

# 2022 VISION TEAM REPORT



OAKLAND  
BAPTIST CHURCH

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## INTRODUCTION

Dear Oakland Family,

In April of this year, 2022, I will celebrate five years of being Pastor at Oakland Baptist Church! While there have been challenges, I've thoroughly enjoyed the past five years and I'm looking forward to what God has in store for our future. In order to discern God's desires for our future, last January I asked our church to begin a vision process.



On January 31, 2021, I laid out a plan for our vision process which included the formation of a Vision Team. Our Fellowship of Deacons endorsed this plan, and our Nominating Committee worked hard to form a balanced Vision Team that represented the entirety of our congregation. On Sunday, February 14, 2021, the congregation approved the vision plan, including the proposed slate of Vision Team members.

Many of you asked me: "Why this year? Why start such a big undertaking when we are still dealing with COVID and many people do not feel comfortable being in the church building?" Those are good questions! My answer is: 1) We are a church that seeks to be the presence of Christ at the crossroads of life. Certainly, 2020 and 2021 proved to be some of the longest and widest crossroads any of us will ever face; yet our most difficult experiences often provide fertile ground for God to do a great work. 2) We must still be about the work of the church. Just because we've faced some setbacks doesn't mean we can put everything on hold. In fact, we haven't put anything on hold. Ministry has continued even during the pandemic, and we must make plans for ministry to continue once the pandemic is completely behind us. 3) We've been handed a gift of space and emotional bandwidth to consider what matters most. Over the past two years we've learned how vital friendships and interaction can be to our well-being. We've also learned there are many things we can do without, such as more meetings and red tape. How can we build on these things? How can we discern what a post-COVID church will look like? For these reasons I felt the time was right to explore where God is leading us.

With approval from our Deacons and Finance Committee, we partnered with The Center for Healthy Churches to answer those questions. We were assigned a coach, Jayne Davis, to guide us in conversations about our past, present, and future. Rev. Davis currently serves as the Associate Pastor for Discipleship at First Baptist Wilmington, NC. She's worked with a number of churches in the visioning process, and she's written a book titled *Hopeful Imagination: Traditional Churches Finding God's Way in a Changing World*.

Together, Jayne and I established four goals for the Vision Team. These goals were as follows:

1. Clarifying Oakland's unique identity and giftedness.
2. Determining areas of focus to build upon our current strengths.
3. Determining areas of emphasis for future ministry.
4. Developing ministry goals and an action plan for reaching those goals.

We also established a timeline for achieving these Vision Team goals. This timeline included three congregational meetings, as well as a Community Forum, in the Spring of 2021. In the Fall, our Vision Team presented their findings to the congregation and presented a draft report for feedback. What you read in the following pages is a culmination of all the work, prayers, data, and conversations that have taken place over the past year. As a sidenote—everything the Vision Team has done can be found on our website: [oaklandchurch.com/visioning](http://oaklandchurch.com/visioning).



This visioning plan will take three to five years to fully implement and will require the prayers and commitment of our entire congregation. Please join with me, our staff, and our Visioning Team in the months and years ahead as we seek to implement God's vision for Oakland. Most importantly, join with God! We must have God in the mix. It is God who gives us the vision and it is God who equips us to carry out the vision. As always, it is a privilege to serve as your Pastor. May God continue to use Oakland Baptist Church in the days and years ahead!

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Jeff Hayes

## IN THE WORDS OF OUR VISION TEAM



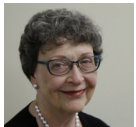
Oakland is entering a new chapter in her journey, and I am so glad that I get to grow with our congregation during this wonderful process. I feel that the Vision Team really put everything into this and I can't wait to see what comes next. **-Sadie Bridges**



It has been a privilege to work with a dedicated group of people to help guide the future of our church. The process has been enlightening but the end result will be beneficial for everyone in their spiritual growth for themselves and the church. **-David Cason**



I'm very grateful for the support the Vision Team continues to receive from Oaklanders. Together we will move forward to make God's plan for this body of believers a reality! **-Dan Cox**



Throughout this past year, I realized how much God has blessed this church with wonderful, caring people striving to carry out God's will here on earth. As long as we prayerfully and lovingly continue working toward that goal, I believe God's love will abundantly provide for our needs to do just that. **-Edie Dobbins**



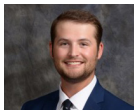
It has been exciting working with the Vision Team and learning through the congregational meetings the possible opportunities OBC has to make a positive difference in our community. I look forward to seeing our church put these goals into action. **-Angie Dumsha**



