



The Grapevine

Oxford United Methodist Church ~ Rev. Dr. Julius E. Del Pino, Pastor
Issue 19 | September/October 2023

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them, bear much fruit..." John 15:5

OUR MISSION

*Uniting in Jesus Christ
we spread God's love*

OUR FOCUS

We envision a church with a vibrant Christian spiritual life where we welcome and value all God's people... Where we grow, discover, and share our gifts in the church and in the world.

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From
the
Pastor



The summer months are almost over and we are now moving forward into the fall season. While some have taken vacations to different locations, many of us stayed here in the Oxford area and continued the work and ministry of Oxford Church. We are a busy church with purpose and vision!

I want to personally thank each of you for the sacrifices you continue to make to ensure a positive and Spirit filled movement! Thank you for putting the church first in your lives. Thank you for being in weekly worship and creating an atmosphere where people feel accepted, respected and loved! Thank you for caring for each other in a Christ-like way.

Many are feeling and believing that GOD has a unique plan for this church... your church. Thank you for being open to transformation to take the love and grace of Christ beyond the walls of Oxford Church into the community! Thank you for taking the time and effort to keep the vision alive..

Our Vision... "We envision a church with a vibrant Christian spiritual life where we welcome and value all God's people... Where we grow, discover, and share our gifts in the church and in the world."

I look forward to your return this fall as we continue the journey to revitalize our faith and ministries! There is a unique opportunity for you here! Come and explore how you can be part of a growing and evolving church community!

Rally Sunday is September 17. Please plan on joining us for Sunday worship as we celebrate the return of the Bell choir as well the presentation of both new and covenant members who have decided to re-commit their lives to the ministry and service of Christ's church, Oxford Church.

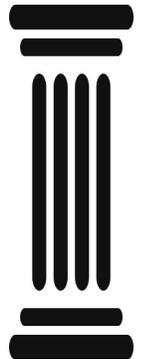
With deep gratitude for the privilege to serve you!
Julius E. Del Pino, Pastor



Autumn Celebrations



On September 10th, we will be celebrating the “Pillars” of Oxford United Methodist Church. “Pillars” are those members who have been members of OUMC for 50 or more years.



Help us celebrate and thank the following members:



Shirley Acheson



Millie Solon



Nadine Lychuk



Ro Van Wagoner



Bill Van Wagoner



Shirley Connor



Bob Willobee



Carol Hauxwell



Kay Boyle



Chris Acheson



Photo not available at time of printing

Laura Clancy

Photo not available at time of printing

Jan Smith



Lorrin Schwartz



Renae Shagena

at Oxford UMC



September 17th Rally Sunday...



Bells & Brunch and New Member Celebration

Once again we will be blessed with our bell choir's beautiful music and a wonderful brunch! Invite your friends, family and neighbors for this wonderful worship and fellowship time.

Praise Singers & Excelsior Bell Rehearsals begin September 6
at 5pm for Singers & 6:30pm for Bells

Contact Renae Shagena (248-969-2225) for Singers &
Rosemary Rumbold (248-391-0973) for Bells

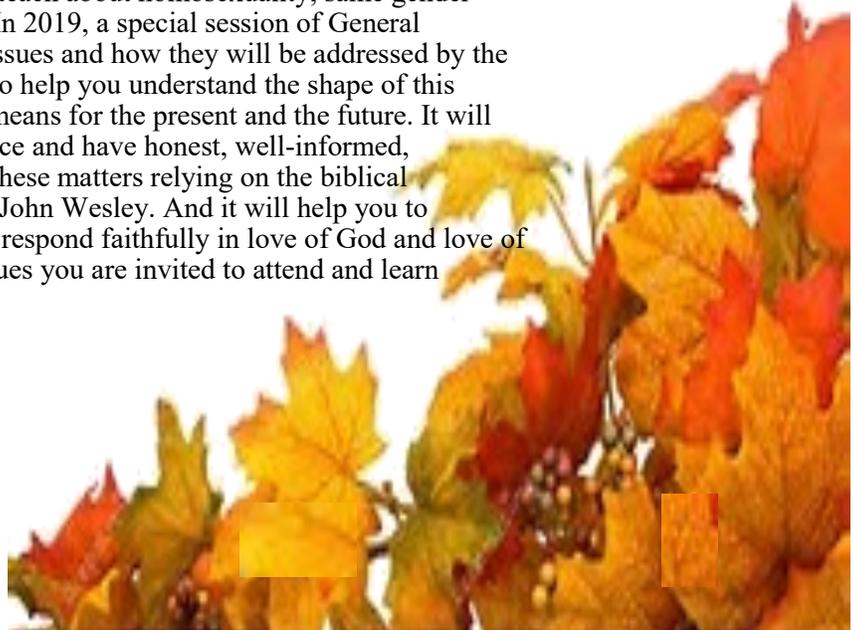
(Experienced musicians are welcomed as substitute bell ringers)

