



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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July 2024 The Oak Notes

Pastor Article

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and MAKE DISCIPLES of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ (Matthew 28:18-20).

Over the last few months, our church board has been wrestling with what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. We began by exploring what the Bible itself has to say about what it means and looks like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. We looked at what makes Jesus so attractive to follow. We reflected on what it means to call Jesus the master of our life. We wrote out personal reasons for following Jesus. We explored Jesus’ strategy of disciple-making and several of the characteristics of a disciple in the gospels.

From there, we worked to come up with a succinct definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and came up with the following definition: **“A disciple is an obedient follower of Jesus Christ who is becoming more like Jesus in word and in deed; they love and serve God and his people and are reproducing that same kind of life in other people.”** The mission statement of the UMC says that we are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. When we say we want to make disciples at Oak Hills UMC, this is what we mean. This is the kind of disciple we want to produce. Someone who obediently follows Jesus and who is becoming more and more like him every single day. Someone who really does love God and his people, and who is reproducing that life in other people. Everything that we do is designed to produce that kind of a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are not looking to simply make a regular church attendee or even a convert to Jesus Christ, but true followers of Jesus.

It raises the question: Are you that kind of a disciple? Are there specific words or phrases in that definition that challenge your understanding of what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Are there things that call you to go deeper or call for some sort of personal growth in your own life?

Take some time to sit down and reflect on that definition.

If you were actually to become that kind of a disciple, what would you need to change? How would you live differently than you are doing right now? What would it look like to truly become obedient to Jesus Christ? What would it look like to really and truly follow him? What would it mean to become more like him in your words and actions each day? What might it look like to truly love him and his people? Who might you need to invest in if you were truly to reproduce the life of discipleship in other people?

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

John’s Study: Tuesday, 6 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



Administrative Board Topics of Interest



(1) We developed a definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and a picture of what that looks like. We believe a disciple is an obedient follower of Jesus Christ who is becoming more like Jesus in word and in deed; they love and serve God and his people and are reproducing that same kind of life in other people. In the next months we will be refining our picture, assessing how our ministries are doing at making that kind of disciple, talking about communication, and developing a discipleship path.

(2) We are working toward launching an after-school ministry when school starts back up in the fall. We are looking for donations of old but working video-game systems/games, gently used board games that teens will enjoy, ping-pong paddles/net/balls, and a foosball or pool table. In the last month, we have completed the painting of Wilke chapel and are currently beginning to acquire needed items. We also have received an additional \$10,000 grant from the Foundation for Evangelism for this project. Part of these funds allow for our Youth Pastor, Ali Scully, to have additional hours each week for this project. Our goal is to acquire all needed items for the space by the time the ministry launches latter this fall.

(3) Home City Ice has made an offer of \$130,000 to purchase the lot behind the garage that has the playground on it. We would invite your input on whether or not we should consider moving forward with this sale. If we were to opt to sell, it would require district approval and a majority church vote at a duly called Special Church Conference later this summer or during our normal fall Church Conference.

(4) Year to date, we are currently \$15,352 in the red. However, \$10,450 of this comes from expenses to fix up the Bridgetown parsonage for rental. These funds were covered from the funds acquired by the sale of the Ebenezer parsonage last year. If you take that out, our bottom line sits at \$4,902 in the red for 2024. That means our current expenses are almost \$1,000 a month more than our current income. Average monthly income sits at \$16,562 and average monthly expenses at \$17,542. Total May income, however, was only \$12,198, the lowest single month of the year; about \$1,200 less than in May 2023. Linda Wise notes that in general we are seeing less checks come in through the church offering plate each week. As we head into the summer vacation season, we encourage you to be sure to remember to give to the church both when you are here and when you are out of town through our church website.

(5) Sissy’s pantry is EXTREMELY low on food right now. They are in need of donations of pretty much everything except vegetables and beans. In addition, Helping Hands is currently OUT of gift cards for the needy. Let’s make a special push this month to replenish food supplies and gift cards for the needy.

(6) The computer that Mary Atkinson uses for our financial record keeping has hit the end of its life cycle and needs to be replaced. We are currently taking bids to replace the computer in the next few months.

(7) We received a small \$250 starter grant from Thrivent for our Vacation Bible School this month.

(8) Due to Vacation Bible School, the next board meeting will be on the third Monday, July 15, 2024.

Announcements

7/1 – Trustees, 6:30 p.m.

7/4 – Office Closed: Happy Independence Day!

7/7-11 – Vacation Bible School – 6:30-8 pm
(Registration 7/7 at 6 pm)

7/10-UMW Luncheon at Olive Garden in Colerain at 12 p.m.,

7/10-13 – Jurisdictional Conference

7/14 - Family Board Game Night, 6-9 pm

7/15 – Finance 6:30 pm; Board Meeting 7 pm

7/18 – Celebration of Women (Tentatively)

7/21 – Passionate Worship, 12 pm

7/26 – Arts and Crafts, 7 pm

7/31 – Community Dinner, 6 pm

8/3 – Back to School Bash, 1-3 pm

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.





