



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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2023 The Oak Notes

Pastor's Corner

Can you believe it? Christmas is almost upon us. It seems like it was just yesterday we packed up the lights and put the decorations away. Yet, there's no doubt that Christmas is in the air.

This whole season is one that's filled with preparation. We prepare to see loved ones. We prepare for big dinners. We prepare our house with decorations. We shop to prepare for the big day.

Two thousand years ago, everyone was looking for the messiah. John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, calling people to repent and prepare the way of the Lord. But when the messiah came, only a few even recognized he was here. Most of the religious leaders failed to see Jesus for who he was. A Christmas came and a Christmas passed and only a few were even found at the foot of the manger.

So many times, this season is such a blur. There's just so much to be done: decorations, shopping, parties, gifts. The busyness of this season eclipses our joy and our sense of excitement. Everything builds to this moment, yet, by the time Christmas arrives, we're run down and exhausted. Pretty soon, we're packing up the gifts, and the trees, and the lights. And another Christmas just ends up passing us by.

I wonder, how often are we really captivated by this Christmas beyond imagination? The story of Christmas is a story filled with joy. There's celebration and excitement. Every character breaks out in songs of praise. They have been waiting and longing for this moment their whole life. Their messiah is here and that's something to celebrate! Each of the characters (Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, the shepherds, Simeon, Anna) encounter the birth of Jesus with such excitement and joy!

This is a Christmas beyond imagination: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham; to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve

him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days" (Luke 1:68-73). What about you? How are you encountering this Christmas? Have you ever thought about it?

My hope, as we enter this Advent season, is that we make space to encounter Jesus anew. Our goal is that this story speak to us in new ways. I would challenge you to consider how you might approach this Christmas season differently this year. I would challenge you to make it a priority to be in worship every week. I would challenge you to take time to reflect and read through the Christmas stories in the gospels (Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2). I would challenge you to adopt new practices in your lives that ready your hearts for his arrival. Maybe set up an advent wreath at home? I would challenge you to invite your friends, your family, and your neighbors to come. This is the time of year people are really interested in trying spiritual things. Whatever you do, don't allow this Christmas to pass you by. May this Christmas and all the Christmases to come truly be filled with joy—a Christmas beyond imagination.



Pastor Vacation

Pastor Justin will be on vacation from Monday, December 25 through Monday, January 1. Amit will be preaching on Sunday, December 31. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time please contact Amit Dutta at 513-658-2867. For all other church related items contact the church office at 513-574-1131.



Worship – Sunday, 10:30 am

Sissy's Pantry – Wed 6:30-8:00 pm

Zoom Prayer – Thursday, 11 am



Bible Studies

Sunday School 9 am

Women's Group: Mon 10 am

Gospel of John: Tues 6:30 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



Advent: Sundays, December 3, 10, 17, 24, 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Celebration: December 24, 5:30 p.m.



Poinsettia Order Forms: Order forms are available in the bulletin to use to order a poinsettia to decorate the altar for Christmas worship services. They will be yours to take home and enjoy after the Christmas Eve service. Poinsettias that are purchased in memory or honor of someone will be acknowledged in the Christmas bulletins. The cost is \$10 and orders must be received by Dec. 17, 2023.



Announcements

12/4 – Trustees, 6:30 pm

12/10 – Family Board Game Night 6-9 p.m.

12/11 – Finance meeting 6:30 pm and Board meeting at 7 p.m.

12/13 – UMW Luncheon at the Market St. Grill in Harrison.

12/15 – Young at Heart, 7 pm

12/16 – Sports Card Show, 9 am-3 pm and Festival of Lights 3 p.m. Youth Group

12/24 – Christmas Eve Worship, 5:30 p.m. (Sunday morning worship at 10:30 am will be Advent week 4)

12/25-26 – Merry Christmas: Office Closed

12/25-1/1 – Pastor Vacation

12/27 – Community Dinner, 6 pm

12/29 - Scrapbook/Craft group 7 p.m.

1/1 – Happy New Years: Office Closed

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.



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, when you use your Kroger card a small percent of what you spent is given back to the church.



West Ohio Annual Conference Special Session

The Special Session of the West Ohio Annual Conference convened on Saturday, October 28 at Ginghamburg United Methodist Church with nearly 800 clergy and lay members in attendance. During this time, 96 churches were approved for disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church, bringing the total churches to disaffiliate to date to 348 and leaving 606 churches in the West Ohio Conference of the UMC. We also approved the 2024 conference budget, filled holes that had emerged in the General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegations since their election in 2019, and adopted the recommendation of the Board of Trustees to sell camps Otterbein and Widewater. Proceeds will be used to boost the ministry of Camp Wesley and to launch new children, youth, and young adult ministries.

2024 General Conference Delegates

- Rev. Roger Grace
- Rev. Karen Cook
- Rev. April Casperson
- Rev. Deanna Stickley-Miner
- Rev. Anna Guillozet
- Rev. Tom Rand
- Rev. Rachel Miller
- Mr. Bill Brownson
- Mr. George Howard
- Ms. Callie Picardo
- Ms. Tracy Chambers
- Ms. Katelin Hansen
- Ms. Bobbi Ruddock
- Mr. Alex Giffin
- Rev. Jason Wellman (Alternate)
- Rev. Wade Giffin (Alternate)
- Ms. Julie Carter (Alternate)
- Ms. Dione Joseph (Alternate)

2024 Jurisdictional Conference Delegates

- All General Conference Delegates plus:
- Rev. Jason Wellman
- Rev. Wade Giffin
- Rev. Suzanne Allen
- Rev. Todd Anderson
- Rev. Leo Cunningham
- Rev. Rosario Picardo
- Rev. Glenn Schwerdtfeger
- Ms. Julie Carter
- Ms. Dione Joseph
- Mr. Steven Dunn
- Ms. Chris Clough
- Mr. Ladon Balmos-Ruddock
- Ms. Kathy Elasky
- Mr. Preston Eberlyn
- Rev. Amy Aspey (Alternate)
- Rev. Justin Williams (Alternate)
- Mr. Andrew Nimely (Alternate)
- Ms. Lisa Wachenfeld (Alternate)



The Youth Group is blessed to have received grant money for the upcoming year. We are beginning to plan renovations to the old sanctuary to turn the space into a game room for the kids to relax and study.

We are looking for donations of board games, Nintendo Switch console, PS4 consoles and we will need extra hands to put the room together. More information will be sent out later.

This month of December, the youth will be reading through the book of Luke to prepare their minds for the holiday season. The youth room will be filled with cheer this season as we write Christmas cards to nursing homes, decorate and enjoy sharing stories about our Christmas traditions.

Thank you,
Ali



HAPPY BIRTHDAY,
Jesus!



Your invited to Jesus Birthday Party on Sunday December 17,2023.

Where: OHUMC in Fellowship Hall

Time: 9:00am – 11:30 am – A Nativity Themed Game will be played during the Sunday School Hour, followed by singing Happy Birthday to Jesus and enjoying in cupcakes and juice. Then everyone will go up to church and then will come back down during the J.A.M. for a Nativity Story, craft, prayer, and the lighting of the Advent Wreath.

Please Bring a Gift for Baby Jesus, which will be opened during the party.

All gifts should be for an infant or toddler, which will be donated to Wesley Childcare Center, which is an inner-city childcare center.



Together our church family packed over 50 Boxes!!! Praise God! Thank you to everyone that helped.

