



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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February 2026 The Oak Notes

Pastor Article - Valentine's Day

One of the most popular TV shows a few years back was This is Us. It followed the story of the Pearson family and their three children—Kevin, Kate, and their adopted child, Randall. During episode 6 of season 5, Randall travels down to New Orleans, where he learns the story of his birth mom Laurel.

It was a love story for the ages. Laurel grew up in a prominent family in New Orleans, but she never quite felt like she fit in. She longed to be loved and accepted, but the only people who understood her were her Aunt Mae, who was shunned by the family, and her brother Jackson, who died in Vietnam. After Jackson's death, Laurel is struggling. She's in deep pain and Aunt Mae tells her that she needs to find a way to let it go. So, she goes out into the lake and lets out a horrific scream. Hai, who's a refugee from Vietnam, hears her screaming and he thinks she's in trouble, so he tries to rescue her. And that begins their story. A story of forbidden love that begins to blossom and grow. Things are going well until one day, Laurel's dad tells her she has to marry the banker that he has chosen for her. Feeling trapped, Laurel decides to leave town. She begs Hai to come with her, but he can't abandon his parents. So she sets out alone until one day many years later they meet again. By that time, Laurel has a child and has been in prison for 5 years due to a drug overdose. During that time, she was plagued by guilt and shame. She convinced herself that she was not worthy to be Randall's mom, and so she returns back home. She moves in with Aunt Mae and spends decades waving and smiling at Hai, who is now married with kids. After Hai's wife dies, one day, he notices that Laurel is not at the market so he decides to go and visit, only to find out that she has cancer. Even so, she goes on to live for two more years and Hai and Laurel spend every moment together. After all those years, they finally get their happy ending. Their love story.

On some level, we all long to be part of a great love story. Love may very well be the deepest longing of the human heart. Deep down, we all want to be loved, accepted, and embraced. We like to tell people how we met our spouse. We like to tell people how we fell in love. Women like to compare engagement stories and are already thinking

about all the romantic things that could happen come Valentine's Day.

Over and over again, we are bombarded with discussions about love in our movies, our TV shows, and our songs. From conversation hearts, which boil the topic of love down to a few short words, to the 190 million cards, candies, flowers, balloons, and gifts that will be sent out this year. Love simply consumes us this time of year. It's all around us. It's in the air. It's everywhere we go and everywhere we look.

It's for that reason, that over the next three weeks, leading up to Valentine's Day, we're going to be talking about God's love for us. The Bible is God's love letter to us. It's the greatest love story that's ever been told. It's the story of how God, in his great love for us, has worked to pursue us and woo us back to him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I invite you over these next three weeks, to be swept up in the story of God's love and to remember, if nothing else, that God truly does love you!

God Bless,

Pastor Justin



February

Administrative Board Topics of Interest– January Board Updates

1) Income for the month of December came in at \$21,151 and expenses at \$20,607 for a gain of \$544. Income for calendar year 2025 came in at \$247,646 and expenses at \$233,659 for a profit of \$13,987. This included paying \$6,656 in apportionments, up from \$4,780 in 2024. Pledges, tithes and offerings were up by 7.5% in 2025, from \$164,560 in 2024 to \$176,878 in 2025, suggesting growth in giving. Our fundraising team also brought in a net profit of \$3,166 in 2025. Giving to Sissy's pantry was also up by 95% from \$6,595 in 2024 to \$12,894 in 2025. Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to God this year!

2) We have been having some sewer backup issues in the basement. We have had at least 2 backups in recent months. To prevent ongoing issues, the trustees contracted with Geiler's to replace the drain pipe. This meant tearing out and replacing floor tiles. This work was completed in January; cost \$6,700.

