

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

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Tidings



December 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
15th of each month.

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

Judy Falls

Custodian

Dawn Hunter

Treasurer
oumctreasurer@hotmail.com

Office: 540-434-7747

x200 for Melissa

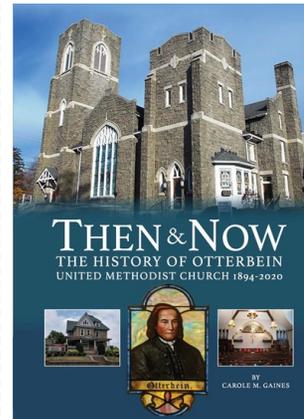
x201 for Adam

x203 for Dawn

x204 for Sandy

x207 for Judy

x210 for Faith



Heritage Book Order Form

*Then & Now—Otterbein United
Methodist Church 1894-2020*

This church history book was written
in connection with Otterbein UMC's
125th anniversary celebration in 2019.
As such, **until December 31, 2020**,
you can **order and pay** for this
publication at the
SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY PRICE of \$20.
(Thereafter, it will be sold at the
book's bar code price of \$25.)

Don't delay! Take advantage of this reduced price!

Ready in time for Christmas gift-giving!

Order pick-up details will be announced when
the books are received from the printer.

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

NUMBER OF BOOKS _____ **(x \$20.00)**
(special pricing ends 12/31/2020)

TOTAL: _____

Make check payable to "OUMC" and
designate "Book Order" in the memo line.

Please send the completed order form
and your payment to:

Otterbein UMC
176 W. Market Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Thank you for your order!

Otterbein in Prayer

Jerry & Claudia Andes	Norma Heath	Andrew Moyers
Gary Billingsley	Barbara Henry	Beverly Nelson
Millie Bruce	Laura Headlee	Judy Pruett
Pat Brunk	Silas Herndon	Don & Bonnie Rohr
Rev. Louis Carson	Bennie & Gloria	Ron & Mary Ellen
Jo Ellen Dickenson	Hildebrand	Rohrbaugh
Nancy East	John Hoffnagle	Linda Stephens
Rev. Samuel Espinoza	Dot Jones	Martha Taylor
Vicki & Ed Gaines	Evelyn Keane	Charlie Tibbits
Judy Grandle	Glen Langston	Keith & Sharon Waters
Florence Green	Janet Liskey	Mary Wenger
Betty Griffith	Marion Malabad	Rev. Richard Worden
Ray & Audrey Griffith	Allene McCoy	Anita Yount
Doris Hanger	Orpha Miller	Kim Zigler

Join in an Old-Fashioned Christmas Carol Sing-a-long!

Sunday, December 13th at 2 pm. Otterbein will be having an **Old-Fashioned Christmas Carol Sing-a-long** in the back church parking lot. There will be music presented by our (virtual) College Chorale. Each person attending will receive a special gift bag with homemade holiday cookies and other goodies. Snow date is the next Sunday, December 20th. Please make plans to join in the fun!



For Your Information

- **Tidings deadline** for the **January** issue is **Monday, December 14** by **3 pm**. 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 oumcadm@hotmail.com by the 14th.
- **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.

FROM THE PASTOR

Advent is a season of preparation. Our scriptures during this time of the year speak of getting ready. Whether it be John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness or the prophet Isaiah telling of a time ahead of restoration and a promised Messiah, we look with hope towards Christmas. The sense of preparation for me is felt strongly when we start the work of writing Advent devotionals. This makes year three of that work and I receive the same comments every year from our devoted writers: “Where did that scripture come from?” Of course, I have an answer, but at the heart, it is a question about the season. As we settle in to write a Devotional, our minds naturally turn towards the Christmas season. Jesus’ birth, angels and shepherds, wise men bearing gifts, and then we get something very different. Prophetic writing in tiny books at the end of the Old Testament, hard readings from Paul, or gospel passages that make us really struggle to find a connection with the feeling of the season. And yet, despite those challenges, I read every year devotionals that capture the season of Advent. It challenges us to make those connections, separating the joy of Christmas from the preparation of Advent, but that work is done well. I would argue that the diligent work of Advent makes Christmas all the better. Advent is not more important than Christmas, but I think it is essential in helping us appreciate Christmas. If we jump ahead to all the familiar stories, we miss the importance of getting ready.

