

SMALL GROUPS | A DROP FROM THE ALTAR | SENIOR ADULTS | EVENTS

the messenger

• LIVE OAK CHURCH MAGAZINE / FEBRUARY 2026

AVOIDING
RELATIONSHIP
DRAMA

LOVE THY
NEIGHBOR

FROM
THE
PASTOR'S
DESK

FORMING
HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS

ABIDE



MORE
THAN A
MOMENT

MY LOVER &
MY FRIEND



CELEBRATING OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Darlene Ashley
Sam Ashley
Sarah Bates
William Bates
Reginald Brannan
Sylvia Brannan
Carla Broggi
Joe Broggi
Jonathan Brumfield
Misty Brumfield
Taryn Cannino
Jamie Cook
McKenna Cook
Todd Cook
Hannah Cooper
Jeff Easley
Patra Easley
Dan Evans
Ashley Gautreau
Matthew Gautreau
John Hanna
Chris Harris
Christy Harris
Daniel Hawkins
Rebekah Hawkins
Judy Hergruder
Ken Lang
Pam Lang
Brittany Lester
Michael Lester

Seaira Mathewson
Joseph McClendon
Lacy McClendon
Jessica McLin
Michael McLin
Amanda McMichael
Chad McMichael
Bert Neal
Joan Neal
Bob "B.J." Nolan
Sal Palmero, Jr.
Sal Palmero, III
Shantelle Palmero
Brenda "Cookie" Powell
Leslie Rushing
Shane Rushing
Bridget Skelton
Gillian Smith
Hunter Smith
Steve Snider
Brad Thomas
Kim Thomas
Candace Trott
Sherry Tucker
Aislinn White
Chris Withers
Logan Withers
Salli Withers



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Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to help us abide in His love and to keep His commands.

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Small moments and everyday choices lead to make a big impact.

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Healthy relationships do not happen by accident.

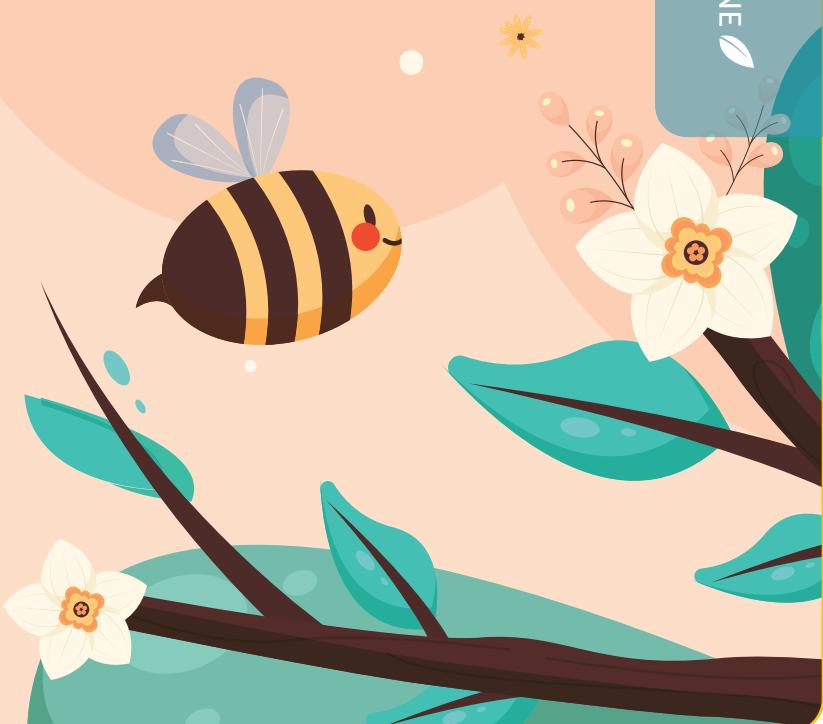
11 **avoiding relationship drama**

Relationships are far greater than any treasure a person could physically collect. However, relationships can also hurt us.

