



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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July 2025 The Oak Notes

Pastor Article - Independence Day

When the initial battles of the Revolutionary War began in 1775, very few actually wanted to break ties with Great Britain. Those that did were considered radicals. By the following year, that all had changed. On June 7, 1776, the Continental Congress gathered in Independence Hall, where Richard Henry Lee introduced a motion calling for the independence of the colonies from Great Britain. After much debate, the vote was postponed and Thomas Jefferson and John Adams (among others) were appointed to draw up an official Declaration of Independence. On July 2, 1776, they reconvened and Henry's resolution passed. However, it wasn't until July 4, that the Declaration of Independence was formally adopted and signed. And so, each year, on July 4th, we celebrate our independence and our freedom as a nation.

Freedom, and in particular, freedom of religion is at the core of who we are as a nation and a people.

This season reminds me how Christians all over the world are still unable to meet together in worship. How in many places it is illegal to assemble, illegal to worship, illegal to do things we take for granted.

Our founding fathers had the foresight to fight for the freedom to worship and, for that, I'm thankful.

But of all the freedoms we have, the one I am most thankful for is the freedom that's found in Jesus. Jesus Christ came to set us free, to set us free from the bondage of sin and death. But he didn't just come to set us free FROM something, he also came to set us free FOR something. Jesus died that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). He died that we might be who we were made to be.

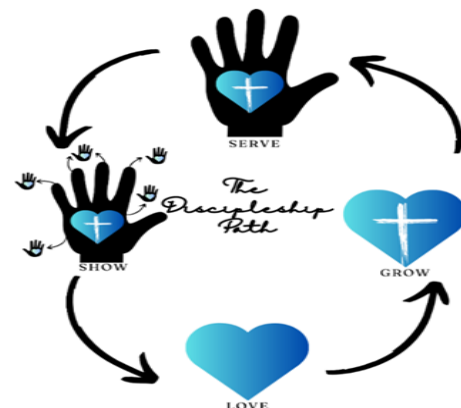
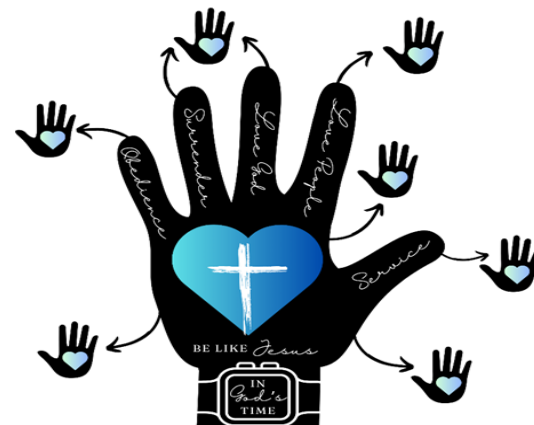
Galatians 5:13 puts it this way: "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather [use your freedom] to serve one another in love."



Freedom is not freedom to do whatever we please. It's freedom to become who we were meant to be. Freedom to live as Jesus desires us to live. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Gal 5:1).

Happy 4th of July!

Pastor Justin

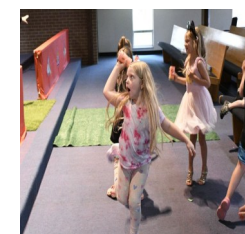


OHUMC Family Ministries



Family Ministries

Vacation Bible School



It's hard to believe that we are already 1/3 of the way through summer break! During Sunday school, the kids have been learning about dealing with changes, forgiveness and how to love each other like Jesus loves us. We will continue to highlight these lessons throughout the summer.

We have some fun events coming up and we hope you'll join us!!

Looking Ahead:

Saturday, July 12th: 2-4pm Bowling Stumps Lane

Pool Party at Freudemann's: 5-7pm Date TBD



Back to School Bash – Saturday August 9, 11 am-1pm. Each team, committee, and ministry of the church is asked to host a game booth and to give prizes (school supplies). We are asking each group to provide enough school supplies for 200 kids and/or teens. Each booth should have either a generic option that could be used for teens and kids (e.g., folders, notebooks, pens, pencils) or if you have an elementary specific item (crayons, glue sticks, etc.) another more generic item for junior and senior high teens. If you are not a part of a team, committee, or ministry of the church, donations of school supplies are always appreciated. Please see Kathy Cramerding for any questions and to volunteer to help.



