

the messenger

LIVE OAK CHURCH MAGAZINE / APRIL 2026



HE IS
RISEN

The text "HE IS RISEN" is rendered in a white, bold, serif font with a teal drop shadow. The letters are surrounded by decorative teal and yellow floral-like shapes. The background features a cracked stone texture in shades of purple and pink, with a bright sunburst effect at the bottom center.



1-2-3-4
WE DECLARE A
PENNY
WAR

WHERE: Live Oak Church Worship Center Lobby

WHEN: April 19-May 3

HOW TO PARTICIPATE: Each MINISTRY has their own coin jug for collecting money located in the CHURCH LOBBY.

ADD POINTS to your jug by adding PENNIES & DOLLARS.




SUBTRACT POINTS from other ministries by adding SILVER COINS to their jug.

BATTLE OF THE MINISTRIES




All funds raised will go toward Connect Camp Scholarships. Points will be updated weekly on Live Oak Kids Facebook page! The winning group will be announced on May 10th.


POINT SYSTEM

ADDING POINTS

-  EACH PENNY = +1 POINT
-  \$1 BILL = +100 POINTS
-  \$5 BILL = +500 POINTS
-  \$10 BILL = +1,000 POINTS

SUBTRACTING

-  NICKEL = -5 POINTS
-  DIME = -10 POINTS
-  QUARTER = -25 POINTS



*Easter Was Just
the Beginning
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

A time and a place for everyone

For more information about groups and events visit www.liveoak.church or call (225) 664-4801.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY

8:00 AM Worship Service

8:45 AM Children & Pre-Teen Sunday School
Sherri Gardner: 1st-4th Grade - Upstairs in FLC
Jodi Rushing: 5th-6th

8:45 AM Students 7th-12th Grade: Upstairs in FLC

8:45 AM Adult Small Groups:
See Page 5 for Full List

9:30 AM Children's Ministry - 1st-4th Grade - FLC

9:30 AM Preteen - 5th-6th Grade - Chapel

9:30 AM Worship Service

11:00 AM Children's Ministry - 1st-4th Grade - FLC

11:00 AM Preteen - 5th-6th Grade - Chapel

11:00 AM Worship Service

6:00 PM Young Adults Worship Service - Chapel

WEDNESDAY

8:00 AM Quilters Ministry - FLC

6:30 - 7:30 | Nursery | Infants-2 y/o

6:30 - 7:30 | Preschool | Pre-K3 to Kindergarten

6:30 - 7:30 | Kids | 1st-4th

6:30 - 7:30 | Preteen | 5th-6th

6:30 - 7:30 | Student Ministry | 7th-12th

6:30 - 7:30 | Worship & Study | Adults

6:30 - 7:30 | Study | Young Adults

Download the App



Church Map



ADULT BIBLE STUDIES

small group | large group

Sunday 8:45 AM

Young Adults Class // **Topical** // Krist & Katie Norsworthy - The Loft (Sanctuary Upstairs)

Adults Class // **Genesis** // David Orges - Room #214

Median Adult Class // **Habakuk** // Dickie Davis - Room #202

Senior Adult Class // **Topical** // Layne Hutchinson - Room #212

Pastor's Class // **Gospel of Luke** // Dr. Mark Crosby - Choir Room

New Member Class // Bro. Sam LoBello - Room #201

Sunday 9:30 AM

Co-ed Class // **Topical** // Robert Poole - Room #211

Couples Class // **Romans** // Todd & Sealy Pettavino - Room #202

Sunday Evenings

4:00 PM // **Doctrinal Study** // Layne Hutchinson & Jon Williams - Room #202

6:00 PM // Young Adults // **Worship Service** // Krist Norsworthy - Chapel

Monday

6:00 PM // Men's Discipleship Group // **Topical** // Robert Poole's Home

6:30 PM // Deeper Life Men // **The Gospel of Matthew** // David Tate - Room #201

6:30 PM // Deeper Life Women // **Angels** // Jan Tate - Chapel

Tuesday

6:30 PM // **Exploring Ezekiel** (1st & 3rd Tuesday) // Stephen Hebert - Chapel

6:30 PM // **Grief Support Group** (2nd & 4th Tuesday) // Stephen Hebert - Chapel

Wednesday 6:30 PM

Worship & Study // **Topical** // Dr. Mark // Sanctuary

Young Adults Class // **A Biblical Guide to Life and Faith (Adulting 101)** // Krist Norsworthy - The Loft

