the mid-Atlantic states and Florida. Sherry retired after 30 years from F&W, Inc., where she was Director of Affordable Housing.

Bob and Sherry have one daughter, Christy Foley, and two grandchildren, Jake and Julz. They are also the proud parents of Zakey and Joey, their Shetland Sheepdogs.

If you are into woodworking, radio-controlled aircraft, motorcycling, or railroad models, you have a lot in common with Bob. It has been said, "The difference between a man and a boy is the price of the toys."

Looking for Supplies

by Tess Anderson



Do you have craft projects that have gone unfinished? Supplies you've never used? Beads, buttons, old jewelry we can repurpose? The Arts and Crafts group would love to have some new supplies to make things for the fall bazaar. Keep us in mind as you are doing your post-Christmas purge!

You can leave items in the library or with Tess Anderson, Rena' Brown, or any member of the Arts and Crafts group. Thank you!

Youth Yard Sale

by Martha Gregory



I hope you all welcome news of the upcoming Youth Yard Sale on March 10. Think of all the clothing, dishes, sporting goods, books, linens, curtains, knickknacks, records, Christmas decorations, toys, jewelry, appliances, games and puzzles, chairs and tables, beds and lamps you have in your houses, your spare rooms, your basements, your storage sheds. Are you using them all? Do they hold a special place in your heart, or do you wonder why you still have them around or why and how they got to your home in the first place? Personally speaking, my home is constantly calling out for more room and less stuff.

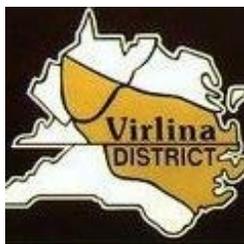
A new year, when the weather is really cold outside, could be the perfect time for working indoors and gathering items to donate to the annual Youth Yard Sale. We have discovered from many yard sales that simply because we don't need it, have outgrown it, have no more room, have many more than we can use, or simply changed our minds and wonder, "What was I thinking?" there is someone out there who would still like to purchase it.

Please put these dates on your calendars: Items can be brought to the fellowship hall beginning Saturday, February 24. Youth, their families, and anyone else in the church family ready for a yard sale adventure, has the opportunity to volunteer for the following two weeks — February 24 until the Saturday of the sale on March 10. We will be carrying, unpacking, pricing, and sorting. And on the day of the sale, we will need helpers all day with checking out and carrying out, and lots of walking about to help our customers.

As part of the day, we also have a Bake Sale, and the Kitchen Café will be serving breakfast biscuits and hot dogs for lunch. So not only do you have the opportunity to prepare for the sale, but also to bake goodies or make candy, as well as spend a few hours in the kitchen on the day of the sale.

The funds raised support our youth in their outreach ministries, work camps, and once again this year, National Youth Conference in Colorado for our high school youth and chaperones. The junior highs, along with their chaperones, will be traveling to a work camp in Brooklyn, NY.

There will be more information in Sunday bulletins regarding schedules and volunteer opportunities. It is five weeks until the sale and three weeks until we begin our two weeks of concentrated efforts in the fellowship hall. So now is a good time to begin gathering donations and planning on ways to be involved in this church-wide event. Give me a call with any questions or suggestions.



Virlina District News

Camp Supporter Luncheon

Send your congregation's Camp representatives, pastors, youth leaders, friends, and supporters of Camp Bethel to our Camp Supporter Luncheon on Saturday, February 10. The meal will be from 12 noon until 3:00 p.m. Please ensure that at least ONE person from your church is in attendance.

After a free lunch in the Ark, we'll share and distribute all the tools and information you need to communicate Camp Bethel to your home congregation.

Sow the Seed Banquet

The Sow the Seed Scholarship Banquet will be held on Thursday, March 8, at 6:30 p.m. YOU can plant seeds of faith in the lives of children, youth, and young adults. At \$50 per person (larger gifts accepted), all costs and donations from the evening directly fund "camperships" and our summer camp ministries.

RSVP to campbetheloffice@gmail.com or (540) 992-2940 by February 28. Payments are accepted in advance or at the table, and your gift is tax-deductible.

Our base fee for a week of camp in 2018 is \$320. Give the gift of CAMP; it's an experience that can change a life forever.