20 **campus updates**

These improvements will give our sanctuary and lobby a renewed, fresh feel while honoring the purpose for which they were designed.

the talk
(yes that one)
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LIVE OAK CHURCH MAGAZINE



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 CALENDAR

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:
Dawn Lott - 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
9:30 AM Worship Wednesday - Online

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

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Church Map



ADULT BIBLE STUDIES

small group | large group

Sunday 8:45 AM

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

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

Median Adult Class // **Micah** // 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

9:30 AM // **Live Oak Ladies** // **Daughters of Grace** // Chapel

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 // **Making Life Disciples Bible** // Conference Room

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

Friday

5:30 AM // **Men's Group** // **Acts** // 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** // **Tame Your Thoughts** // Sam LoBello - Room #202



JULY 21-25, 2026
3-6 GRADE

\$250



CONTACT
FAITH@LIVEOAK.CHURCH
FOR MORE INFORMATION
spots are limited



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.

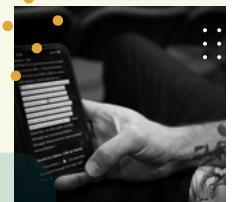


ROOTED IN CHRIST. GROWING TOGETHER.

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.



WWW.LIVEOAK.CHURCH/YOUNG-ADULTS



from the PASTOR'S DESK



It seems as if 2026 has started off with some amazing events, both nationally and internationally. From Venezuela to Iran, from Minneapolis to New York, we are seeing some interesting and historical headlines. These events are often concerning and confusing, requiring God's people to pray for peace, wisdom, and healing.

As we pray for the healing of those who are broken, struggling, and hurting, we need to look at our own personal and meaningful relationships and discern how healthy, hopeful, and happy they are. If we do not discern how we are doing, how can we be of help to others? If we don't take care of our home, how can we care for someone else?

In the Month of February, we will be studying the power of love, the importance of marriage, and how to maintain a family in difficult

and challenging times. Life is not easy, nor is maintaining healthy relationships and families. Therefore, in February, we will be teaching "how to keep your love strong and your family connected."

The hope is that the principles in this series will strengthen your relationships and bring hope and healing to your family.

So come join us in February for this series on how to "Strengthen Your Love and Family."

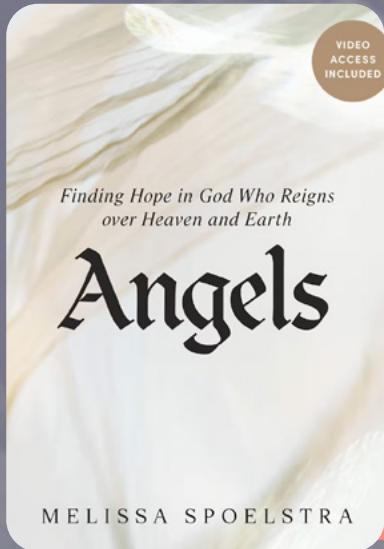
Hope to see you Sunday!



Dr. Mark Crosby
Senior Pastor

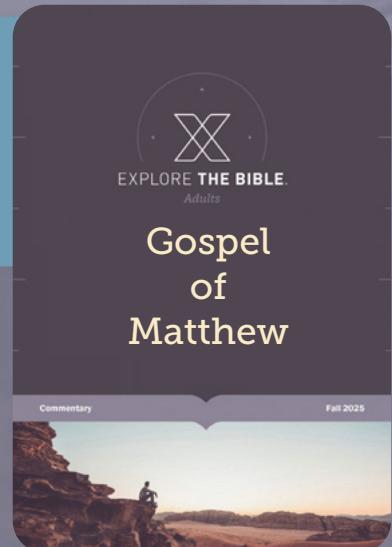
**STRENGTHEN
YOUR
LOVE
AND
FAMILY**

DEEPER LIFE



FOR MEN
Mondays at 6:30
in the 201

FOR WOMEN
Mondays at 6:30
in the Chapel



My Lover and My Friend

by David Orges, *Executive Pastor*



February often turns our attention toward love. Specifically romantic love. We see roses, dinner reservations, chocolates, and all the traditions that surround Valentine's Day. Scripture, however, offers a far richer and more enduring picture of love than anything a greeting card can provide. One of the most beautiful lines in the Bible appears in **Song of Solomon 5:16**, where the bride describes her husband with deeply meaningful words:

“This is my lover! Yes, this is my friend.”