Thursday

6:00 PM // **Men's Play & Pray Basketball** // Jim Otken - FLC

6:30 PM // **Ministering to the Most Helpless** // Conference Room

7:00 PM // **REFUGE Addiction Recovery** // Sam LoBello - Room #201

Friday

5:30 AM // Men's Group // **Romans** // Jim Otken - Room #202

6:00 PM // Co-ed // **Acts** // Robert Poole - Room #202

Second Saturday of Each Month

7:30 AM // Mens Prayer Breakfast & Study // **UNLEASHED!: Releasing God's Glorious Kingdom in and Through You** // Sam LoBello - Room #202



PASTALAYA

Fundraiser



Support our team going to serve at Joni & Friends Family Retreat—a place that ministers to families living with disability.

 Tickets on sale now in the church app
 Pickup: April 19 after each service

Plate includes pastalaya, green beans, bread & a sweet treat.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

- Pastalaya
- Green Beans
- Bread
- Cake





from the PASTOR'S DESK



The first quarter of the year is over, and what a year this has already been. There is a major conflict in the Middle East, record temperatures throughout the country, unsolved national kidnapping, rapid price increases, and partial government shutdowns, just to name a few of the problems and concerns that many are experiencing.

In all of this, many churches are recording lower attendance and the inability to “bounce back” from COVID. Some are closing, and many pastors are “retiring.” This seems to be a very difficult and depressing time in the lives of believers and churches.

However, this is nothing new for followers of Jesus. On the Friday we call “good”, Jesus was crucified. It seemed all was lost, hope was gone, and the potential for God’s Kingdom arriving was destroyed. The disciples went into hiding, some went back to their original vocation, and others “stewed” in their doubt and personal disappointment.

Then something happened that changed hearts, lives, and the world. Jesus arose from the dead, and when he did,

everything changed. The disciples who had denied him, doubted him, and distanced themselves from him were transformed into evangelists who proclaimed his resurrection. This spread throughout the region and eventually around the world. The tomb was empty, the veil (in the temple) was torn, and heaven’s gates were opened to all who would believe.

This is the same hope we have today. Though life can get crazy, and the unexpected takes place, and events happen that you never expected, the resurrection of Jesus reminds us that God is in control, we have been redeemed, and ultimately paradise awaits all who trust, believe, and receive his amazing grace.

So whatever you are experiencing today, whatever is troubling you, whatever has happened that you never expected, please know you are not alone. There is a resurrected Savior declaring to you and me, “I am the resurrection and the life, and he who believes in me, though they die, yet shall they live” (John 11:25-28).

This is what gives us hope, peace, and the assurance that our God reigns, our Savior lives, and His Spirit seals us forever. This

is good news of great joy. Let us share these truths with the Church and with the world that needs this good news this Easter Sunday.

*THIS IS WHAT GIVES
US HOPE, PEACE, AND
THE ASSURANCE
THAT OUR GOD REIGNS,
OUR SAVIOR LIVES,
AND HIS SPIRIT
SEALS US FOREVER.*

Have a Happy Resurrection Sunday!


Dr. Mark Crosby
Senior Pastor



Newsletter & Updates

MEN'S MINISTRY

Men Helping Men Be Men

CRAWFISH BOIL

Saturday, May 16,
1:00 PM @ FLC

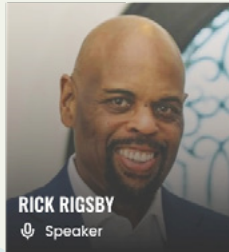
This is a free event.
Bring a friend...and
your appetite!



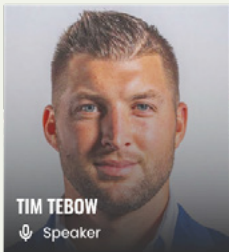
WILLIE ROBERTSON
Speaker



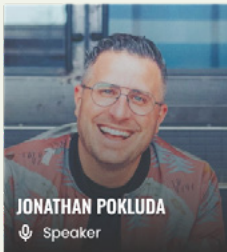
PHIL WALDREP
Speaker



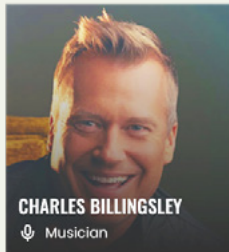
RICK RIGSBY
Speaker



TIM TEBOW
Speaker



JONATHAN POKLUDA
Speaker



CHARLES BILLINGSLEY
Musician

GRIDIRON MEN'S CONFERENCE

June 19-20

Tim Tebow,

Willie Robertson and more!