In 2020, I think it is even more important to be keenly aware of the Advent season and the celebration that is coming. We are in an extended and difficult time of preparation. We have postponed celebrations that we desire and have become accustomed to. It seems like we will never be able to rejoice the way we want to, but this too will pass. As we focus on Advent, we wait patiently for the celebration of Christmas. So too do we wait on that time when we will be able to lift our voices together again. We wait for our time of sharing the bread and cup. We wait for the chance to gather around the table in Memorial Hall and share a meal. Let this season of Advent prepare us for that great celebration this is coming.

Adam



UMW News

Women called to prayer and study,
Women called by God to serve,
Women called to works of justice,
Called by God to act in love.
~Laurie Zelman~

Our fourth quarter "Pledge to Mission" is due in December and since we will not have our December luncheon, please bring your 2020 pledges up to date and mail to Jo Ann Liskey (4856 Shen Lake Drive; Rockingham, VA 22801) by **Tuesday, December 8**. Her phone number is 434-2997. Unless Jo Ann is notified otherwise, the amount of your pledges will remain the same for 2021. The 2020 officers have agreed to keep their office for another year.

Members completing Reading Plan 1 and receiving certificates are: Christy Blagg, Jo Ann Liskey, Judy Monger, Portia Pruitt, and Hazel Willi. We received a certificate for achieving Six Channels of Mission Giving and a Gold Certificate for meeting the "Living Into Our Purpose" requirements. We are ordering books for the 2021 Reading Program. More information will be in the January *Tidings*.

The UMW District Officers have planned next year's events and we are working on the 2021 Program Booklets for each of you.

Mary inspires me. With all the difficulty around her, she chose to treasure the words of the God and ponder them in her heart. May we do likewise. May we end the year 2020, not with sarcasm and pessimism in our hearts, but rather with a testimony of the goodness of the Lord on our lips. Let us begin by pondering the words from the angel - "*Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.*" Hallelujah! Jesus has come!

Rev. Faith Fowler

Race, Class, and the Kingdom of God Study Series

"Be Equipped and Empowered for Reconciliation"

This 6 week course is being offered via Zoom beginning in January 2021

Mondays, January 18 - February 22 from 7 - 8 pm
and

Thursdays, January 21 - February 25 from 12-1 pm

Please contact Faith Fowler to sign up and for more details:
(540) 209-4806 or faithfowler@vaumc.org

Tower Chimes Update



In November, the Administrative Council agreed to finish the tower chimes refurbishment project by commissioning the assembly and installation of a new keyboard. Our faithful organ specialist, Mr. Xavier Wilhelmy, will be building a custom keyboard that is designed specifically

for our tower chimes. Sandy Schaefer and Mary Ely Griffith have been a part of the process and assure me that it will make the playing of the chimes much less cumbersome. Mary will gladly share the technical aspects of this work with you if you desire to know more. The cost between a custom made keyboard and other options was negligible, coming in at just under \$4,000. If you would like to make a donation to this project, please make your check payable to OUMC and designate "tower chimes" to the memo line of your check.

