



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

### Pastor Article

Friends, I have the great privilege of inviting you to attend a unique training event on Centering Prayer coming up on Saturday, September 27 from 9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

As you know, over the last several months, we have been working on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. We have laid out our definition of a disciple and a discipleship path with four specific steps: Love, Grow, Serve, and Show. (1) A disciple of Jesus loves God and God's people. (2) A disciple of Jesus grows in their love for God and God's people. (3) A disciple of Jesus serves God and God's people, and (4) a disciple of Jesus shows the love of God and God's people by reproducing that life in other people.

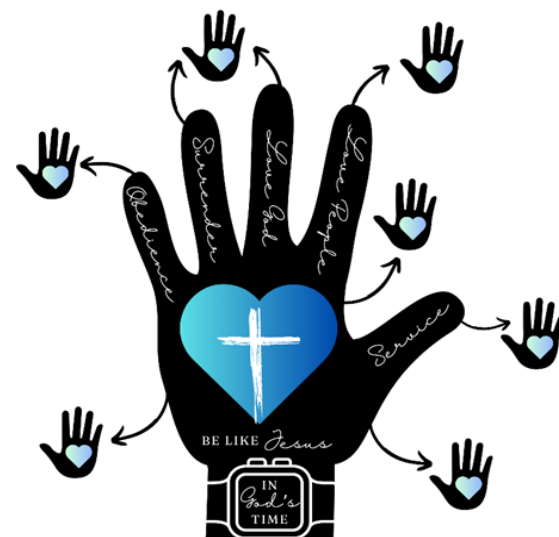
One of the ways we grow is when we learn to experience God's presence and connect deeply with Jesus in prayer. We all know we are to pray, but many times, we haven't been trained or taught how we can actually do that. I don't know about you, but one of the things I struggle with in prayer is silencing the noise around me; those distractions that always seem to emerge and get me thinking about other things when I go to the Lord in prayer. I'm praying about one thing and then a random thought pops in my head or I hear a noise, and all of a sudden, my focus is gone and I'm off thinking about something else.

Centering prayer is a type of prayer that is about learning to silence the noise around us that we might experience the presence of God more fully. It was developed under the desert monks in the early church, was popularized later by St. Teresa of Avila in the 16th century A.D., and most recently was revived again by Thomas Merton (1915-1968), a prominent Catholic monk and mystic. It is a contemplative method of prayer that centers in on a sacred word (often an attitude, characteristic, or the name of God) as a way of silencing the noise. When I use it, it's generally the word holy, but it can be any characteristic of God. You speak that word slowly, over and over, as a way of focusing your thoughts on who God is till the distractions drift away and you are left in the stillness simply dwelling in God's presence.

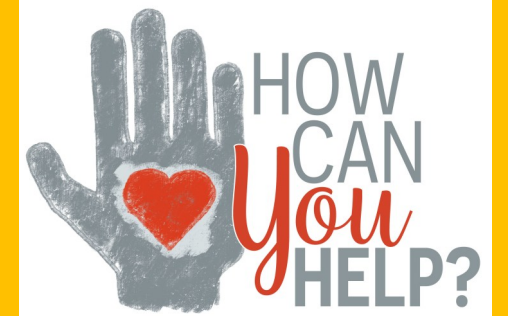
It's a type of prayer that's more about experiencing the God who comes to meet with us, than listing off our needs. The training will be led by the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Contemplative Outreach Center. For more information, you can go to their website at <https://cogcnky.org>. I would encourage you to join us as we learn to go deeper in prayer and learn to experience God's presence among us in a new way.

I conclude with Jesus' words in Matthew 6:5-8: "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

*Pastor Justin*



# OHUMC Family Ministries



## Family Ministries

### Back to School Bash was a success!



### Operation Christmas Child/Shoe Box

There will be a Project Leadership Workshop at Friendship Baptist Church, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30 (Friday) Sherilyn is going and would like to have others join her. A new addition this year, they will have a recipient of a Shoe Box there from the Middle East and he will give testimony on how God worked in his life through the Shoe Box. This will be an awesome view of this ministry that we do not usually get the chance to witness.