Sign up now at

Information Desk. Cost: \$175

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

MONDAYS AT 6:30 PM — HOME BIBLE STUDY | ROBERT POOLE'S

MONDAYS AT 6:30 PM — DEEPER LIFE BIBLE STUDY | ROOM 201

THURSDAYS AT 6:00 PM — PLAY & PRAY BASKETBALL | FLC

THURSDAYS AT 7:00 PM — REFUGE ADDICTION RECOVERY | ROOM 201

FRIDAYS AT 5:30 AM — IRON MAN'S BIBLE STUDY | ROOM 201

SECOND SATURDAY AT 7:30 AM — PRAYER BREAKFAST/STUDY | ROOM 202



MEN'S PLAY AND PRAY

THURSDAYS 6-9 PM
BIBLE LESSON 7:15 PM
★ AGE 16+ ★
LOCATION: FLC

DARE I SAY IT ... EASTER WAS JUST THE BEGINNING

by Dr. David Orges, Executive Pastor

Every year, 2.6 billion Christians gather to celebrate Easter Sunday. We sing. We worship. We reflect on the empty tomb. And for many, everything feels clear. Jesus is alive, hope is real, death has been defeated, and we have the assurance of an eternal home in God's presence.

But then Monday comes, and what then?

If we're honest, a lot of people don't know what to do next. Most people just turn the page and move on. *Because here's the truth most of us miss.*

EASTER IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY. IT'S THE BEGINNING OF YOUR CALLING.

If all we do is celebrate the resurrection and forget about what came after, we've stopped the story too soon. Hear me out... the resurrection wasn't the conclusion. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the launch point! What happened after Easter matters just as much as what happened on Easter.

So, let's walk through it together.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE RESURRECTION?

When Jesus rose from the dead, He didn't immediately ascend into heaven. He stayed. He walked. He taught. He appeared.

For forty days, Jesus made it unmistakably clear that He was physically alive.

He appeared to Mary Magdalene at the tomb (John 20:11-18). He walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). He stood among His disciples, even when they were hiding behind locked doors, and showed them the wounds in His hands and His side (John 20:19-29). He cooked breakfast for them on the shore (John 21). He ate with them (Luke 24:42).

And then there's one of the most powerful moments in all of Scripture:

"He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time..." (1 Corinthians 15:6, TLV)

This wasn't a private vision. This wasn't a rumor. This was a public, historical reality. Hundreds of people saw the resurrected Jesus at the same time!

Why does that matter? Because Jesus wasn't just proving that He was alive. Jesus had something better in store. He was preparing His people for what was to come next.

THE RESURRECTION WAS CONFIRMATION

Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies in His life, death, and resurrection. A dozen of the prophecies were specifically concerning His resurrection. The resurrection validated everything Jesus had said.

Every promise. Every claim. Every teaching.

When Jesus walked out of the tomb, He proved that He is exactly who He said He is; the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the One with authority over sin and death.

Paul wrote: "He was raised on the third day in keeping with the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:4, TLV)

This wasn't some stroke of luck or random idea. It was planned. It was promised. It was fulfilled. The resurrection was God's affirmation of everything Jesus ever declared. But it gets even crazier because it didn't stop there!

THE RESURRECTION LED TO COMMISSION

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father, He gave His

followers a clear assignment. We often call it the Great Commission:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19, ESV).

This is where everything shifts. The disciples were no longer just followers of a first-century rabbi. They were now witnesses, commissioned as messengers. The disciples became representatives.

Jesus didn't rise from the dead so His followers could sit in awe. Jesus rose from the dead so His followers would step into their preordained purpose.

Don't miss this. Notice the order:

Resurrection → Relationship → Responsibility

Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples. He restored them, each according to their own need. And then He sent them (Acts 1:8).

The good news of great joy is that this pattern still holds today!

THE ASCENSION WAS NOT AN ENDING

After forty days, Jesus ascended into Heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father in honor and glory (Acts 1:9-11).

Can you imagine being there?

You've just spent weeks with the resurrected Christ. You've seen Him, touched Him, talked with Him, eaten with Him, and now He's leaving. Let's talk about disappointment and devastation!

But listen to what the angel says as the disciples stand stunned in silence after the ascension:

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you

into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11, TLV)

Translation: Boys, this isn't the end. Let's get to work.

