



Dear Church Family,

At the time of this writing, I have been honored to serve as your pastor for **78 days**—78 days filled with joy, gratitude, and deep thankfulness. Once again, thank you for calling me to serve as your Senior Pastor and lead undershepherd. It has truly been a blessing.

As we begin a new year and I continue settling into this role, there are several upcoming changes and initiatives I'd like to share with you:

Text Messages – In the coming weeks, you will begin receiving a brief weekly text message on **Saturdays at 4:00 p.m.** as a reminder of what to expect at Towering Oaks on Sunday.

Connection Cards – We will soon transition our guest follow-up process from a QR code to a simple, physical connection card, making it easier for guests to share their information.

Staffing – We are actively seeking God's direction regarding individuals who will serve on our staff to lead our **musical worship ministry** and **youth ministry**. Please pray for our Personnel Committee and staff leadership as we discern God's will for these important roles.

Vision Team – In the coming weeks, I will announce the members of our **Vision Team**. This group of men and women will help prayerfully think through our mission, core values, strengths, and areas where we can grow as a church.

The Hope Initiative – Beginning **January 5**, our staff, deacons, and prayer team will participate in a 30-day emphasis called **The Hope Initiative**, drawn from *Pray & Go* by Thom S. Rainer. This initiative will focus on intentional prayer and gospel engagement. Each day, participants in this initial group will read a short chapter (typically 2–4 pages) that concludes with a practical action step—such as praying for a specific person, writing a letter to a community leader, or inviting a neighbor to church.

I am deeply encouraged about the future of Towering Oaks Baptist Church. Across our nation and around the world, there is a renewed hunger for spiritual truth. The YouVersion Bible app has surpassed one billion downloads. Physical Bible sales have increased by 41.6% since 2022. Downloads of spiritual apps are up 79% since 2019, and Christian music streaming has risen by 50% over the same period (Source: *The Heartlander*). People are searching for the Lord—let's be faithful and fervent as we point them to Jesus.

All for Jesus,

Dr. Jeremy P. Roberts
PASTOR

Words from Shelley



My story ... part of it, anyway

Happiest memories of childhood are the days my dog and I roamed the beautiful Minnesota forest. In season and out, we traipsed for hours among the majestic white pines and amazing birch bark trees. Spring was an adventure as we looked for trilliums (flowers) and watched for monarchs among the milkweed. Summers brought the greenest of green grass, towering (to a kid anyway) cornstalks and square bales of hay. The cool breezes blowing through the brilliant colors of autumn took my breath away when I stood still and watched God rain leaves. As you might know, the peaceful winter snows were my favorite. Even as my toes froze in my boots with no lining, the wonder of winter took me captive.

Even though God was not a part of family conversations, all of nature called out to the existence of something, someone, much greater than I. God reached out to me through Pastor Jack and his wife—they showed me Jesus. I attended Vacation Bible School a few times where my sister and I heard “behold I stand at the door and knock.” We sang songs and made crafts and those people showed us Jesus.

We moved to Louisiana when I was 11. Several years later, a new friend at school began inviting me to church. I resisted. She persisted. I relented. Much to my surprise, these people who spoke with a strange accent had the same “thing” my Minnesota memories owned. They showed me Jesus. I gave my whole heart to Jesus and felt the relief of forgiven sin. He has kept every promise and has never left me. Not long after my personal relationship with Jesus began, Tommy began pastoring a small church nearby and he baptized my sister and me.

Of course, there is a lot more to my story. God’s faithfulness and work in me continues.

What’s the take-away, you ask?

God is real.

God is always working.

God is faithful.

God wants a relationship with you.

God has a plan for you to glorify Him by telling others about Him.

God used my experiences as a child to shape me and direct my path into working with children. He will do the same for you.

There’s much to be done in 2026. I’d love to hear your story. Come talk with me if you don’t have a story. Let’s all be that persistent friend who reaches out and says to others “Come and see.”

Get your sharpie marker out and write this down in all caps:

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JULY 20-24 9:00-12:30
Without a doubt—your presence is needed.

Let’s begin to pray for God’s direction, leadership, and blessings on this very special week in the lives of boys and girls.

We are so very blessed at Towering Oaks with people leading babies – 6th grade each Sunday and Wednesday. Bring your children. We will show them Jesus.

I love serving alongside you,
Shelley

*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you
will be faithful to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 1:6

Words from Greg

A brief "What if?" for 2026 -

2026 will bring much focus on the celebration of freedom. This year is the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. As believers, we recognize the significance of genuine freedom - and from whence that freedom comes.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36

As a matter of fact, the scriptures are replete with the theme of liberty & freedom from the shackles of sin.

2026 will also likely bring more evidence of the forthcoming rapture & Jesus' impending return. (Please take a few moments to read and ponder the words of 2-Timothy 3... Does it seem like this text describes our current world?) What if 2026 is the year we are summoned to the Lord's glorious abode? What if 2026 presents the last opportunity to share Jesus with friends, family, and neighbors? What if our every word & deed reflected this all too real possibility? Let us resolve, together, that 2026 will see us faithfully sharing the genuine Freedom that is offered only by and through Jesus Christ.