Brunch help is needed. Please contact Tony Rizzo (248-628-1787) if you are able to help.

Wednesday Bible Study

Starting September 13 at 10:30am

There will be a new Bible study this fall... "Living Faithfully: Human Sexuality and The United Methodist Church" with the DVD "Faithful and Inclusive: The Bible, Sexuality and The United Methodist Church" by Rob Fuquay. The UM Church is seeking a way forward and there is deep disagreement about what the church should teach about homosexuality, same gender marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ persons. In 2019, a special session of General Conference was held to consider these complex issues and how they will be addressed by the UMC in the future. This Bible study is designed to help you understand the shape of this debate, what the Bible says about it, and what it means for the present and the future. It will help you understand the outcome of this conference and have honest, well-informed, and grace-filled conversations with others about these matters relying on the biblical interpretation approach of Methodism's founder, John Wesley. And it will help you to discern, in prayer and conversation, how you can respond faithfully in love of God and love of neighbor. No matter how you feel about these issues you are invited to attend and learn in Christian grace with one another.



PRAY for and Encourage One Another Daily

Lord - we lift up these people to you by name:

Toni Capers Liv Storkel Laura Clancy Kip Lawrie Julius Del Pino Carolynn Foss Chuck McIntyre
Millie Solon Sue Smith Gail Mack Olga & Eric Neill Joyce Del Pino Kent Patterson
Ron Shedlowsky & Family Rev. Kristin Lowe Ro Van Wagoner Amy Thorson John Hauxwell
Bruce Conrad Kristina Del Pino Shirley Ricketts Ron Bunker Shirley Conner

We ask your blessings upon:

Those affected by Natural Disasters & all Violence in the US and worldwide

All Families - those expecting new children; dealing with loss of a loved one

All our school children, their teachers, school workers and administrators

All affected by the Oxford High School and all other School Shootings

Those with mental illnesses, are lonely, or do not have someone to pray for them

First responders, caregivers, medical personnel and all affected by illness

All of our brothers and sisters who deal with racism & hatred

Those in the military serving on our behalf [especially Kevin Friesmuth & the crew of the USS West Virginia]

Our local and national representatives in all three branches of government

Oxford UMC, Pastor, Staff, Guests, United Methodists, and Christians everywhere

Our Revived Church - that Oxford UMC may be a great source of love

for this community and that we may revive our vision

We also pray for those whose names are unmentioned, dear Lord, for you know and love them.

We ask all these things in your name, Lord Jesus.

Amen!

Need prayer with Pastor? Sign up on the sheet outside the office.