The ascension doesn't close the story. It inaugurated the next chapter and expanded the work. Jesus is no longer physically present in one place. Instead, His mission is now carried forward through His people, in all places at all times.

And that leads to one of the most important moments in history.

THE SPIRIT CAME AND EVERYTHING CHANGED

In Acts 2, something happened that transformed everything. The Holy Spirit came.

The same disciples who were hiding in fear just weeks earlier were now boldly proclaiming the gospel in the streets. Peter stood up and preached to the gathered crowds, and 3,000 people were saved when they responded to the gospel in a single day (Acts 2:41).

So, what changed?

The resurrection gave the disciples confidence. The Spirit gave them power.

This is critical, so don't miss it: The Christian life was never meant to be lived in your own strength. What Jesus accomplished through the resurrection, the Spirit now empowers in your daily life.

THE CHURCH WAS BORN

After the Day of Pentecost, the early church began to take shape.

“They were devoting themselves to the teaching of the emissaries, to fellowship, to breaking bread, and to prayers.” (Acts 2:42, TLV)

This is what life after Easter looked like for the disciples:

- They gathered
- They learned
- They shared
- They prayed
- They lived on mission

And “The Lord was adding to their number day by day” (Acts 2:47, TLV).

The resurrection changed individuals, and it launched a movement. And that movement is still going today.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

This is where it gets personal, because it's easy to look at all of that and think, “That's great for them, but what about me?”

The reality is that what happened after Jesus' resurrection still defines what happens for us today.

1. You Are Not Just Forgiven, You Are A Saint And You Are Sent

Easter is not *only* about your salvation. It's about your calling.

Yes, your sins are forgiven. Yes, you've been made new. But that's not the finish line, it's the starting line.

Yes, you have been entrusted with the message of the Gospel. You are now a witness to what Christ has done. You don't have to have all the answers. You just have to be faithful with what you know.

2. You Don't Walk Alone

The same Spirit that empowered the miracles and growth of the early church lives in you.

Take a second and think about that.

You are not *trying* to live the Christian life through *willpower*. You *ARE* living the Christian life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

That means:

- You have help when you're weak
- You have clarity when you're confused
- You have courage when you're afraid

The resurrection secured your new life. The Holy Spirit sustains it.

3. Your Life Is Now Part of Something Bigger

The early church understood that the Christian faith is at its very core, communal.

Christians aren't just individuals trying to survive. They are a people on mission together. You are part of the body of Christ. You are connected to something global, historical, and eternal.

Your faith was never meant to be lived in isolation.

4. The Story Is Still Being Written

One of the most powerful realities of the resurrection is this:

The story didn't end in Acts, and it didn't end in the first century. The story of the resurrection is still unfolding today. As a follower of Jesus, your life is now part of that story.

Every conversation. Every act of obedience.

Every moment of faithfulness matters, because the same mission Jesus gave His disciples is now entrusted to you.

SO WHAT DO YOU DO AFTER EASTER?

Let me make this simple:

Don't just celebrate the resurrection, step fully into it.

- Don't just remember what Jesus did. Respond to it.
- Don't just believe Jesus is alive. Live like it.

If Jesus is truly risen, then everything changes. Actually, our entire faith hinges on this one fact. “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain...And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:14 & 17, ESV)

Because of the resurrection your purpose changes. Your priorities change. Your identity changes. And your future changes.

FINAL THOUGHT

Easter Sunday is powerful. It is emotional, and it's celebratory. But Easter is not the destination. It's the doorway.

Easter isn't the end of the story. It's the beginning of your calling.

So the real question is not, “Did you celebrate Easter?”

The real question is, “What are you going to do now that Jesus is alive?”

Because the same Jesus who walked out of the tomb is calling you to walk into your purpose.

And that... is where the real story begins. 🌱



rightnow MEDIA

THE BOOK OF
NEHEMIAH
ERIC MASON

UNTANGLE
YOUR EMOTIONS
JENNIE ALLEN

SERIES 1:
WHAT IS
A CHRISTIAN?
FRANCIS CHAN

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Counselor's Corner: Meet Jason Cooper

Jason Cooper is the newest PLPC at our LOC Counseling Center. He completed his Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling through Liberty University in December 2025. Jason also holds a graduate degree in education. His academic journey has been driven by a desire to better understand how people think, grow, and work through the challenges of life.

You may recognize Jason from his years working in Live Oak schools, where he spent over 20 years as a teacher and administrator. For the past 8 years, he has continued as an educator in the virtual space. His experiences working with students and families led him to counseling, where he continues the work he has always loved—listening, encouraging, and helping people navigate difficult seasons with clarity and hope.

