



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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January 2025 The Oak Notes

Pastor Article

New Year's is a time of new beginnings. It's a time of year that causes us to pause and to reflect, to reevaluate and reassess our lives. Who are we? Why do we exist? What's really most important in life? What goals and priorities really matter? In other words, it's a time when we seek to define our purpose.

The same is the case in the life of the church. New Year's offers us a really great opportunity to stop and take a really good look at who we are, where we are, why we exist, and where really we're going.

Think of it like this: If you're going on a journey, you can't start driving without knowing where you are and where you're going. You have to know your current location. You have to know your destination, and you have to know how you're going to get there. The same is the case with the church. If we're to make an impact in our world, we have to know who we are, where we are going, and how we're going to get there. Otherwise, we'll be like a hamster exerting a lot of energy but not making any progress.

In Lord of the Rings, Frodo Baggins is tasked with taking the ring of power to Mordor to cast it into the fires of Mount Doom in order to end the reign of the Dark Lord Sauron once and for all. The only problem is: Frodo doesn't know how to get there. So, the Fellowship steps up to give him direction and guidance along the way. But the ring drives Boromir mad, so Frodo sets out on his own and without a guide, he becomes aimlessly lost, wondering around in circles, unable to actually get where he is going.

Directions matter. The path matters. The process matters if we are going to reach our destination. To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is a great goal. It's what Jesus calls us to when he tells us to go and make disciples of all nations. But to actually hit that target, we must first know what a disciple of Jesus is, what our picture is, and how we are actually going to get there.

Over the last year, our church board has worked hard to clearly define what a disciple is, what a disciple actually looks like, and our intentional discipleship step-by-step process to get there. As we begin this New Year, we're going to take 4 weeks to simply zoom in and center ourselves on that picture. We'll talk about how a disciple loves God. How

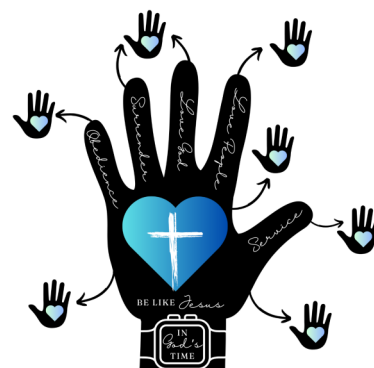
a disciple love's God's people. How a disciple is an obedient follower of Jesus, who is growing and becoming more like Jesus in word and deed. How a disciple serves God and God's people, and finally how a disciple reproduces that same kind of life in other people.

Each week, I'd ask you to consider your own faith: How can you personally move forward and grow in this area of discipleship in 2025? Because ultimately, God desires our faith to grow day in and day out.

My prayer and my challenge for this New Year is that we each would become more like Jesus this year. May God give us the strength to both BE and MAKE disciples of Jesus each and every day this year!

Have a very blessed and Happy New Year!

Pastor Justin



Pastor Vacation

Pastor Justin will be on vacation from Wednesday, December 25 through Saturday, January 3. Amit Dutta will be preaching in pastor's absence on Sunday, December 29. You may also reach out to Amit if you have a pastoral emergency at any time during pastor's vacation. His number is 513-658-2867. For all other church related questions, please contact either the church office (513-574-1131), Administrative Board Chair Mary Flannery (513-378-7085), or Lay Leader Bob Schloss (513-702-7118).



Announcements

- 12/25-1/4 - Pastor Vacation
- 1/1 - Office Closed: Happy New Year!
- 1/6 - Trustees, 6:30 pm
- 1/7 - UMW Luncheon, 12 pm
- 1/8 - Grief Relief, 7-8:30 pm
- 1/12 - Faith Forming Relations, 12 pm
- 1/12 - Family Board Game Night, 6-9 pm
- 1/13 - Finance 6:30 pm; Board Meeting 7 pm
- 1/17 - Young at Heart, 7pm
- 1/19 - Church Potluck, 12 pm
- 1/21 - SPPRC, 5:30 pm
- 1/22 - Grief Relief
- 1/23 - LifeLine Screening
- 1/24 - Arts and Crafts, 7 pm
- 1/25 - Sports Card Show, 9 am-3 pm
- 1/26 - Passionate Worship, 12 pm
- 1/26 - Youth Group Bowling, 3-4:30 pm
- 1/29 - Community Dinner, 6 pm
- 2/5 - Grief Relief 7-8:30 pm
- 2/8 - Winter Carnival, 1-3 pm

Weekly Bible Studies

- Sunday School 9 am
- Women's Group: Mon 10 am
- John's Study: Tuesday, 6 pm
- Pastor's Study (Walking through the Bible): Wed 2 pm
- John's Study: Thursday, 10:30 am
- Youth After School Program: Thurs, 3-4:30 p.m.



Inclement Weather Policy

With winter weather around the corner, we wanted to take time to let you know what to expect. In general, Pastor Justin will do everything possible NOT to cancel worship. If worship must be canceled it will be announced on our church Facebook page, and our church website on Sunday morning no later than 8 a.m. Pastor will still stream the sermon live provided he has internet service at home.

