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June/July 2025

Dear church family,

The last week in May was—Children’s Camp at the Oaks

The first week of June was—Youth Fuge at North Greenville University (Greeneville SC)

The second week of June is —Day Camp at TOBC for 1-3 grades.

Then there is Father’s Day, July 4, . . .

THEN

The most exciting week of the year at TOBC. . .

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!!!!

Summer is a busy time around Towering Oaks.

Throughout June and July, we will continue our regular services—even while you take time for R&R away from home. We will continue our Sunday pm services that are intentionally reminiscent of the worship style of yesteryear, singing out of the hymnal, and straight—talk Bible preaching.

Then June 22 we will hold a reception in place of our evening service for Mark Ellison for 9 years of ministry at Towering Oaks. Mark has accepted the ministry position of Spiritual Life Director at Unity Christian School in Rome, Georgia. Please join us as we show our appreciation to Mark and Jamie and team Ellison (the kids). They have worked diligently behind the scenes these last 9 years and will be sorely missed.

No doubt, the best outreach we have at Towering Oaks is our annual Vacation Bible School. I am sure you have already noticed the MAGNIFIED promotion around. July 21-25 will be busy bees all around our campus. Three county school buses will arrive daily carrying the Greene County ESP program kids to hear the gospel and enjoy Bible learning. WE NEED YOUR HELP! All hands on deck as we have our most visible outreach to the County. Please be an active part---there is something everyone can do. Make Shelley’s day and contact her.

As the Pastor Search Team nears presenting the man they believe God has for Sr. Pastor at Towering Oaks, please intensify your prayers for the family and for our dear Church to be ready to move forward in the next chapter of what God is doing.

Thank you for your faithfulness in allowing God to use you with the investment of your time, finances, and most of all your prayers. It takes all of these to support the continued ministry of Towering Oaks. Pray about how God would have you give in each of these areas. We appreciate your participation and input as we continue on our mission to “know Him, and make Him known.” You are very much appreciated and loved.

I am sincerely His and yours,

I spent hours outside.

Every season.

Watching squirrels collect seeds and leaves in the fall.

Breathing the crisp winter air.

Stomping thin ice that would soon become a puddle as spring made an entrance and grass peeked out from under the fading white blanket.

Exploring the woods, making mudpies, and watching summer storms in awe of their power.

And I knew this didn't come to be by accident.

We sang songs.

We played games.

We sat in the shade under a tree and ate cookies and drank red Kool-Aid.

We colored in a church basement that smelled of paste and old books.

They told me about a man called Jesus.

They said He is God's only son.

They described Him as strong, patient, kind.

They told me about the wonderful things He did for people. He did what only God's son could do.

And then ...

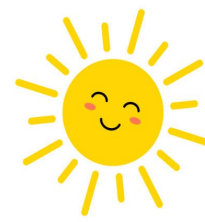
They said ...

JESUS wants me to be with HIM.

Wait.

What?

The only Son of the Creator of the world WANTS ME?



This was the foundation my faith was built upon. A few Vacation Bible School's sprinkled here and there. Some visits in the home of Pastor Jack and his wife Lorraine on Thursday mornings during the school year. And long walks in the great Minnesota outdoors, looking up at the sky through tall white pines and knowing, absolutely knowing, Someone out there is mighty big.

I was fifteen when God called my name and I answered.

I'm so thankful for the people who had bills to pay, sick to care for, closets to clean and gardens to tend yet they stopped long enough to wrap two cookies in a napkin, sing *Hear Christ calling Come after Me...* and teach me

*Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go and prepare a place for you and if I go I will return and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also. (John 14)*

This is my story. I'd love to hear yours. And if you don't have one, I'd love to introduce you to Jesus, God's only Son. HE wants YOU to be with HIM!

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

I love serving alongside you,

Shelley

# News From Mark

Wow can this really be it? This is my final entry into our monthly newsletter. Somewhere there is a log of the top 10 typos that never made it to print but, alas, that dreaded autocorrect has them buried away where they will not see the light of day nor the ink in print.

I'm not sure where to begin as I write my final entry as the past nine years are too full of the goodness of God to really narrow down a favorite moment or two or even a "top 10 list". I am honored to have served alongside Bro. Tommy, the staff, with the people of Towering Oaks, and to the people of Greeneville/Greene County.

I look back on the past 9 years and smile, laugh, and tear up all in the same moment. At the risk of sounding overly sentimental, I feel like Paul writing the Philippians 1:

*<sup>3</sup> I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.*

My family and I are grateful for the memories and friendships and will cherish each. Thank you for the memories. Thank you for your faithfulness to the gospel. Thank you for the mindset to look forward to what God has in store in the coming days. I look forward to hearing how God continues to work in and through Towering Oaks. I love you all.

It has been an honor to serve.

