



OAKWOOD
United Methodist Church

CONNECT - DISCIPLE - SERVE

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

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

WEB SITE:

www.oakwoodlife.org

**SEND PRAYER
REQUESTS TO**

prayers@oakwoodlife.org

Senior Pastor, Alexis Johnson
Alexis.johnson@oakwoodlife.org
515-262-6007

**Small Group Ministry &
Connections Associate**
Julie Feldman
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
Jessica.ruby@oakwoodlife.org
Tania Bentley, 515-360-9817

Administration
Nancy Berggren
Nancy.berggren@oakwoodlife.org



November 2024



November 17 is Stewardship 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 2025. 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 of giving so we can plan for next year. Our prayer for Oakwood is that we find ourselves GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER in 2025. Please prayerfully consider increasing the amount you give to the church. This will go a long way to keep us on solid financial footing. This issue of the *Oakleaf* provides financial information about the church as well as examples of how we **Connect-Disciple-Serve**.

Prior to Stewardship Sunday, we will be distributing Estimate of Giving Cards for 2025. At the end of the worship service on November 17th we will ask for your estimate cards. Please be praying about your gift.

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 for this time of fellowship.



Saturday Mornings @ 8:00 am
All men are welcome
Please see Mike Feldman if you
have questions.



WORSHIP Services

Sunday 9:30 am

Wednesday 6:30 pm

Both the 9:30 am Sunday Service and the
6:30 pm Wednesday Service are in -person
and live streamed at www.oakwoodlife.org

Childcare Available

Classics

Classics will meet on November 14 at noon.

Please join this potluck for
people 55 and over. There is wonderful
food and great fellowship. The program
speaker for the month is Mark Graeve.



Facebook: Oakwood United
Methodist Church

Instagram: Oakwood_UMC

Website: www.oakwoodlife.org



Ten children at HOPE Ministries Women's and Children's Center were provided winter weather wear out of the generosity of people at Oakwood. Thank you for helping to make sure these kids stay warm this winter.

Also, the In-gathering is coming up on November 2nd and the Angel Tree program will be kicking off the middle of November, We have ten families who we will be supporting in that effort.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

September 2024 Finances

- **Monthly Operating Fund Income:** September 2024 had regular offerings of \$25,378.00 and capital fund offerings of \$65.00 for total offerings of \$25,443.00.
- **Monthly Operating Fund Expenses:** Total operating expenses were \$24,318.05
- **Monthly Operating Fund Net Income:** +\$1,124.95.

September Cash Balances

- **Operating Cash Balance:** \$65,195.56
- **Technology Funds:** \$0.00
- **Mission Fund:** \$5,584.23
- **Memorial Fund:** \$16,494.96
- **Concert Fund:** \$5,390.99
- **Building Operations Fund:** \$0.00 (*Operation Face-Lift Fund*)
- **Building Use Fund:** \$10,753.43
- **Spaghetti Supper Fund:** \$20,253.52

If you have any questions about Oakwood finances, please contact one of our Finance Committee Members: Gary Schwartz, Chair; Steve Jurgens, Treasurer; Rev. Alexis Johnson, Mike Anderson, Nancy Berggren, Judy Carico, and Steve Rendall.

Stewardship Sunday Brunch



Don't forget to pick up a reservation card for our Stewardship Sunday Brunch. This will be a great time of celebrating everything that is happening at Oakwood. All the activity that goes on here is amazing. From local and global mission, to children and youth ministries, to the discipling of adults, we have been so blessed. We are all participants in the ongoing work of God through Jesus Christ! Thank you for your part in this.

The reservation cards will be handed out by the sanctuary doors on November 3rd and 10th and there will be some on the welcome table. Please return them by November 13 by putting them in the basket on the welcome table or giving them to Nancy in the office. You may also call the office at 515-262-6007 to reserve your spot.

A Word from our Lay Leader

As Thanksgiving approaches, it feels like this has been a tough year. For example, the media has been full of ads for and against candidates. There have been wars and rumors of wars (sounds Biblical to me).

And don't get people started on the crazy weather or any of several other issues.

Recently I got reminded about something that may be a little more important.

I had finished a meal. It was something I really liked and, as usual, Starr had made more than we could eat so we would have leftovers for future meals.

Afterward, I picked up something to read and ran across an article about a person who lives in the countryside in Kenya in a dried mud hut. He most often ate from his garden.