Annual Conference 2024 Report

The West Ohio Annual Conference met at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio from Wednesday, May 29 to Saturday, June 1, 2024. The Annual Conference is made up of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates, representing each of the churches across the conference. Pastor Justin Fuhrmann and Sherilyn Reynolds served as the delegates for Oak Hills UMC at this year's annual conference. This year's theme was "God is Able," stemming from Ephesians 3:20-21: "Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always." This was the first conference post-disaffiliation.

Here are some of the most important things that came out of this year's Annual Conference:

(1) Bishop Palmer completes his 12th year as bishop in West Ohio and moves into retirement on August 31. A new bishop will be appointed at the Jurisdictional Conference in July to serve East and West Ohio.

While we are not combining conferences with East Ohio, West Ohio will share a bishop with East Ohio.

(2) Local churches were charged to develop a culture of call within the church. The supply of pastors entering ministry is critically low in comparison to the number of churches currently needing pastors. Just seven people were ordained this year (5 elders and 2 deacons) and only eight were commissioned (4 as provisional elders and 4 as provisional deacons) while some 31 pastors retired from ministry.

(3) The General Conference in May voted in favor of an amendment to the UMC constitution. The proposed amendment gives the US and each central conference the freedom to adapt certain portions of the *Book of Discipline* to their context for missional effectiveness. Since it is a constitutional amendment, it requires ratification by a 2/3 majority vote of all annual conferences. This vote will take place at annual conferences in 2025. West Ohio passed legislation to ensure that there are plenty of educational opportunities throughout the next year to ensure we are fully informed and

prepared to vote next year. Bishop Palmer assured the Annual Conference that the Council of Bishops and other bodies would support the effort and would have materials ready for discussion in the coming months.

(4) We adopted a 2025 budget that calls for a slight reduction of \$51,000 in funding for the conference. The budget prioritized funding for each of our three conference priorities: Engaging youth and next generation ministries, strengthening the ministry pipeline, and alignment of conference resources. In addition, the budget calls for payment of 100% of our general church apportionments and \$500,000 in grants to local churches. The majority of reduction comes from the move to shared episcopal leadership. This budget continues the trend to lower apportionments, down about \$10.3 million since 2018.

(5) Legislation was adopted calling churches to consider the plight of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. The West Ohio Conference was charged with promoting and making available to local churches the study "God's People: A Series of Bible Studies Reflecting on the Holy Land" in addition to sending three people to the Holy Land to discern and bring back recommendations to the conference in 2025.

(6) The Commission on Equitable Compensation presented guidelines for a 3% increase to minimum pastor salaries in 2025. The current minimum salary for a full ordained elder is now at \$47,908 per year. This minimum salary recommendation remains below Pastor Justin's current salary of \$52,000 per year.

(7) Nearly \$30,000 was received to establish the Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer Scholarship at Africa University in Zimbabwe. This scholarship supports the full tuition for all four years for at least 1 student.

(8) We adopted a new slate of clergy and lay conference leadership for the next quadrennium. Pastor Justin will be serving on the District Strategy Committee and the District Mission Foundation for 2025.



OHUMC Family Ministries



VBS: This year's Vacation Bible School will be held from Sunday, July 7 to Thursday, July 11 from 6:30-8 p.m. Each night will include a time of worship, a Bible story, crafts, and games. Our theme is "On the Case," a detective theme exploring the parables of Jesus Christ. Lessons include spending time with God is how we grow (Parable of the Sower), using our gifts is how we serve (Parable of the Talents), spending time with others is how we care (Parable of the Good Samaritan), and sharing our story is how we love (Parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Sons). We are currently in need of volunteers to serve as crew leaders and to help with decorations beforehand. If you can help in any way contact Kim Warman.



VBS Supplies Needed: 4 wooden spoons, 3 bags of Easter grass, 2 Ace bandages, 2 plastic water bottles, 4 regular size crispy rice cereal, and 4 playground balls.



Back to School Bash: The Back to School Bash will be held on Saturday, August 3 from 1-3 p.m. Each ministry in the church is asked to run a game and to pick a school supply to distribute. A follow-up discussion will be held on Sunday, May 19 after church. All teams should have a representative present.



Youth Room/After School Program: We are working toward launching an after-school ministry when school starts back up in the fall. We are looking for donations of old but working video-game systems/games, gently used board games that teens will enjoy, ping-pong paddles/net/balls, and a foosball or pool table. Over the next few months we will be painting and updating Wilke chapel in preparation for this ministry. We have received a Go Grant of \$5000 for this project.



The youth room is coming along nicely. The fresh coat of paint really brightens the room and creates a welcoming space for youth.

In the month of July we will be learning about "loving our neighbors", with readings from Matthew.

Thank you,

Ali