* **Thanks!** *
* gave me a birthday card *
* and wished me a happy *
* birthday. I miss you all. *
* - Eric Mitchell - *

Ponder

*“But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”
(Luke 2:19)*

“In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”*

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. **But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”
(Luke 2:8-20)*

As I consider Mary in this passage, I am amazed! Not only because she had just given birth to the Savior of the world in a stable, but because she had the capacity to not get caught up in the chaos around her, but rather chose to ponder all that the Lord had done. Pondering on goodness is not something our culture encourages us to do. To ponder, or meditate, on something good, in the midst of the bad, takes intentionality, focus, and time. It's easy to ponder negative things - dwelling on all that has gone wrong. But I would like to call us to come up higher and choose, like Mary, to ponder on the goodness of the Lord. Consider 2020, yes it's been a hard year - AND it's been a year filled with goodness of the Lord. Can you see it? Will you be intentional and take the time to ponder the faithfulness and goodness of the Lord even in the midst of the loss and grief? This is my plan for December.

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A Riddle

from the Otterbein United Methodist Men's
Fellowship:



What do you get when you combine 7 gallons of spaghetti sauce, 15 pounds of noodles, 11 pounds of salad mix, 216 cookies, over 100 slices of garlic French bread, 7 dedicated cooks in the kitchen, and a speedy-service home delivery lady? Apparently, you get many (110) satisfied customers! At least that was the feedback received following the Otterbein United Methodist Men's Fellowship **first-ever Drive-Thru Curbside Pickup Spaghetti Supper** in October. The donations also indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the meal and the cause. To date, **\$2,200** has been received in support of the OUMC College Chorale Scholarships. While this is the most generous donation level the Men's Fellowship has ever received for one of our meals, we hope that in 2021 an in-person Spaghetti Supper can and will be offered. We all missed the wonderful in-person fellowship of the meal this year. We, as a group, feel extremely blessed by your prayers, time, and donations!



We are sorry that we will not be able to offer our **Christmas Brunch** in December this year due to the continued threat of COVID-19. We pray that everyone will continue to follow safety practices (wearing a mask, physical distancing, washing hands frequently). It is also our prayer that we can return to some “normal” church activities in the future as work continues on plans to deliver an effective, safe vaccine.

Please stay tuned for announcements in future *Tidings* and elsewhere as we plan to resume our monthly Otterbein Men's Fellowship prayer breakfast meetings in **January, 2021**.

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

JOY and REJOICING in ADVENT 2020

We can all agree 2020 has had its challenges, cancellations, and disappointments. Across the country and here at Otterbein, Christmas will look and feel very different this year. In New York City, iconic traditions such as *The Nutcracker* and Radio City Music Hall's *Rockettes Christmas Spectacular* have been canceled. Santa Claus won't be greeting children at Macy's flagship NYC store for the first time in nearly 160 years. At Otterbein, we will miss the decorating of our beautiful sanctuary and Christmas tree. We ache to realize there will be no December Sunday with our Sanctuary Choir Cantata and United Methodist Men's Christmas Brunch. We grieve the loss of singing Christmas carols together and the lighting of candles at the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. About now, wouldn't it be good to receive some good news?

The good news is that our joy is not dependent on what is going on in our life or in our world. No earthly thing can ever give us complete joy. The season of Advent is known as one of "joyful expectation." In the church we name the third Sunday of Advent as *Gaudete Sunday*, or "Joyful Sunday," as our waiting for the Savior is almost at an end. Advent gives us the opportunity to take time to reflect, prepare, and place emphasis on our hope. The joy we have in Christ is not seasonal or circumstantial. Instead, it is a response to what God has already done and continues to do. The story of Jesus' coming is good news for everyone. In Luke's Christmas story the angel proclaims, "*I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people.*" The joy that overwhelms the hearts of the shepherds, the angels, the wise men, Mary, and Joseph is the joy that still has the power to fill our hearts with rejoicing today.

God has something good for you this Christmas season. Christ is our reason for rejoicing as we sing and reflect on the ancient carol *Good Christian Men*,

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served as treasurer for 3 years.