The previous year, he had a good crop of squash which was a staple of his diet. He had saved lots of seeds from them to plant the next year.

When this year's planting season rolled around, he had his usual large garden with lots of room for his squash. But it quickly turned into a very dry year. He had to carry water in a bucket from some distance to water his plants. Most of the garden was doing pretty good but his large patch of squash was not. He knew if his squash did not grow, then he would have a lot less to eat and none to sell.

Though he tried and tried to give the squash adequate moisture, it just was not working. After one long day, he wiped his brow, dropped to his knees, and prayed that he would have enough food to eat and sell.

Shortly thereafter, he noticed shoots coming up from the ground where he had planted his squash seeds. He smiled and thanked God as now he knew they would grow.

When I recalled the meal Starr had prepared, I was struck by how different the Kenyan and I are. I don't worry about food. We often eat at home but can also

eat at restaurants or just stop at the grocery store whenever we don't feel like cooking.

I also considered our house. I knew the farmer from Kenya would live in a small hut. It would have few, if any, amenities including no running water, an outdoor bathroom, and little air circulation.

I looked out my window and saw part of the side of my house and reflected on how big it is and how I don't worry about the extreme heat, extreme cold, or if I can find what I need.

Despite his difficulties, the Kenyan sang praises to God even when his garden was not growing. Then, he cried tears of joy and was filled with gratitude and hope when the seeds sprouted. He knew God was working with and helping him.

It is Thanksgiving time - - a time when we often pray for things like healing, family, etc. But we seldom consider thanking God for most of the things in our lives we just take for granted like our full bellies, our health and access to doctors, our ability to go many places at any time, etc. Seldom, do we recognize all of these for what they are - a gift from God.

This Thanksgiving, I hope we can all set aside a few minutes to really reflect on all we have and to thank God for every gift we have received. I also hope you will remember that everything we have would be considered a major blessing to most everyone in much of the rest of the world.

Then, maybe we can sing a song of praise to God for all our blessings - - and have a truly great Thanksgiving. Doyle Scott



[illegible]

Hospitality and Outreach Committee



The Hospitality and Outreach Committee (H.O.T.) has been busy preparing for the upcoming fall season and Advent. Thank you to all who have signed up to either greet or host fellowship. Also, a big thank you to all the secret bakers. If you plan to donate items for fellowship for a particular Sunday, please be sure to let Pam Schwartz know. Sometimes, several of our secret bakers get quite generous and we have more than enough treats.

Each Monday, Nancy Berggren posts on CCB, requests for door greeters and fellowship hosts. Be sure to check your email as you can sign up there. If you do not use email, just let Pam know if you would like to greet or be a fellowship host. You can also sign up on the schedule located on the counter in the Café Court.

Fellowship and Greeting are great ways to Connect – Disciple – Serve and you get to know others by being a host or a greeter. Ask a friend or friends, your bible study group, youth group to host or greet. It's easy to host Fellowship. The coffee is already made, with cups, plates and napkins, etc. available. All you need to do is provide enough goodies to serve approximately 80 people and any other type of beverages you would like to serve. There is no need to bake, packaged goodies work just fine along with fruit, meat and cheese. Both of these opportunities give you the chance to meet someone new and/or keep our Oakwood connections alive.

As we approach the Advent season, our committee may be asking for extra volunteers. Sometimes it takes an army to keep activities running smoothly.

NEEDED! A volunteer is needed to oversee and maintain the children's activity bags. Any questions, please talk with Pam Schwartz.

Also, if you would like to be a part of the Hospitality and Outreach Team contact Angie or Pam.

If you have any questions about hosting, please talk with Angie Acker (515-720-6918) or Pam Schwartz (641-425-9919).

Our Kids at Parkridge



Our Children's Ministry continues to grow with abundant energy and joy!! The children had fun at Parkridge Specialty Center in early October, playing Bingo with the residents and sharing a snack.

