

OTTERBEIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
176 West Market Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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# Tidings



July &  
August 2020

**The Tidings**  
**Otterbein United Methodist**  
**Church**

176 West Market Street  
 Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Office - (540) 434-7747  
 Fax - (540) 433-4018  
 oumcharrisonburg.org

Prayer Ministry - (540) 434-7745

*Tidings* articles are due by the  
 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

You may either bring articles to  
 the church office or email them  
 to oumcdadm@hotmail.com

**Saturday Night Alive**

5:30 pm  
 Informal Worship Service

**Sunday Schedule**

9:30 am Sunday School  
 for all ages  
 10:30 am Worship Service

Please check the calendar for  
 times of regular and special  
 events.

**Weekday Office Hours**

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 am - 3:00 pm



Have you checked out our Facebook Page? You can find us at facebook.com/OUMCHarrisonburg or through the link on our website. Please check out our page and share with your friends!

**Our Staff**

**Rev. Adam Blagg**  
 Senior Pastor  
 oumcpastor@hotmail.com

**Rev. Faith Fowler**  
 Associate Pastor of Health &  
 Wellness  
 faithfowler@vaumc.org

**Sandy Schaefer**  
 Music Director / Organist  
 oumcmusic@hotmail.com

**Melissa Miller**  
 Office Manager  
 oumcdadm@hotmail.com

**Judy Falls**  
 Custodian

**Dawn Hunter**  
 Treasurer  
 oumctreasurer@hotmail.com

Office: 540-434-7747  
 x200 for Melissa  
 x201 for Adam  
 x203 for Dawn  
 x204 for Sandy  
 x207 for Judy  
 x210 for Faith

**Otterbein in Prayer**

Phyllis Albrite	Carole Gaines	Evelyn Keane	Linda Stephens
Wilda Billhimer	Judy Grandle	Glen Langston	Martha Taylor
Gary Billingsley	Florence Green	Janet Liskey	Craig Thompson
Millie Bruce	Betty Griffith	Judy Liskey	Charlie Tibbits
Pat Brunk	Ray & Audrey	Marion Malabad	Alison Trost
Rev. Louis	Griffith	Allene McCoy	Keith & Sharon
Carson	Doris Hanger	Orpha Miller	Waters
Jeremy Cook	Rev. Isaac Harper	Steve Morris	Mary Wenger
Jennifer Cordova	Laura Headlee	James Neff	Rev. Richard
Tyler Custer	Norma Heath	Judy Pruett	Worden
Jo Ellen	Barbara Henry	Don & Bonnie	Anita Yount
Dickenson	Silas Herndon	Rohr	
Allen Dellinger	Bennie & Gloria	Ron & Mary Ellen	
Nancy East	Hildebrand	Rohrbaugh	
Rev. Samuel	John Hoffnagle	Roy Shifflet	
Espinoza	Charlene Hunley	Joe Sims	
Halcie Fishback	Dot Jones	William Smith	

*Heartfelt thanks church family for  
 the cards, calls, and prayers during  
 my hospital stay in April for double  
 pneumonia and heart problems.  
 Thanks to Pastor Adam Blagg for  
 calls and prayers.*

*Blessings and love,  
 Judy Liskey*



**For Your Information**

- *Tidings* deadline for the September issue is **Monday, August 17 by 9 am.** All groups, classes, and individuals are welcome to submit articles for the *Tidings*. Plan your activities and bring the written details to the church office or email to the office at oumcdadm@hotmail.com by the 17<sup>th</sup>.
- **Prayer Line Ministry:** Call 434-7745 anytime (day or night) to hear a prayer to encourage and give you support. To leave a prayer request: listen to the prayer, then follow the prompts to leave your request or words of praise.

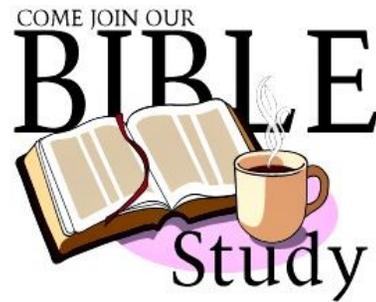
## Fall Bible Study

Bible Study has been a different experience in the spring of 2020. We will hopefully resume in-person gatherings for the fall, but if we are learning anything during these days, it is to be flexible.

