

JANUARY 2026

OCKER BRETHREN CHURCH

Serving Christ, Serving Our Community



From the Pastor....

I have to be honest with you all. This past year has been the worst year of my life. So, reflecting on 2025 is emotionally painful for me. In my reflection, I struggled to find any words to write that would bring peace and comfort to my heart and to our church during this Peace-filled season.

So, I opened and re-read an old friend...

In Oswald Chambers' fine devotional, *My Utmost for His Highest*, he succinctly tells us how we should look forward with faithful expectancy because of God's enduring faithfulness.

Here is what he writes...

God Uses Our Past Mistakes For Good

Security from Yesterday. "...God requires an account of what is past" (Ecclesiastes 3:15). At the end of the year we turn with eagerness to all that God has for the future, and yet anxiety is apt to arise when we remember our yesterdays. Our present enjoyment of God's grace tends to be lessened by the memory of yesterday's sins and blunders. But God is the God of our yesterdays, and He allows the memory of them to turn the past into a ministry of spiritual growth for our future. God reminds us of the past to protect us from a very shallow security in the present.

God Promises To Go Before Us

Security for Tomorrow. "...The Lord will go before you..." This is a gracious revelation – that God will send His forces to where we have failed to do so. He will keep watch so that we will not be tripped up again by the same failures, as would undoubtedly happen if He were not our "rear guard." And God's hand reaches back to the past, settling all claims against our conscience.

God Wants Us To Let The Past Rest

Security for Today. "You shall not go out with haste..." As we go forth into the coming year, let it not be in the haste of impetuous, forgetful delight, nor with the quickness of impulsive thoughtlessness. But let us go out with the patient power of knowing that the God of Israel will go before us. Our yesterdays hold broken and irreversible things for us. It is true that we have lost opportunities that will never return, but God can transform this destructive anxiety into a constructive thoughtfulness for the future. **Let the past rest, but let it rest in the sweet embrace of Christ.**

The 2026 Ocker Board of Elders will be installed on Sunday January 11 during Worship Service.

The first Board of Elders meeting for 2026 will be Wednesday, JAN 14, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Conference Room. Meetings are open and ALL are invited to attend.

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2026 Elders are:

Robert Stephens
Mark Wilfert
Stephanie Phillips
Amanda Parker
John Paul Chervenka
John Brinkley
Lynne Cassens
John Shank
Mike Biember
*New Members

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Leave the broken, irreversible past in His hands, and step out into the invincible future with Him.

As we learn to reframe our past mistakes and failings through the lens of God's redemptive power, everything changes. Yes, we have failed. Yes, we have made some poor decisions. Yes, we may feel some keen regret over lost opportunities. However, **God is our great Savior, Redeemer, and Friend.** He will help us to learn from our failings so that we choose more wisely in the future. He will walk beside us to provide the daily strength and grace we require. God is in our past. God is in our present. God will be in our future. There is nowhere we can flee from his blessed presence.

I hope that gives you some peace...if not, I pray you find as much peace as you can this season. If you are looking for some peace...let me re-introduce you to an old friend of mine...they call him Jesus. I know a church in southwest Bell county that really tries to follow him...and every time you walk through their doors, you get this strange feeling of warmth and comfort...the people there, call it the peace of Christ.

Humbled to be your pastor.

Brad



Unity of the Brethren Update

The Unity has elected me Vice President of the denomination with a focus on missions and continuing pastoral education. To be honest, this is a challenging appointment for a couple of reasons. Primarily, I work best with a singular focus...and for ten years, my singular focus has been Ocker. Since Grant's passing, I have found it difficult to focus on anything other than my family and Ocker...everything else has been sidelined.

However, the Unity is going through critical time in which a lot of important decisions need to be made...and the impact of those decisions will be lasting. I felt like Ocker should be involved in those vital leadership decisions and help lead the Unity into a new bright future. That being said, this new role will, occasionally, take me away from Ocker on denominational "business."

For example, our team has been charged with mission advertisement/education. The Unity wants our churches to have deeper relationships with the missions and missionaries we support. To that end, John Brinkley and I will be going to Snook Brethren church late next month to thank the congregation for their support and to present the specifics of Prosthetic Promises (John's ministry). By the end of 2026, we hope our missionaries will have visited most (if not all) of our Unity Churches.

Thanks in advance for your understanding, and let me know if you have any suggestions on how to improve our denomination.

Brad

Christian Sisters News

Membership dues are \$12 and can be given to Lanelle Lesikar payable to Ocker Christian Sisters.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, January 20 at 11:30 am. All ladies are invited!

OCKER CEMETERY DUES

Cemetery Dues are \$2 per year and should be given directly to Sharon Marek. These dues are to be paid by church members who wish to be buried at Ocker. Please see Sharon Marek for more information.)

