



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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November 2025 The Oak Notes

Pastor Article Thanksgiving

One of my favorite thanksgiving hymns is *Now Thank We All Our God*. Its words are a powerful declaration of praise and thanksgiving to the God who has blessed us from our birth, through all of life, and for all eternity. But what you probably didn't know is that that hymn was written during the height of the 30 Years War, at a time when Germany was racked by disease, pestilence, and plague. City after city was surrounded, besieged, and cut off from food and water. Eventually, people began to die and, with no way to bury the bodies outside the city, disease became even more widespread. Hundreds died every single day. In the city of Eilenburg, one of the hardest hit cities in the region, was a pastor by the name of Martin Rinkart. By some accounts, he performed an estimated 50 funerals every single day and nearly 5,000 during his time in Eilenburg, including that of his wife and a few members of his own family.

Yet, one night, as they sat around their dinner table with nothing but a few scraps to call a meal, he penned the words of that famous hymn: "Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices, who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices; who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today. O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us, with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us; and keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed and free us from all ills in this world and the next. All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given; the Son and him who reigns with them in highest heaven; the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore; for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore." It was out of the most difficult and emotionally draining circumstances that one could face that came a declaration of praise.

The truth is: Faith is easy when everything goes our way: when life is good, and the sun is shining down on us, and everything is exactly as we thought it would be. But what happens when trial, hardship, crisis, or difficulty hits? What happens when pain shakes us and our faith is put to the test? The real question is: How will we respond when life gets hard? Will our faith be tossed to

and fro by the circumstances of this life or will we choose to respond with an attitude of praise and thanksgiving just like Martin Rinkart?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says this: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Paul does not say to give thanks FOR all circumstances, but IN all circumstances. In other words, he's not calling us to give thanks FOR all the hard things in life; he's not even implying all things are good, but he's calling us to embrace a posture of gratitude even in crisis. Thanksgiving is not determined by what happens to us; it's a posture and a choice we choose to take.

Steven Furtick says: "There is always something to give thanks for when we've made the decision to be a thankful person." I wonder: How might you chose a posture of thanksgiving even in times of difficulty?

I challenge you this month. Focus on what you have to be thankful for; not all the problems you face. Focus on what you have. Count the blessings that are there. You will always find what you look for.

Have a very blessed and Happy Thanksgiving!

Pastor Justin





All Saints Remembrance

It's been said that God has given us two great lamps: the lamp of hope that lights the future and the lamp of memory that illumines the past. We spend a good bit of time in the church looking toward the future, thinking about the fullness of the kingdom of God. But it is right and good that we should also look back, to remember and pay tribute to those who have gone on to glory. It is for that reason, that since the early days of the church, the church has paused on All Saints Sunday to look back and remember those faithful saints who have died over the course of the last year. This year, during our All Saints Remembrance on Nov 16, we will remember the following people: Diane Dektas, Gail Macke, Marcie (Green) Misch, Phyliss Schaffer, Nick Spradlin, Dick Yards and Roger Spradlin. May God give us grace that in remembering their lives and their faith, we be inspired to run the race with perseverance and that we join with them in glory.



Advent/Christmas Readings and Hanging of the Greens

We are looking for readers to light the Advent candle through the Advent season and on Christmas Eve (November 30, December 7, December 14, December 21, and December 24). If you would like to read or light a candle please let Pastor Justin know by emailing Jfuhrma@hotmail.com. We could also use your help in decorating the church for Christmas after church on Sunday, November 23.





Administrative Board Topics of Interest

1) This fall's church conference will be held on Monday, November 10 at 6 p.m. All members of the church have voice and vote. During this time, we will vote to approve Pastor Justin's change in salary, adopt the Nomination Committee's recommendations for lay leadership, celebrate what God has done in the last year, and receive required reports, including the trustee's report and the membership audit.

2) We brainstormed goals for 2026. We plan to continue focusing on (1) Community Involvement and Outreach, (2) Children's and Youth Ministry, (3) Discipleship, (4) Hospitality, and (5) Financial Stability. Some of things we touched on include (1) finding new ways to get into the schools, including placing labels with our name and an encouraging message on donations, (2) pay-it-forward projects, (3) ongoing community appreciation, (4) finding new ways to engage the kids that are coming to pantry each week, and (5) staffing our nursery and getting the live stream broadcast on the TV in the nursery.

3) The lease on our copy machine has come to an end. As a way of saving money, we have opted to purchase a smaller copy machine as we no longer need a big machine since we don't have the child care. The old machine will be removed. The newly purchased machine is now in the church office. The old copy room will become a storage room for our custodian to use for her supplies and decorations.

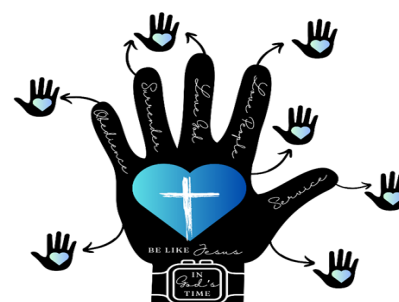
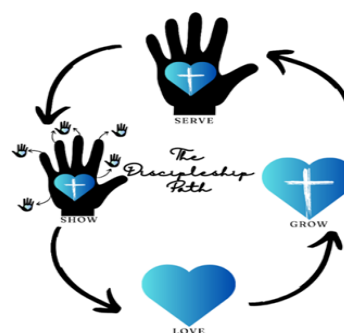
4) Income for the month of September came in at \$28,434 and expenses at \$13,685 for a net profit of \$14,749. This brings year to date income to \$189,305 and expenses \$169,535 for a net gain of \$19,670. As a result, we have begun increasing our apportionment payments. We also found out that we will be receiving two renewal grants from the Great Miami River District in 2026: (1) A \$8,000 youth and family ministry grant and (2) a \$5,000 community outreach and involvement grant, for a total of \$13,000.

