



Oak Hills United Methodist Church
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March 2026 The Oak Notes

Pastor Article - Lent

Spring is nearly here! The sun is shining. The temperatures are rising. The flowers are starting to bud. The birds are chirping. Before long, leaves will be on the trees. And that means it's time for spring cleaning! One of the few memories I have from my childhood is the annual spring clean. Every year, we'd spend Spring Break cleaning the house. My mom worked at the library at the local elementary school, so it made for a really good time to catch up on some much needed work around the house. We'd clean out the gutters. We'd wash the windows. We'd scrub the windows screens. We'd go through the closets and the garage and get rid of the clutter. We'd wipe down the cobwebs and move the furniture to get the stuff that piled up behind. We cleaned out the fridge and defrosted the freezer. We gave our home a deep and thorough clean that went well beyond anything we did the rest of the year.

But spring cleaning isn't just for our homes. It's also for our souls. The origins of spring cleaning go back to the period of heavy cleaning the Jews observed before the annual Passover feast. The early Christians applied that practice to the season of Lent and their spiritual preparation for the resurrection of Jesus at Easter. In other words, spring cleaning is, at its heart, a spiritual practice. It's about preparing our souls. It's about making ourselves ready for Jesus. While the house might have seemed clean before, spring cleaning reminds us just how much dirt and grime piles up beneath the surface. Sometimes we have to do some real, deep, spring cleaning to prepare our souls for greater fruitfulness and faithfulness to God.

Throughout this season, I would challenge you to do 5 things: (1) Take time to identify something to give up in order to make space to meet with Jesus. (2) Join with us in prayer, fasting, and repentance by coming to our Thursday Zoom Prayer Meetings at 11 a.m. (3) Spend daily time in personal confession and repentance. (4) Participate in our daily Lenten devotional challenge, and finally, (5) make it a priority to be with us each week in Lent and during our special worship services throughout this Lenten season.

Our Holy Week services include:

(1) Maundy Thursday (April 2, 7 p.m.): Maundy Thursday is the celebration of the final meal that Jesus spends with his disciples before his execution (the Last Supper). We partake in Holy Communion.

(2) Good Friday (April 3, 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 beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. Come anytime between 1 and 4 p.m. Spend as much or as little time as you need working through the stations.

(3) Easter Celebration (April 5, 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. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave says: If it is dead, if it looks dead, if it appears dead, if it seems dead. It doesn't have to stay that way! New life is possible. New life is on the horizon. New life is coming. These bones can live again!

God bless,

Pastor Justin



MARCH

Administrative Board Topics of Interest– February Board Updates

1) Income for the month of January came in at \$11,397. Expenses came in at \$15,243 for a net loss of \$3,846. This is, for the most part, due to having to cancel in-person worship on Sunday 1/25. That meant we had one Sunday less income than in a typical month. We did note, however, that the first Sunday in February was larger than normal, suggesting that many made up their giving on the first Sunday back.

2) The church board has begun their annual policy review. Due to the current political situation, we are working on developing an immigration preparedness and response policy should ICE arrive on campus. Pastor Justin is challenging us all to join with him in prayer and has committed to study and reading. He will be doing a sermon series on what the Bible says to us about immigration later in the summer or fall.

3) Bishop Jung met with church leaders and Pastor Justin on Thursday, January 29. He spent time in prayer for the church, engaging and learning about the church from our leaders, and getting to know Pastor Justin a little better. Pictures of his visit were posted on our church Facebook page. This was part of Bishop Jung's commitment to visit every United Methodist Church in Ohio in his first four years.

4) We received a \$475 Green Mini Grant from the West Ohio Conference to be used for switching over our lighting from incandescent to LED fixtures. We received a \$250 Thrivent Community Grant for VBS.

5) Estimates for the replacement of the roof on the flat portions of the building range anywhere from \$32,000-\$45,000. The trustees are taking additional quotes at this time. Financial support for this project comes from reserve funds from the sale of church properties over the last couple of years.

6) The upstairs hallway is being painted on Saturday February 28 and, if needed, on Saturday March 14.

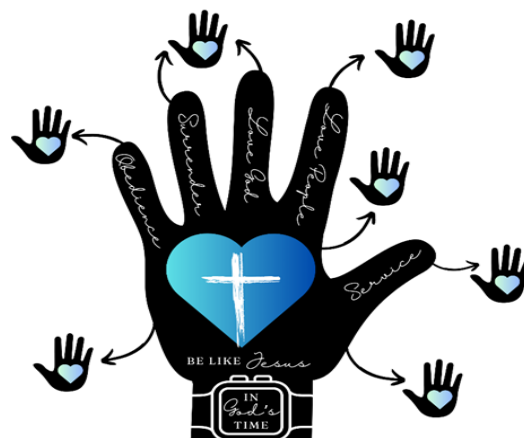
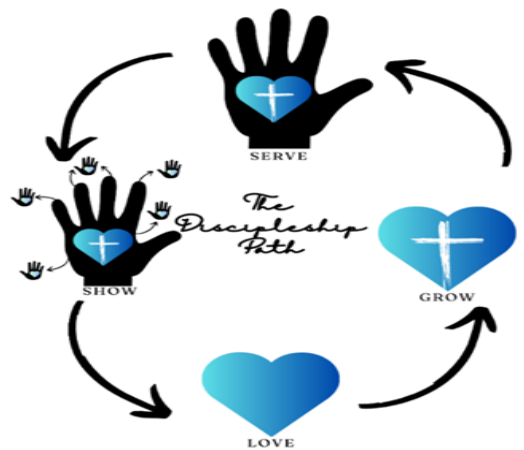
7) We are working toward establishing a Congregational Care Team, to include cards, calls, and visits to our shut-ins, those who are sick, and hospitalized. If you would like to help, please contact Pastor Justin.