Our 2020-2021 Bible Study is set. We will be exploring the gospel of Luke in the fall and spring. This will finish the cycle of Gospels that we have studied together. For our Old Testament text, we will turn to Jeremiah and read a part of that prophetic text in the Fall. In the spring we will take on 1 & 2 Peter as our post-Easter reading material.

During Advent and Lent, we will have appropriate seasons studies which will be informed mainly by how the remainder of 2020 unfolds. During the first two months of 2021, we will explore the early history of the church, using portions of Acts to help guide our study. We will conclude the spring with a session on applying the text.

Hope to see you geared up and ready to go for the fall, praying for in person studies once again!



The church seasons are going to be a bit reorganized this year. Early on in our response to the global pandemic, I used language, as many did, of an extended Lent and a big Easter celebration when we returned, thinking to myself that the return would be the middle of May at the latest. Now I write a *Tidings* article for July and we still have no firm commitment about when we will return to our sanctuary.

During those early months of the pandemic, once we figured out how to do virtual worship, we spent a lot of time taking care of projects that had been put off and were much easier to do when the church was going to be empty for a period of time. This is often work that is reserved for the summer when church life takes a different feel. Rarely would any of us have time to devote to these projects during Easter, but we did this year. Now that Ordinary time is upon us, a lot of our catch-up work has been caught up. Many of the other activities that we embrace during the summer, Camp Overlook, mission trips, are on a hiatus due to the pandemic. I hope that we will have a chance this summer to worship again and focus on being together, much like we would do during the Easter Season. Maybe our Pentecost and Easter just got switched this year. I look forward to being with all of you again in worship soon. In the meantime, stay the course, remain safe, and keep your fellow person in prayer.

*Adam*



## UMW News

The UMW would like to thank Hazel Willi for the many face masks she has made for the District UMW to

distribute and the ones she has given to individuals, organizations, and companies.

Thanks to everyone for bringing their pledges up to date so that the second quarter mission pledge could be met.

NO meeting in July.

Since we have been unable to meet for several months, a **meeting is planned for Tuesday, August 11 at 11:15 am in Room 204** in order to discuss several issues.

The Annual Conference is scheduled for September 17-19. Therefore, the date of the District Prayer Breakfast (Saturday, September 19) has to be rescheduled.

Due to the Coronavirus guidelines, it is uncertain if we will be able to have the breakfast. A decision will be made later. Watch the *Tidings* for more information.

“Living Into the Purpose” and the “Reading Program” forms are due the first part of September. Please let Hazel know how many books you have read.

If anyone is interested in becoming a “Rainbow Giver,” please contact Jo Ann Liskey by August 1. The cost is \$60 and application must be mailed in by August 15.

Mission Encounter, scheduled for July 24-26, has been cancelled, but the Conference will offer online classes on the book, *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*. If interested, please contact Wilma (433-9545).

Learn from engaging in new conversations with new people. Learn from books like, *Rediscipling the White Church: From Cheap Diversity to True Solidarity* by David W. Swanson. Learn from movies like, *Just Mercy* and *Selma*. Learn from Facebook Live chats with Pastor Chris Johnson at Divine Unity Community Church in Harrisonburg. Learn about white privilege and how we as the White Church can begin to be helpful in the fight to eradicate racism. Learn about racial reconciliation from other churches who are already engaging in racial justice and reconciliation ministries.

Adam and I are talking about creating an opportunity for our church to begin a conversation entitled “Race, Class, and the Kingdom of God”, through a sermon series and offering of small groups. Stay tuned to hear more about these details and when and where they will be happening.

**I also want to invite you to join me for UpperZoom Prayer.** 2 Chronicles 7:14 says: “*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*” I recently participated in a 10 Day UpperZoom prayer gathering with Pastor Mark Batterson and National Community Church in DC, and was deeply moved by the experience. I would like to create a similar space for those of us at Otterbein to pray together and seek God’s heart as a community. **We will meet for UpperZoom Prayer on Monday - Wednesday at 7:14 am for three weeks in July.** You can expect the prayer time to last about 20 minutes. The dates are July 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22. If you are interested, please let me know and I will send you a zoom link to all the meetings. If you don’t have zoom on your computer, talk to me and I can help you connect by your phone. You may reach me directly at 540-209-4806.

