

# OAKWOOD OAKLEAF

## NOVEMBER 2025



Our fall events were full of energy and a blessing. We had about 160 people at the Harvest Party and over 150 kids at Trunk or Treat. This newsletter is full of pictures of both events. And our new food pantry that started on Wednesdays in October has grown from two families the first week to sixteen families during the last Wednesday of the month. Thanks to everyone who helped make these activities so special.

Our focus in November will be Consecration Sunday on November 16 and this newsletter contains information about this event. Please be praying about your contribution to Oakwood in 2026.

Finally, thanks to Roger Johnson for preaching on October 26. We give him a big thumbs up!

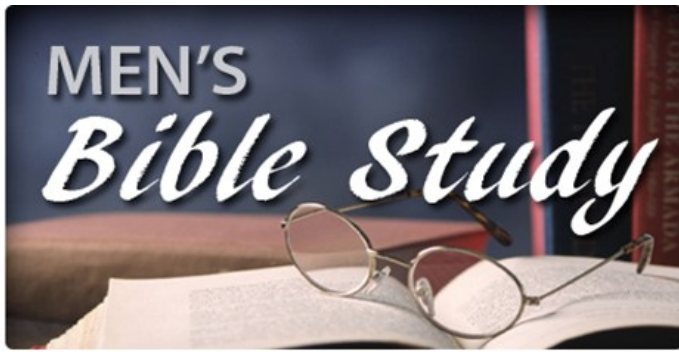
In this issue:  
Fall Events  
Our Food Pantry  
Consecration Sunday



CONNECT

GROW

SERVE



Saturday Mornings  
8:00 am

All men are welcome  
Please see Mike Feldman if  
you have questions.



### **WORSHIP Services**

Sunday 9:30 am  
Our Sunday Service is  
in-person and live streamed at  
[www.oakwoodlife.org](http://www.oakwoodlife.org)  
Childcare Available



Facebook: Oakwood United Methodist Church  
Instagram: Oakwood\_UMC  
Website: [www.oakwoodlife.org](http://www.oakwoodlife.org)

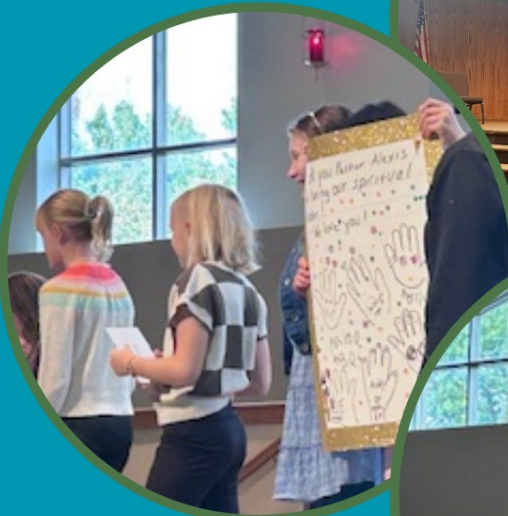
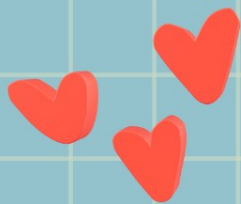
### **Classics**

Classics will meet on November 13 at noon. Please  
join this potluck for people 55 and over. There is  
wonderful food and great fellowship.



# PASTOR APPRECIATION

## THANK YOU!



October was Pastor Appreciation month. The kids wanted to show how glad they are that Rev. Alexis is at Oakwood, so they made cards and gave them to her during worship. The kids aren't alone. We are all glad Rev. Alexis is here.

# ***Oakwood Youth***

Happy fall! We have had a great school year so far with our youth! On Wednesday nights we have been working chronologically through some of the early stories of the Old Testament and seeing God's power and love at work. Sunday mornings in CLT, we are reading through Ephesians and have some discussion about The Word. If your 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade student would like to join or invite their friends, we would love to have them! Our Wednesday Youth Group has lesson time from 5:30-6:30 and free time in the gym from 6:30-7:30 pm. And we meet in the coffee shop for Sunday School from 10:45-11:30.

We do have a few dates coming up with no activities for holidays. No Youth Group on Wednesday 11/26 ahead of Thanksgiving. And in December, we will not have classes on Wednesdays 12/24 or 12/32 and Sunday 12/28 during Christmas Break.