Pilgrimage XXII

Pilgrimage XXII will be held March 16-18, 2018, at Camp Bethel. People from 58 congregations in our district have attended this event, which is a spiritual retreat for adults of all ages. It is for the young and old, for the new Christian and the one who has been a Christian for decades. Pilgrimage is for everyone, because no matter where a person is on his or her faith journey, it is always good to take another step and draw closer to God.

The basic structure of the weekend is the same each year with talks, small groups, fun times, inspiring worship services, and much more. Yet God continues to work in wonderful ways through this ministry, and we give Him all praise and honor!

The only way to truly understand what Pilgrimage has to offer is to experience it. Prayerfully consider if this is your year to attend. If you would like more information, contact Karen Hayes at (336) 765-5263 or by email at haynesmk1986@yahoo.com or go to www.experiencepilgrimage.com.

Letter of Thanks

Dear friends at Oak Grove Church,

On behalf of all of us at Camp Bethel, THANK YOU for your presence and participation in our October 7, 2017 Heritage Day Festival. Please share a big THANK YOU from us to everyone in your congregation! As of December 18, Heritage Day has raised \$36,475.11, with more trickling in from continued apple butter sales. Heritage Day revenue directly funds our ministry; thus Heritage Day is camp's largest annual fund-raising event, providing 5% of camp's annual funding. *It's just so good to be TOGETHER!*

Your continued support of Camp Bethel is a great blessing to us! I've enclosed our latest News and Upcoming Events for you to share with your congregation, family, and friends. Please plan to participate in our 34th annual Heritage Day Festival on Saturday, October 6, 2018.

Thank you for your extraordinary giving, volunteerism, and participation in Camp Bethel's ministries. Pray for the staff, the Virlina District Board, and the Outdoor Ministries Committee, and all our campers, volunteers, and supporters as we joyfully continue the work of Jesus, *together*.

—*Together*, in Christ our hope,
Barry LeNoir, Camp Bethel Director

Note: This letter, in its entirety, along with the schedule of coming events, is posted on the church bulletin board.

Save these Dates!!

Saturday, April 7 Spring Workday at Camp Bethel

There will be projects for all skill levels and all ages! RSVP for meals to: (540) 992-2940, or campbetheloffice@gmail.com.

Sounds of the Mountains Friday and Saturday, April 27 & 28, 2018

This is one of Camp Bethel's most important fundraisers, so help spread the word. For more information go to www.SoundsoftheMountains.org.

Youth News!

February Middle & High School Events

Saturday & Sunday, February 3 & 4

9:00 a.m. — Leave from Oak Grove CoB for Senior Highs' IYC Retreat, led by Interdistrict Youth Cabinet, at Henry Forks CoB in Rocky Mount. Get more information: <http://virlina.org/manage-articles/all-articles/21-information/89-2018-youth-retreats.html>. You WILL be home in time for the Brethren Bowl!

Wednesday, February 7

5:45 p.m. — meal
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. — Youth Scoop

Saturday, February 10

8:00 a.m. — Project WARM (7:00 breakfast at Chip & Jo's, Salem)

Wednesday, February 14

5:45 p.m. — meal
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. — Ash Wednesday Service (all church)

Wednesday, February 21

5:45 p.m. — meal
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. — Youth Scoop

Sunday, February 25

5:00 - 7:00 p.m. — Youth families dinner and yard sale set-up

COMING UP . . .

March 2-3 — Junior High District Retreat at Camp Bethel. Get registration form and more information: <http://virlina.org/manage-articles/all-articles/21-information/89-2018-youth-retreats.html>.

March 10 — Youth Yard Sale (and each evening two weeks prior)

April 6-8 — Senior High Roundtable, Bridgewater College

June 3 — Graduation/Senior High Sunday

June 27 - July 1 — Junior High Workcamp, Brooklyn, NY

July 21 - 26 — Senior High National Youth Conference, Ft. Collins, CO



Oak Grove Church of the Brethren has called Stephanie and Ronald Robinson and Mary and Marc Wilson to our deacon board. They were officially installed as deacons on Sunday, January 14, 2018.



Wish List for February:

Dinner Napkins
Canned Vegetables

Sunday Morning Statistics

Date	Sunday School	Worship	Budget	Special Gifts
January 7	67	117	\$4,573	\$25
January 14	77	114	\$2,872	—
January 21	76	118	\$4,678	—
January 28	81	140	\$7,414	\$778



Sermons for February

- February 4: **Take nothing for granted: Welcome!** | Peter 4:9
 February 11: **Take nothing for granted: Serve!** | Peter 4:10
 February 18: First Sunday of Lent
Sunday of Holy Week: Jesus' triumphal entry. Matthew 21:1-11
 February 25: Second Sunday of Lent
Monday of Holy Week: Jesus cleanses the temple. Mathew 21:12-17

A Word from Pastor Tim . . .