Such is my prayer.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" Isaiah 61:1

In His Grip,

Brother Greg

Words from Amy

Dear T.O.B.C. Family,

I hope that you all enjoyed a wonderful celebration of our Savior's birth. I want to thank you for your generosity and support of the Sowers' Scholarship; currently, we have already raised \$625! Our students, grades 2-8, were taught the Go & Tell program the week of December 15th, so I ask that you join me in prayer that the Holy Spirit will continue to work through these students to share the Good News with those He puts in their paths.

In His Service,
Amy Pfaff-Biebel



The Sowers' Scholarship
For Postsecondary Education

Recognize academic excellence, spiritual growth,
and develop future faith-driven leaders

Up to \$2,500 per student

Fundraising Goal
\$5,000

How to Give:
In Person: Designate for The Sowers' Scholarship
Online Giving: Sowers' Scholarship

Matthew 13:23 "The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

Hello TOBC family and friends! Greetings from the Underground!

December is obviously a special month each year on the Christian calendar: it is the month we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. December is the month we remind ourselves and the rest of the world of the most precious gift ever given to mankind. But there is a problem. And this problem is unavoidable. For many of us, myself included, we look around at the world we currently live in and wonder at times if this world is really worth saving. A daily dose of the news and we see the death and destruction in Gaza, Ukraine, or “somewhere else”. Right now crime is so bad in some cities that National Guard troops and extra law enforcement is needed to protect the citizens. Inflation has skyrocketed and the price of a house is absurd. Churches are struggling to stay open while self storage units, gyms, and car wash businesses grow. December can be depressing if you aren’t looking in the right direction: towards Heaven. And that got me thinking.....I need to remind the youth that “It’s a Wonderful Life”.

Yes, that’s right, it is and we all have George Bailey to prove it! Of course I am referring to the 1946 classic movie “It’s a Wonderful Life”, considered by many to be one of the quintessential movies of the classic era. Now don’t worry, Jesus was still at the forefront of our lessons, as He should always be, but sometimes it helps to see things through a different lens. Here is an overview of the movie: a man who is contemplating ending his life because he sees no value in it or in the world he lives in calls upon God to help him. He is then forced to see what the world would be like if he never existed and he realizes that his life isn’t cursed or worthless; it is blessed. George will exclaim at the end of the movie one of the best lines ever delivered, “*Please, God, let me live again. I wanna live again*”.

Here are three themes from this movie I would like to share with all of you. I hope you and your families are doing well, I know it is a tough world out there. But if you ever feel yourself figuratively “standing on that bridge” like George Bailey and doubt the good work you all do for the church and your families then reflect on this:

1. The Inherent Value of Life: the most important thing about our existence is the fact we were created male and female in the image and likeness of God. And as Genesis 2:7 tells us God “*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*” It is the earthly life that leads to the Heavenly life; life is precious and no one’s life is worthless! Ephesians 2:10 states, “*For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” George Bailey deceived himself into thinking he was worth more dead than he was alive. The value of George’s life was not found in his bank account, it was found in the good works he had done.

2. Value based on Faith: unfortunately, in the movie George could only see the value of his life through the eyes of the world. He forgot to see the value of his life through Faith. One of the most difficult obstacles to overcome in this life, whether you are in the youth group or a grandparent, is seeing the value of your life in this world and your role in it through God’s eyes. Here is a verse that reflects this- Psalms 139:13-14 “*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*” Remember that YOU are WONDERFULLY made! God created YOU in the womb! This alone should get our chins held high and our attitudes put in place. George thought he was a failure because he lost a few thousand dollars. It took a near death experience to remind him that his life was priceless. Your life is priceless, too. You are the most valuable item that you will ever own, no return policy needed!

3. The Power of Community and Redemption: Here is something I think we all make a mistake on: thinking we are alone and no one can help or will help. There isn’t a Christian in church today that got there on their own; someone helped them get to the altar. None of us go through life without the help of others, yet we try to convince ourselves at times that “no one understands”. The movie ends with a moving scene where the whole town comes to the rescue of George Bailey and they donate money, up to ten times the amount he lost, to help their friend and neighbor. Reflect on these verses when you either feel alone in your problems or you hesitate to help a brother or sister in Christ with their problems.

Galatians 6:2-3 “*Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.*”

John 13:34-35 “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*”

Job 42:10-12 “*After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring. The LORD blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part.*”

Yes indeed, from Job to George Bailey to you, “it’s a wonderful life”. Thank you Lord!

Todd Carpenter





**January 1st and 2nd
Church Offices
Closed**


Thank you for helping share the gospel by participating in Operation Christmas Child—Christmas Shoeboxes. Over 1,200 boxes were sent to Ghana, Honduras, Panama, Ukraine, Malawi, Benin, Guyana, and Burundi.



Join Us!
Pacesetters
January Gathering

- **Monday, January 19 @ 9:00 AM**
- **Breakfast @ Harvest Restaurant
3124 W Andrew Johnson Hwy**
- **Meet there**
- **Sign up in Bible Study Groups/
in the Family Porch Area/ in the
Foyer**





Towering Oaks Women's Ministry Presents:

A night of
**PRAYER &
FELLOWSHIP**

an evening of heartfelt prayer and uplifting music

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 6TH
6 PM IN THE CHAPEL**

Covered in Prayer

Bring a shirt of your choosing you are
fine to get paint on!

We will provide the paint.

After we apply paint to our hands, we
will then all take turns praying for
one another.

Staff and Support Staff

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