Through this visioning experience, I have fallen more in love with OBC and her people. In conversations, I have learned about meaningful traditions, gained a better understanding of current happenings and dreamed about potential, future opportunities. It is with joyful anticipation that I consider our next steps and see ideas turn into action. I truly believe this OBC faith community, with God at her center, can move mountains. **-Karen Emmerton**



I am very proud of what our church has developed with this report, and I look forward to where our church is going in the future. **-Kunsiri Grubbs**



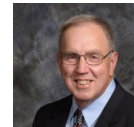
I'm confident that our team's vision for our church aligns well with Oakland's current values but offers ways to enhance them. This will take conscious effort and time; as a church, we're up to the challenge. **-Miller Hoffman**



I really enjoyed getting to learn and grow closer with all of my fellow Vision Team members throughout this process. We had some awesome ideas and plans for the future and I can't wait to see where they take us. **-Heath Hudson**



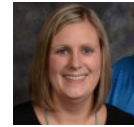
The visioning process for Oakland has been both a challenging and rewarding experience, and it was such an honor to have been part of such a dedicated and motivated Vision Team. I am so proud of how the team took big God-sized dreams and articulated them into practical goals that align with the core values of Oakland. I hope that the Oakland community is just as excited about our future because I firmly believe the visioning process will guide our church in the upcoming years. **-Amanda Ledford**



It is rare that a focus group from OBC contains individuals from age 13 to almost 80. I wondered if the young folks would speak up, but they exceeded all expectations. Bright, introspective, talented, thought provoking. These teenagers and twenty-somethings were breaths of fresh air and were leaders in the conversations. Their fingerprints are all over the final document. **-Frank Snyder**



I feel really good about the input we received and look forward to experiencing putting those words into action. Thanks for taking the time to help. **-Jim Vining**



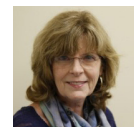
I am so excited about where God has led OBC in this process. The years to come will be filled with growth and excitement as we make progress toward God's vision. **-Meredith Westbrook**



This visioning process has been enlightening for me. I enjoyed learning more about our church's history and the people who have served to make Oakland what we know and love today. I also enjoyed the opportunity to speak to members of our church during the congregational meetings to hear their thoughts and personal experiences. **-Rick Wetherell**



Throughout this process I have learned that we often look for the big mission and service moments but miss the smaller, daily opportunities right in front of us. **-Jimmy Williams**

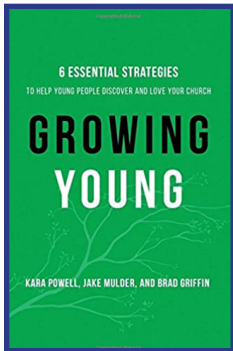


Vision and team are powerful words, and I am truly grateful to have experienced this power as we utilized cooperation, participation, and SUPPORT in "owning" this process for OBC. The opportunity to work with this diverse group of gifted Oaklanders; the encouragement, insight, and participation from our membership; and solid community support were vital to making this task even doable. I am proud of who we are at OBC and confident we will continue, with God's help, to move forward in creating an open environment for individual and collective spiritual growth as well as opportunities to service to those in need. **-Susan York**

## BOOKS THAT INFLUENCED OUR WORK

### *Growing Young*

by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin

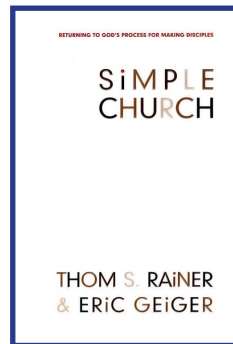


Based on groundbreaking research with over 250 of the nation's leading congregations, *Growing Young* profiles innovative churches that are engaging 15- to 29-year-olds and as a result are growing--spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically. Packed with both research and practical ideas, *Growing Young* shows ministry leaders how to position their churches to engage younger generations in a way that breathes vitality, life, and energy into the whole church. **For results from the *Growing Young* survey visit our website: [www.oaklandchurch.com/visioning](http://www.oaklandchurch.com/visioning)**

### *Simple Church*

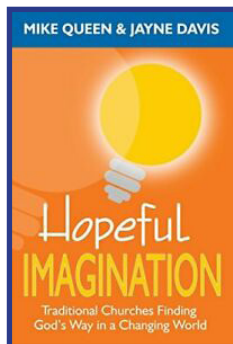
by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger

*Simple Church* guides Christians back to the simple gospel-sharing methods of Jesus. No bells or whistles required. With insights based on case studies of 400 American churches, Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger prove the disciple-making process is often too complex. Simple churches thrive by taking four ideas to heart: Clarity. Movement. Alignment. Focus. *Simple Church* examines each idea, clearly showing why it is time to simplify.