In counseling, Jason works with adolescents and adults facing a variety of challenges, including anxiety, depression, grief, relationship struggles, and major life transitions. He especially enjoys helping people understand how their thoughts shape their emotions and choices. Jason believes that the wisdom found in Scripture speaks directly to the struggles people face today. He seeks to thoughtfully integrate biblical principles with sound counseling practices to help people experience real growth and healing.

Jason and his wife Julia have been married for 32 years and have three children. When he's not educating or counseling, you'll find him playing guitar, shopping for his next pocketknife, digging into a good science fiction book or movie, or looking for the perfect cheeseburger. He's grateful to be part of the Live Oak Church family and is honored to serve his community in this new way. 🌿

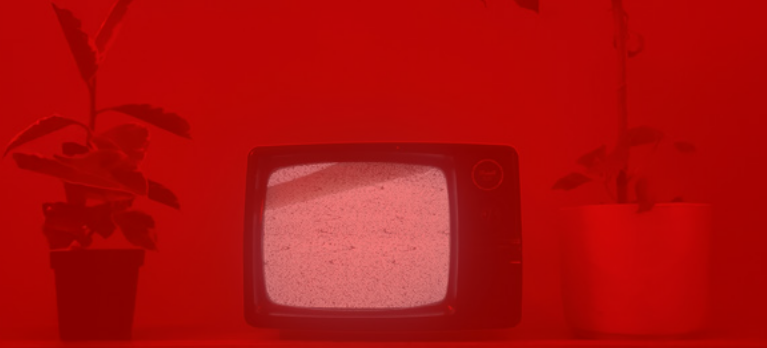


LIVE OAK CHURCH

COUNSELING CENTER

on the Live Oak App, our website liveoak.church
or booking a session by calling 225-664-4801

						
Anna Wilkins MA, MS, PLPC	Summer Renee Babin PLPC, MA, BS	Jason Cooper M.Ed, BA, PLPC	Melissa Benton-Hebert MA, BS, PLPC, PLMFT	Destiny Sadler MS, PLPC	Alyssa Lott Osborne Graduate Student	Sylas Faust Graduate Student



ENGAGING ENTERTAINMENT LIKE A CHRISTIAN

by Krist Norsworthy, Young Adults Pastor

We live in a world saturated with entertainment. Movies, music, streaming shows, podcasts, TikTok videos, and digital art constantly shape how we think, feel, and imagine reality. Whether we realize it or not, we are being formed by what we consume: “You are what you eat.”

The question is not *whether* media influences us. It does. The real question is: how should you, as a Christian, engage with it?

For many believers, the answer has often swung between two extremes. On one side, there’s total rejection: avoid anything “secular” to stay pure. On the other hand, there’s passive acceptance: “it’s just entertainment,” so don’t think too deeply about it. I don’t think either of these approaches fully reflects the depth of a biblical worldview.

The better path is one of thoughtful, joyful, discerning engagement with culture. Not fear. Not naïveté. But wisdom.

MEDIA IS TELLING YOU A STORY ABOUT REALITY

Every movie, song, or show carries a message—even if subtle.

It tells you: What matters, What love looks like, What success is, What’s wrong with the world, How to fix it, If it’s worth fixing... Even humor can lower our guard and make us accept ideas we might otherwise question. As Eric Hoffer once said: “Propaganda does not deceive people; it merely helps them to deceive themselves.”

That may sound strong, but think about it. Think about the cultural changes you’ve seen even in *your* lifetime. How much of that shift has been driven (not by arguments) but by stories? Stories shape imagination. And imagination shapes belief.

A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Before we talk strategy, we need to talk grounding. Let’s use three bible passages to guide this conversation:

1. **Romans 12:2** — “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (ESV)
2. **Philippians 4:8** — “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (ESV)
3. **Acts 17:22–28** — Paul stands in Athens and addresses a philosophical and religious culture by connecting with what they already know. He points to their altar “to an unknown god” and uses it as a bridge to proclaim the true God—the Creator of everything, who does not live in temples or depend on human hands.

The Apostle quotes two well-known Greek sources to connect with his audience. He says, “In him we live and move and have our being,” from Epimenides. In its original context, it referred to Zeus, but Paul uses it to point to the true God as the source of life and existence.