In those two phrases, Scripture gives us a picture of marriage that is intentionally cultivated, spiritually grounded, emotionally secure, and relationally whole. Romance and friendship are not competing forces. In fact, they strengthen one another. When a husband and wife grow in both affection and companionship, they reflect something of God's faithful love toward His people.

Love That Goes Beyond the Moment

The Hebrew word *dôd* used in verse 16 is translated as “**lover**” or “**beloved**” and points to deep affection, desire, and delight. It is the language of ultimate romance. The spark. The connection. The thrill of being chosen, and cherished.

But sparks alone cannot sustain a marriage.

Attraction is an amazing gift from God, yet it is not the foundation of a covenant. Feelings can rise and fall and seasons in life change. What sustains a relationship across years and decades is not a moment of passion, or even a string of moments. It is the daily choice to love sacrificially, faithfully, and consistently.

Friendship That Strengthens the Foundation

The second phrase, “**this is my friend**,” is just as important as the first.

Romantic love may begin a marriage, but friendship is essential to keeping it healthy and stable.

The Bible teaches that friendship is defined by loyalty, trust, shared life, and deep understanding. A friend is the person you want to talk to at the end of the day. The one who celebrates your wins and listens to your burdens.

A marriage **without** friendship becomes transactional. A marriage **with** friendship becomes transformational.

As the years progress, the beauty of marriage is in companionship built through laughter, forgiveness, shared memories, honest conversations, and the strength of simply being together.

Loving Like Christ Loves Us

The love Solomon describes ultimately points us toward Christ, the One who calls His people both **beloved** (Romans 1:7) and **friends** (John 15:15).

Jesus loves His Bride with passion and commitment. He pursues us. Delights in us. Remains faithful when we are weak, and walks with us as a friend. He saves us as our Redeemer.

Marriages flourish when husbands and wives **both** model their love after the love Christ has for His Church. Intimacy grows deeper than anything the world can offer when we honor God by loving with His love.

A February Challenge

As you enter this “love month,” with its red roses and candy hearts, take some time to reflect on what truly builds a Christ-centered marriage.

Ask yourself:

- **Do I treat my spouse as my beloved, the one I cherish?**
- **Do I treat my spouse as my friend, the one I enjoy and invest in?**
- **Is our marriage growing in both warmth and companionship?**

If your answer to these questions is no, don't be discouraged. What matters is not where you find yourself right now, but instead what matters is the direction you choose to move from here.

This February, commit to growing your marriage in the two ways Scripture celebrates: with deep affection and faithful friendship.

May God strengthen every couple in our church to experience what Solomon articulated so beautifully; a relationship where romance and companionship flourish side by side.

This is my lover, my beloved, my companion. Yes, this is my friend. 



MORE THAN A MOMENT

by Krist Norsworthy, *Young Adults Pastor*

From January 1–3, over 20 of our Young Adults traveled together to Passion in Arlington, Texas. What we experienced over those few days was more than a conference or a trip; it was an encounter with God that continues to shape us even now.

We gathered with forty-five thousand other young adults to worship, sit under the teaching of God's Word, and respond honestly to what the Lord was doing in our hearts. There were moments of joy, conviction, healing, and reflection. We watched young people lean in with openness and humility, naming real struggles, real questions, and real faith. God met people in deeply personal ways, not through hype, but through truth.

What became clear very quickly is that Passion was never meant to be the finish line. It was a starting point. The conversations on the bus, the prayers in the room, and the reflections afterward revealed a growing hunger—not just for a powerful experience, but for a deeper, more faithful walk with Jesus and with one another.

That theme has continued to shape our Young Adults ministry. In January, our Sunday night sermon series was titled "*He Is Life*." The

heart behind that series is simple but foundational: we aren't chasing moments; we're chasing Jesus. Scripture reminds us that Jesus doesn't just *give* life—He *is* life. And when our faith is rooted in Him, it doesn't fade when emotions settle or routines return. It grows.