I hope you will join me as we seek the Lord’s heart and ask Him how Otterbein can be a part of bringing about racial justice and unity in Harrisonburg. We are called to be one with God and one with each other, and to be ministers of reconciliation in our city. May it be so!

Your Sister in Christ,  
Pastor Faith

“you have the right to remain silent” and “who can take your children?”. What should only have been an inquiry and questioning about who we were and what we found turned into a 2 and a half year legal battle with criminal charges against us. What happened that day and the 2 and a half years that followed was a direct result of systemic racism and abuse of power within the policing system and their departments. When my husband and I finally testified in front of a Grand Jury on January 6, 2010, the charges were immediately dismissed, as they found no evidence connecting us to the crime. The police were never held accountable for their unjust actions, abuse of power, and utter failure to bring about justice in the situation.

So what do we do with all of this? As we begin to pay attention to the life experiences of our black brothers and sisters, and listen to the stories about racism and injustice within the policing system, what then? Many of us within the White Church desire to be helpful and part of the solution, but we don't know what to do or where to start. I submit to you a few suggestions for first steps:

- **PRAY.** Pray for God's heart on these matters. Ask for eyes to see things the way God sees them. Pray like Jesus prayed for the world and for His people (John 17). Pray that God would break your heart for what breaks His heart. Pray with humility. Pray for the capacity to receive God's love, healing, and forgiveness.
- **LOOK.** Look to the gospel of Jesus Christ as your lens with which to view everything. Look to the Scriptures and remember that as followers of Jesus we are mandated to hold together justice, mercy, forgiveness, grace, and love for ALL people.
- **LISTEN.** Listen to the stories of our black brothers and sisters who have been hurt by racism and police brutality. Listen without judgement. Listen with an open heart. Listen with compassion. Listen with an willingness to have your mind changed.
- **LAMENT.** Lament the lives lost. Lament the painful experiences you hear. Lament the injustices within our systems that have kept racism alive for over 400 years. Lament the failure of the White Church to speak up on behalf of our black brothers and sisters. Lament your own participation and silence.
- **LEARN.** Learn what you do not know.

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Otterbein United Methodist Men's Sunday is scheduled for August 23 at 10:30 am during the Morning Worship service. We hope we will be back attending church in person in the sanctuary by that time. We plan to have a special men's choir and all are needed and invited to join us in song. No experience needed! For additional information, please contact one of the members of our Otterbein Men's Fellowship Leadership/Planning team below.

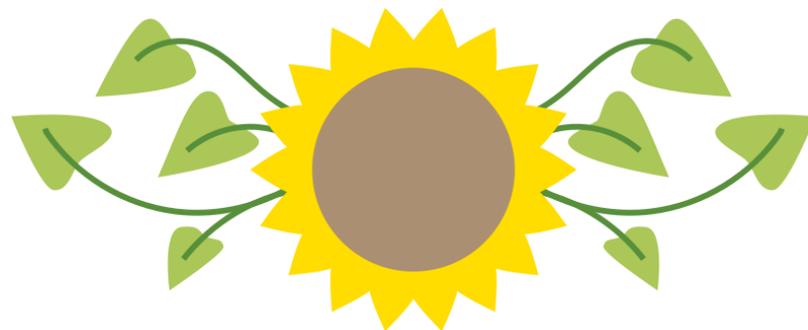


Also, in the very near future, we hope to continue our monthly breakfast/prayer meetings at Thomas House Restaurant in Dayton on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays beginning at 7:30 am.

For additional information concerning our fellowship, please check our website: <https://www.oumcharrisonburg.org/united-methodist-men>

**Leadership/Planning Team:**

Bill Pollard  
Carter Ritchie  
Dylan Andrade



Other than worshipping together as the Otterbein family, the thing I have missed the most during these unexpected days of quarantine is BASEBALL. I missed watching Jonathan play on his High School team, I missed the excitement of MLB Opening Day and following every game of the 162-game season, and I miss going locally to watch our Harrisonburg Turks play. I miss the sounds, the smells, the bad calls, even the dirty uniforms and mud caked car. It is sometimes quoted: "Baseball is Life."