Birthdays

September 1 - Mike Bellairs
September 4 - Dan Mumbrue
September 7 - Sydney Richter
September 18 - Jan Smith
September 21 - Mary Dempsey
September 26 - Bernie Rumbold
September 29 - Megan Imirowicz
September 30 - Laura Clancy

October 6 - Bob Willobee
October 13 - Bruce Conrad
October 16 - Julius Del Pino
October 7 - Harvey Acheson
October 29 - Bruce Bunker
October 30 - Steve Laidlaw
October 31 - Catherine Richard
- Eric Richard
- Mary Adekitan

Anniversaries

September 12 - Bruce & Debra Bunker
September 23 - Mark & Amy Fleischer
September 27 - Bob & Colleen Richter
September 28 - Kevin & Keri Kater

October 10 - Steve & Kathy Laidlaw

Let's Not Wait Another Day

Posted on July 12, 2023

The Rev. Margie Crawford
Superintendent, East Winds District

While working on my doctorate, one of my minors was in neural science. I could enroll in coursework at the medical school associated with the neural science program. Students were encouraged to purchase the entire semester of lecture notes for all the courses, and I did so. Some notetakers included words of wisdom at the end of their notes to encourage classmates to navigate through the readings, lectures, and labs associated with the second year of medical school.

This is one of my favorites: "The sooner you get behind, the longer you have to catch up." These are wise words to help manage the stress of falling behind. Although I don't intend to procrastinate, some tasks that I want to complete are delayed by unforeseen matters that take precedence. So, I put off calling my sister, son, or nieces, doing the laundry, or running the dishwasher for another day. My thought is . . . it can wait.

The result is that I'm behind. Not with everything. I have more crochet projects to complete than I care to admit. One is a blanket for my six-year-old niece that I started when she turned four. It was intended to be a Christmas present in 2021, and hopefully, it will make it under her tree this year. As I pack for my move to the East Winds District, I hope to be done before the movers arrive.

Even though I plan ahead, life has a way of intervening. I adapt and hope to be prepared to do the tasks I have set

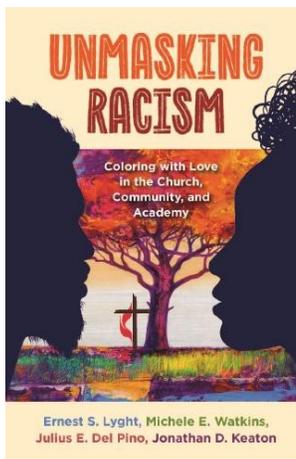
for myself and respond to unanticipated needs. I strive to accomplish everything that is before me, but sometimes that means some projects must wait.

COVID-19 caused us to place the missions and ministries our faith communities were engaged in on hold, and in some cases, we were forced to end them entirely. Because we were isolated from one another, many of the programs and events we planned had to wait for another day.

Now that the pandemic is behind us, we can begin or renew our missions and ministries for those within our faith communities, as well as those who are hungry and thirsty to know that our Lord still moves in and through us. In these few short years, our mission field has changed, and it continues to do so.

Let's not wait another day to take on the work before us. Is it possible to set other tasks aside so we can focus on making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world? What questions must we ask ourselves to prepare for who we can help and how we will help them? What resources are available to us? How do we find those willing to help us in our work? What do we need to make this work our priority?

Our Lord continues to speak with us about what it means to be servants of our Creator. Each of us is called to spread the good news of our Lord and Savior, to be God's instruments of help, healing, comfort, and strength for a world that needs the assurance of our Creator's presence. Let's not wait another day to answer God's call upon our lives. May we be blessed as we seek to accomplish the tasks our Lord has set before us. Amen.



Pastor's book is now complete & available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble!

(He will be holding a book signing in the fall and may have them available at a discount)

Unmasking Racism: Coloring with Love in the Church, Community, and Academy suggests that exposing, unmasking, and/or eliminating racism are prophetic responses

to God's call. Love of God and neighbor represent their foundation. Justice, equality, mercy, and love for all God's children are one decision away — namely making a commitment to do God's will. By coloring with God's love, we take the long view. God uses our prayers, meditation, discernment, nonviolent direct action, and redemptive suffering to move our world towards a more perfect union.



Staff & Laity Sunday

By Alex Wolf

Staff & Laity Sunday will be celebrated here at Oxford UMC on October 15 at the 10am worship service

Here at Oxford UMC we are fortunate, in fact blessed, to have an assortment of lay persons who, in their own unique and varied ways have shown themselves to be invaluable parts of the spiritual and religious life of the church.