We're encouraged by what God is doing in our Young Adults and excited about what's ahead in 2026. Passion reminded us that community matters, that honesty leads to healing, and that following Jesus is a lifelong pursuit, not a single emotional high. Our prayer is that what God began in those days continues to bear fruit in everyday faithfulness.

If you have a heart for young adults (or are looking for a place to serve) and would like to support and invest in this ministry, we would love to have you serve alongside us. Whether through hospitality, mentoring, or behind-the-scenes support, your involvement can make a real difference.

We're grateful for every student who took part in Passion and even more grateful for what God is continuing to do as we seek Jesus together, the One who is Life. 

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ABIDE

by Seth Doiga, Worship Minister

This month, our theme is all about love. How well we love our spouses, our kids, and our friends is directly impacted by the overflow, or lack thereof, from our relationship with Jesus. In John 15, Jesus challenges us to "Abide" in His love. In verses 9-10 Jesus says these famous words, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Jesus commands us to love Him and to keep His commands. When we strive to love Jesus in our own strength, we will ultimately miss the mark. The way we love Jesus well is to surrender to the direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives and allow Him to work through us. Being Spirit-led is key to loving and serving Jesus well. Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit as our Helper, so our job is to be faithful to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our life.

Like any relationship in our life, our walk with Jesus takes effort and sacrifice. In the month of February in the life of our church we are challenged and reminded to love our spouse and our families better. As Dr. Mark often says about this sermon series, "you either love it or you hate it." The effort we put into our walk with the Lord, our

relationship with our spouses, our relationship with our children, and all other relationships in our lives is an act of worship to the Lord. Paul challenges us in Romans 12 that our whole lives are to be lived sacrificially as an act of worship to Jesus. Putting this challenge from Paul into practice in the relationships in our lives will leave us tired and weary if we rely on our own strength to sacrificially love Jesus and those most dear in our lives.

We weren't ever called to carry that responsibility on our own. Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to help us abide in His love and to keep His commands. Deciding to be faithful to the call of Jesus to sacrificially love Him and those around us is not a decision we can successfully make in our own strength. Jesus wants us to love Him and keep His commands - not because He wants to control our every move; rather, He knows our desperate need for His presence and His blood to be applied to our lives. He loves us faithfully, especially when we don't reciprocate that back to Him. He sent us a helper to pursue His presence. Prayerfully our hearts desire in 2026 is to rely on the Holy Spirit to help us look more and love more like Jesus in our lives. 

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"Taste and see the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him."
Psalm 34:8

Thursdays at 7 PM

Struggling with addiction? **We are here for you.**
We meet in Room #201. **Come join us!**

REFUGE





Love Thy Neighbor

by Madison Cody, *Children's Minister*

One thing I see over and over again is this: kids want to love well... they just need help knowing how. "Love thy neighbor" sounds simple, but for kids, sometimes neighbors look like classmates who hurt their feelings, siblings who take their stuff, teammates who don't pass the ball, and friends who are different from them.

Here's the good news: loving others isn't something we expect kids to figure out alone. It's something we practice together: at home, in the car, at the dinner table, and yes... even in the hard moments.

Kids learn compassion when we slow them down enough to see others. Start by helping your child notice people. Ask questions like, "Who looked left out today?" or "Who might need encouragement?"

Next, teach them that love is more than feelings; it's action. Loving your neighbor can look like sharing, including someone new, telling the truth, standing up for a friend, or choosing kindness when it would be easier to be mean.

And don't miss this part: let your kids see you love your neighbors. The way you speak about others, respond to frustration, show grace, and serve quietly speaks louder than any lesson.

Remind your child (and yourself) that we don't love others to be nice kids. We love because Jesus first loved us. When kids understand that kind of love, it starts to change how they treat the world around them.

Small moments and everyday choices lead to make a big impact. 

JOURNEYING Through GRIEF

AT LIVE OAK CHURCH

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

2nd & 4th Tuesday of the Month
6:30 pm in the Chapel

For More Information Contact:

Pastor Stephen | Stephen@liveoak.church

The Talk

(Yes, That One)

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

I was sitting in a staff meeting last week when the question was asked if it would be helpful for topics to be assigned to us for the newsletter. I was immediately on board. I will write about anything. I just do not want to have to come up with the topic myself. That enthusiasm lasted right up until I saw what had been assigned to me. I genuinely thought I was being punked. I was not. And now here we are.