Living without fear in a violent age

After the shooting at Southerland Springs Baptist Church on November 5, a number of my clergy friends—and several of you—began asking about steps congregations might consider to minimize the chance of an event like this happening to us. After consultation with our Executive Committee, I invited Officer Josh Johnson of the Roanoke City Police Department to conduct a safety walk-through at Oak Grove. Dave Jones and I met with Officer Johnson on December 12.

While we are still awaiting his final report, I provided the Executive Committee with a summary of Officer Johnson's visit. At their request, I am including that summary here, which focused on three areas:

1. We walked around the outside of the building and considered lighting, potential locations for security cameras, and checked to see if first floor windows were closed and locked with the blinds closed.
2. In the nursery and children's church rooms, we were asked to consider whether these doors should be locked when the rooms are in use, and if we should conduct a "shelter-in-place" drill with the children.
3. In regards to the "active-shooter" scenario that prompted this conversation, Officer Johnson recognized that churches do not want to be heavy-handed with security, as this defeats our calling to "extend hospitality to strangers" (Romans 12:13). He did, however, offer the following thoughts for our consideration:
 - a. Should we train ushers and greeters to be on the lookout for suspicious behavior while greeting visitors?
 - b. Should we keep one or two persons in the vestibule during the worship service?
 - c. Should we lock all exterior doors—except the front door—once worship begins? This would prevent someone from "sneaking in." But forcing late-comers to enter through the front door is somewhat inconvenient. But is it prudent?

The Executive Committee has only begun considering these matters, and has not made decisions on any of this. Various commissions will be asked to consider the items that apply to their ministry areas. In the meantime, I am writing an article for *Messenger* that examines our culture's idolatry of guns and how that idolatry contributes to our fear, potentially limiting the expression of Christian hospitality to strangers. All of these factors will be part of our discussions on this subject.

We would be glad for feedback you might offer on this subject. Please be in contact with either Pastor Tim or Board chair Kathie Robinson to share thoughts and comments.

February 2018



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 12:30 pm — Backpack 2:00 pm — Games at church 5:30 pm — Evangelism & Membership 6:00 pm — Christian Education 7:00 pm — Missions & Service	2	3 Sr. High IYC Retreat
4 Souper Bowl Sunday 2:00 pm — Brethren Bowl at Penn Forest Elementary Sr. High IYC Retreat	5 9:00 am — Crafts 5:30 pm — Property	6 5:30 pm — Handbells 7:00 pm — Peace Group	7 5:45 pm — Dinner 6:30 pm — Bible Study 7:30 pm — Choir	8 12:30 pm — Backpack 2:00 pm — Games at church	9	10 7:00 am — Breakfast at Chip & Jo's 8:00 am — Project WARM 9:30 am — Staunton Avenue Food Dist. 12:00 pm — Camp supporter luncheon
11 Handbells play during worship 6:30 pm — Executive Committee 7:30 pm — Church Board	12 9:00 am — Crafts	13 1:00 pm — Caroling 5:30 pm — Handbells	14 5:45 pm — Dinner 6:30 pm — Ash Wednesday Service 7:30 pm — Choir	15 12:30 pm — Backpack 2:00 pm — Games at church	16	17 7:00 pm — Talent Show & Chocolate Extravaganza
18 1st Sunday of Lent	19 9:00 am — Crafts	20 5:30 pm — Handbells	21 5:45 pm — Dinner 6:30 pm — Bible Study 7:30 pm — Choir	22 10:30 am — Joyful Hearts 12:30 pm — Backpack 2:00 pm — Games at church	23	24
25 2nd Sunday of Lent 5:00 pm — Youth Family Dinner & Yard Sale setup Set-up for Youth Yard Sale	26 9:00 am — Crafts	27 5:30 pm — Handbells	28 7:00 pm — Choir		Coming Up in March: March 10 — Youth Yard Sale March 11 — One Great Hour of Sharing March 16-18 — Pilgrimage March 18-21 — Awakening Services at Oak Grove March 29 — Love Feast March 30 — Service of Darkness March 31 — Easter Egg Hunt	