



**Oak Hills United Methodist Church**  
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**April 2025 The Oak Notes**

**Pastor Article - Easter Reflection**

*“But on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ Then they remembered his words. When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering what had happened” (Luke 24:1-12).*

Notice the mindset of the women as this story opens. We see what they are thinking through their actions. They set out to go to a tomb. They set out looking for a corpse. They set out to embalm a dead body. They come to the tomb in mourning, with grief and tears and spices. They went there looking for the dead. Jesus had died on the cross and they didn’t think there was any possibility for anything else. Yet, when they get there, the stone is rolled away and they hear the greatest news ever told: “He is not here; he is risen!” The crucifixion may have said it was over, but the resurrection says, there is still hope. Crucifixion and death do not ultimately have the final word; only the resurrection has the final word.

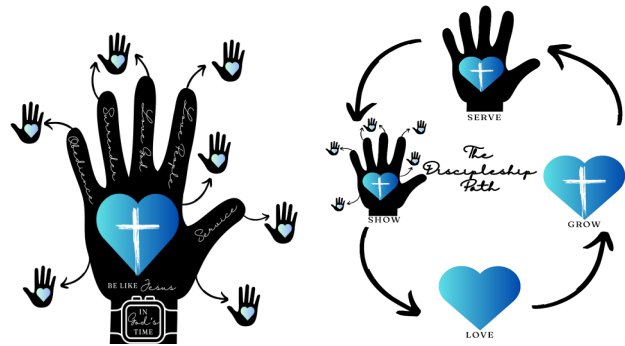
Notice how the story begins. It opens with the word BUT. Jesus was dead BUT on the first day of the week. Jesus was buried BUT at dawn. It may look like hope is gone,

BUT Jesus is risen. It make look like it’s final, BUT it’s not over. The word BUT appears three times in this passage: But on the first day of the week (1:1), but when they entered (1:3), but the men said (1:5). But is a powerful word. It declares that something has changed, that something has shifted. What was is now no more. The message of Easter is that a new beginning has come. Crucifixion is not the end. Death is defeated. What was is now no more.

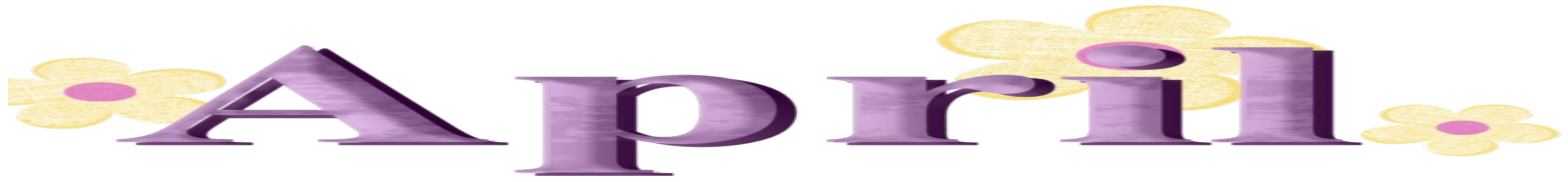
I wonder: What are the dead places in your life? What are the places where it looks like there’s no way to move forward? What are the places where your hope is dead and gone? What are the tombs that are staring you in the face? What is it that keeps you up at night and makes you feel like there’s no hope?

The message of Easter is this: If it is dead, if it looks dead, appears dead, or seems dead, it doesn’t have to stay that way. Jesus Christ has risen to bring new hope and new life into the deadest, driest, most hopeless places of human life. He is risen from the grave! And his resurrection is OUR resurrection. Stop clinging to the tomb. Embrace the good news of Easter. He is not here! He is risen! A new day has come.

Happy Easter!



*Pastor Justin*



Administrative Board Topics of Interest

- 1) Renovation on the prayer room has begun. We are working on converting this room to a café and welcome center as a way to improve hospitality. The work is expected to be completed by Easter. The cost of the project will be covered by a \$8,000 grant we received from the West Ohio Conference.
- 2) Our 2024 Year End Report reflects a number of things to be thankful for: (1) We welcomed 4 people to membership by profession of faith and 1 by transfer from another United Methodist Church. (2) We baptized 3 people. (3) Our average online attendance grew from 48 to 61, while our in-person average attendance only decreased by 3 each week. This reflects an overall total increase in worship attendance of 10 people each week, or 15%. And (4) our small groups, Sunday School classes, and Bible studies grew from 84 to 93 distinct participants (kids, youth, and adults) throughout the year, an increase of 11%. Each of these numbers reflects a life that is being touched through what God is doing here at Oak Hills!
- 3) We have established a comprehensive greeting and hospitality rotation that has gone into effect. Folks will be greeting in the parking lot each week, at the doors, and there will be hosts available to serve as the appointed friend for guests that may arrive each week. We are still looking for a few folks to be a part of following-up with folks who are missing each week. Contact Pastor Justin if you can help.
- 4) We began brainstorming possible ways to increase our impact through advertising. Over the next few months, we will be seeking to zone in on two or three things that might expand what we are already doing in this area. Currently, we are using Facebook marketing for our big kids’ events (hence our increase in attendance the last few years), and we get invites and banners for Christmas and Easter.
- 5) The trustees report that they are looking at replacing the siding on the Bridgetown parsonage. They are also purchasing an AED device and two Life Vac devices to improve church emergency readiness.
- 6) We reviewed our 2025 goals to see what progress has been made and discussed some next steps.
- 7) Our Radical Hospitality and Fundraising Teams are working toward hosting a car show this summer.