I will be honest. I am uncomfortable writing this, and there is a good chance a small part of you was uncomfortable the moment you saw the title and considered skipping this article altogether. Can we all just agree that this is one of the most awkward parts of parenting. Hands down, the conversation no parent ever feels ready for is “the talk.” Yes, that talk. Here is the deal, parents. We can avoid these conversations, but if we do not have them, the world will. And the world does not care about your child’s heart the way you do.

When Lauren was little, I assumed “the talk” would be a one and done, big moment conversation, something I would not need to worry about until she was a teenager. What I have learned, though, is that this is not a single conversation at all. It is an ongoing dialogue, one that grows and changes as our children do. The goal in having these conversations is not perfection, but strengthening your relationship with your child. These conversations should be age appropriate and honest. I would also caution parents not to overshare, especially with younger children. The analogy I often use with kids about a tube of toothpaste applies here as well. Once the information is out there, you cannot put it back in, so be intentional with what you share. Above all, make sure your conversation is rooted in faith rather than fear. You do not need all the answers. In fact, some of the best conversations I have ever had with kids are when they ask a question and I have to respond with, “That is a great question. I will have to get back to you.”

Below are some helpful tips to help you have “the talk” without panicking, oversharing, or pretending it is not happening.

Ages 3–5

- At this age, the foundation of these conversations is safety, trust, and truth.
- Children need to understand that God created their bodies, that their bodies are good, and that their bodies belong to them.
- Psalm 139:14 reminds us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, which means our bodies are not accidental or embarrassing.
- Parents can reinforce this by using correct names for body parts and explaining the difference between private and public parts of the body.
- Conversations should include teaching children what safe and unsafe touch looks like.
- The tone of these conversations should be calm and matter of fact, without shaming or overreacting.
- When parents respond with confidence and composure, children learn that their questions are welcome.
- The goal at this age is to build trust and keep the door open for future conversations.

Ages 6–8

- Children in this age range often begin asking more direct questions, including how babies are made.
- What children need most are simple, factual answers that are honest but not detailed.



- Proverbs 2:6 reminds us that the Lord gives wisdom, and wisdom includes knowing how much information to share and when.
- Parents can offer reassurance by keeping explanations brief and age appropriate.
- A child's curiosity should guide how much information is shared.
- Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that there is a time for everything, and it is appropriate for parents to say, "We will talk more about that when you are older."
- These conversations help children understand that parents are a safe source of truth without overwhelming them.

Ages 9–11

- As children approach this stage, they become more aware of their bodies, emotions, and the influence of peers.
- Puberty is approaching, and children may feel unsure or confused about the changes they are experiencing.
- This is a natural time to introduce conversations about physical development and emotional shifts.
- Parents can begin discussing God's purpose for our bodies.
- First Corinthians 6:20 reminds us that we are called to honor God with our bodies, even as they change.
- Romans 12:2 encourages us not to conform to the pattern of this world, reinforcing the importance of parents being the trusted voice.
- The goal during this stage is to normalize what is happening and guide children before peers, media, or the internet shape their understanding.



Ages 12–14

- The preteen years require conversations rooted in both truth and grace.
- If these discussions have not yet begun, it is not too late to start.
- Silence often communicates discomfort, and children may assume certain topics are off limits.
- Parents should speak clearly about God's design for sex and the importance of boundaries and self respect.
- Conversations should address the influence of media, the internet, and peer pressure.

- First Thessalonians 4:3 reminds us that God's will is for us to live holy lives.
- Romans 8:1 reassures us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- Children need to hear that having questions or feelings does not make them sinful, and that wisdom matters in how they respond.