Thank you to everyone who helps continue to make our youth program a thriving and welcoming place for our students!

Nathan

## **Southeast Polk Homecoming Parade**





*I will bless you...so that you will  
be a blessing. Genesis 12:2*

400 NE 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Pleasant Hill, Iowa 50327  
515-262-6007 Office  
515-262-5680 FAX

[www.oakwoodlife.org](http://www.oakwoodlife.org)

**SEND PRAYER  
REQUESTS TO**  
prayers@oakwoodlife.org

**Senior Pastor, Alexis Johnson**  
515-262-6007  
[Alexis.johnson@oakwoodlife.org](mailto:Alexis.johnson@oakwoodlife.org)

**Small Group Ministry &  
Connections Associate**  
Julie Feldman  
515-262-6007  
Julie.feldman@oakwoodlife.org

**Connections &  
Welcome Associate**  
Angie Acker  
Angie.acker@oakwoodlife.org

**Music Ministries Associate**  
**Brian Acker**  
 Brian.acker@oakwoodlife.org

**Youth Director**  
Nathan Fischer  
nathan.fischer@oakwoodlife.org

**Children's Ministry Associate:**  
 Ruby Ruby  
 Tania Bentley, 515-360-9817  
 Tania.bentley@oakwoodlife.org  
 Jessica.ruby@oakwoodlife.org

**Church Administrator**  
Nancy Berggren  
515-262-6007  
Nancy.berggren@oakwoodlife.org

[illegible]

# ***Oakwood Food Pantry***



## ***Free Food Pantry***

Open  
**WEDNESDAYS**  
5:30 -7:00 pm



***Oakwood United  
Methodist Church  
400 NE 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Pleasant Hill  
515-262-6007***

Please park in our west  
parking lot at the back  
of the church.

Thanks to Caring Hands in  
Altoona for their support.





## ***Consecration Sunday***

November 16 is Consecration Sunday when members and friends of Oakwood will be asked to give an estimate of how much they plan to give to the church in 2026. This is an important Sunday because it provides each of us the opportunity to more formally consider the stewardship of our time, talents and resources for The Lord. And, yes, we ask for an estimate so we can plan for next year. Our prayer for Oakwood is that we find ourselves growing in faith together in 2026. Please prayerfully consider increasing the amount you give to the church. This will go a long way to keeping us on solid footing. This issue of the Oakleaf provides financial information about the church as well as examples of how we Connect-Grow-Serve.

After worship, we are having a special fellowship brunch. We will be handing out RSVP cards for this event the first two Sundays in November. Be sure to make your reservations.

On Consecration Sunday, we will be distributing Estimate of Giving Cards for 2026. At the end of the worship service, we will ask for your estimate cards. Please be praying about your gift.

### **Oakwood Finance Committee**

Kathy Bolten, Co-Chair  
Don Timmins, Co-Chair  
Marlys De Vries, Treasurer  
Diane Plym  
Mike Anderson  
Brenda Gustafson  
Nancy Berggren  
Rev. Alexis Johnson