He also quotes, “For we are indeed his offspring,” a line from the 3rd-century BC poet Aratus. This line, also, originally referred to Zeus, but Paul uses it to affirm a partial truth—that humanity is dependent on God—while redirecting his listeners toward a fuller understanding of the Creator.

He explains that God is sovereign over all nations and history, and that His purpose is for people to seek Him. Showing that there

are glimpses of truth within their culture. So, Paul doesn’t withdraw from culture or the conversation of the day. He understood it—and used it as a bridge. That’s our model.

WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

A *worldview* is the lens through which we interpret reality. It answers questions like: What is real? What is wrong with the world? What will fix it? Every piece of media operates from a worldview—even if it’s not explicitly stated.

Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer famously said: “Ideas have consequences.” Art and media are not random; they are expressions of belief. Sociologist James Davison Hunter says that culture shapes how we *imagine* reality, not just how we think about it. So when you watch a movie, you’re not just consuming a story. You’re encountering a worldview, and it’s shaping your understanding of this universe.

A THEOLOGY OF CULTURE

To engage culture well as a Christian, you need a balanced theology of culture.

First. Culture Is Not the Enemy

Author Andy Crouch defines culture simply as: “What humans make of the world.” From the beginning, God called humans to cultivate, reproduce, and create (Genesis 1). Art, music, storytelling—these are not distractions from our purpose. They are part of it. SO, Christians should not only critique culture—we should also **create within it**.

Secondly. Culture Is Fallen

It’s not the enemy, but at the same time, culture does reflect humanity—and humanity is sadly broken. Saint Augustine described this in terms of two loves: Love of God and Love of self.

These competing loves shape who we are and what we do. So culture will always be a mixture of: Truth and distortion. It will, to some degree, be Beautiful and broken.

Thirdly. Culture Is Something We Participate In

Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr described different ways Christians relate to culture. We either Reject culture, Blend with culture, or Transform culture. Most of us naturally lean one direction. But the most faithful approach is not withdrawal or assimilation.... it's **transformation through discernment.**

DISCERNMENT VS LEGALISM

I think the goal is not to reject everything imperfect. The goal is to **recognize truth and distortion clearly.** And, to not engage with things that lead you personally away from the truth. That's what it means to engage culture like a Christian—not shutting it out, but seeing it *truthfully*.

This is where things often go wrong.

Two Common Extremes

1. **Total Rejection:** This leads to isolation and often shallow thinking.
2. **Total Acceptance:** This leads to uncritical consumption and quiet formation by unbiblical ideas.

A BETTER WAY

Timothy Keller suggested that Christians should: Affirm what is good, Critique what is false, and to Reinterpret through the gospel. This approach takes both truth and sin seriously.

Instead of asking only: "Is this allowed?"

Ask:

1. What is this shaping me to love?
2. What vision of the "good life" is this presenting?
3. What does it say about identity, purpose, or truth?
4. Does this draw me toward Christ—or subtly away from Him?

These questions move to **wisdom.**

A THREE LENS METHOD

Here's a simple framework you can actually use:

1. **Enjoy It:** Appreciate creativity, storytelling, beauty.
2. **Examine It:** Identify the worldview underneath.
3. **Evaluate It:** Measure it against Scripture.

This allows you to stay engaged without being passive.

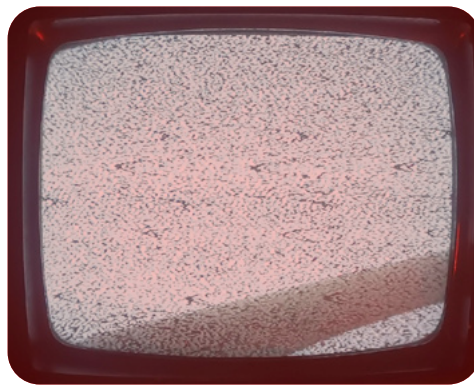
CAN YOU ENJOY WHAT YOU DISAGREE WITH?

This is one of the hardest questions. Can you enjoy a movie, song, or artwork that celebrates something you believe is wrong?

The answer is: **sometimes...but carefully.**

You must be able to: Recognize what's being celebrated, Distinguish between appreciation and endorsement, and Guard your heart from influence

If you can't do that, it may not be wise to engage with it. But if you *can*, it becomes an opportunity for deeper understanding and even meaningful conversation.



THE POWER OF STORY

Stories don't just reflect culture—they shape it. Think about: How relationships are portrayed in media, how morality is framed, how identity is defined. These narratives slowly normalize certain ideas. Not through argument but through repetition and emotional connection. How often are people appealing to "feelings" rather than "truth" or "consequences?" That's why discernment matters so much.