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Acts Bible Study - I know it's not always easy to go back out once everyone has gotten home. We like to get settled and in our pajamas. How about making a New Year's resolution to join us in the Acts Bible Study on Wednesday nights at 6:30. There is still much to learn. When we get together, we learn from each other. All are welcome. You can even come in your pajamas!

Harmony of the Gospels Sunday School – Come and join our class for a look at all 4 Gospels – How are they alike? How are they different, and why? Oftentimes one or more of us will say – “I never thought about that” or “I never noticed that before”. Bring your Bible Sunday morning and join us as we discover new things.

Maggie



**HAPPY NEW YEAR!
GIRLFRIENDS & GOD**

~JANUARY GATHERING~

**WE WILL BE FILLING OUT A COUPLE MONTHS
WORTH OF BIRTHDAY CARDS**

**January 14
Ocker
5:00-6:00**

hello january

The Craft Retreat schedule for 2026 is as follows:

January 9-10 - Hosted by BYF
April 17-18 - Hosted by Sunday School
July 17-18 - Hosted by Christian Sisters
October 9-10 - Hosted by Operation Christian Child (OCC)



Rogers Food and Clothing Pantry

Ocker is a proud supporter of the Rogers Food and Clothing Pantry as a part of our outreach ministry. There is a tote box at the entry table of the sanctuary to receive any donations of food items in particular, pancake mix, syrup, oatmeal, canned meats, canned soups that include meats also, rice, beans, other canned items, noodles, mac n cheese, etc. The pantry will also receive gently used housewares and clothing and toys, children's books and puzzles, adult puzzles, pillow, blankets.

This is a free program for those in need. The Pantry has an outreach with other similar programs in our area. If the Pantry cannot use an item donated, they are able to donate to other similar programs.

Of course, there is a need for volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Ocker's liaison, Lisa Sebek, or Ocker's Administrative assistant, Stacié Sebek.

The Pantry is only open on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 9am to Noon so to volunteer for one day a month, or more if desired, will not require a lot of time.

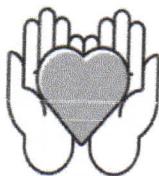
Thank you for your consideration and time and donations.

YOUTH RETREAT

January 24-25

At Hus Encampment in Caldwell

Retreats are for and up. They are held at the Hus Encampment in Caldwell. Check-in is at 9am on Saturday. Dismissal is at 1pm on Sunday. All retreat forms must be turned in no later than Wednesday, January 7. Forms and info can be found at www.unityofthebrethrenyouth.org.



Winter Drive

Youth are collecting new and gently-used blankets, jackets, coats, etc. to help those in need this winter season. Drop your donation in the boxes in the fellowship hall.

Youth Bible Study and fellowship will meet every Wednesday in January from 6-8pm. Families are invited to join us on Wed. Jan. 28 for game night.

LOCK-IN: Youth (6th grade and up) will be having a lockin on Tuesday, December 30. Doors open at 6pm. Everyone must be picked up by 9am on Wednesday. (No youth Bible study Wednesday, December 31.)

Please join the BYF Group Me by texting @ockerb to 81010. If you need more information, contact Jenn Chervenka 254-913-1244; jennchervenka@gmail.com.

YOUTH FUNDRAISERS IN JANUARY...

These funds take us to our Summer fundraiser, so please make every effort to participate! A signup genius link will be posted to the group me. Please text Jenn if you need the link via text.

Youth Sponsored Craft Retreat:

Fri. Jan. 9-Sat. Jan. 10

Retreat set up will be done on Wednesday, January 7 during youth Bible study. We will need meal supplies and servers for Friday dinner, Saturday lunch, and Saturday dinner. We also need a crew to clean up on Saturday night. Sign up on the sign-up genius no later than Monday, January 5 as remaining supplies will need to be purchased.

Youth Soup-Your Bowl Meal:

Sun. Jan. 11

Each youth brings a crock or roaster of soup/chili/stew and a side item. A free-will offering is collected. Designate the type soup/stew/chili you are bringing so that we make sure that we have a variety.

Be sure to invite your family and friends to eat with us that Sunday. A free-will offering will be collected.

Let's get fundraising!

