



Oak Hills United Methodist Church

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Pastor Article

Once upon a time, there was a church. There was a church who prayed bold prayers. There was a church who dreamed big dreams. There was a church that was willing to be used to make a difference in the world. They stepped out in radical faith. They went where God was calling them to go and did what God was asking them to do. What they wanted always took second place to the direction of the Holy Spirit and the needs of the church. They gathered together daily to worship with joy, excitement, and expectation over what God would do. Miracles occurred. So much was happening, the entire world wanted to see what was going on. And God added to their number daily those who were being saved.

There is so much beauty, power, and potential in a church that is truly working right. There is so much Jesus Christ can do through a church that's truly been seized by His vision for what the church could and should be, so much God can do when a church does whatever it takes to impact the world.

I'm reminded of God's vision for the church in Micah 4:1-2: "In the days to come, the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'" It's a powerful picture. Multitudes from every tribe, tongue, nation, and language are depicted as flocking to the temple. Lives deeply changed and renewed by the hope of Jesus Christ as they leave behind their idols and their pagan gods to seek the face of the one true God. It's why we do what we do.

The question is how do we offer that kind of hope to the world? Let me offer four quick thoughts:

(1) We can only offer real hope when we have first experienced it ourselves. In her book *Unbinding the Gospel*, Martha Grace Reese tells a story of a conversation she had with eight pastors. She asked them, "Hey,

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what difference does it make in your own life that you are a Christian?" And what followed was silence. She stared in disbelief, waiting, and finally one said, hesitantly, "Because it makes me a better person???" When we can't clearly articulate how Jesus has changed us, we don't have anything to share. So I ask you, sit down and clearly identify what difference Jesus has made in your life. Consider, how would your life be different if you had not taken that step of faith? How has Jesus changed you?

(2) We can only offer real hope when we live out our faith in the world. Christians often look no different than nonbelievers. We are rattled by the same stuff. We respond in the same way. We act and speak just like the rest of the world, even though we claim to have hope. The thing that made the early church so attractive was how different and distinctive they were from the world around them. People wanted what they had, because they saw how Jesus changed them and how differently they lived.

(3) We can only offer real hope when we speak about our faith. Romans 10:14 says, "How can they call on someone they don't have faith in? And how can they have faith in someone they haven't heard of? And how can they hear without someone speaking to them?" Many times we allow our actions do all the talking. But without words, our actions can easily be misunderstood. True impact comes only when we explain our actions through our words. Someone might be attracted by what we do, but it won't matter if they don't know why. Change comes only when we explain why we do what we do.

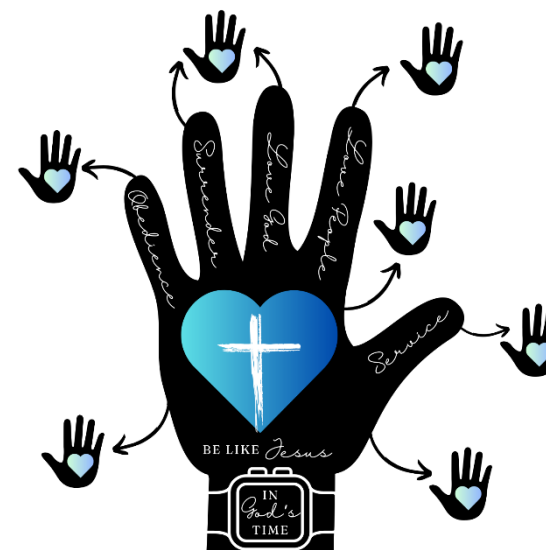
(4) We can only offer real hope when we get involved in the lives of other people. Many times Christians live in their little Christian bubbles. We spend our entire lives in the church and we don't even know anyone who isn't a believer. But if we are going to impact the world, we must get involved with others. Ultimately it comes down to this: Do we really want to be used? Are we really willing to embody his call to be the hope of the world? And if so, will we begin to invest and build relationships with people?



SEPTEMBER

Administrative Board Topics of Interest –

1) Now that we have our definition and picture of a disciple, the board has begun discussing the creation of an intentional discipleship path. Our goal is to intentionally and consistently move people forward toward becoming the kind of disciple we say we want to produce. 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. Think of it like this. When you get in the car, you tend to know where you are going—the destination. Our definition and picture of a disciple is our destination, our goal. The discipleship path is how we get there. Over the next few months, we will be working to define a clear path with next steps that we produce disciples who make disciples.



2) Beverly Boone has elected to step down from her role as church secretary. Bev's last day will be Friday, September 6. Till then she will be working only 9 hours per week (Monday, Thursday, Friday). The Staff-Pastor Parish Relations Committee has decided to hire Ammisty Thomas as her replacement. Ammisty will begin with us on Tuesday, September 10. Her hours will be Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

3) On August 25, the Special Church Conference voted to sell the old Penn property (back lot with the wooden playground) to Home City Ice (18 to 3). This authorizes the Board of Trustees to act on our behalf to finalize the sale. Per the *Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church, the proceeds from this sale can only be used

for future capital improvements beyond the regular church operating budget.