RAISING THOUGHTFUL CONSUMERS (AND CREATORS)

If you're leading others or raising kids this becomes even more important. Instead of only or always just saying: "Don't watch that." Try asking: What do you think this is saying?

Do you agree with it? Why or why not? How does this compare to what Scripture teaches?

So, yes, protect your kids from things they shouldn't see, but also disciple them into **critical thinkers shaped by our faith.**

For instance, we use a service in our home called VidAngel. It allows us to edit movies and TV shows in a custom way. I've shown my kids movies like Oppenheimer and Saving Private Ryan so they can see, in some way, the reality of war, for instance. But, cut out things that don't necessarily need to be seen to understand what's going on.

THE GOAL

My hope for this conversation is not to create a list of approved and banned media or to make people feel guilty about entertainment. The goal is something deeper: **To form people who can think like Christians in any cultural moment.**

I want you to be able to recognize truth, resist distortion, engage thoughtfully, and enjoy beauty without losing conviction.

MISSION NOT REMOVAL

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus prays for His followers:

"I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one... As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." (John 17:14–15, 18, ESV)

Jesus does **not** pray for removal. He prays for protection and mission. Christians are sent people. We live in the world, but we do not belong to it. Our values, loyalties, and identity come from another kingdom.

This week, try this: Don't just consume media. **Engage with it.** Watch intentionally. Listen carefully. Think deeply. Because every story you take in is shaping you. The question is: **Who (or what) is shaping your imagination?**

Nothing in this kingdom is neutral. Every piece of media is telling you something about reality. Let Scripture guide you and empower you to engage without total withdrawal. Because the goal is not to escape culture. It's to live faithfully **within it.** 🌿

REFUGEE

Thursdays at 7 PM

**STRUGGLING WITH ADDICTION?
WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.
WE MEET IN ROOM #201.
COME JOIN US!**

**“Taste and see the LORD is good; blessed is
the one who takes refuge in Him.”**

Psalm 34:8

Support. Instruction. Accountability.



LIVE OAK CHURCH
YOUNG ADULTS
ROOTED IN CHRIST. GROWING TOGETHER.

BIBLE STUDY
—
Sunday Mornings
8:45 AM in the Loft
(Ages 18-30)
—
Start your week in Scripture with Bible Study, honest conversation, and prayer.

WORSHIP + DINNER
—
Sunday Nights
6:30 PM in the Chapel
(Ages 18-30)
—
Worship led by young adults, a Christ-centered message, and dinner + hangout time.

YOUNG ADULTS CLASS
—
Wednesday Nights
6:30 PM in the Loft
(Ages 18-25)
—
A midweek class designed to help you learn, grow, and build community.

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SENIOR ADULTS

By Landra Reed



“For behold, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The blossoms have already appeared in the land; the time has arrived for pruning the vines, and the voice turtle dove has been in our land.”

Song of Solomon 2:11-12

We started spring with a trip to Avery Island and a great group! Let’s continue spring with a trip to the Dinner Bell on Wednesday, April 22nd. We will leave the church by bus at 9:15 a.m. The cost is \$30. After lunch we will head to the railroad museum just down the road. Make sure to sign up at the connection center.

Senior adult ladies, we will end our spring journey with our annual Mother’s Day tea at the Lake House in Baton Rouge on May 4th. The time is 11:00 and the cost is free. This is our way of showing our appreciation for all you have done for our church family. We only have a limited number of seats available so make sure to sign up at the connection center. The cutoff date for signing up is April 20th. 🌿



A DROP FROM THE ALTAR by Sam LoBello

One of my seminary professors used to say to his class while teaching, “This is a drop from the altar.” He was communicating to his students that what he was about to say was important and may well appear on the next test. As a result, it would be wise for us to remember it.

As I have journeyed through life God has given me “Drops from the Altar” from time to time. I have tried to remember them and apply them to my life. I will share one with you each month. I hope you find them to be helpful in your journey, as well.

“I don’t know what your earthly father was like, but you have a Heavenly Father who loves you and longs for a relationship with you.”

Greg Laurie



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GOD WAS RAISING ME TOO

by Faith Storck, *Director of Children's Ministry*

It's the eve before my daughter Lauren's 21st birthday, and as I sit here reflecting on how fast these years have gone, I can clearly see the Lord's faithfulness in her life and in my parenting... or sometimes lack thereof.