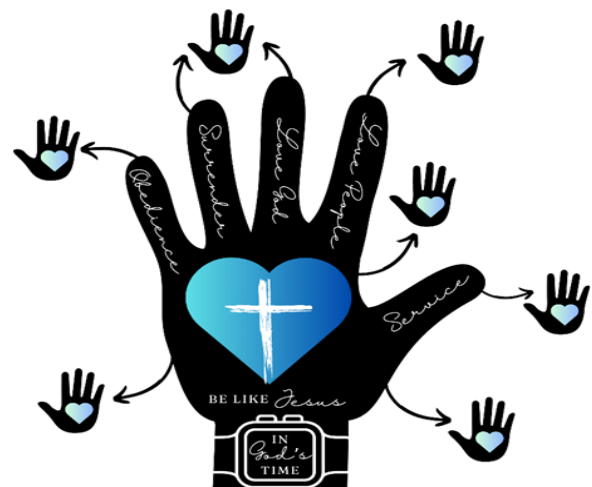
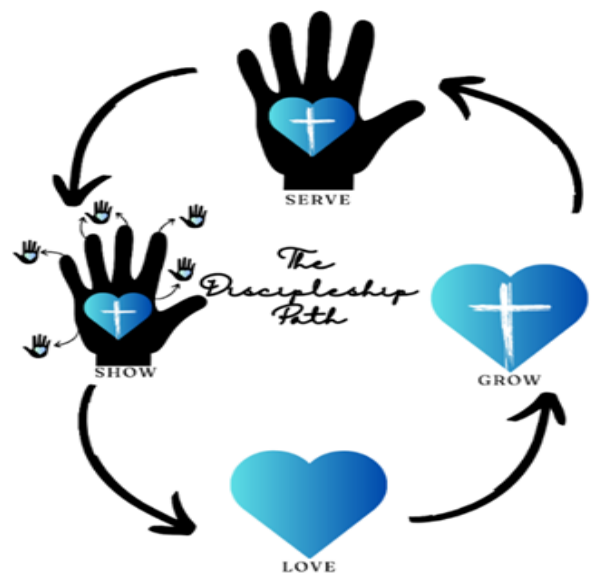
3) The trustees are taking bids to replace the roof on the rental house and the flat portions on the church. Funds for this project come from reserve funds that came from the sale of the back lot in 2024. In addition, the trustees are exploring the possibility of painting the sanctuary and upstairs hallway.

4) We are working on cleaning out several of the closets around the church. Items that we are looking on getting rid of will be placed in the old youth room for a short time for you to peruse. The purpose of this project is to eliminate the clutter so that we can free up space for various teams/groups to use. The board is committed to shared space as we do not have the space for everyone to have their own space.

5) Our youth leader Ali Scully has begun to make inroads with the Oak Hills High School's Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and First Priority as a way of building into the schools to form new relationships.

6) Risk-Taking Missions is exploring the possibility of launching a Laundry Love ministry, where we would provide assistance with laundry at a local laundromat. We are currently talking with laundromats and with Soapy Joes to see if they would donate trial sizes of detergent for this project. More info to come.

7) Once again, we will be doing prayer partners for the season of Lent. If you would like a prayer partner, please fill out the form in your bulletins and put it in the offering plate by Sunday, February 8. You may also email the church office at oakhillsumc@fuse.net. Ash Wednesday worship will be Feb 18 at 7 pm.





Announcements

2/2 - Trustees, 6 pm
2/4 - UMW Lunch, 12 pm
2/4 - Grief Share, 6 pm
2/7 - Winter Carnival, 1-3 pm
2/8 - Family Game Night, 6-9 pm
2/9 - Finance, 6:30 pm; Church Board, 7 pm
2/11 - Dinner and Devotions, 6 pm
2/15 - Church Potluck, 12 pm
2/15 - Disciplemaking Practitioners, 1 pm
2/18 - Ash Wednesday Worship, 7 pm
2/19 - Grief Share, 6 pm
2/20 - Youth Movie Night, 6-8 pm
2/20 - Young at Heart, 7 pm
2/22 - Fundraising, 12 pm
2/25 - Community Dinner, 6 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 (Paul's Letters): 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



OHUMC Family Ministries



Winter Carnival

Saturday, February 7 1-3 pm

Saturday, February 7, 1-3 p.m. We need volunteers to sign up to run games, crafts, books, tattoos and the welcome table. All volunteers must be here no later than 12:15 pm. We also need help setting up on Friday, February 6 at 4 pm. Any and all help is appreciated.



Valentine's Boxes

We would like to send all our college students a Valentine Box, so please give your student's name and address to Kathy Cramerding or put it in the offering plate by February 1 st , 2026. We also need to fill the boxes. College students like home-made treats, snacks, and little gifts, such as socks or dish towels. You may also donate funds to help cover the shipping of the boxes. Please give your donations to Kathy Cramerding or put them in the church office marked Valentine Boxes. All donations must be brought in by Sunday February 8 th , 2026, when Faith-Forming Relations will fill the boxes.





The youth group enjoyed a trip to Perfect North Slopes during winter break!



FCA Meeting: Every other Friday
7:00-7:45 at Oak Hills High School



OHUMC Youth Group will be hosting a movie night on Friday, February 20, 6pm-8 pm for kids in grades 6-12. Mufasa: The Lion King will be playing in the sanctuary. Pizza, popcorn, and drinks provided.



Sunday School: February studies will focus on relationships, love, and God's faithfulness. The youth group will read about the story of Gideon and the story of Saint Valentine.

We will learn about God's love and learn about the "5 Love Languages": Gifts, Service, Time, Touch, and Words", while reading through 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John 4.

Valentine's Day is a time to show our love for our family and friends, but February can be a month to especially focus on showing God's love to everyone around us.