Baseball spans generations and is a game of ingenious design, measured not by the limits of the clock like most sports, but by equal opportunity. Each team gets 27 outs, each player gets 3 strikes or 4 balls. Sometimes a game is short, sometimes it goes into extra innings. Any team can come from behind in the bottom of the ninth to a glorious walk-off victory. Many of you know that Jonathan, Elisabeth, and I are die hard fans of the Washington Nationals. Last year they did the unthinkable and came back from a 19-31 record in May, with a dismal 0.1% chance of Winning the World Series. Their improbable path to a World Series victory included being the first team in MLB history (or any sport for that matter) to win all four championship series games on the road. Of all years for baseball to be on hold, it is the year our beloved Nats should have unfurled their World Series Banner, shown off their championship rings, and been enjoying a season as defending champions.

Baseball is considered America's pastime, and as a result, the game has inspired more idioms in American language than any other sport. From baseball we get expressions such as a ballpark figure, batting a thousand, let's touch base, we need to cover our bases, you knocked it out of the park, it came out of left field, step up to the plate, and it's a

history, from the Reconstruction era to the civil rights movement that emerged a century after emancipation." 1

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, **"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"**. I humbly submit my conviction to you this day, that the White Church in America has remained silent about the sin of racism for too long. I say this as a person with white skin who is part of the White Church in America. We have opted out of conversations about the reality of systemic racism in our country and institutions for far too long! We have remained silent on things that matter, and we can do so no longer!

The filming of the horrific murder of George Floyd, at the hands of a white police officer, has been a long overdue wake up call to our nation, that racism and police brutality are real. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Emmett Till... how many innocent black lives will it take before we choose to stand up and speak out and say enough is enough? **As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to speak out against injustice and repent for the ways in which we have participated in and benefited from systemic racism in our country, either by our words, actions, inactions, or silence.**

Since learning of the murder of George Floyd on Memorial Day, I have spent countless hours lamenting, listening, and leaning into conversations about racism in our country. I come to this moment with a unique lens and perspective, because of my past experiences and present circumstances. I enter the conversation as a white woman who was married to a black man for 15 years. I enter as a white mother of a 14 year old brown skinned young man, who fits the profile of the young black men who were killed by white police officers. I enter this moment having experienced personally the devastation of injustice, systemic racism, and police abuse of power. In July of 2007, when my son was just 17 months old, my husband and I were arrested for a crime we did not commit. We were simply attempting to turn into the police, something we found while our family was on a walk in the woods. It was a day that changed the course of my life. As we attempted to call 911 to report what we found, approximately 30 police officers and their dogs rushed in and surrounded us. They took my husband, a black man, and began patting him down against a police car. Then they said two things to me...

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## Health and Wellness from the Inside Out *Our Call to Unity*

*“Our reconciling “Peace” is Jesus! He has made Jew and non-Jew one in Christ. By dying as our sacrifice, he has broken down every wall of prejudice that separated us and has now made us equal through our union with Christ. Ethnic hatred has been dissolved by the crucifixion of his precious body on the cross. The legal code that stood condemning every one of us has now been repealed by his command. His triune essence has made peace between us by starting over—forming one new race of humanity, Jews and non-Jews fused together!*

*Two have now become one, and we live restored to God and reconciled in the body of Christ. Through his crucifixion, hatred died.”*

*(Ephesians 2:14-16 TPT)*

*“I pray for them all to be joined together as one even as you and I, Father, are joined together as one. I pray for them to be one with us so that the world will recognize that you sent me.”*

*(John 17:21 TPT)*

God’s vision for His people is that we would be one with Him and one with each other. The death of Jesus on the cross destroyed the dividing wall of hostility between people and made oneness possible. Jesus modeled unity with His Father and prayed for us to be one. Yet we know that we are NOT unified - we know that we are NOT one. Something has gone horribly wrong! Jesus’ death on the cross made it possible for us to be reconciled to Him and to one another, yet this is not what we experience in our world or in our nation. **The sin of racism** has been a part of our country since it’s inception, beginning with Native Americans and continuing on with the transatlantic slave trade. “Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries people were kidnapped from the continent of Africa, forced into slavery in the American colonies and exploited to work as indentured servants and labor in the production of crops such as tobacco and cotton. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, America’s westward expansion and the abolition movement provoked a great debate over slavery that would tear the nation apart in the bloody Civil War. Though the Union victory freed the nation’s four million enslaved people, the legacy of slavery continued to influence American