In general, you can expect the following:

(1) Level 3 Snow Emergency (in Hamilton County): All in person worship services, church activities, and meetings will be canceled and the church office will be closed. Worship online will still proceed as scheduled provided that Pastor Justin has internet service at home.

(2) Level 2 Snow Emergency (in Hamilton County): All in person church activities and meetings will be canceled. Pastor Justin and Mary Flannery will determine whether in-person worship services are canceled on a case-by-case basis. If in-person worship is canceled, worship online will still proceed as scheduled provided that Pastor Justin has internet at home. Pastor Justin and Debbie McCane will determine if the church office is closed on a case-by-case basis and may work from home if needed. Each person is encouraged to use their own wisdom and discernment to determine if they will go out.

(3) Level 1 Snow Emergency (in Hamilton County): All in-person worship services, church activities, and meetings will proceed as scheduled provided Pastor Justin can get to church. The church office will be open. Each person is encouraged to use their own wisdom and discernment to determine if they go out.

Worship - Sunday, 10:30 am

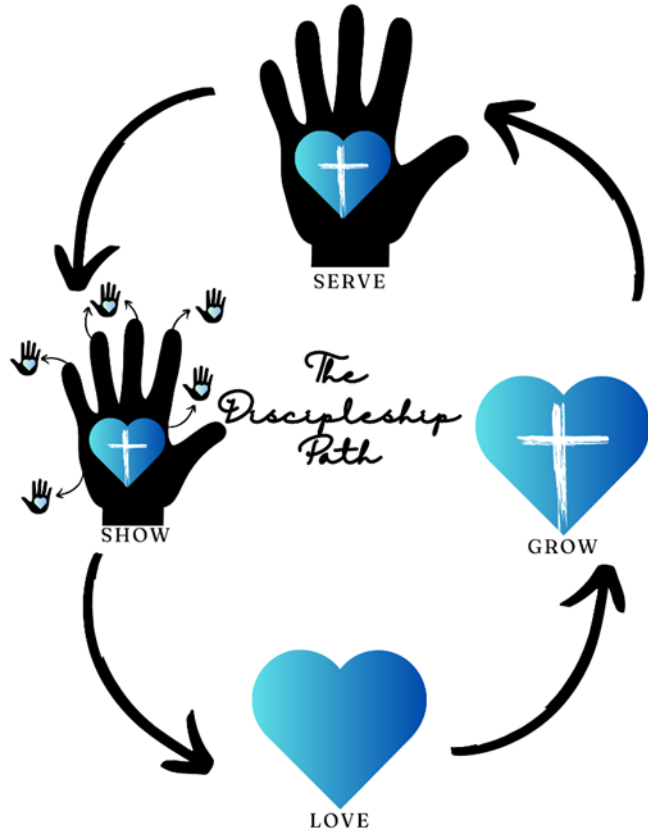
Sissy's Pantry - Wed 6:30-8:00 pm

Zoom Prayer - Thursday, 11 am

January

Administrative Board Topics of Interest –

1) The board finalized and adopted our discipleship path centered around the terms love (heart), grow (cross), serve (hand), and show (reproduction). See the image below .



- 2) We reviewed, brainstormed, and assessed our 2025 goals in light of our work on our discipleship path. Our work will continue in the areas of community involvement and outreach, children's and youth ministry, discipleship, hospitality, and financial stability in 2025. A few things of note: (1) We are exploring moving two a second community dinner each month, with a brief worship/devotion time. (2) We are looking to launch another hobby/affinity based group, possibly a book club in conjunction with the local library, but need leadership for the group. (3) We will be looking to develop an intentional marketing and hospitality plan next year. And, finally, (4) we are looking to for people who would be interested learning how to personally disciple others. If you would be interested in helping with any of these, please see Pastor Justin. Priority will be given to those things with the greatest interest.
- 3) 3) The sale of the old Penn Property (lower playground lot) to Home City Ice has been finalized. Final

proceeds resulted in a net income of \$129,558 for the property. Per *The Book of Discipline*, these funds can only be used for capital improvements and maintenance. Home City Ice did agree to take full responsibility of the retaining wall and to give us full usage of the lot as long as the church exists. Capital proceeds now stand at \$262,000 as a result of this sale and the sale of the Ebenezer parsonage in 2023.

4) The West Ohio Conference has awarded us a \$8,000 Go Grant for 2025. This grant is to cover the renovation of our "prayer room" into a welcome center/café so that we can improve hospitality. Half of the funds will be received in February and half in July. We hope to have it completed by Easter.

5) The trustees report that the new awnings have been installed outside, and the trim, baseboards, and painting of the doors in the fellowship hall should be finished up by the end of December.

6) Due to the sale of the old Penn Property, November saw a net income of \$111,275. Without the sale, we had a loss of \$18,583. The majority of this loss (\$10,950) was a result of the waterproofing project on the old parsonage, which was covered by capital proceeds from the sale of the Ebenezer parsonage, the new awnings (\$1,530), the planned painting of the fellowship hall (\$596), and an unexpected sewer backup downstairs, which costed \$946 to repair. Without those our November loss was \$4,561. Year to date, we stand at an income of \$87,062, due to the sale of the old Penn property. Without that, we are running a loss of \$42,999, of which \$22,595 was work on the old parsonage covered by capital proceeds. That means, we stand at roughly \$20,404 in the red for the general fund in 2024. We encourage you to help us finish the year strong as you give to your church in your year-end giving in December.



