



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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2024 The Oak Notes

Pastor Article

Wednesday, February 14 marks the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a season of serious repentance and preparation, as we ready our hearts for the celebration of Easter. The earliest Christians used it as a time to prepare candidates for baptism and a time of repentance for sinners, who had been excluded from communion and were seeking restoration in the church. As a sign of their repentance, they wore sackcloth and ashes. They engaged in a strict period of fasting, eating only one meal each day. This led, to the modern practice of giving something up in order to ready our hearts and focus on Jesus.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and culminates on Good Friday. It continues for a period of 40 days (excluding Sundays) in memory of Jesus' temptation by the devil in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Throughout this season, we consciously pause to reflect on our lives, our sin, and the cross. During Holy Week, we meditate on the final events of Jesus' life before he dies. We'll walk with him as we partake in Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday and we'll watch him suffer and die on the cross on Good Friday.

There's no denying it. Jesus Christ is the central figure of the Christian story. Our faith was founded by and grounded on the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. That raises a central question for us: Who is this Jesus, really? In Jesus' day, there were all kinds of ideas about who he was. Some said he was John the Baptist. Others said he was Elijah. Still others one on the prophets (Mark 8:27). And after hearing what everyone else thought, he asked his disciples a deeply personal question: But what about you? Who do you say that I am? Every one of us is called to wrestle with that question and to answer it for ourselves. It's not something that can be left to chance. It's not something others can decide for us. It's not

something we can inherit from our parents or our family simply because we were born into a Christian home. Again and again, Jesus answered that question himself, most clearly in the so called I am statements in the Gospel of John. On 7 different occasions Jesus answered that question with vivid images and metaphors beginning with the words I am that we might come to know who he really is. He says I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the vine, and I am the resurrection and the life. Throughout this Lenten season, we'll explore each of these statements in turn that we might come to know Jesus our great I am.

Throughout this season, I would challenge you to do 5 things: (1) Take time to identify something to give up in order to make space to meet with Jesus. (2) Join with us in prayer, fasting, and repentance by coming to our Thursday Zoom Prayer Meetings at 11 a.m. (3) Spend daily time in personal confession and repentance. (4) Read through the Gospel of John by following the daily reading plan, and finally, (5) make it a priority to be with us each week in Lent and during our special worship services this season.

Worship – Sunday, 10:30 am

Sissy's Pantry – Wed 6:30-8:00 pm

Zoom Prayer – Thursday, 11 am



Church Office Hours Beverly started a part-time job working in the lunchroom at Westwood Elementary School. The church hours are now 2-5 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Thank you all for your support and understanding.

Beverly



Our special services include:

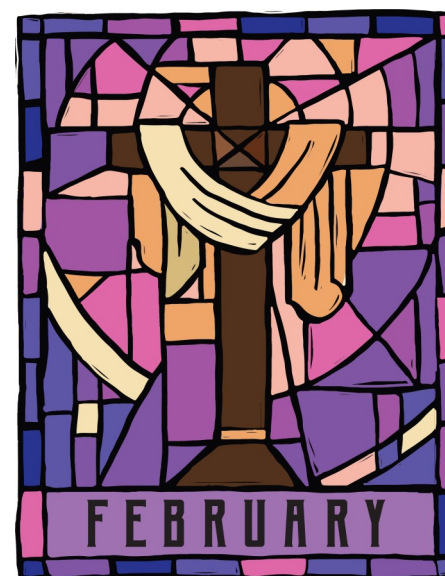
(1) Ash Wednesday (February 14, 7 p.m.): Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return. Ashes are a sign of our mortality, our sin, and our repentance. We take time to reflect, confess, and repent.

(2) Palm/Passion Sunday (March 24, 10:30 a.m.): We relive the move of Holy Week, from celebration to death. We begin our service with the celebration of Palm Sunday. We worship and praise Jesus to the waving of palm branches. We end our service with the move toward cross and death on Good Friday.

(3) Maundy Thursday (March 28, 7 p.m.): Maundy Thursday is the celebration of the final meal that Jesus spends with his disciples before his execution (the Last Supper). During this meal, he institutes the sacrament of Holy Communion. We will take time to pause and reflect on what this meal means.

(4) Good Friday (March 29, 12-4 p.m.): Good Friday is the day of the crucifixion, the day on which Jesus dies for the sins of the world. We invite you to take time to reflect on the cross through a series of guided prayer stations as we reflect deeper on Jesus's seven I am statements. Come anytime you want between noon and 4 p.m. Spend as much or as little time as you need working through the stations.

(5) Easter Celebration (March 31, 10:30 a.m.): We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Join us as we come together to celebrate the greatest news ever told. Jesus says I am the resurrection and the life. Resurrection is not an event. It is a person. It is in the resurrection that we see who Jesus really is. He is the God who brings us victory over sin and grave as we raise to new life in him.