### *Hopeful Imagination*

by Mike Queen and Jayne Davis



*Hopeful Imagination* has three powerful messages: 1) we must pay attention to and trust God's movement through the Spirit, 2) we must imagine with great hope the future God has for us, and 3) we must remind ourselves daily that the church exists primarily for those who have not yet entered our doors. Mike Queen and Jayne Davis walk pastors and church leaders through the practical and theological shifts necessary to move from a hopeful imagination to seeing the hand of God in action.

## CONVERSATIONS THAT INFLUENCED OUR WORK

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING #1

On April 14, 2021 the Vision Team hosted a conversation focused on ***A Vision Grounded in our Past***. Together we discussed the what, when, and how that tells our story. We asked questions such as: *What brought you to Oakland? When are we at our best? and What is most true about Oakland Baptist Church?*

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING #2

On May 5, 2021 the Vision Team hosted a conversation focused on ***A Vision Grounded in our Present***. Together we took a hard look at how well we are connected with each other and our community. We asked questions such as: *How do people get connected to Oakland? and What specific mission/service opportunities have been most meaningful for you personally?*



### COMMUNITY FORUM

On May 19, 2021 we listened as community leaders Juan Roldan, John Gettys, and Gordon Bell shared their perception of challenges facing the Rock Hill and York County communities. Through this forum we learned how we can assist in both, actively addressing these issues and becoming a stronger voice in mobilizing others to respond. We also solicited electronic feedback from other local organizations.

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING #3



On June 2, 2021 the Vision Team hosted a conversation focused on ***A Vision Grounded in our Future***. Together we voiced our God-sized dreams for the future, both as individuals and a congregation. These dreams helped shape attainable goals found in this Vision Report. We asked questions such as: *What is your God-sized dream for Oakland's mission mindedness? and What is your God-sized dream for relationships that are fostered at Oakland?*

**For a list of data collected from each of these conversations visit our website: [www.oaklandchurch.com/visioning](http://www.oaklandchurch.com/visioning)**

## VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

Imagine if it is 2025? 2030? 2040? What do you hope will be true about Oakland Baptist Church? What kind of church do you hope we will become? The work of the Vision Team has served as a starting point in answering those questions. This is not a tactical plan, but a course in discovering who God has created us to be and how God will use who we are to lead us into the future.

The Vision Team utilized the data from our three congregational meetings to capture the foundation of who we are as a church. These core values were clearly identified as Relationships, Spiritual Growth, and Missions. Building on this strong foundation, the Vision Team developed goals to guide the work of OBC forward in both individual and collective growth as God's presence in Rock Hill.

You can find all the data related to the vision process by visiting our website: [oaklandchurch.com/visioning](http://oaklandchurch.com/visioning).

### RELATIONSHIPS



Oakland is passionate about maintaining and nourishing the connections that are formed within our church while always leaving space to welcome others into the circle of faith. Mutual respect and acceptance of others in all walks of life are values we hold in high esteem.

*Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.* -John 13:34-35 (CEB)

*Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God.* -1 Peter 2:17 (MSG)

*And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* -Hebrews 10:24-25 (NRSV)

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Oakland believes faith should engage the mind and the heart in an ever-growing, life-changing formative process that reflects our desire to live as devoted followers of Christ.

*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* -2 Peter 1:5-8 (NIV)

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.* -Colossians 2:6-7 (NRSV)

*He handed out gifts above and below, filled heaven with his gifts, filled earth with his gifts. He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.*

-Ephesians 4:11-13 (MSG)

### MISSIONS



Oakland believes we are most impactful when we stretch beyond our walls and borders. We are intentional about knowing and serving our neighbors, locally and globally.

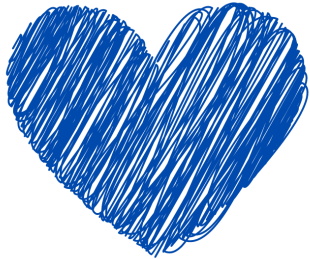
*God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings.* -1 Peter 4:10 (TLB)

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.* -Matthew 25:35-36 (NIV)

*Jesus said, 'Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God's good news to one and all.'* -Mark 16:15 (MSG)

## WE ARE A CHURCH THAT VALUES

### RELATIONSHIPS



Oakland is passionate about maintaining and nourishing the connections that are formed within our church while always leaving space to welcome others into the circle of faith. Mutual respect and acceptance of others in all walks of life are values we hold in high esteem.