5) The trustees are taking quotes for repairs to the flat portions of the roof over the sanctuary. They are also looking at replacing or fixing the keypad access system since several have noted it is not working.

6) Initial stripping for the pickleball court will be completed by the time that this newsletter comes out. We have applied for a \$8,000 grant from the West Ohio Conference to have it professionally painted. Our goal is to develop a monthly pickleball ministry in the upcoming year. Pickleball is a rapidly growing hobby in the world today so this is a good way to reach out and build relationships with new people.

Racial Justice Journey

The Wesley Foundation at the University of Cincinnati, in conjunction with Northern Hills UMC, are sponsoring a Racial Justice Journey to the Brian Stevenson sites in Montgomery, Alabama (The Legacy Museum, the National Museum for Peace and Justice, and the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park) in order to learn from our nation's history with racism and to consider how racism continues to impact our society today. They are looking for adults who are interested in either sponsoring a student to attend or to attend with them in order to build relationships. The trip is during UC's winter break, January 6-10. The trip cost is \$300 per person. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Rev. Tracy Chambers (umcpastortracy@gmail.com) or Rev. Becky Schofield-Motter (director@wesleyuc.org).





Announcements

11/2 – Daylight Savings Ends: Fall Back!
 11/2 – Stewardship: Leaders' Lunch, 12 pm
 11/3 – Trustees, 6 pm
 11/5 – UMW Lunch, 12 pm
 11/8 – Youth Meals on Wheels Service Day, 1-3 pm
 11/9 – Consecration Sunday and Dinner, 12 pm
 11/9 – Disciplemaking Practitioners, 1 pm
 11/9 – Family Game Night, 6-9 pm
 11/10 – Church Conference, 6 pm
 11/10 – Church Board, 7 pm (No Finance)
 11/12 - Dinner and Devotions, 6 pm
 11/12 – Grief Relief, 6-7:30 pm
 11/16 – All Saints Remembrance
 11/16 – Operation Christmas Child Boxes Due
 11/16 – Passionate Worship, 12 pm
 11/19— Grief Relief—Surviving the Holidays 6-7:30 pm
 11/21 – Young at Heart, 7 pm
 11/22 – Sports Card Show and Bake Sale, 9 am-3 pm
 11/23 – Hanging of the Greens, 12 pm
 11/26 – Community Dinner, 6 pm
 11/26 – Grief Relief, 6:30 pm
 11/27-28 – Office Closed: Happy Thanksgiving
 11/30 – First Sunday in Advent
 11/30 – Disciplemaking Practitioners, 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 (Romans): Wednesday, 2 pm

John's Study: Thursday, 10:30 am

Youth After School Program, Thursday, 3-4:30 pm



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.



OHUMC Family Ministries



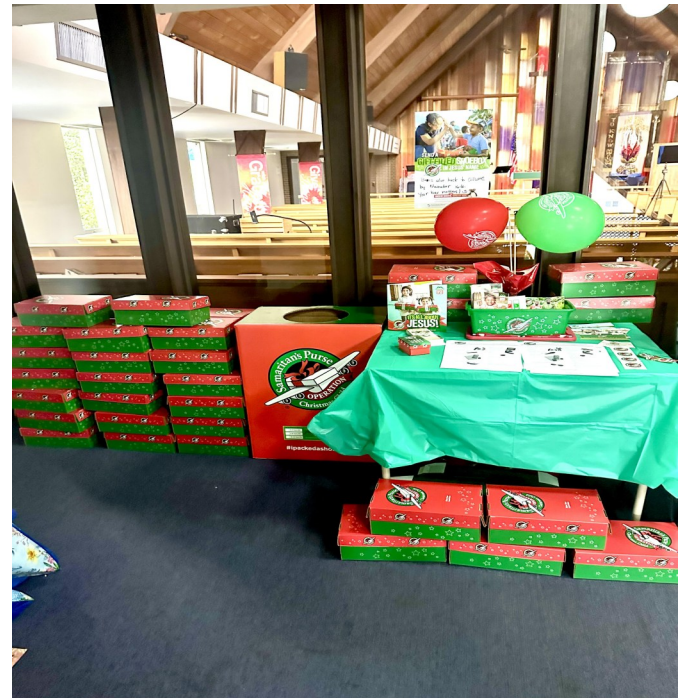
Family Ministries

Faith Forming Relations' **ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE**, will be ending on Sunday, November 16th. Brown bags are in the Narthex and all bags are due back by November 16th. Items needed to fill the bags are: Canned chicken, canned tuna, ravioli/spaghetti O's, chicken noodle soup, tomato soup, peanut butter, jelly, boxed spaghetti pasta, cereal, mac n' cheese, canned fruit.



Birthday Party for Jesus/Breakfast with Santa is December 13, 2025, and volunteers are needed to help serve breakfast, register the children, and help with the games. If you are able to help, please let Kathy Cramerding or Sherilyn Reynolds know.

We will also need 200 cupcakes for the party. If you are able to donate some, please let Kathy Cramerding or Sherilyn Reynolds know.



Operation Christmas Child/Shoebox—The shoe boxes are due back to church no later than Sunday, November 16. We are encouraging each person to ask a friend or local business to donate a box. Bring hope to a child who may not think hope was possible.





BLOC Ministries Service
Project
Were we having fun or
What???



*Whatever you do,
DO IT ALL FOR THE
Glory of God*
1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