News from CEC

Happy New Year Sunday School and Church family. We are going to kick off 2026 with good stuff. Mark your calendars with the following breakfast hosts. Remember, these breakfasts are held the first Sunday of each month. They are as follows:

January - Standard Adult Class
February - Life Application Class
March - Books of the Bible Class
April - Potluck - everyone bring
May - Muffins with Mom
June - Donuts with Dad
July – Potluck
August – CEC
September – Standard Adult Class
October – Life Application Class
November – Books of the Bible Class
December – Potluck

Ocker has several adult Sunday School classes being offered. We would love to have you join us if you are not already a part of one of our classes. Classes are:

- * Adult Standard Class - using adult Sunday School classes material from David C Cook and coordinated by Roseanne Groseclose
- * Life Application Adult Class utilizing a book from David Jeremiah and coordinated by John Brinkley
- * Synopsis of the Gospels Adult Class discussing the likes and differences of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John coordinated by Maggie Imhoff - this class will be discussing a new topic soon
- * Books of the Bible Adult Class is currently in the second book of Kings. The class reads through the book of the Bible with a commentary from J Vernon McGee and coordinated by class members

All of our adult classes range in age from young adult, including some college age, up through Senior Adult. Pick one or try them all and then pick! You will find one that will peak your senses.

We also have children and youth classes along with first Sunday music provided during worship service. The youth children and youth classes are by age/school grade.

- * Nursery - through age 3 - Carolyn Groseclose
- * Pre K and K - ages 3, 4, and 5 - Jana & Judy Jeske
- * Grades 1, 2, and 3 - Sandra Dubcak
- * Grades 4, 5, and 6 - Amanda Parker
- * Grades 7 & Up Pre-Confirmation - Jennifer Chervenka
- * High School - Isaiah & Jessica Coleman

If you have questions or need more information, please contact our Sunday School Superintendent Tracie Malovets or one of the officers, Dianne Psencik, Lynn Cassens or Lisa Sebek

Happy New Year 2026!

JANUARY 2026

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JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 – Zachary Fojtasek
- 5 – Matt Phillips
Ron McAdams
- 8 – Kathi Beimer
- 9 – T.K. Cummings
- 10 – Desirae English
- 11 – Kylie Bedrich
- 12 – Tyler Stork
- 13 – Brittini Krcha
- 14 – Robin Brinkley
- 15 – Celestia Hoelscher
- 16 – Matthew Sebek
- 22 – Emma Harrison
- 24 – Shelly Stanolis
- 25 – Houston Tucker
- 27 – James Naivar
- 28 – Justin Dillard
- 31 – Porter Phillips

January Anniversaries

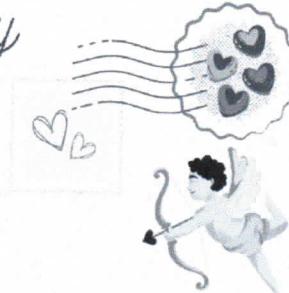
- 8 – Zach & Kayla Fojtasek
- 21 – Emil & Karen Bethke
- 27 – Richard & Emily Doney
- 29 – Max & Kathy Jordan



Looking ahead...

Happy Galentine's Day
Join Girlfriends & God
for a lunch date and
gift exchange.

Bring one \$15 gal gift, wrapped

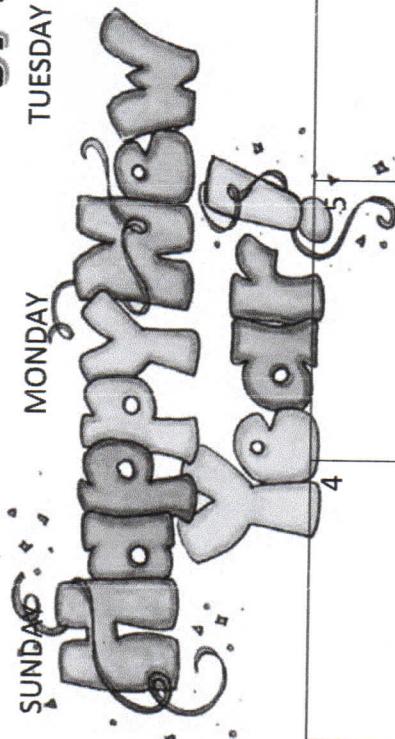


February 10th 2026
Hwy 77 Cafe in
Rosebud, TX

12:00

Please join our GroupMe
for up-to-date
information and details
Text Chelsey @ 254-718-2847

JANUARY 2026



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

SATURDAY

1	2	3
8:30 am First Sunday Fellowship 10:15 am Worship	6 YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6 – 8 PM	7
		8
		9
		10
		-----QUARTERLY CRAFT RETREAT-----
11 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Worship with Elder Installation Soup-Your-Bowl following Worship	12 CHRISTIAN SISTERS MEETING 11:30 AM	13 YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6 – 8 PM
		14 SENIOR ADULT FELLOWSHIP 9 AM – 1 PM
		15 BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING 7 PM
18 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Worship	19	20 YOUTH BIBLE STUDY 6 – 8 PM
		21 22
		23
		24
25 9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Worship	26	27 FAMILY GAME NIGHT 6 – 8 PM
		28
		29 SENIOR ADULT FELLOWSHIP 9 AM – 1 PM
		30
		31 3 snowflakes