The following goals and strategies will help us live into our value of relationships. These strategies are not comprehensive and we look forward to the way God will guide our work.

**GOAL:** With God's help we will commit ourselves to being an open, inviting, and inclusive community of faith where everyone can find a place of belonging.



*Our strategies include but are not limited to the following:*

- Maintaining and increasing the accessibility of our facility to accommodate those with special needs.
- Providing educational opportunities to learn about each other and our neighbors in a comfortable, non-confrontational environment that respects and encourages diversity and expression of different ideas.
- Strengthening intergenerational relationships through activities that offer a variety of ages contributing to the same project or educational opportunity.
- Exploring opportunities for the use of our facilities by outside groups.
- Intentionally working to increase diversity in our laity and partnerships that reflects the diversity and inclusiveness we value.

**GOAL:** With God's help we will find intentional ways to connect new people into the life of our church, regardless of where they are on the faith journey.



*Our strategies include but are not limited to the following:*

- Creating and maintaining a process for welcoming new people into the life of the church; and introducing opportunities to be involved in spiritual growth and service.
- Fostering mentor relationships between new persons and those well-established in the Oakland family of faith.
- Creating an exploratory team to discern our perception in the community as a "Baptist" church and whether or not this title helps or hinders our influence.
- Establishing a marketing strategy to increase our presence and promote our values within the community.

**GOAL:** With God's help we will increase the involvement of younger generations within the life of the church.



*Our strategies include but are not limited to the following:*

- Renovating space in the church building to create a dedicated children's area for those in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- Renovating space in the church building to create an authentic youth area for those in sixth through twelfth grade.
- Implementing the six strategies found in the book *Growing Young: Six Essentials to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*.
- Developing focused opportunities to engage with college students and young adults.

## WE ARE A CHURCH THAT VALUES

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Oakland believes faith should engage the mind and the heart in an ever-growing, life-changing formative process that reflects our desire to live as devoted followers of Christ.

The following goal and strategies will help us live into our value of spiritual growth. These strategies are not comprehensive and we look forward to the way God will guide our work.

**GOAL:** With God's help we will create opportunities for discipleship which lead to transformational relationships with Christ and impacts our everyday living.



Our strategies include but are not limited to the following:

- Creating and maintaining an educational tool that allows every person to know what spiritual growth is and how to implement it into their Christian journey.
- Developing a discipleship blueprint for all ages.
- Expanding opportunities for small groups and Bible studies outside of the normal Sunday School hour.
- Broadening our worship style to incorporate opportunities to highlight and celebrate Christ at work within and among us.
- Exploring the possibility of having a shared worship experience with other churches in our community.



*The Lord will guide you always;  
God will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.  
You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.  
Isaiah 58:11*





## WE ARE A CHURCH THAT VALUES

### MISSIONS



Oakland believes we are most impactful when we stretch beyond our walls and borders. We are intentional about knowing and serving our neighbors, locally and globally.

The following goals and strategies will help us live into our value of missions. These strategies are not comprehensive and we look forward to the way God will guide our work.

**GOAL:** With God's help we will enable every person to participate in at least one service ministry.



*Our strategies include but are not limited to the following:*

- Taking inventory of the places people are currently serving inside and outside of our church.
- Taking inventory of the current mission and ministry opportunities being offered within Oakland.
- Offering an annual spiritual gifts inventory to allow everyone to identify their strengths, skills, and interests.
- Creating and maintaining an educational tool that allows every person to know how to use their spiritual gifts.
- Providing a variety of opportunities for service ministry ensuring there are enough opportunities for every person to be involved.
- Restructuring, merging, and condensing committees, allowing people greater opportunities to serve in mission-focused ministries.

**GOAL:** With God's help we will be a leading church in the community for meeting the needs of others.



*Our strategies include but are not limited to the following:*

- Creating open lines of communication with leaders of community organizations in order to listen and respond to their needs.
- Establishing partnerships with other churches and organizations for meeting the needs of others.
- Infusing local mission opportunities and awareness into every aspect of Oakland's ministry, including Sunday School, Worship, and the Oakland Day School.
- Annually establishing mission groups that will consistently engage with mission partners to assess needs and formulate plans for assistance. (Examples: Hope, Habitat for Humanity, York County Medical Clinic)
- Continually educating our congregation on the needs in our community and discern the needs we believe God has led us to address.
- Providing opportunities for education and action related to issues of social justice.