Holy Week Events

- (1) Palm/Passion Sunday (April 13, 10:30 a.m.): We re-live 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 to the cross on Good Friday, for Jesus did not come to be the kind of messiah we want; he came to suffer and die for the sin of the world.
- (2) Maundy Thursday (April 17, 7 p.m.): Maundy Thursday is the celebration of the final meal that Jesus spends with his disciples before his execution (the Last Supper). This year we reflect on the final night of Jesus’ life from the Last Supper to his crucifixion with a Tenebrae service with Holy Communion.
- (3) Good Friday (April 18, 1-4 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 the call to give it up and follow him. Come anytime you want between 1 and 4 p.m. Spend as much or as little time as you need working through the stations.
- (4) Easter Celebration (April 20, 10:30 a.m.): We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Join us as we come together to celebrate the greatest news ever told. We learn to give up death as we stop clinging to the tomb and learn to live into the new life that’s found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



**Holy Week**





**Announcements**

- 4/2 - UMW Luncheon, 12 pm, O’Charleys Western Hills
- 4/2 – Grief Relief, 6:30 pm
- 4/7 – Trustees, 6 pm; Finance, 6:30 pm; Board, 7 pm
- 4/9 – Dinner and Devotions, 6 pm
- 4/10 - SPPRC 7 pm
- 4/12 – Easter Party, Egg Hunt, and Silent Auction, 1-3 pm
- 4/13 - Family Board Game Night, 6-9 pm
- 4/16 – Grief Relief, 6:30 pm
- 4/17 – Maundy Thursday Worship, 7 pm
- 4/18 – Good Friday Prayer Stations, 1-4 pm
- 4/18 – Young at Heart, 7pm
- 4/20 – Easter Worship, 10:30 am
- 4/21 – Office Closed: Easter Holiday
- 4/25 – Arts and Crafts, 7 pm
- 4/26 - Yard Sale 9-1 pm
- 4/27 - SPPRC 12 pm
- 4/28 - Fundraising (Team 5) 6 pm
- 4/30 – Community Dinner, 6 pm
- 4/30 – Grief Relief, 6:30 pm
- Worship – Sunday, 10:30 am
- Sissy’s Pantry – Wednesday, 6:30-8:00 pm

**Weekly Bible Studies**

- Sunday School 9 am
- Ways of the Alongsider: Sunday, 12 pm
- Women’s Group: Monday 10 am
- John’s Study: Tuesday, 6 pm
- Pastor’s Study: Wednesday, 2 pm
- John’s Study: Thursday, 10:30 am
- Youth After School Program: Thurs, 3-4:30 p.m.

**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**

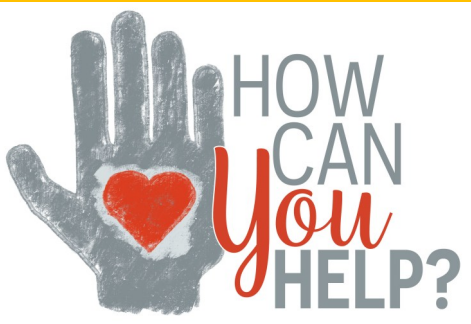
Did you know that you can give to the church through your phone? Simply download the free Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app on your phone, search for Oak Hills United Methodist Church, and then

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.

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



**Family Ministries**

**Easter Party and Egg Hunt – April 13**

Our annual Easter Party and Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, April 12, from 1-3 pm. The event will include the sharing of the Easter story, a craft, a silent auction for adults, and an egg hunt for kids. We are in need of donations of plastic eggs and candy. We are expecting 200 kids so we will need 200 more plastic eggs and 300 cupcakes (so parents can have some too). This year we will be having the kids turn in eggs for a bag of candy so you can bring any kind of individually wrapped candies, including chocolate. We are also in need of donations baskets and items for the silent auction. Please have all candy and eggs to the church by no later than Sunday March 30. We will also need help putting together bags of candy on Saturday, April 5 at 9 a.m. If you have any questions please contact Kathy Cramerding at 513-348-9555.



Blessings, church friends. We are flourishing in the After School Program with 13 kids now signed up! If you know any 6-12 graders who would like join the ASP, please reach out to Ali.

In March we had a gift card giveaway. Each teen that brought a friend, was entered in a drawing to receive a gift card. This has helped in growing this group.

Regular events are being planned for the summer.

Don’t forget the after church info meeting on April 13.

**Looking Ahead:**

Apr 10: End of School Year Party