Each of these dedicated individuals gives of themselves selflessly contributing their time and energy to the life and vitality of Oxford UMC.

These contributions take many forms. Each of these tasks or responsibilities the laity have taken on make activities and services at Oxford UMC more vibrant and enriching. Among these crucial roles during worship are those of the Tech team who work to ensure that each service will have clear and audible spoken and musical portions. They also make it possible for people to view words from music and scripture visible on the screen in the front of the Sanctuary. Our Bell Choir Director carefully selects and leads the bell ringers in consistently moving and inspiring performances on a monthly basis.

Oxford UMC benefits from the dedicated efforts of a number of Ushers and Greeters who have the all important responsibility of welcoming visitors and creating a positive first impression for those new to the church. Liturgists put themselves front and center making announcements and explaining what to expect during the service as well as delivering well-prepared and heartfelt prayers and scripture readings.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Youth in maintaining the vitality and growth of a congregation and Oxford UMC is no exception. While we do not have a large presence of young people we still manage to have a number of individuals who are eager to step up and present valuable and helpful messages about morality and how best to lead one's life for the benefit of young and old alike. Still others take on tasks like serving as singers who lead the congregation in musical performance, preparing and assisting with the ritual of communion, those who make sure that after worship goodies and coffee is provided in order to foster fellowship, working to keep the building clean and maintained.

There are those laity who oversee the business, education, outreach and fellowship of Oxford UMC in various meetings, groups and support areas making it possible to provide for the church and its vision.

It is the efforts and work of the laity and the staff together that make it possible to maintain a healthy and flourishing church congregation and community.

Definition of "Laity":

NON-CLERGY MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

Laity is a term used in Christianity to describe members of a congregation or parish who are not members of the clergy.

It comes from the Greek word "laos" which means "people of God".

In the United Methodist Church, laypersons are called to serve Christ with their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service and their witness. Lay people are the front line of daily ministry at the workplace, in the home and within the community.

The clergy are ordained ministers who have received sacramental training and are authorized to perform religious ceremonies and administer sacraments.

Book Discussion Group



Do you enjoy reading? We do!!! Our book group is always looking for more readers who like to chat with friends about books. We meet the second Wednesday of the month at 1pm in the Memorial Room.

Wednesday, September 13: *Passing* by Nella Larsen. Irene Redfield is a Black woman living an affluent, comfortable life with her husband and children in the thriving neighborhood of Harlem in the 1920s. When she reconnects with her childhood friend Clare Kendry, who is similarly light-skinned, Irene discovers that Clare has been passing for a white woman after severing ties to her past--even hiding the truth from her racist husband. Clare finds herself drawn to Irene's sense of ease and security with her Black identity and longs for the community (and, increasingly, the woman) she lost. Irene is both riveted and repulsed by Clare and her dangerous secret, as Clare begins to insert herself--and her

deception--into every part of Irene's stable existence. First published in 1929, Larsen's brilliant examination of the various ways in which we all seek to "pass," is as timely as ever.

Wednesday, October 11: *The Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread* by Don Robertson. On a quiet autumn afternoon in 1944, nine-year-old Morris Bird III decides to visit a friend who lives on the other side of town. So he grabs the handle of his red wagon and, with his little sister in tow, begins an incredible pilgrimage across Cleveland . . . and out of childhood forever. Set against the backdrop of one of the worst industrial disasters in American history, Don Robertson's enduring, beloved masterwork is a remarkable story of destiny, bravery, and responsibility, as fresh and relevant as when it first appeared in print.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Bogus (248 747-7544). Hope to see you at Book Discussion!



Local Missions - Helping our Neighbors

Oxford / Orion FISH Food Pantry

“Neighbors Helping Neighbors”

FISH Location: 1060 S. Lapeer Rd., Oxford
Website: www.oxfordorionfish.org

**To receive food from
FISH: (248) 628-3933**

We are collecting FISH donations on the first Sunday of each month. You may also make out a check to Oxford UMC and put “FISH Food Pantry” in the memo line and we will make sure that your donation gets there. “Thank You!” Remember - NO EXPIRED FOOD PLEASE!