Ages 15 and Up

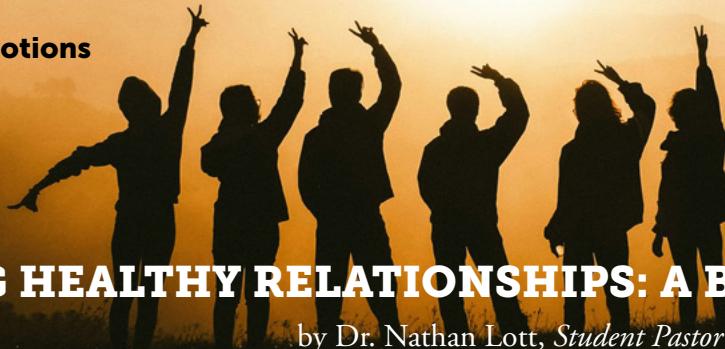
- As children grow into their teenage years, the approach shifts from teaching to dialogue.
- Teenagers benefit more from conversations that invite listening rather than lectures that shut them down.
- James 1:19 reminds us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.
- Parents can focus on reinforcing their child's identity in Christ and encouraging wisdom and discernment.
- Conversations about consequences should be honest without being fear based.
- First Timothy 4:12 reminds young people that their age does not limit their ability to live faithfully.
- Keeping conversations ongoing communicates safety, trust, and support as teenagers navigate real life.



These conversations will feel awkward. Parents will stumble over words, think of better responses later, and occasionally wish they could rewind and try again. That does not mean you are doing it wrong. God has always worked through imperfect people who were simply willing to obey. Scripture reminds us that His power is made perfect in our weakness, not our polish. Grace covers clumsy conversations, and God is faithful to use even our imperfect efforts for good.

What matters most is not saying everything perfectly, but showing up consistently. Being present, willing, and engaged speaks louder than flawless wording ever could. God is faithful to guide parents who seek Him, and you are not walking through this alone. He loves your children more than you do, and He is at work even in the conversations that feel messy, uncomfortable, or unfinished.

I am happy to report that I survived writing this article. If nothing else, let this encourage you that awkward conversations can be faced, one uncomfortable sentence at a time. I wrote about one of the most uncomfortable parenting topics out there, and the Lord was faithful the whole way. If He can get me through writing this, He can certainly get you through the conversation. 



FORMING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Dr. Nathan Lott, *Student Pastor*

Healthy relationships do not happen by accident. Scripture teaches that relationships are formed, shaped, and sustained by wisdom, character, and love rooted in God Himself. From friendships and family relationships to dating, marriage, and life within the church, the Bible provides clear guidance for cultivating relationships that honor Christ and bless others.

Biblical relationships begin with our personal relationship with Jesus. The foundation of every healthy relationship is first a healthy relationship with the Lord. Jesus summarized all of life with two commands: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30–31). When our identity, security, and worth are grounded in Christ, we are freed from using others to meet needs only God can fulfill. Instead, we are able to love selflessly, patiently, and faithfully.

This understanding was shared by the earliest Christians as well. The **Didache**, one of the oldest Christian writings outside the New Testament, begins by describing two paths in life: the way of life and the way of death. The way of life is defined primarily by love for God and love for others, showing that from the very beginning, believers understood healthy relationships as a direct outgrowth of devotion to God.

In all relationships, one's character matters more than

chemistry. Scripture consistently emphasizes character over charisma. Proverbs teaches that “as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). Healthy relationships are marked by honesty, humility, faithfulness, and integrity. Whether choosing friends, dating, or building partnerships in ministry, believers should ask not only, “Do I enjoy this person?” but also, “Does this relationship help me grow in wisdom and godliness?”

The early church echoed this conviction. In his letter to the Corinthian church, **Clement of Rome** warned that pride, jealousy, and self-interest were often the root causes of broken relationships and division. He urged believers to pursue humility and mutual submission, reminding them that a strong Christian community is built not on personality or position, but on Christlike character.

The Bible’s definition of love goes far beyond feelings. First Corinthians 13 describes love as patient, kind, not self-seeking, not easily angered, and rejoicing in truth. Healthy relationships are sustained not by constant agreement or emotional intensity, but by commitment, forgiveness, and grace. This applies equally to marriages, friendships, parent-child relationships, and relationships within the church.