4) Sissy's party is in desperate need of food. We are currently having to spend about \$500 every two weeks to keep up with the demand from those in who are in need in our community. Please consider making regular donations to Sissy's pantry above your tithes and offerings to help with our shortage.

5) July was a good month financially. Due to the receipt of 2 grants for our youth after-school program (\$12,500), July ended in the black with a gain in income of \$13,865. Overall, YTD we run \$1,650 per week in the red. This is a result of expenses accrued in readying the Bridgetown parsonage for rental. Finance chair Bob Schloss says that without those added capital expenses, which were funded by monies received from the sale of the Ebenezer parsonage last year, we are pretty much even for the year.

Congrats Jeff!

A special congratulations to Jeff Waller, who was baptized on Sunday August 4! If you are interested in being baptized please see Pastor Justin.



SEPTEMBER

Announcements

- 9/1-7 – Pastor Vacation
- 9/2 – Labor Day: Office Closed
- 9/2 – Trustees, 6:30 pm
- 9/4 – UMW Luncheon, 12 pm
- 9/8 - Family Board Game Night, 6-9 pm
- 9/9 – Finance 6:30 pm; Board Meeting 7 pm
- 9/15 – Stewardship Team Meeting, 12 pm
- 9/15 – Promotion Sunday
- 9/19—Youth After School Program Begins, 3-4:30 p.m.
- 9/20 – Young at Heart, 7 pm
- 9/25 – Community Dinner, 6 pm
- 9/27 – Arts and Crafts, 7 pm
- 9/29 – Membership Class, 12 pm

Worship – Sunday, 10:30 am

Sissy's Pantry – Wed 6:30-8:00 pm

Zoom Prayer – Thursday, 11 am

New District Superintendent Coming

On August 13, Bishop Palmer announced that effective January 1, Rev. Jenn Lucas will be appointed as the pastor of a new church start in Mason, Ohio. This new church will be working in collaboration with Adam Hamilton's Resurrection United Methodist Church, a church with multiple locations in the Kansas City area. The new District Superintendent of the Great Miami River District starting January 1 will be Rev. Suzanne Allen. Suzanne is currently one of the Pastors at Hyde Park Community UMC in Cincinnati. She has served churches in West Ohio since 1998, including Defiance St. Paul's, Milford Trinity, and Springboro First. In addition, she has served as the Assistant to the District Superintendent and as a Regional Missional Specialist in the former Ohio River Valley District. She is married to Daryl Hams, a RN, who works in public health and harm reduction. She has two kids: Jake, who is a junior at Colorado College, and Zoe, who is currently a senior in high school. She enjoys being outdoors, particularly hiking, kayaking, gardening, and traveling.

Pastor Vacation

Pastor Justin will be on vacation from Sunday, September 1 to Saturday, September 7. Amit Dutta will continue our *Ephesians: Gospel of Grace* series on Sept 1. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Rev. Scott Meeker of Zion Community (513-617-5952). For all other church related business, contact the church office (513-574-1131), Bob Schloss (513-702-7118) or Mary Flannery (513-378-7085).

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

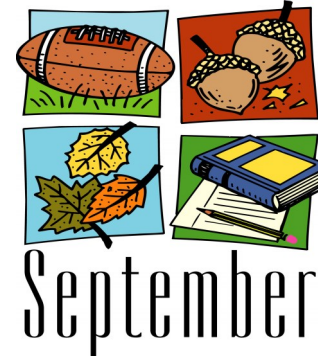


Kroger Rewards

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.

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.



OHUMC Family Ministries



Back to School Bash Report:

On Saturday, August 3, we hosted our first annual Back to School Bash. An estimated 200 people were in attendance for food, games, and distribution of school supplies. The leftover supplies were donated to our partners Springmyer and Oakdale Elementaries. A special thank you to all our church volunteers, Bridgetown Finer Meats for donating the meat for the grill, HICON Inc. for sponsoring the bouncy house, and Western and Southern Financial Group for hosting a table to bless our community even further.



Youth Room/After School Program:

It's hard to believe but the launch of our After-School Ministry is just around the corner! We will be launching this ministry on Thursdays beginning September 19 from 3-4:30 p.m. in Wilke Chapel. All teens grades 6-12 are encouraged to attend and bring their friends! Each week will include snacks, a lesson, and time for fun and fellowship (video games, foosball, ping pong). We are still looking for people who are willing to serve each week alongside Ali. Please see Ali, if you are interested in helping.

Over the last month, we learned that we will receive another \$5,000 from United Methodist Disciple Ministries for this project. That brings that total grant funding for this project to \$20,000 from three different organizations: UM Discipleship Ministries, the Evangelism Foundation, and West Ohio. It is amazing to see how God is already blessing this ministry. We look forward to seeing what God will do!

Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes are now available in the lobby. Pick yours up today! Boxes are due back by Sunday, November 17. If you want, you can also fill a box online at samaritanaspurse.org/buildonline