OHUMC Family Ministries



Family Ministries

Winter Carnival – February 8

Our annual Winter Carnival will be on Saturday, February 8 from 1-3 pm. There will be games, popcorn, and crafts for kids of all ages. Each child will receive a free book. We are in need of donations of new or gently used children's books. Volunteers are needed to help set up on Friday, February 7 at 2 pm and to help run games on Saturday. Please see Kathy Cramerding if you have any questions or wish to serve.

Birthday Party for Jesus and Breakfast with Santa

A big thank you to everyone who helped out with our Birthday Party for Jesus and Breakfast with Santa in December. The event was a great success. Here a few pictures from the event:



Looking Ahead:

- Jan 26: 3pm-4:30pm Bowling with youth group
- Feb 23: Volunteering at Meals on Wheels 12-2pm
- Mar 23: TBD (Activity chosen by youth)
- Apr 10: End of School Year Party

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.

Vanco

Did you know that you can give to the church through your phone? Simply download the free Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app on your phone, search for Oak Hills United Methodist Church, and then set up an account. Once it's set up you will be able to give either a one time or reoccurring gift. You can also contact Linda Wise (513-205-8104; lpwise@fuse.net) to set up an automatic payment 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.





Oak Hills United Methodist Church Discipleship

Path

Mission:

We exist to MAKE DISCIPLES of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Vision:

To be a place where people GROW in faith through the passionate love of Jesus as we SHOW the LOVE of Jesus to the world.

Definition of a Disciple:

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.

Discipleship Path:

(1) LOVE: A disciple of Jesus Christ loves God and God's people.

Goal: To connect people to God's love through worship and to one another in Christian fellowship.

Scriptural Basis: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-30).

Image: Heart

Priority Area: Sunday Morning Worship

Team: Passionate Worship

Ministries: Sunday Worship, Online Stream, Hospitality, Resurrection Band, Puppets, Hobby Ministries
Needed Ministry: Regular monthly or bi-monthly fellowship dinners after church to build community.

Discipleship Movement Target: To get people coming to IN PERSON Sunday worship every single week.

Invitation: Invite people into small groups/classes, service opportunities, and outreach opportunities.

2) GROW: A disciple is an obedient follower of Jesus, who becomes more like Jesus in word and deed.

Goal: To encourage daily, ongoing growth in obedience and Christlikeness as followers of Jesus Christ.

Scriptural Basis: "Jesus said: If you hold my teaching, you really are my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32).

(Image: Heart with a Cross

Priority Areas: Small Groups, Youth and Kids Ministry

Team: Faith Forming Relationships

Ministries: Small Groups, Sunday School, Kids Min (JAM, SS), Youth Group, Youth After School, Prayer
Needed Classes: Core Principles (What is a Disciple), Core Practices (Spiritual Disciplines), Core Beliefs (Walking through the Bible, Foundations of Faith/Theology, Holiness)

Discipleship Movement Target:

(1) To get everyone to have a regularly, daily devotion of prayer and Bible study every day of the week.

(2) To get everyone involved in a least one small group throughout the week (people grow best when they are in community with other believers in prayer and Bible Study throughout the week).

Invitation: Invite people into service opportunities and to one on one discipleship opportunities.

(3) SERVE: A disciple serves God and God's people.

Goal: To encourage service of God and God's people through the use of one's spiritual gifts in the church.

Scriptural Basis: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45).

Image: Hand with Heart and Cross

Priority Area: Ministry Teams, Sissy's Pantry

Team: Risk Taking Missions

Ministries: Ministry Teams and Committees/Boards, Sissy's Pantry, Risk Taking Missions Opportunities
Needed Classes: Core Purposes (Discover Your SHAPE/Gifts)
Possible Needed Ministries: Regular Mission Trip/Service Project Opportunities, Leadership Development

Discipleship Target Movement: To get everyone serving in some way in some ministry of the church.

Invitation: Invite people to share their faith and into one on one discipleship opportunities.

(4) SHOW: A disciple reproduces the life of a disciple in other people.

Goal: To equip people to share their faith with others and for one on one investment in other believers.

Scriptural Basis: "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).

Image: Full Picture of a Disciple

Priority Areas: Community Involvement and Outreach, Personal Disciplemaking

Team: Radical Hospitality

Ministries: School Ministry, Sissy's Pantry, Community Dinner, Kids Events, Advertising, Hobby Ministries

Needed Classes: How to Share Your Faith, The Ways of the Alongsider

Needed Ministry: Personal Disciplemaking

Discipleship Target Movement:

(1) To get everyone sharing their faith with non-believers and regularly inviting people to church.

(2) To get everyone investing in at least one believer in a one on one (or triad) discipleship relationship.

Invitation: Invite people to invite new people into relationship with Jesus and to church.