



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
 6069 Bridgetown Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45248
 513-574-1131; oakhillsumc.org
 oakhillsumc@fuse.net



NOVEMBER 2023 The Oak Notes

Pastor's Corner

The origins of the modern Thanksgiving story go back to the days of the first pilgrims. We all know the story. Pilgrims set sail from Europe on the Mayflower in pursuit of religious freedom. They landed at Plymouth Rock. The Native Americans taught them how to plant and harvest food, and a year later, they had an abundant harvest. So, they organized a massive 3 day feast. The pilgrims and Native Americans came together. They celebrated, shared their food, and gave thanks to God for the incredibly abundant harvest. And ever since, we've gathered around our tables to celebrate God's blessings on our lives.

Thanksgiving has become a symbol of abundance in our culture. The images of this season are images reflecting incredible abundance: the feast, the fat turkey, the big pumpkin, the horn of plenty.

If we reflect deeply on our tradition, it's also clear this is God's hope for his people. From the very beginning, God created us to be a people of abundance. He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, a place that is often depicted as a place of paradise; a rich and fertile land filled with good things (trees and plants for food, a constant supply of water, even God's presence). As the story goes on, the language of blessing, abundance and fruitfulness become a central feature in the story, appearing 615 times in the Bible. Adam and Eve are called to be fruitful and multiply. The Promised Land is depicted as a land flowing with milk and honey. Even Jesus said: "I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). By God's design we were created to thrive.

Many times, we think of that abundance in terms of the American dream (money, possessions and the like), but God's vision of the abundant life is different. It means being the people he created us to be, living the life he called us to live. Abundance isn't about stuff. It's about being connected to the one who is the true source of life and salvation that we might truly thrive. He didn't come to leave us where we are, but to restore us from sin to the abundant life that we were created to have from the beginning.

This Thanksgiving, as you come together around the table, I'd challenge you to consider how much God has done for you in Jesus Christ! Reflect not only on the physical blessings of your life, but also on the countless spiritual blessings God has given us in Jesus Christ. As Paul says: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:18).

May you and your family have a very blessed and happy Thanksgiving, both today and always!



Announcements

- 11/1 - UMW Luncheon, 12 pm
- 11/5 - Daylight Savings Time Ends: Fall Back
- 11/6 - Trustees, 7 pm
- 11/12 - Family Board Game Night, 6-9 pm
- 11/13 - Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes Due
- 11/13 - Finance 6:30 pm; Church Conference, 7pm (No Board Meeting)
- 11/17 - Young at Heart, 7 pm
- 11/18 - Christmas Holiday Sale, 9 am-2 pm
- 11/19 - Passionate Worship, 12 pm
- 11/23-24 - Office Closed: Happy Thanksgiving!
- 11/24 - Scrapbooking/Craft Group, 7pm
- 11/26 - Hanging of the Greens, 12 pm

Bible Studies

- Sunday School 9 am
- Women's Group: Mon 10 am
- Gospel of John: Tues 7 pm
- Pastor's Study (Mark): Wed 2 pm
- John's Study: Thursday, 10:30 am
- TOGA: 1st and 3rd Thursday, 7pm @ 5609 Green Acres Ct., Cincy



Worship - Sunday, 10:30 am

Sissy's Pantry - Wed 6:30-8:00 pm

Zoom Prayer - Thursday, 11 am



Kroger Rewards

Oak Hills United Methodist Church is currently set up as a beneficiary on Kroger Community Rewards. This gives a small percentage of each purchase you make at Kroger back to the church. If you have not already done so, we would encourage you to connect your Kroger card to Oak Hills UMC online. Step 1: Get a Kroger Card. Step 2: Create a digital account at Kroger.com and link your Kroger card. Step 3: Go to www.kroger.com/communityrewards. And click where it says search for your organization here. Step 4: Search for Oak Hills United Methodist Church. When the church comes up, select it and click save. From now on,



The Youth Group has been discussing friendships and self identity. We are planning our next outing to the Festival of Lights in November or early December. More information to come.