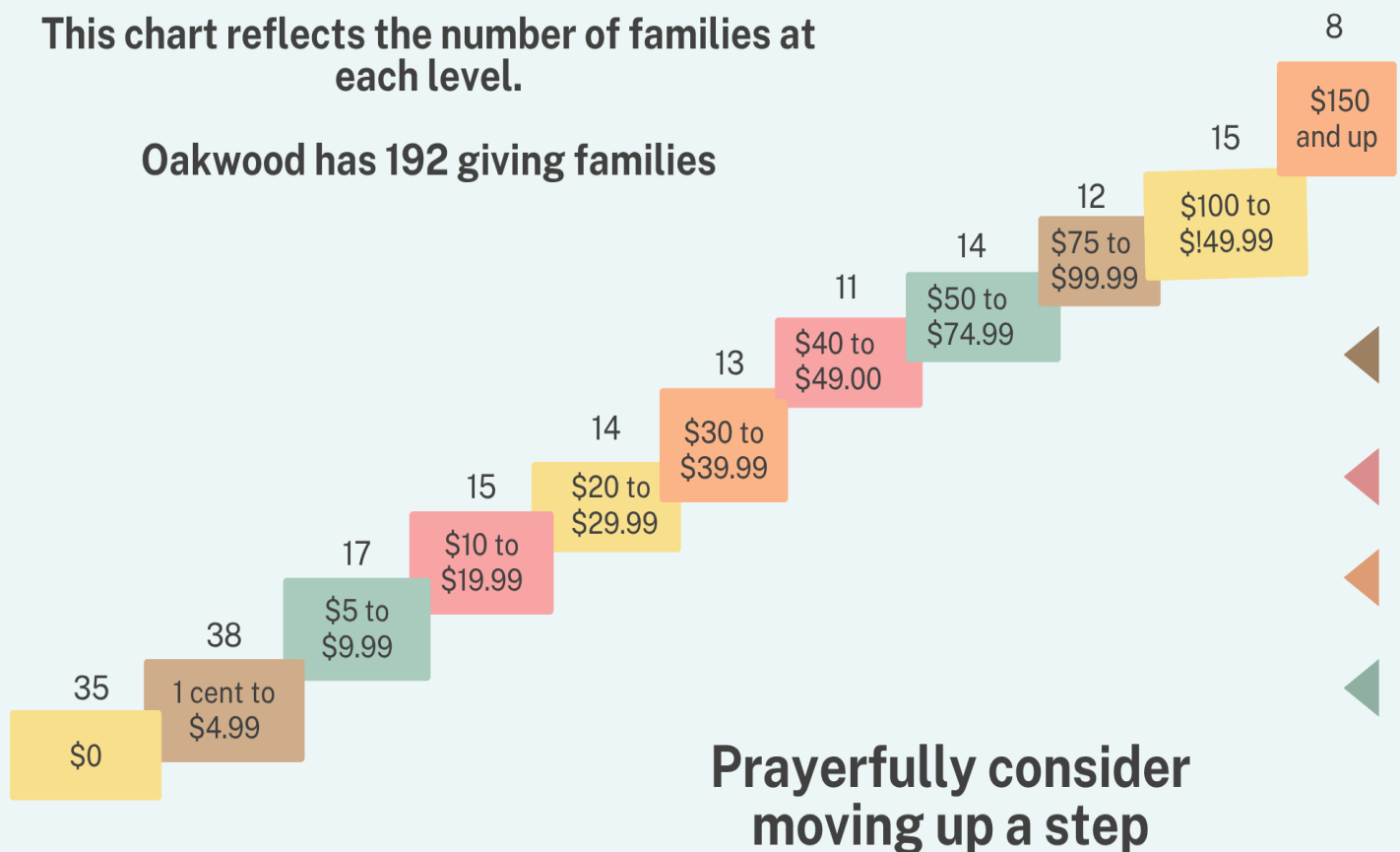
# Oakwood Giving

Below is our “step-up” chart. This shows the number of gifts that Oakwood has received at each step or giving level. Please look to see where you are on the chart, then prayerfully consider stepping-up on Consecration Sunday. Remember that all of the gifts Oakwood receives go to our church’s mission to **Connect-Grow-Serve**.

## Oakwood’s Weekly Giving

This chart reflects the number of families at each level.

Oakwood has 192 giving families

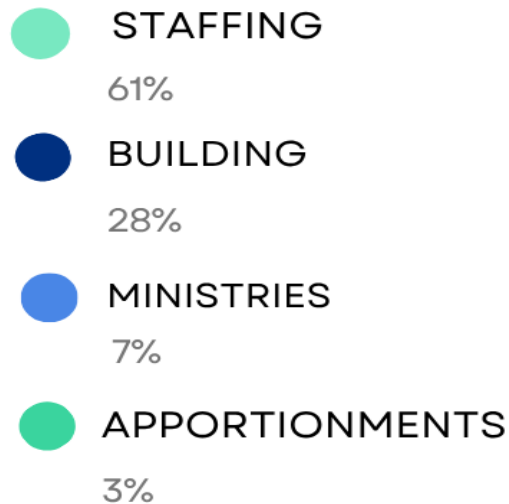
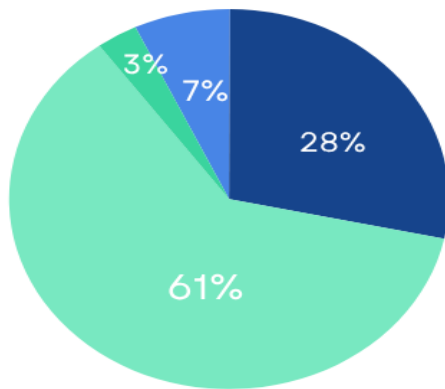


A tithe on \$60,000 of income is \$115 per week or \$6000 per year.