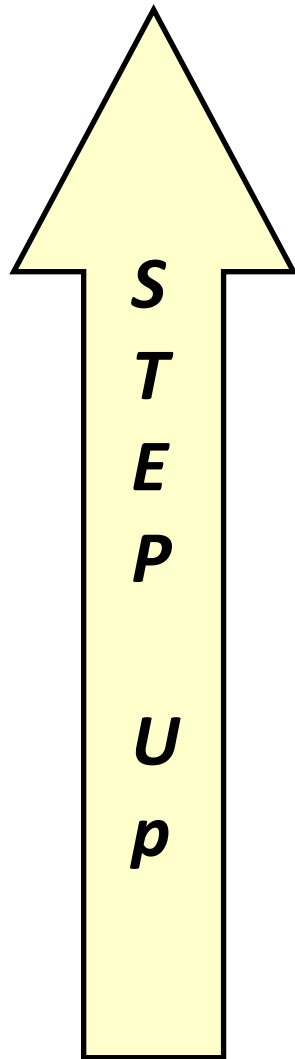
In November, we'll start practicing for the Christmas program which will be Sunday morning December 15th! We hope our Oakwood Family will enjoy the Children's Performance this year during Sunday Service.

Tania and Ruby would love to have you help volunteer with our Children's Ministry Program. If you feel lead to help in any capacity, please feel free to stop Tania or Ruby anytime. We'd love to speak with out. Blessings, Tania and Ruby



Oakwood Giving

Below is our “step-up” chart. This shows the number of gifts that Oakwood has received at each step or giving level. The data is for October 2023 through October 2024 and reflects the offering. Please look to see where you are on the chart, then prayerfully consider stepping-up on Stewardship Sunday. Remember that all of the gifts Oakwood receives go to our church’s mission to **Connect-Disciple-Serve**.



Weekly Giving Chart

Amount	Number Giving
\$200 or more	3
\$150-\$199	8
\$100-\$149	15
\$75-\$99	9
\$50-\$74	18
\$40-\$49	9
\$30-\$39	15
\$20-\$29	13
\$10-\$19	20
\$5-\$9	15
Less than \$5	48

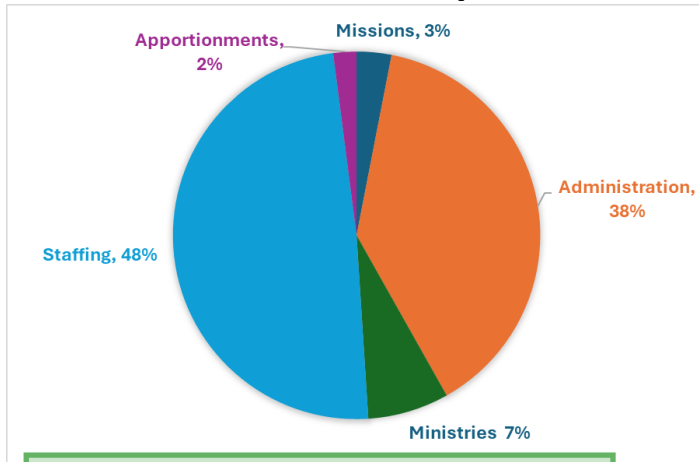
Oakwood has approximately 175 giving units.

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!

Finance Update

2024 Oakwood Expenses



Ministries

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

Administration

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

Staffing

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

Apportionment

Support to eh Annual Conference for world
-wide relief efforts and conference admin-
istration

Missions

Community Meal Outreach
Hope Ministries Donations
Food Pantry and Box
Angel Tree

All money designated for missions goes
to missions

Fundraisers and Special Offerings

Oakwood raises money through fundraisers and special offering. These are not included in our budget, but are a very important part in funding our programs. Thank you!

Spaghetti Dinner	\$15,499
Children's Bake Sale	\$1733
UMCOR	\$4390
Meals from the Heart-land	\$5435
Parable Project	\$250

2024 Budget Summary as of October

2024 Income	\$325,850
2024 Expenses	\$363,240

2024 Expenses through October

Ministries	\$25,821
Administration	\$138,212
Apportionments	\$8000
Staffing	\$173,247
Missions	\$12,309



There is a lot happening.....

November 3

Happy Birthday Oakwood. Come to worship at 9:30 am to celebrate our 35th birthday. Rev. Scott Hibben, our founding pastor will be delivering the message. Stay after church for a birthday fellowship!

November 10

Charge Conference at 1:00 pm at Oakwood. All our congregation is invited to attend this annual business meeting.

November 17

Stewardship Sunday is the day we turn in our pledge cards for 2025. And stay for brunch. On November 3, we will hand our brunch reservation cards so we can get a count of those who will attend!

This newsletter edition contains information that is intended to help you determine your giving. Remember you are always welcome at Oakwood, no matter what you give.