Announcements

- 7/2 - UMW Luncheon, 12 pm
- 7/4 – Office Closed: Independence Day
- 7/6 – Back to School Bash Planning, 12 pm
- 7/7 – Trustees, 6 pm
- 7/9 – Later New Testament Letters Study Begins, 2 pm
- 7/9 - Dinner and Devotions, 6 pm
- 7/12 – Youth Bowling @ Stumps Lane, 2-4 pm
- 7/12— Men’s Breakfast, 9 am at Bob Evans
- 7/13 – Family Game Night, 6-9 pm
- 7/14 – Finance 6:30 pm; Board 7 pm
- 7/18 – Young at Heart, 7 pm
- 7/25 – Arts and Crafts, 7 pm
- 7/26 – Sports Card Show and Bake Sale, 9 am – 3 pm
- 7/30 – Community Dinner, 6 pm
- 8/3 – Church Picnic, 2 p.m. @ Dave and Karen Freude-manns
- 8/9 – Back to School Bash, 11am-1pm

- Worship – Sunday, 10:30 am
- Sissy’s Pantry – Wednesday, 6:30-8:00 pm
- Zoom Prayer – Thursday, 11 am

Weekly Bible Studies

- Sunday School 9 am
- Women’s Group: Monday 10 am
- John’s Study: Tuesday, 6 pm
- Pastor’s Study (Later NT Letters): Wednesday, 2 pm.
- John’s Study: Thursday, 10:30 am



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.



Administrative Board Topics of Interest

- 1. Due to Pastor’s vacation and Vacation Bible School the church board did not meet during the month of June. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 14 at 7 p.m.
- 2. Income for the month of May was \$14,678. Expenses came in at \$16,290 for a net loss of \$1,612. Annual income through May is \$101,024 and expenses stand at \$100,447 for a gain of \$577 year to date.

Annual Conference Report

The 56th Session of the West Ohio Annual Conference was held May 28-31, 2025 at Capital University in Columbus. Pastor Justin Fuhrmann and Sherilyn Reynolds served as our delegates. Michael Kleimeyer also served as an at-large delegate for the Great Miami River District. Bishop Hee-Soo Jung presided. The theme for this year’s conference “Rise Up Be-loved” comes from Mark 5:35-43, where Jesus raises Jairus’ daughter from the dead. Guest speakers and teachers included former West Ohio Bishop Bruce Ough, Rev. Dr. AHYun Lee (Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, Care, and Psychotherapy at Garret- Evangelical Theological Seminary), and West Ohio’s own Rev. Dee Stickley-Minor (Executive Director for Mission Engagement for United Methodist Global Ministries). Key items of note and discussion included:

- 1. The West Ohio Conference is moving toward merging with the East Ohio Conference to form one Ohio Conference after the next Jurisdictional Conference in 2028. The proposed 2026 budget created several shared conference level staff positions between the two conferences and a resolution was passed calling for both West and East Ohio to support the discernment process through prayer. One piece of legislation was jointly presented at each conference by members from both conferences this year. We have been sharing one Bishop with East Ohio since September of 2024. Bishop Jung is hosting listening sessions with district leadership in each of the two conferences as we prayerfully discern.
- 2. The most important thing we did was to vote on a statement on Worldwide Regionalization. This statement was a proposed amendment to our United Methodist Constitution, which allows each region of the church to adapt certain portions of the Book of Discipline to their ministry context. It calls for the creation of both a General Book of Discipline, which includes the parts that cannot be adapted (doctrine, our theological task, the ministry of all Christians, and our social principles), and *Regional Books of Discipline*, which outline the adaptations that each region has made for their specific context. Things that can be adapted to each context include ordination requirements, standards for membership,

standards for marriage, funeral rites, and adaptations such as are necessary to local laws. It also creates a separate US Regional Conference (comparable to the current Central Conferences which will be renamed as Regional Conferences). The Regional Conferences oversee adaptations to the Book of Discipline for their specific region and the US Regional Conference will discuss all US centric discussions (such as pensions) so that the General Conference can focus on truly worldwide issues. Adaptation of this amendment requires an aggregate 2/3 majority of all Annual Conferences worldwide, so we will not know the results until some-time later in the fall, when it is released by the General Secretary.

3. We voted on three additional amendments to our United Methodist Constitution that were adopted at the 2024 General Conference, including (1) adding the words gender” and “ability” to the existing statement on inclusiveness; (2) taking a stronger stance against racism by naming white privilege, white supremacy, and colonialism, and taking an active anti-racism stance; and (3) adapting the statement on clergy education to allow for an M.Div. equivalent overseas. Adaptation of these amendments require an aggregate 2/3 majority of all Annual Conferences worldwide, so we will not know the results until fall.

4. The 2026 West Ohio Conference budget proposed a reduction of 3% from the 2025 budget, reflecting an ongoing commitment to reducing apportionments for local churches. This is, by in large, a direct result of a reduction in conference staffing and the move to shared East and West Ohio positions. Increases in the budget were given to the areas of immigration and youth and young adult ministry.

5. Legislation was adopted to require local churches to submit a renewable energy plan to the District Board of Church Location and Building before approval of any new building plan and to encourage all churches to take action to move toward making their facilities more green and energy efficient.

6. Legislation was adopted to create an LGBTQ+ Task Force to support and advocate for LGBTQ+ candidates going through the ordination process in West Ohio.

(7) Legislation was adopted to create an Immigration Law and Justice Network site in Ohio and to create a special “Welcoming Migrants” offering Sunday each year to support its work. Moreover, the West Ohio budget included an additional \$141,000 to support immigration related matters for clergy.