**Thank you** for all your gifts, and please remember you are always welcome at Oakwood no matter how much you give!



# 2025 PERCENT OF TOTAL OPERATING FUND SPENDING



**Ministries**  
 Camp  
 Small Groups  
 Adult Learning  
 Vacation Bible School  
 Youth and Children's Programs

**Building**  
 Utilities  
 Insurance  
 Technology  
 Kitchen Supplies  
 Custodial Expenses  
 Building Maintenance  
 Office Supplies and Postage

**Staffing**  
 Salaries  
 Benefits  
 Pension  
 Travel Costs  
 Continuing Education  
 Annual Conference Expenses  
 Payroll Costs  
 Employment Taxes

**Apportionment**  
 Support to eh Annual Conference for world-wide relief efforts and conference administration

## 2025 Project Program Expenses

Ministries \$23,786  
 Building and Office Expenses \$97,884  
 Staff \$212,672  
 Apportionments \$12,000  
 Missions \$2342  
**TOTAL \$348,684**

*We thank you for all the gifts you have given to Oakwood in 2025.*



## Thanks Trustees

A big thank you to our trustees. They have been doing a great job keeping our beautiful church ship shape! Your work is so appreciated. The Trustees are pictured below. Hunter Davis, Eric Buchacker, Mike Kirkpatrick, John Bergeson, Larry Keller, Gary Schwartz, co-chair, Mike Feldman, co-chair.







## A Journey of Faith and Community: Launching Our Church Food Pantry

This past July, a simple question from our wonderful pastor, Alexis, set off an unexpected journey for me. She asked if I would help start a food pantry at our church. I eagerly said yes, imagining a gradual process with an opening set for next summer. Little did I know, God's plan had a different timeline in mind.

Alongside Julie Ann Feldman, Alexis Johnson, and Kitana Fischer, we connected with leaders from Altoona's Caring Hands. To our surprise, their timeline aimed for an opening on October 1st! Initially, I felt overwhelmed—after all, it was the beginning of the school year, and I was stepping into unfamiliar territory. Yet, with encouragement and support, we embraced the challenge.

Our first opening was what I affectionately termed a "tech rehearsal," with just two people visiting. Undeterred, we saw it as an opportunity to refine our process. The following week, however, no one came. Doubts crept in, but through prayer and leaning on one another, we decided to shift gears and fully embrace the mission. By the third week, we welcomed 12 families, and just this past Wednesday, we served 16 families, many of whom have large households. The need is evident and growing, especially with the current economic challenges and the approaching holiday season.

Throughout this journey, I've learned invaluable lessons. I've realized the importance of trusting God, even when feeling unqualified. I am reminded that I am never alone in this endeavor. God's provision came through the support of many wonderful people who have walked with me, guided me, and at times, carried me.

Caring Hands has been an incredible partner, providing significant food rescue items. However, the need continues, and we are seeking additional shelf-stable items. If you feel called to contribute, your donations to both our weekly pantry and the little pantry outside would be greatly appreciated.

Together, we are making a difference, guided by faith and driven by love. Let us continue to support one another in this mission, trusting that God will lead us every step of the way. Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey.

Blessings, Cassie Lahmann



# Food Donations Needed



Oakwood's little Food Library has been very busy these last few months. Multiple bags of food are taken out to the curbside box each week, thanks to your donations.

This November, help us refill the missions closet shelves that keep the Food Library supplied. When you bring nonperishable food donations to church, place one sticker on our sheep for each item. Watch our sheep fill up with stickers, as our shelves fill up with food! We all work to fulfill our Lord's command, "Feed my sheep", with every extra can or box of food we throw in our grocery carts to share with our neighbors in need.