Please reach out to Sherilyn if you are interested in attending because she will need to RSVP.

## Trunk or Treat

Saturday, October 25 1-3 pm.

We will need people to sign up to decorate their car trunks and pass out candy. We will also need donations of wrapped candy.







**Administrative Board Topics of Interest**

1) The month of July was another positive month financially. Our income for the month was \$20,367 and our expenses \$17,196, for a net gain of \$3,171. Of this, \$4,000 came from grants and \$3,220 was a gift to Sissy’s Pantry from the Cheviot Eagles. This brings our year-to-date gain to \$11,994. This is up from a \$6,343 loss at this time in 2024. As a result, the finance team had decided to increase apportionment payments beginning in September from \$457 per month to \$1,000 per month. We budgeted to pay \$2,984 in district apportionments (100%) and \$2,500 in conference apportionments (12.5%). This increase will bring our conference apportionment payments to \$4,672 (23%) for the year. Thank you for your faithfulness in giving and for all the work you have done to move us toward financial stability.

2) The \$175,000 in capital proceeds that we invested in a CD at 4.4% 5 months ago has now generated \$3,000 in interest and that that has been added to the principle and reinvested for another term. These funds came from the sale of the Ebenezer parsonage and the back lot with the playground. The trustees still have \$89,231 available in capital savings that can be used for upcoming improvement projects.

3) The trustees have decided to wait on the replacement of carpet in the sanctuary at this time. The flat portions of the roof need to be replaced first. That is a more urgent need and will likely cost around \$50,000. Those funds would come from the \$89,231 currently available in capital savings.

4) Based on the number of bags and hot dogs we handed out, we are estimate around 200 people attended our recent Back to School Bash. One family who was present came to worship the next day.

5) At the request of our grief group, there will be a training on centering prayer on Saturday, September 27 from 9 am to 1:30 pm led by the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Contemplative Outreach.

6) Risk Taking Mission is currently doing our annual Festival of Sharing, gathering resources for flood buckets, hygiene kits, period kids, and kids school kits. A list of needed items are available in the resource stand in the lobby. All items must be returned no later than Sunday, September 21. Also, be on the lookout for information about shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child in the weeks to come.

7) We have recruited four people to be part of our Disciple-making Practitioners team (Kris Smith, Karen Freudemann, Sherilyn Reynolds, and Tim Janson). Pastor Justin will be

meeting with them 2 times a month. The goal is to model and train them on how to personally disciple others in our congregation.

8) Radical hospitality is asking for additional assistance for our two community dinners each month. If you come to the dinner and are not serving in the pantry after, please stay and help clean up. Thanks!

**Celebrate With Us!**

At our church picnic in August, we had the privilege of baptizing Holly Scudder and Marjie Bauer.



**Announcements**

- 9/1 – Labor Day: Office Closed
- 9/1 – Trustees, 6 pm
- 9/3 – UMW Luncheon, 12 pm
- 9/4 – Youth After School Program Resumes, 3-4:30 pm
- 9/7 – Disciplemaking Practitioners, 12 pm
- 9/8 – Finance 6:30 pm; Board 7 pm
- 9/10 - Dinner and Devotions, 6 pm
- 9/14 – Passionate Worship, 12 pm
- 9/14 – Family Game Night, 6-9 pm
- 9/19 – Young at Heart, 7 pm
- 9/21 – Church Potluck, 12 pm
- 9/21 – Disciplemaking Practitioners, 1 pm (following potluck)
- 9/24 – Community Dinner, 6 pm
- 9/26 – Arts and Crafts, 7 pm
- 9/27 – Centering Prayer Training, 9 am – 1:30 pm (lunch provided)
- 9/27 – Sports Card Show, 9 am-12 pm
- 9/28 – Stewardship Team, 12 pm

- 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): Romans Starting Wednesday, 9/10, 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.

**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.