Current Needs -

Canned pineapple	Canned tomatoes	Canned mandarin oranges	Baked Beans
Canned chicken	Beef Stew	Chili	Chunky Soup
Cake mix	Personal care items	Feminine Products	

Current Hours -

Office: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 9 to noon [Please call to make an appointment]
Pantry: Tuesdays - 1-3pm; Wednesdays - 10-2pm; Thursdays - 1-5 pm; 3rd Saturdays of the month - 9:45-11:30am (snow days - if the schools are closed, the pantry will be closed)

Any questions, contact Julie Langley (248-628-9619) or John & Devon Warren (248-778-8735)

FISH is a 100% volunteer organization and they need your help. All donations are tax deductible.



Oxford UMC Meal Outreach

ALL ARE WELCOME!

All are invited to the community **Free!** meal program at OUMC!! On Saturday mornings we are serving breakfast at PFP (People Feeding People)! We encourage you to attend and not only be fed by food but also with fellowship. We are lifting people up through nutrition and friendship. We are providing a hot breakfast and most weeks a sack lunch for people in the Fellowship Hall (the 3rd week is carryout). If you are interested in helping in any way please contact Kathy Laidlaw (248) 701-5910. We hope that you come and enjoy!!!

WHERE: Oxford United Methodist Church
WHEN: Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 am

Community Free Meals

If you or someone you know would like a

Free!

hot meal please invite them to visit:

Lake Orion UMC (Mondays)

Immanuel Congregational (Tuesdays)
from 5:30-6:30pm

and Oxford UMC (Saturdays) from 9:30-10:30am



Love in the Name of Christ (Love INC) of North Oakland County is a non-profit network of churches in the area, including Oxford UMC.

The mission of Love INC is to mobilize local volunteers and churches to help those in need and transform lives in the name of Christ. They try to provide any help that is beyond the scope of the churches on their own.

The Clothing Closet (at Oxford Free Methodist Church at 790 S. Lapeer Road) needs help sorting donated clothes on Tuesdays from 9:00am-noon

There are other volunteer positions available and they really could use the help! Some include working with clients and some are behind the scenes. Please call and volunteer today! It could be as little as a few times a month or one day a week!

If you would like to donate your time or money to help your neighbors in need please contact them:

Website - www.loveincfnoc.org or
call 248-693-4357 for more information.

UM Women: Rachel Circle



Welcome Fall & Welcome to All of You!

We have an exciting line up starting this September & October (& November but that is for the next issue). I want to personally invite all women in the Oxford & surrounding areas to join us this season. Rachel Circle is a group of women that come together to make this world a better place.

Some of the activities we will be planning & working on are: Samaritan's Purse Shoebox ministries packing party campaign, a Halloween/dinner/movie evening, creatively hosting a "Book Signing" event for our very own Rev. Julius Del Pino & his just published book: "Unmasking Racism"; hosting the church's Friendship Hour & more.

I always love September as we look forward to seeing each other again & meeting new attendees. Speaking of new attendees - Are you a woman who is searching for more in your life? Including making new friends, building & enriching the relationships you already have and with Jesus Christ.

A purpose driven life is the best way to feel connected to others. Meeting & making new friends is always a positive start to every season. Especially, as we head into the Fall & Winter months which can sometimes be isolating, difficult & lonely. I believe that Jesus has a plan for each & everyone of us.

Would you like to be part of a thriving, giving, caring team who will be making a positive difference in the lives of others? If you respond yes, give our group a try.

Here is a simple example of how friendly & casual a typical Rachel Circle meeting is: We arrive at 10am, for the first 20/25 minutes we meet & greet, chat, catch up, laugh, eat (btw - there is always coffee & tea & something sweet or savory). Around 10:25am there is a reminder that it is time to settle in, refill your cup & prepare to start our meeting. We start with prayers, minutes from our last meeting, new business, a moving & thought provoking Christian based devotion is read, discussion, card requests, signing & closing prayers.