When I first had Lauren, we were surviving on about fifteen minutes of sleep at a time for what felt like the first nine months of her life. That girl was a complete flunky at *Baby Wise*, the sleeping method that was all the rage back in the early 2000s. Then came the terrible threes. Let's be honest, the terrible twos are a myth because the threes come in hot. Her fierce independence nearly sent me over the edge as she climbed everything in sight and never stopped moving.

Throughout the years, some of those days tested my patience more than I ever thought possible. Hello, fourth grade math. I am thankful for her good hygiene, great behavior, and impeccable manners. That is what parenting is all about, right? Don't I wish. What I have learned through the years is that parenting is just as much about the parent as it is about the child.

Parenting has a beautiful way of pointing out all of your flaws. I thought I was pretty strong in the patience department until that girl could not remember the one thing I had already told her to do one million times. Suddenly, all my spiritual maturity flew out the window and ran far, far away.

Somewhere between the toys scattered across the living room floor like a war zone, the multiplication tables, and the rollercoaster

of emotional hormones, the Lord started doing something unexpected. He was not just shaping Lauren. He was shaping me.

I began to realize that parenting was not primarily about producing a well behaved child. It was about becoming a more Christlike adult. It was not about controlling every outcome. It was about surrendering control. It was not about always having the right answers. It was about trusting the One who does.

There were many seasons when I prayed for God to change her. What He often chose to do instead was change me.

He used parenting to teach me perseverance and maturity when life felt overwhelming (James 1:2-4). He used it to expose pride and grow humility in my heart (Philippians 2:3-5). He used it to strengthen endurance when I felt like giving up (Galatians 6:9). He continually reminded me that my responsibility was faithfulness, not perfection (1 Corinthians 4:2).

Am I a perfect parent now? Not even close. But by God's grace, I am more like Christ than I was before. Parenting has been one of His greatest tools of sanctification in my life.

One of the greatest joys of my life is not simply that Lauren turned out responsible or respectful, although I am incredibly grateful for that. My greatest joy is knowing she has a personal relationship with Jesus and faithfully serves Him.

Scripture says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 John 1:4). I understand that verse in a way I never could have years ago.

Looking back now, I can see the handiwork of God all over her life and mine. He was present in the sleepless nights, the difficult conversations, and the moments I wondered if I was doing anything right at all.

He gently reminded me that children are ultimately His before they are ever ours (Psalm 127:3). Our role is not to manufacture their faith but to model it, nurture it, and trust Him with the outcome (Proverbs 22:6).

If you are in the thick of parenting right now, exhausted, overwhelmed, or unsure whether anything you are doing is making a difference, take heart. God is not only at work in your child's life. He is also at work in you.

One day you may find yourself sitting where I am, on the eve of a milestone birthday, looking back with gratitude and awe at the steady faithfulness of God.

Parenting will humble you.
It will stretch you.
It will refine you.

But if you allow Him, it will also draw you closer to the heart of the Father, the One who has been patiently loving and leading you all along (Psalm 103:13). 🌿

meet our team

Reach Us at info@liveoak.church



Dr. Mark Crosby
Senior Pastor



Dr. David Orges
Executive Pastor



Trish Graves
Business
Administrator



Rev. Trent Barnett
Worship Pastor



Rev. Sam LoBello
Director of Adult
Ministries



Rev. Stephen Hebert
Minister of
Pastoral Care



Faith Storck
Director of
Children's Ministry



Madison Cody
Children's
Minister



Seth Doiga
Worship Minister



Rev. Krist Norsworthy
Young Adults Pastor
& Communications



Linda Holdman
Administrative
Assistant



Brayden Lott
Preteens Minister



Jim Otken
Treasurer



Liz White
Office
Secretary



Mark Herbst
Facilities
Director

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JUNE 22ND-26TH

**HAVE YOU BEEN VISITING LIVE OAK CHURCH?
CONSIDERING BECOMING A MEMBER?
WE HAVE A CLASS JUST FOR YOU!**

NEW MEMBERS CLASS

This class begins the first Sunday morning of each month at 8:45 and ends on the fourth Sunday.

In these four sessions, you will encounter life-changing truths and learn more about Live Oak Church. You will look at Salvation in 3-D, learn to Enhance Your Relationship With God, Examine the Stages of Spiritual Growth, and Discover Your Spiritual Gifts.

This class meets in Room #201 and recycles each month.

We look forward to welcoming you into our Live Oak Church Community of Faith!