8) Our new Laundry Love ministry is starting the end of March at the Washland Laundromat. During this time, we will be providing pre-paid gift cards for laundry needs at the laundromat as a way of blessing our community and building new relationships. If you would like to help, please contact Mary Flannery.

9) Risk-Taking Missions will be showing appreciation for the Green Township snow crew this month.

10) We are looking for 1-2 people who would be willing to assist with J.A.M. one time per month. If you would like to help, please contact Kathy Cramerding.

11) We are currently cleaning out the closets around the church. Items we are looking to get rid of are being placed in the old youth room (last room on the left in the upstairs hallway). It will be there for a little while. So, if you want something, please take it; otherwise, it will eventually be pitched.





Announcements

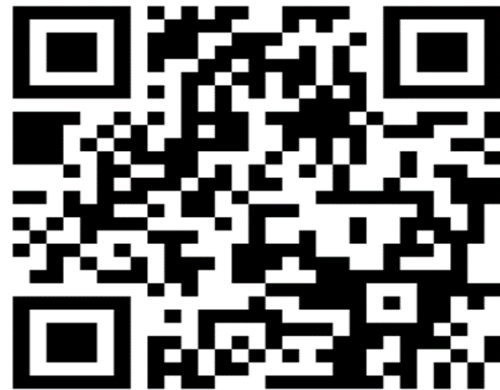
- 3/1 - Passionate Worship, 12 pm
3/2 - Trustees, 6 pm
3/4 - UMW Lunch, 12 pm
3/4 - Grief Share, 6 pm
3/8 - Daylight Savings Time Begins: Spring Forward!
3/8 - SPPRC, 12 pm
3/8 - Family Game Night, 6-9 pm
3/9 - Finance, 6:30 pm; Church Board, 7 pm
3/11 - Dinner and Devotions, 6 pm
3/14 - Card Show and Bake Sale, 9am-3pm
3/15 - Disciplemaking Practitioners, 12 pm
3/20 - Young at Heart, 7 pm
3/22 - Fundraising, 12 pm
3/22 - Grief Share Remembrance
3/25 - Community Dinner, 6 pm
3/28 - Easter Party/Egg Hunt and Silent Auction, 1-3 pm
3/29 - Passion/Palm Sunday
3/29 - Disciplemaking Practitioners, 12 pm
4/2 - Maundy Thursday Worship, 7 pm
4/3 - Good Friday Prayer Stations, 1-4 pm
4/5 - Easter Worship, 10:30 am
- 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

*****Please submit all material for the newsletter by the second Friday of each month.*****



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.

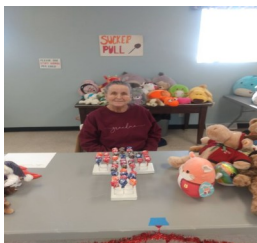
Online Giving

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



Winter Carnival 2026



Easter Party and Egg Hunt

The Easter party and egg hunt is Saturday, March 28th from 1:00-3:00 pm, Please invite any children in your neighborhood to join us.

We need your HELP. If you can donate or help, please let Kathy Cramerding know.

1. Individually wrapped candy, it can be chocolate. Candies need to in by Sunday March 22. It can be left in the office marked Easter Party or given directly to Kathy Cramerding.
2. Need helpers to fill the treat bags on Friday, March 27th starting at 6 pm.
3. Need helpers to set up tables and chairs for the party on Friday, March 27th starting at 6 pm
4. Need people to bring cupcakes in for the party. We need at least 250 cupcakes. The cupcakes can be dropped off and placed the kitchen on Friday, March 27th or Saturday, March 28th by noon.
5. Helpers are needed on the day of the party to hide eggs, help the children with the craft and help serving our guests cupcakes and juice. If you can help the day of the party, please be at church by noon.

A sign-up sheet is located in the foyer by the suggestion box.

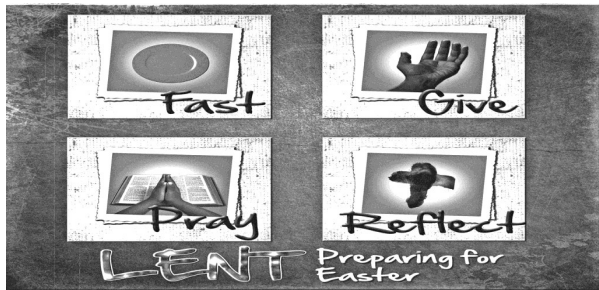




Lessons for Lent

Lent is not just about self-denial for its own sake, but it can be a time of meaningful sacrifice, service, and self-reflection. It commemorates Christ's 40 days in the desert and is a time for prayer, fasting, generosity, and almsgiving.

Before Jesus began his earthly ministry, he spent 40 days in the wilderness (Luke 4: 1-13). We will focus our Sunday School studies on discussing restoring our relationship with God and the people around us and how can we better serve them.



Upcoming Events:

BLOC Ministries volunteering:
Date TBD in April

Meals on Wheels volunteering:
Saturday, May 9 (time TBD)

Summer Swim Party for kids &
teens: Wednesday, June 17 12-
3pm at
the Freudemann Swim Club

Movie Night

Youth Group's first movie night went well with 10 teens attending: 6 familiar faces and 4 new. The 4 new teens were spotted hanging out on the corner waiting for the crosswalk light to change. They were invited inside for pizza and stayed for the movie! It was so amazing watching God move!