Healthy relationships require healthy boundaries. Jesus Himself modeled appropriate boundaries,

often withdrawing to pray and refusing to be controlled by the expectations of others. Scripture teaches us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), to avoid unhealthy influences (1 Corinthians 15:33), and to guard our hearts with wisdom (Proverbs 4:23). Boundaries are not unloving; they protect what is valuable and allow relationships to flourish in a God-honoring way.

God did not design us to live or grow in isolation. From the earliest pages of Scripture, we see that it is not good for people to be alone. The church is described as a body, where each member is connected, valued, and necessary (1 Corinthians 12). Healthy relationships within the church are marked by encouragement, accountability, service, and mutual care. When believers commit to loving one another well, the church becomes a powerful witness to the world.

Forming healthy relationships is a lifelong process. It requires humility, repentance, forgiveness, and continual dependence on God’s grace. As we grow in Christ, we learn to relate to others not out of fear, pride, or selfish ambition, but out of love that reflects the heart of Jesus.

May we be a church that models healthy, Christ-centered relationships for every generation, pointing one another toward faith, maturity, and joy in the Lord. 



SENIOR ADULTS

By Landra Reed



"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

1 Corinthians 13:7

The word "love" is so powerful. It makes you feel as if you're never alone, that you can endure all things, and that you can always find hope if you have love. Love gives you a feeling of joy and happiness. And the three little words I love you can mend a heavy heart. Sometimes we don't tell each other enough that we love one another. So don't forget to tell the ones you love that you love them. Love is contagious and fills us with light. I, for

one, love my church family, and I want you to know it. Because maybe somebody needs to hear that they are loved.

On Friday, February 13th, at 11:00 in the FLC, we will have a Valentine's Day dance and lunch. The cost is \$10 to cover the meal. We will have live Cajun music and a professional photographer to take your pictures, so dress your best. Make sure to sign up at the information desk. The cutoff date is February 8th.

On March 26th, we will be heading to Avery Island and the Jungle Garden. More details to follow. 🌺

LIVE OAK CHURCH

QUILTING MINISTRY

WEDNESDAYS AT 8 AM IN THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER
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THE "OTHER SECTION" OF YOUR OFFERING ENVELOPE.



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.

"God can't give us peace and happiness apart from Himself because there is no such thing."

C.S Lewis

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Avoiding Relationship Drama



by Brayden Lott, *Children's Minister*

Relationships are far greater than any treasure a person could physically collect. However, relationships can also hurt us very deeply. This short article aims to help manage relationships with a Biblical worldview in order to avoid drama and heartache that may arise from toxic friends.

Managing Relationships

Let's begin managing relationships the same way coaches pick who they want to be on their team. Do these coaches go around the school and look in classrooms and say, "Hey, that student looks like he has a lot of friends, let's get him on the basketball team?" No! Any athlete will tell you there is usually an intense tryout period to make sure you are able to do what the coach wants you to do.

Relationships are not as easy as getting a bunch of potential friends together and picking who is best. However, avoiding drama often starts by picking good friends.¹ The Bible says, "The righteous choose their friends carefully" (Proverbs 12:26, NIV). Even after you pick your friends carefully you may end up experiencing difficulties in your relationship. Through the Bible we learn that we should respond in two simple ways: Empathy and Confrontation.²

Empathy

Empathy means being able to understand someone else's feelings, or putting yourself in their shoes. As Christians, we must be able to look at a person that is hurting us and understand that Jesus was the only perfect person. People make mistakes and we should understand that they could have just messed up. Now if a person is continuously mean, then it is time to move to step two.

Confrontation

You should always greet meanness with kindness as the Bible says, "Turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38-42; Romans 12:18). This

would be a great time to tell your non-Christian friend about how Jesus helps us even though we all mess up sometimes. For your Christian friend, you should try to help them see their sin in order for them to grow in a better relationship with Christ.