Feed My Sheep  
*John 21: 15-17*

## Food Donation Suggestions

Pasta  
Peanut Butter  
Canned Fruit  
Canned Meat  
Pizza Mix  
Pizza Sauce  
Canned Vegetables





# Oakwood Kids

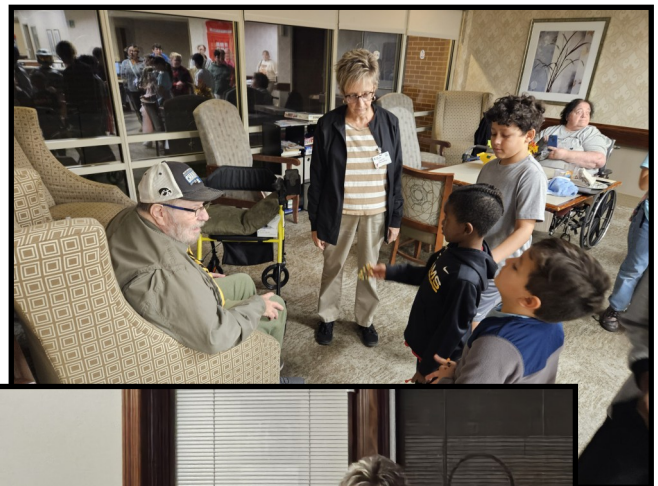
What a fun filled October we've had with our Children's Ministry Program. The kids enjoyed going to Parkridge Nursing Home to hand out cards and bracelets and then enjoyed lots of fellowship, fun and candy at Fall Harvest Party. All the kids went home with as much candy as they wanted thanks to Caring Hands!

In November, we will continue to practice for our Christmas Program which is Sunday December 7<sup>th</sup> during 9:30am Worship Service. We'd love to have as many Oakwood Families and Friends attending to support our Oakwood Kids.

As a reminder, we will not have class Wednesday November 26<sup>th</sup> due to Thanksgiving Holiday and Sunday November 30<sup>th</sup> will be Dress Rehearsal for the Christmas Program.

We thank all of our Volunteers who made Fall Harvest Party a wonderful success. We cannot run this ministry without your support, time and love of our Oakwood Kids!

Thank you, Tania and Ruby



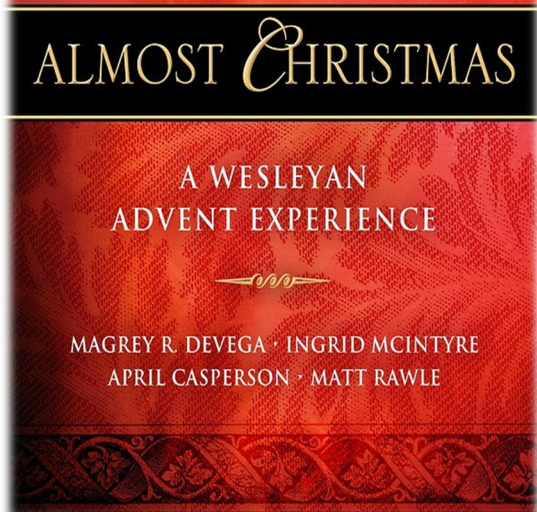
# Advent Study

Please Join us this Advent Season on Tuesday evenings 11/25, 12/02, 12/09 and 12/16 from 5:15-6:30 for Almost Christmas, A Wesleyan Advent Experience led by Julie Feldman.



By [Magrey deVega](#), [Ingrid McIntyre](#), [April Casper-son](#), [Matt Rawle](#)

In 1741, John Wesley preached his famous sermon titled “The Almost Christian” in which he encouraged people to follow Christ wholeheartedly. We should not be satisfied with being almost Christian but rather strive towards being altogether a Christian.



In *Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience*, author and pastor Magrey deVega leads a group of authors to explore how we can make the same commitment to Christ during Advent, connecting our Wesleyan heritage with the traditional Advent themes of Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace.

In this book, perfect for Advent, deVega and the other authors break down the barriers that prevent us from experiencing an “altogether” love, hope, joy, and peace in Christ in our lives and in the world around us. They demonstrate the promises God offers to us that makes those longings a reality, inviting us to claim those promises for **ourselves** this Advent and celebrate an altogether Christmas.

Chapters include: Altogether Love, Altogether Hope, Altogether Joy, Altogether





# TRUNK OR TREAT







# Fall Harvest Party