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whole new ball game, just to name a few. To use yet another baseball-ism, it definitely feels like 2020 has thrown us a curveball. We have faced a coronavirus pandemic, closed schools, jobs lost, financial instability, violence, isolation, fear, uncertainty... In life we can’t control the kinds of pitches we are thrown, but we can choose how we react. If we only expect fastballs, the curveballs of life will get the best of us. God IS in control. He knows exactly what course our lives are going to take, *“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”* (Proverbs 16:9). We are never alone at the plate, God is with us each and every at bat. When we do all we can to keep our eyes on Jesus, no curveball can strike us out.

Missing you all dear friends,  
Sandy

## ***Soup Kitchen Update!*** ***July 2020***

In the past weeks, the numbers of people showing up for the Soup Kitchen have decreased. However, we have continued to serve those who do show up. Each Monday, food bags are prepared ahead of time and handed out the back door of Memorial Hall to anyone who shows up who needs food. The bags contain a freshly prepared meat and cheese sandwich, chips, granola bar, peanut butter or cheese crackers, and some kind of sweet (dessert) item. Bottles of plain or flavored water and a piece of fruit are also offered. Memorial Day Monday we got a little creative and served hot dogs in the food bags. This was very popular with our guests! We continue to rely on Jacob, Kira, Lena,

and Micah Blagg to help prepare the sandwiches and fill the bags. **Many thanks** to them for their great assistance! And many thanks to all of you who support the Otterbein Soup Kitchen with your time, talent, and resources!



## Kits for Conference

No decision has been published about the Kits for Conference. Please watch the bulletin for information on the kits. It is suggested that you continue working on the School Kits and Health Kits. See the April *Tidings* for a list of items required.

## Heritage Project—Church History Book

Our publisher is busy proofreading and working on the layout and design of our latest church history book (1894-2020). Barring any further impacts related to Covid-19, the book is projected to be ready for distribution Autumn 2020.

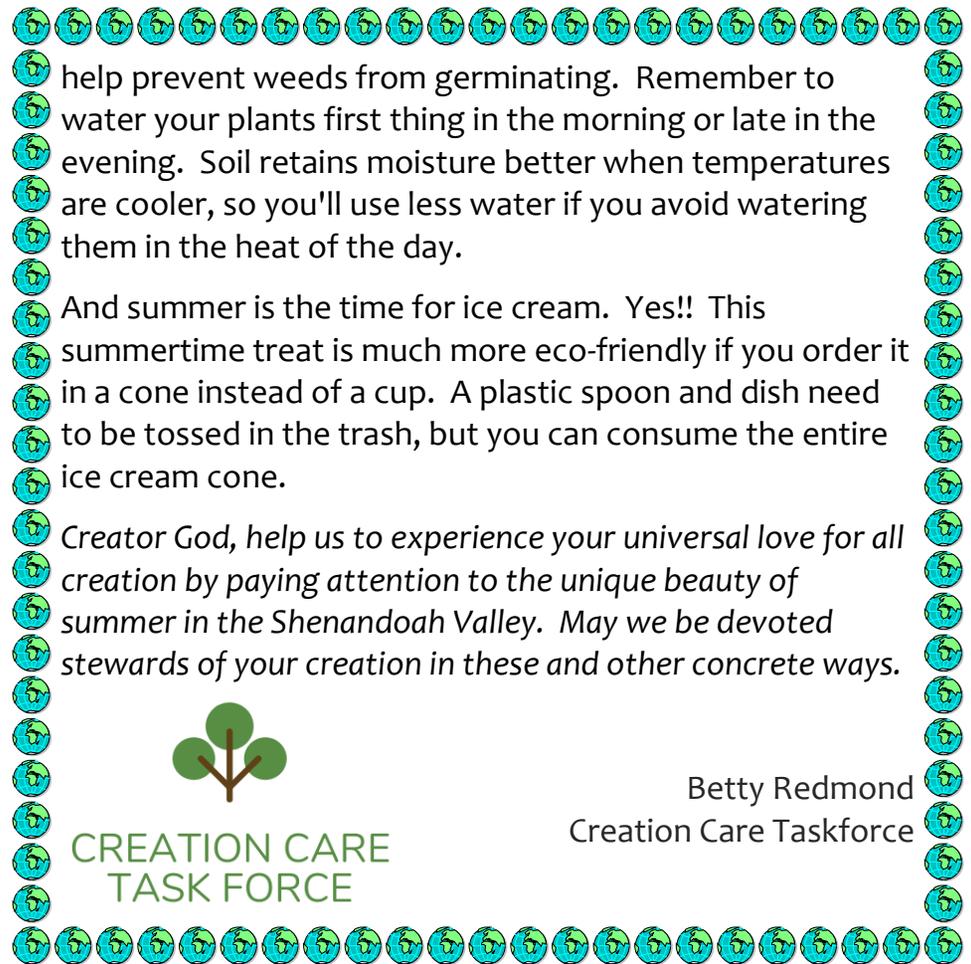
**Reserve your copy, NOW!** (Hey! It's not too early to be thinking of Christmas gifts!) If you anticipate purchasing a book(s), please advise us of your intention. This will ensure the availability of adequate quantities while also avoiding the costs associated with printing excessive copies.