Administrative Board Topics of Interest

1) The month of December was a good giving month netting us an income of \$4,330. This means 2023 closed with a deficit of just \$8,263, far less than we were projecting over the last several months. This was primarily due to our end of year push and the receipt of our fourth quarter grant income. Thanks for your faithfulness in helping us close the year strong and your ongoing faithfulness in the new year.

2) At the direction of the Administrative Board, we have launched a new Fundraising Team to organize, market, and implement a series of fundraising events (goal: 4-6) throughout the 2024 calendar year. Our goal is to find new ways to generate additional revenue so that we can close 2024 with a balanced budget. The team includes Sherilyn Reynolds, Cari Laws, Tami Ernst, Dan and Beth Basham, and Ellen Neiheisel. If you are interested in being a part of this new team please let Pastor Justin know.

3) We are encouraging everyone to sign up and ask 3 people (family members or friends) to link Oak Hills UMC as a charitable organization on their Kroger Card. This gives a small percentage of each purchase you make at Kroger back to the church. Currently we are earning around \$200 a quarter. With minimal effort we could double or triple that number with no cost to anyone. 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. If you need help getting your card set up we would be happy to do it for you. Contact Bob or Sue Schloss.

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 @ 5609
Green Acres Ct. Cincinnati, Ohio 45248



Online Giving

Do you know you can now give on our church web-site? 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.



Valentine Boxes in Need College Student and Service Members

If you are a college student or a Service Member or have a family member who is, please turn in their name and address, so we can send them a Valentine Care Box.

You may place their information in the offering plate, give it to Kathy Cramerding or Kim Warman or leave it in the office marked Valentine Box. We need all names and addresses by Sunday February 11th, 2024, so we can get the boxes delivered by Valentine's Day.



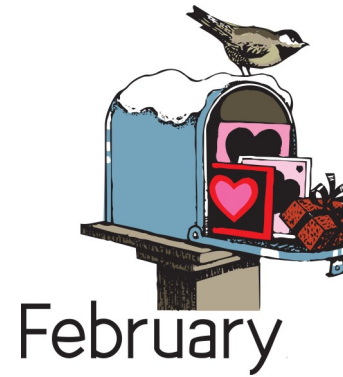
Prayer Partners

Build Your Pray Life During Lent Become a Pray Partner

Please fill out the enclosed prayer partner request form and place in the offering plate, or give it to Kathy Cramerding, Kim Warman or turn it into the church office. If you watch online or receive your newsletter by email, you can email your name into the church office, with your prayer request, if you have any special prayer requests. We need all Prayer Partner Request by **Sunday February 11th, 2024**, so Prayer Partner can be prayed over and picked and mailed out for delivery to you by **ASH Wednesday. Please pray about becoming a Prayer Partner, it is a very uplifting experience praying for someone else, knowing they are in turn praying for you.**

Announcements

- 2/3 - Card Show 9 am-3pm
- 2/5 - Trustees, 7 pm
- 2/7 - UMW Luncheon, 12 pm
- 2/10 - Winter Carnival, 1-3 pm
- 2/11 - Family Board Game Night, 6-9 pm
- 2/12 - Finance 6:30 pm; Board Meeting 7 pm
- 2/14 - Ash Wednesday Worship, 7 pm
- 2/16 - Young at Heart, 7 pm
- 2/17 - Great Miami River District Super Serve Saturday
- 2/23 - Arts and Crafts, 7 pm
- 2/28 - Community Dinner, 6 pm



February

OHUMC Family Ministries



Volunteers Needed to Run a Game at Winter Carnival

On Saturday February 10th from 1:00 to 3:00pm

Sign-up Sheet is in the Narthex

All Volunteers Need to be at the Carnival by 12:30pm to Prep their Game.

If you have any questions, please see Kathy Cramerding.

It is Time to Remember Our College Students and Service Members

Help Us Fill Their Valentine Boxes

Donations of Homemade Cookies, Treats, Granola Bars and Candy are Needed.

You can give your Donations to Kathy Cramerding, Kim Warman or you can leave them in the church office marked Valentine Boxes.

All book donations must be received by Sunday February 11th, 2024.

Volunteers Needed to Set-up for Winter Carnival

On Friday February 9th starting at 1:00pm in Fellowship Hall. The finishing time will depend on how many volunteers show up. If you can only work for an hour, please still come, we can use the help.

Sign-up Sheet is in the Narthex

If you have any questions, please see Kathy Cramerding.



Donations Needed for the Winter Carnival

Please Donate Gently Used or New Children's Story Books

For Our Children's Book Table

Our Goal is to Give a book to every child who comes to the Carnival.

You can give your Book Donations to Kathy Cramerding, or you can leave them in the church office marked for Carnival.

All book donations must be received by Sunday February 4th, 2024.