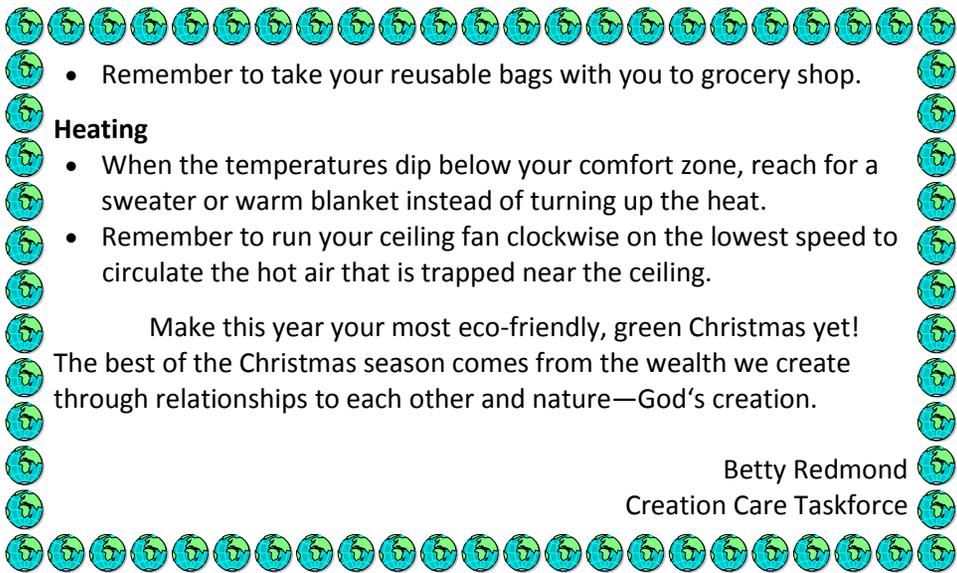
- **Vicki Gaines** has been Otterbein's most constant presence in all types of meetings.
- **Carole Barber** serves as the facilitator of the FIA meetings.
- **Adam Blagg** has been called upon to serve as vice chair this year.
- I have contributed the least due to past work travel, but try to be present as often as possible.

However, many of you have also lent your support by providing ideas for projects and attending council meetings or gatherings. I feel that God is pleased to watch us working together to respond to needs in our community.

To better accomplish the goals of FIA (currently we are advocating for more affordable housing), a full-time staff person is needed to support the many activities. Therefore, FIA is conducting a campaign to raise \$75,000 to fund a position for 2021. At Otterbein we hope it is possible for us to raise \$10,000 towards the goal, and, during the first month of the campaign, we are already half way there.

We invite each of you to consider whether you would like to become a Friend of Faith in Action and contribute towards the campaign. A brochure is attached with more details. Any size donation would be very welcome - what we value most is for as many as possible from Otterbein to be actively supporting this heartfelt effort of the people of faith in our community to find solutions to some of the big needs, which can't be solved by a single congregation. Donations can be made directly to FIA or to OUMC with "FIA" listed on the memo line. If you have any question, please ask any of the five of your representatives to FIA.

With thanks,
Eileen Magruder



- Remember to take your reusable bags with you to grocery shop.

Heating

- When the temperatures dip below your comfort zone, reach for a sweater or warm blanket instead of turning up the heat.
- Remember to run your ceiling fan clockwise on the lowest speed to circulate the hot air that is trapped near the ceiling.

Make this year your most eco-friendly, green Christmas yet!
The best of the Christmas season comes from the wealth we create through relationships to each other and nature—God’s creation.

Betty Redmond
Creation Care Taskforce



Please Become a Friend of Faith in Action!

Can you recall something you’ve done in the past that you just knew was pleasing to God - from small

acts of kindness (sending a card that just happened to arrive at a moment when someone was feeling particularly lonely or discouraged) to bigger actions (volunteering at the soup kitchen for over 2 decades)? For me, I see God at work in Faith in Action (FIA) and feel privileged to join with other members at Otterbein and friends from other congregations (Christian, Muslim, and Jewish) to find solutions for those in need in our community - whether they are new immigrants, people who are incarcerated, or those in need of affordable housing - the people whom Jesus calls on us to serve in Matthew 25:34-40.

