



Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF OXFORD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Sapada Thomas, Pastor

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Oxford First . . . Who?

by Rev. Sapada Thomas



"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 3: 13-14 NIV

We all have DNA. A person's DNA is the set of non-genetic traits, qualities, or features that characterize a person. These traits, qualities and features help define who we are and what we do in life. A person's DNA helps them live with a certain character, integrity, beliefs and values.

Just as individuals have DNA, a church/ congregation has DNA also. It identifies the

church as to who they are and what they value in ministry. So many people may wonder, who is Oxford First U.M.C.? What are their beliefs, values and vision? What are they called to do? It is so important for our church members and members of our community to know who we are and our core values. If members do not know the DNA of their church, they began to just come to worship; sing a few songs, say a few prayers,

and half-way listen to a sermon that they never apply to their lives. However, when members know a church's DNA they are able to be engaged fully in the ministry of the church and not just a Sunday feel good session. So let's talk about who Oxford First is exactly and what God expects out of us.

The vision of Oxford First U.M.C. is ***“Regenerating Passion, Reaching People, and Renewing Purpose”***. It is our desire to **“Regenerate”** the passion individuals have for Christ, to **“Reach”** out to our brothers and sisters in the community, and help **“Renew”** individuals purpose for living. We fulfill our vision by actively participating in our Core Values. Our Core Values are:

1. **Authentic Worship** - worshipping God with our hearts, minds, and souls in a real way
2. **Community/Outreach** - reaching out to help meet the needs of members of our community
3. **Generosity** - giving our time, talents, and tithes to ensure God's ministry continues

4. **Personal Spiritual Practices** - taking time in our personal lives to pray, read the Scriptures, and meditate to help strengthen our souls for ministry.

These are the four values that we want our members to focus on to help them grow and mature in Jesus Christ. In PHILIPPIANS 3: 13-14, Paul encouraged the Philippian church members to forget those things behind them and press forward to those things that would help them mature in Christ Jesus.

So I invite all of our church members to live out who we are as a church. Whether its worshipping God in a genuine way, helping put a food box into someone's care, giving your time to teach a small group of youth, or taking time out to pray to God daily; we all have a responsibility to God, our church, and ourselves to live out who God has called us and our church to be; a church that is ***“Regenerating Passion, Reaching People, and Renewing Purpose”***.

The Children Shall Lead

“Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

MATTHEW 19:14

The time is coming when our children will have to step up and be the leaders. Our time is limited. That's why it is important to teach the children and prepare them for when their time comes. As the scripture states, the future belongs to them.

This is what the Oxford First UMC's

Outreach Ministry, led by Minister Gracie Spearman along with Youth Minister Tressie Johnson, had in mind on Saturday, March 27, when they called on the youth of the church, to spearhead the Food Give-A-Way on that date. The following is a pictorial review of that event.



Thank You

Greetings Oxford First UMC FAMILY! On behalf of the Mission Out-Reach and Pastor Sapada Tomas, thank you so much for coming out to help where ever you could to serve our community by distributing 200 food boxes to put a little extra food on the table for Easter dinner for many on Good Friday. Thank you for serving and working together with smiles, laughter and a willingness to bring Glory to God! God will not forget!



The Resurrection

Luke 24: 1-7

1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

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3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:

7 *The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.*"