**We appreciate the generous monetary gifts received to date.** These monies will be utilized to meet our up-front publication obligations.

If you submitted memoriams or honorariums to be printed in the book, **but have not yet forwarded your free-will monetary contribution, it's not too late to mail your check to the church office.** (Indicate "Heritage Book--gift" on the memo line.) *Thank you!*

**The cost of the book will be a separate fee** and will be collected when your new history book is delivered.

Contact Carole Gaines or Patsy Liskey if you have questions.



help prevent weeds from germinating. Remember to water your plants first thing in the morning or late in the evening. Soil retains moisture better when temperatures are cooler, so you'll use less water if you avoid watering them in the heat of the day.

And summer is the time for ice cream. Yes!! This summertime treat is much more eco-friendly if you order it in a cone instead of a cup. A plastic spoon and dish need to be tossed in the trash, but you can consume the entire ice cream cone.

*Creator God, help us to experience your universal love for all creation by paying attention to the unique beauty of summer in the Shenandoah Valley. May we be devoted stewards of your creation in these and other concrete ways.*



CREATION CARE  
TASK FORCE

Betty Redmond  
Creation Care Taskforce



*A "Sincere Thank you!" to my Otterbein family for the healing prayers, get well wishes, cards, meals, and offers of assistance that I have received since my accident in March. God has blessed me with steady healing over the last several months. He guides me in my progress as I re-gain walking skills. Your many kindnesses have uplifted me. Thank you!*

*Carole Gaines*

## Creation Care

Sunny skies and warmer temperatures offer opportunities to save energy and natural resources as we care for God's creation.

Clothes dryers use a lot of energy spinning and producing heat. If you don't have a clothes line, how about at least hanging clothes that take longer to dry (jeans, towels, etc.), on a drying rack or chairs on the patio or deck. This will not only save energy, but they will smell as fresh as a summer day.

Try keeping your air conditioning temperature set to 78 degrees, the most efficient setting for saving energy and reducing your cooling costs. If you have a ceiling fan it can be a part of a team with your air conditioner for cooling.

According to the experts, adding a ceiling fan can allow you to actually turn up the thermostat 2 to 4 degrees, saving you energy and money with no reduction in comfort. Run your ceiling fan counterclockwise on medium to high speed, which makes you feel cooler by creating an artificial breeze. The ceiling fan uses a limited amount of energy, but does not need to be on when no one is using the room. Remember to reverse the setting of the ceiling fan in the winter to produce the opposite effect by gently circulating hot air that is trapped near the ceiling, reducing use of energy and your heating bill.

If you have a garden or flower beds, you probably have weeds. Pulling them the old-fashioned way (by hand) does take more work, but is much more environmentally friendly than dousing them with harsh chemicals. It's also a great way to get some exercise. A thin layer of mulch will shade the surface of the garden and

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## Congratulations!