With love and prayers,

Bro. Mark and the Ellison Crew

## Ellison Reception

Sunday, June 22

Drop By: 5:00-7:00 PM

In the Chapel

And express your love and appreciation for Mark and his family before they leave for his new position in Georgia



## **“Well done, good and faithful servant...”**

**Depending on the source of the research, the average time a pastor stays with a church is 3.5 to 5 years. At 50-years of ministry, and 35-years of pastoring Towering Oaks, Pastor Tommy will have an enduring legacy.**

**Through trials & triumphs, both ministry and personal, Pastor Tommy has maintained a stalwart life of service to this congregation & our Lord.**

**We’ve seen him shed his shoes to present the gospel in his socks (sometimes quite flamboyant), and he does so with the humble heart of a servant - delivering a message from God’s Word. Whether the message comes from a burning bush (Exodus 3), or read from today’s Bible, it is an awe-inspiring & reverence demanding message from our Lord. It is with such fervor that the Bible has been presented to our congregation.**

**We have enjoyed the blessing of a pastor who is truly steeped in, and saturated by, God’s Word. From the long hours of preparation, to sharing online daily devotions, to small group lessons, to Sunday morning and evening congregational messages, to mid-week services, to the genuine love, care, & concern for every member, Pastor Tommy has been a faithful steward of this ministry.**

**Through the faithful service of Tommy & Shelley, the Lord has been very good to Towering Oaks. Over the next few weeks, let’s take a moment to place our thoughts into writing, and share our appreciation in letters and cards. Beginning on the 29th of June, we will have a table prepared in the foyer to receive your messages of love and gratitude.**

**As we continue to pray for our church family and her new pastor, let us covenant together to pray for Pastor Tommy as he follows God’s guidance into the next chapter and all God has for him to accomplish in Kingdom work."**

*Jeff Justice*

*Mark Ottinger*

*Gregory Allan Youngblood*

*Steve Hale*

*Glenn White*

*Joe Bowman*

*Terry Rayburn*

*Aaron Austin*

*Johnny Miller*

*John Pardun*

*Marvin Reeves*

*Kenny Jenkins*



Greetings from the Underground!



May might be one of the busiest months of the year: grass starts growing, gardens planted, students graduate, summer travel plans begin, youth camps to plan for, and so much more. It seems to go by too quickly!

Graduation... I bet almost everyone of you either received a graduation invite, reminder, or attended a graduation. It is a special time and we would like to recognize three youth group members who are moving on to college: we wish them the absolute best and pray that whatever path they choose in life they let God direct the way!

Layne Miller graduated from Greeneville High School and will attend Tennessee Tech to pursue a Mechanical Engineering Degree.

Tori Ellison graduated from TOCS and plans to attend Tusculum University to pursue a degree in psychology.

Gabe Smith graduated from Greeneville High School and plans to pursue a degree in culinary.

In our Sunday morning class we have been discussing the topic of “*God’s plan for your life*” vs. “*Your plan for your life*” and how we can best discern where the Spirit is guiding us. It was an aptly timed message during the graduation season and at a time when other youth members are moving on to new grades and even new schools. Key verses we dived into were **Jeremiah 29:11**, **Romans 8:28**, **Ephesians 2:10**, **1st Timothy 2:4**, and **John 10:27-28**. I think the main verse for this time is **1st Timothy 2:4** because the most common question a student is asked is “so, what do you want to do or be one day?” Many students don’t have a definite plan, and that’s ok, our plans in life can change. But God’s plan for us NEVER changes and we are told HIS plan for us in **1st Timothy 2:4** is “(God) who wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.” And what is the Truth? That Jesus is the Christ, the risen Son of the living God and it is our faith in Jesus that leads to God’s grace. Class dismissed!

We also had a lesson on “*Traveling through Life with God in Control*”, a spiritual GPS system: *God Positioning System*. Since we are all probably going to take a vacation somewhere this summer it seemed right we should remember who is directing our way. Key verses we studied were:

1. **Psalm 121**- the Lord will protect you
2. **Exodus 13:21**- the Lord will guide you
3. **Proverbs 16:9**- the Lord will direct you

And we finished the lesson with **John 6:25-40** with “Jesus will feed you” from his Bread of Life message. But we all must remember the point Jesus was trying to make: it is an everlasting, eternal spiritual feeding He provides, a food that will never spoil. Verse 36 should cause us all to consider the path we are on, it is a hard lesson. But the very next verse, verse 37, should cause us all to latch on and let Jesus direct us and feed us! Verses 36-37 say: *But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.* Wow! People standing right in front of Jesus still did not believe, but whoever does believe Jesus will never drive away. THAT’S the direction we should drive towards!

Memory Verses for our Youth: four verses to know and understand.

1. **Job 19:25-26** for when times are tough and you need to focus on the Eternal.
2. **Proverbs 18:21** for an era when social media plays too big a role in our lives.
3. **Acts 2:38** when you need that one verse that reminds you everything you really need to know because your mind is wrecked by the internet.
4. **Romans 10:9** for any time in your life you may have doubt because of something you read or saw on TV or the internet. Brush it aside and replace it with this.





# 2025 FUGE Camp

## 2025 Summer Kids Camp



School items are now being accepted for Operation Christmas Child Operation Shoebox. To help, please bring in the following new items: pens, pencils, spiral notebooks, colored pencils, and crayons. Donations can be dropped off in the "food pantry" baskets outside the main foyer or at the café.



### Vacation Bible School

July 21-25

3's-5th Grade

9:00-12:30



Scan Here to  
Register and  
Volunteer