**GOAL:** With God's help we will expand the excellent outreach of the Ministry Center.



*Our strategies include but are not limited to the following:*

- Expanding the physical presence of the Ministry Center, including the possibility of a second location and/or a mobile location.
- Increasing promotion of the Ministry Center through marketing efforts.
- Intentionally working to build upon our partnerships with community help organizations such as Pathways and Hope.
- Intentionally working to form partnerships with new community help organizations.
- Developing a leadership plan for the Ministry Center that will continue the strong emphasis of ministry created by its founding leaders and supported by the congregation.

## IMPLEMENTATION

As a church we are indebted to the members of the Vision Team who have given so much of their prayers, time, and energy to discern God's vision for Oakland. The same can be said for our staff and the many individuals who contributed to the vision process over the past year. What an opportunity this has been to learn and grow with each other and with God! Still, this vision is only in the beginning stages. As has been repeated throughout this report, it will take three to five years to fully implement this vision into the life of our church.

The next step in this process is to form Implementation Teams. These teams will prioritize the goals and strategies that have been laid out by the Vision Team and enlist individuals to help make these goals a reality. Although Oakland has a current committee structure, the Implementation Teams will not come out of those committees.

Implementation Teams will be guided by a group of individuals who have a passion for those particular areas of need, opportunity, and ministry. They will facilitate the implementation of each goal and make recommendations to the larger church. Implementation Teams will be led by members of the Vision Team, ministerial staff members, and individuals from the congregation.

The timeline for implementation teams includes recruitment from March - May and organizational meetings during the summer months. By September we anticipate implementation teams bringing our goals and strategies into reality.



## KEY COMPONENTS TO SUCCESS

### PRAYER

Our individual lives and our corporate life as the church must be centered on God through prayer. Without everyone praying, our efforts in this vision will lack purposeful and spiritual direction.



### COMMUNICATION



Critically tied to our success is every person's having a complete understanding of where God is leading us. Through printed material, audio/visual, and social media efforts we will be transparent in communicating this vision and the work of implementation teams. This vision must remain consistently before us.

### ADAPTATION

In order for this vision to succeed, current models of being church must be examined and new models of being church must be explored. It is essential that each person actively listens to proposals and remains open-minded to new ideas and ways of doing things.

### PARTICIPATION

It is important that everyone be actively engaged in the implementation of this vision. We call on all persons to be active participants in the life of the church as we seek to fulfill God's vision for our church.



### ALIGNMENT

Our goal over the next three to five years is to align everything we do within the vision plan. Prayerful, focused work involving leadership and implementation teams will guide the evolution and expansion of this vision to an inclusive plan of action, study, and service for OBC.

## HOW WILL YOU BE INVOLVED?

As has been stated in this document and throughout the Vision Team process, we will not be able to fully live into this vision for Oakland Baptist Church without you! Lectio Divina is a form of prayerful scripture reading, and we invite you to follow the steps below as you consider in what ways God is nudging you to help implement God's vision for our church.

- **Preparing.** Spend a minute or two relaxing, breathing deeply, centering yourself.
- **First reading.** Read Roman 12:1-13 slowly. Pause between each sentence. After you finish the first reading, be silent for a minute or two.

Romans 12:1-13

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

*For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.*

*Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.*

- **Second reading.** Read the text slowly once again, pausing between phrases, but this time pause even longer and be aware if any of words or phrases that stand out in some way. Underline or circle the words or phrases that stand out to you. After you finish the second reading, write down those special words or phrases below:
- **Third reading.** Reread the passage up to the first word or phrase that touched you in some way. When you reach that word or phrase, stop and repeat it a few times. Continue this process with other words or phrases you underlined or highlighted until you reach the end of the scripture.
- **Pondering.** Reflect for a while on the phrase(s) that moved you. Repeat them a few more times. Let the words interact with your thoughts, your memories, your dreams, or any other Bible passages that come to mind. Begin to wonder, *What might God want to say to me specifically?*
- **Prayer.** Turn that last question into a prayer, asking God, *What is the word you have for me in this passage? Is there anything you want to say to me today?* Listen. Write down anything you sense God might be saying to you.
- **Rest.** Be still and silent for a while. Enjoy being in the presence of God. In this step you move from doing to being. Simply be for a while.
- **Apply.** Given what you have read in this vision report, combined with what God has spoken to you through this Lectio Divina exercise, consider what ways God is nudging you to implement God's vision for God's church. Write down specific opportunities in which you feel the most passionate about participating.

## NOTES

Use these last two pages as a journal to note ways you will be involved, specific prayers for this journey, and ways you have witnessed God working through the implementation of OBC's vision.

# OAKLAND BAPTIST CHURCH

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