The following graduates were honored during the June 7 worship service:

**Kira Blagg** graduated from Harrisonburg High School and plans to attend Virginia Wesleyan University in the fall to study Elementary Education. Kira is daughter of Rev. Adam & Christy Blagg and granddaughter of Rev. Jim & Pat Wingert.

**Anthony Malabad** graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Virginia with a double major in Environmental Science and Global Environments & Sustainability. He has applied for jobs throughout the state and is waiting to hear from them. Anthony is son of Paul & Melissa Malabad and grandson of Marylee Huffman.

**Joel Clemens** graduated from James Madison University with a degree in Vocal Performance. He will be pursuing a Masters Degree in Opera Performance at The Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

**Mary Galvin** graduated from James Madison University with a degree in Vocal Performance. She plans to take a gap year and then attend graduate school.

**Aidan Everett** graduated from James Madison University with a degree in Music Industry. He plans to move to Nashville, TN in the next few months to pursue employment in the music industry.

**Megan Liskey Lambert** graduated from Indiana State University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She is Nursing Supervisor at Rockingham Family Physicians. Megan is daughter of Donnie & Connie Liskey and granddaughter of Janet Liskey.

**Kevin Andrade, Sr.** graduated from James Madison University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology with a concentration in Environmental & Engineering Geology. He plans to finish research assistance to JMU's Geology Department and then seek local employment.

**John Nye** graduated from James Madison University with a Doctorate in Trumpet Performance. Has a potential job offer at Trinity Christian School in Fairfax to be a teacher and band director.



## Trustees Report to the Congregation

It seems this COVID-19 virus has affected just about everything in our lives, including church services and other in-person meetings and activities here at Otterbein. A positive result of our church being closed down for this period of time is that the Trustees have been able to complete a number of important and needed **non-budgeted** projects. Included are:

- ◆ Randy Nelson has completed the installation of new, brighter, and more energy-efficient lighting in both the crib and toddler nurseries, the Faith Builders classroom, the Sunday School hallway, and the greeting area at the water fountains.
- ◆ Judy Falls has done some major cleaning and sanitizing of all areas of the church.
- ◆ The Sanctuary lights have been lowered, cleaned, repaired, and bulbs replaced.
- ◆ Melvin Falls has removed, painted, and reinstalled the ceiling tiles in the Sunday School hallway.
- ◆ The bell tower chimes are being cleaned and repaired. Many thanks to Mary Griffith who plays the tower chimes every Sunday from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Take a drive to the church parking lots to listen to them as you sit in your car (maintaining a safe physical distance).
- ◆ The lower parking lot has been paved and lines on all the parking lots have been repainted.
- ◆ The large glass door refrigerator stopped working. Rather than put more money into the repair of a very old unit, a new, energy-efficient refrigerator with LED lighting was purchased and installed (moved into place in the kitchen) by an energetic team of church members. This was no easy task, but we got the job done!
- ◆ The Trustees are currently refining a proposal for

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installing a new heating system for the Sanctuary and choir room areas to replace our old, inefficient, and sometimes unreliable boiler system.

- ◆ Melvin Falls and John Liskey, Sr. plan to soon remove the old parking meter posts in the parking lots.

The results of each of these projects are amazing! God is pleased with our stewardship efforts in taking care of OUMC.

Since these projects were not included in the general budget, Spring Cash Day is a good way to give a little extra financially to help cover the costs of these needed projects. The Trustees thank you for your past, present, and future support through your prayers and financial giving.

The current Trustees are John Liskey Sr. (chair), Connie Liskey (vice chair), Bill Pollard (secretary), Diane Ritchie, Liz Lawson, Richard Smith, L.J. Joiner, Kevin Andrade, and Chad Hiner. The Trustees welcome your questions or comments concerning these items or any other church maintenance issues.

## Summer Book Study

This summer we will offer three book suggestions for your reading and provide a time in August to gather and discuss. Our discussion may be via Zoom or in-person, depending upon how things are being handled in August.

*Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson

*America's Original Sin* by Jim Wallis

*The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander

All three books deal with race in our country at some level. They are challenging but necessary reading. I hope you take the time to engage with this important work over the summer.