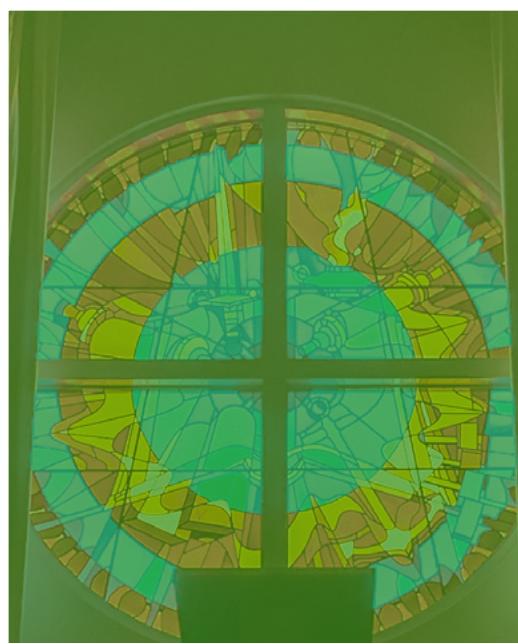
Relationships Take Two

To close, it is important to remember that relationships often take the energy of two people. Meaning, you may be the problem as well. In that case seek forgiveness from your friend and forgiveness from God in any way you may have sinned against Him.³ Ultimately, God is perfect, and if we trust in His word and live life by it, our friendships will lead to joyful lives of uplifting the kingdom of God together. It all begins with picking the right friends and treating them the same way Jesus treated people.

Personal Growth

Over the next month look at your relationships and ask, "Do they help me become more like Jesus? Or am I helping them become more like Jesus?"

1. "Kind of Friends," GQKidz, <https://www.gqkidz.org/kind-of-friends.html>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.
2. "Dealing with Mean People—What Does the Bible Say?" GotQuestions.org, GotQuestions Ministries, <https://www.gotquestions.org/dealing-mean-people.html>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.
3. To understand more about toxic relationships visit: "What Does the Bible Say About Dealing with Toxic / Abusive Relationships?" 412teens, 412teens.org/qna/what-does-the-Bible-say-about-dealing-with-toxic-relationships.php. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.



WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND CAMPUS?

by Trish Graves, *Business Administrator*

This year, we are excited to share plans for a significant update to our sanctuary and lobby areas; spaces that serve as the heart of our church and a welcoming place for connection, fellowship, and worship.

Beginning in January, the project will take place in carefully planned phases, with the goal of minimizing disruption to worship and ministry. The project will begin by replacing our current lighting with brighter, more efficient LED fixtures to help reduce long-term energy costs. Once the lighting upgrade is complete, we will begin painting the sanctuary, lobby, and overflow areas. During this phase, the existing sound panels in the sanctuary will be removed, giving us the opportunity to have them recovered before re-installation. The final phase of the project will include new carpet in the sanctuary and lobby overflow areas, as well as upgraded seating to better serve our congregation.

These improvements will give our sanctuary and lobby a renewed, fresh feel while honoring the purpose for which they were designed.

Your generosity and faithful giving help to support these improvements and help us be good stewards of the facility we have been entrusted with. Thank you for your continued faithfulness and support. We look forward to completing this renovation and pray that it will serve our church family and future generations for many years to come. 

Counselor's Corner: Meet Summer Babin

Summer is a PLPC in our LOC Counseling Center, where she is committed to serving individuals and families with compassion, clinical excellence, and a Christ-centered approach to care. She holds an undergraduate degree in Health Sciences with a concentration in Epidemiology and earned her Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Liberty University. Summer is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Religious Studies of Counseling at Trinity Theological Seminary, where her studies focus on integrating faith and professional counseling practice.

Prior to entering the counseling profession, Summer spent 15 years in the nonprofit sector, focusing on strengthening community resources for children and adults with special needs. Within her work, she advocated for individuals with mental health challenges, supporting families as they navigated complex systems of care. Her desire to help others grew out of a lifetime of personal experience on "the other side" of mental health services, navigating the system as a family member. This background fuels her passion to be a clinician who not only treats but truly understands.

Summer counsels children, adults, and couples, with a particular focus on working with couples and supporting parents of children with substance abuse and special needs. She seeks to provide a supportive, grace-filled environment where clients feel understood, respected, and encouraged.



Summer and her husband Chuck have been married for many years, and together they have five children and call Denham Springs home. In the midst of busy family life, she and her husband enjoy watching scary movies, spending time at their camp, eating at Lee's Asian Fusion, and planning future getaways. 🍃

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