Five of us have been representing Otterbein in FIA since its inception:

- **Linda Conrad** was part of the organizing committee &

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Rejoice! This text invites us to rejoice with our entire beings, with **HEART** and **SOUL** and **VOICE**:

Good Christian men, rejoice! with heart and soul and voice.

*Now ye hear of endless bliss! **JOY! JOY!***

Jesus Christ was born for this.

*He has opened heaven’s door
and we are blessed forevermore.*

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!



May God abundantly fill your heart with joy this Advent season as we rejoice in the birth of our Savior and Lord.

Sandy Schaefer

Furnace Update

As was reported earlier, the current boiler heating system has become a very expensive item to keep operating over the last 10 years. Last winter, the pipes running throughout the church started leaking from the inside out! Because this will become an impossible task to fix, the only alternative was to install a new heat source.

The new gas heating system for the Sanctuary is being installed by Landes Heating and Air and gas lines have been installed by A-Able Plumbing. The Trustees are asking the congregation to support this project above your normal offering with your generous donations to help defray the \$40,000 cost. Funds from the Good Estate Endowment, which can only be used for Capital Improvements, have also been tapped to help with this project. Checks should be made payable to OUMC and designated “New Furnace Fund” in the memo line. Thank you in advance for your support of this project.

Any questions can be referred to Adam Blagg or John Liskey.



Creation Care

CREATION CARE TASK FORCE

“Hanging of the Greens” is a traditional service of decorating the church for the Advent and Christmas season. This service includes the hanging of greenery traditionally associated with everlasting life. You may have participated in such a service in years past. The following litany for the service is found in the UMC *Book of Worship*:

Litany of the Greens

How can we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?
With branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the eternal Christ?
With garlands of wreaths of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, our Savior?
With arrangements of holly and ivy, symbolizing His passion, death and resurrection.

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God?
By hearing again the words of the prophets who foretold the saving work of God?

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

All Glory to God in the highest!

This litany is a beautiful reminder of the beauty of God’s creation and our responsibility to utilize, manage, protect, and defend His creation.

According to the song made popular by Andy Williams, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. We can make it more wonderful if we continue our efforts to be environmentally friendly throughout the Christmas season.

Along with the celebration often comes eco-unfriendly decorating and consumerism. Here are some

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ways to maximize the enjoyment of the Christmas season while minimizing the environmental impact:

Gifts

- Shop locally to reduce your carbon footprint and support the local economy.
- Buy quality, choosing what will last and avoiding non-recyclable plastics.
- Take advantage of the unusual amount of time at home this year to use your creative skills for homemade gifts.
- For those who already have all they need, consider donating to a cause they care about most in their honor.
- Re-gifting is OK – just give your re-gifted item to someone who will appreciate it.
- Choose recyclable Christmas wrapping paper and/or brown plain or printed kraft paper (available at Amazon, Hobby Lobby, Target).
- Reusable gift bags are another good choice, saving the ones you receive to use next year. How about colorful cotton fabric squares that can be used again?
- Use natural raffia or raffia ribbon.
- Avoid rolls of Christmas paper, bows, and ribbon containing non-recyclable elements like foil, glitter, or plastic.

Decorations

- Choose LED lights. They have a longer life span and use less energy. Use a timer so your lights are only on when needed.
- Stick to decorations that are reusable year after year. If you decide not to reuse an item, consider donating it instead of trashing it.
- Greenery and other natural foliage from your yard or from a friend or neighbor is always a good choice. If you want a live tree, buy from a local tree farm.

Food

- Minimize wasting of food by making a shopping list of what and how much to avoid buying unnecessary items that lead to food waste.
- Store leftovers in glass jars or dishes instead of plastics containers.
- Minimize the use of styrofoam, plastic cups, and other disposable paper and plastic products.
- Opt for paper, cardboard, and glass packaged food and avoid single serving plastics.

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