Thanks,

Ali

Online Giving

Do you know you can now give on our church website? Simply go to www.oakhillsumc.org and click give in the bar at the top of the page or scan the QR code below and go directly to our online giving portal.





Church Conference

Our annual church conference will be held on Monday, November 13 at 7 p.m. During this time, we will adopt new church leadership for 2024, act on the pastor's pay package, receive reports, and vote on a recommendation from the Endowment Committee to disband the church endowment. Since its inception, the endowment has only had a small amount given to it. Those funds have not been enough to generate more than a few cents of income each year. As a result, the endowment has not been able to achieve what it was intended to accomplish. Therefore, the Endowment Committee is unanimously recommending those funds be made available to support church building and maintenance needs. All official members of the church have both voice and vote on this matter. If you have any questions on this matter, you may direct them to John Wieman (Endowment Chair) or Bob Schloss (Finance Chair).



Advent/Christmas Readings and Hanging of the Greens

We are looking for readers to light the Advent candle through the Advent season and on Christmas Eve (December 3, December 10, December 17, and December 24 (10:30 am and 5:30 pm)). If you would like to read or light a candle please let Pastor Justin know by emailing jfuhrma@hotmail.com or by signing up at this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050445AAAF29A5FE3-44829875-advent>. We could also use your help in decorating the church for Christmas after church on Sunday, November 26.

Administrative Board Topics of Interest

1) Church Conference will be held in lieu of the November board meeting on November 13 at 7 p.m. The Staff-Pastor Parish Relations Committee, at the approval of the Finance Committee and Administrative Church Board are recommending a \$2000 increase in Pastor Justin's salary for 2024 (i.e., \$52,000/year).

2) The work on the roof and the boiler have been completed. The trustees approved the resealing of the church parking lot (top and bottom) at a cost of \$9,750. These funds will come from the sale of the church parsonage earlier this year. If you would like to contribute to any of these projects in a way that goes above your normal tithes and offerings, write Renovation Fund on the memo line of your check.

3) The finance committee has begun working on formulating the 2024 church budget. The first draft of the budget projects a net loss of around \$22,000. This includes \$6000 in rental income from the old Bridgetown parsonage (\$1000 monthly beginning in June) and payment of our district apportionments. If we could all help out with the small projects that need done on the parsonage we may be able to rent it out sooner and increase our overall revenue for the year (talk to Bob if you want to help out!). We are also working to identify other areas to cut from this budget, but there isn't much fat in the budget now. As a result, we are seeking to identify some fundraisers to do in 2024 to increase our revenue. This means we will need people willing to help organize and run these events. Bob notes that if each giving unit would increase their giving by just \$6 a week, this would cover our projected shortfall at this point.

4) Thanks to receipt of our quarterly grant payments from the district we had a net income of \$4,819 in September. This brings our year to date loss in revenue down to \$11,941 or \$1,493 per week, and our net disposable savings to \$58,382. We are praying for a strong final quarter and strong results from our stewardship campaign to end the year. We have also reapplied for additional grant funding for 2024 in the areas of community involvement/outreach and youth/family ministry.

5) As we move into the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, there are many opportunities to help those less fortunate than us. Operation Christmas Child provides gifts to children overseas; boxes are due back to the church by November 13. The pantry continues to be in need of canned food items. And, we are currently speaking with Springmyer Elementary to identify families to support through the Angel Tree; these will be up by the first Sunday in Advent (December 2) and will need to be back by December 16.



NOVEMBER

OHUMC Family Ministries



Every week, please join Ms. Kathy in Sunday School from 9 - 10:30 am. All kids are welcome! They do fun crafts, games, and lessons centered around the Bible while learning how to live like Christ-followers. There is also breakfast provided.

Also, don't forget to grab a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child shoebox to fill for children in need around the world. We will pack the extra boxes and present them at the front of the church on Sunday, November 19th.

Here's a recent picture of the kid's Sunday school!