Everything we do is with volunteer power. Working together as a team, large or small groups to make a positive difference in the world & powered by the love of Jesus Christ, is our only goal.

If this sounds like something that might interest you, we look forward to seeing you this Fall! All are welcome, you do not need to be a member of the church to be a member of Rachel Circle.

When: the second Monday of each month, at 10am.

Where: at the Oxford United Methodist Church.

If you will need a ride, please contact the church office Mon. - Thur. (8:30am - 1:30pm) & let us know.



Sincerely,
Carolyn Lawrie
Rachel Circle President

UM Men: Band of Brothers

The United Methodist Men focus on Evangelism, Missions, and Spiritual Development.

Questions? Please contact
Fred Nelson, UMM President
(248-628-9826) or
John Warren (248-778-8735).



Friendship Hour is looking for hosts
Do you love to bake, cook, put out fresh fruit or just create a beautiful looking buffet?

Then we have the perfect place to make your dreams come true!

A little nervous to volunteer?

No worries, we will cheerfully walk you through & guide you. Or you could shadow a group doing it. You will have fun creating a welcome environment for all to enjoy after the service.

Please contact Carolyn Lawrie through the church office to let her know you'd like to try it.



Please contact Michelle Mumbroe or Laura Clancy to help with worship. We very much appreciate your service!
Thank You!





*"Do all the good you can,
in all the places you can,
to all the people you can."*

Rev. John Wesley (founder of Methodism)

Finance Update

Thank you for your faithful giving each month to God's Church. We as a Finance team keep track of giving and expenses each month. Thank you for your faithfulness. Please help monthly with our General Fund.

January Giving	\$	7,267.05
February Giving	\$	5,966.15
March Giving	\$	5,890.00
April Giving	\$	7,622.34
May Giving	\$	8,823.90
June Giving	\$	6,354.17
July Giving	\$	8,153.40
August Giving	\$	6,532.20
 Budget for 2023	 \$	 118,856.00



If you prefer to write a check or donate with cash please use your offering envelopes.

If you need envelopes, please call the church office or Larry Bradford, financial secretary.

Please consider giving your donation electronically! It will be paid as you decide and directly deposited into the church account.

*It is so easy! And no more check writing!
There is no fee to join. Safe and secure.
Forms are available from the office.*



We thank Trustee David Cischke for his dedicated service as Head Trustee for many years!!!

***We welcome incoming Head Trustee Tony Rizzo!
Thank you for stepping up to this important role.***

2023 Church Council

Church Council Chairperson:	Michelle Wood	(248)969-2545
General Fund Treasurer:	Becky Sallans	(248)628-1289
Designated Fund Treasurer:	Kevin Kater	(248)628-7804
Financial Secretary:	Larry Bradford	(248)628-5759
Finance Co-Chairpersons:	Bernie Rumbold and AmyBeth Fleischer	(248) 391-0973
Board of Trustees:	Tony Rizzo Michelle Wood	(248)628-1787 (248)969-2545
SPRC Chairperson:	John Warren	(248)778-8735
Worship Team:	Michelle Mumbrue Laura Clancy	(248)969-9173 (248)628-6648
Missions & Outreach:	John & Devon Warren	(248)778-8735
Adult Bible Study:	Sue Rizzo Rosemary Rumbold	(248)628-1787 (248)391-0973
Education Team:	Mary Dempsey Amie Von Knorring Bob Willobee	(810)797-5736 (248)342-8051 (248)628-2357
Camp Ed. Coordinator:	(available)	
Revive Team:	Steve Laidlaw	(248)801-5924
UMM President:	Fred Nelson	(248)628-9826
UMW / Rachel Circle:	Carolyn Lawrie	(586)925-2687
Lay Member to Annual Conference:	John Warren	(248)778-8735

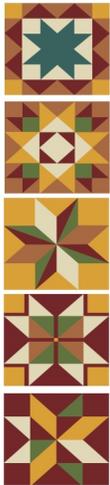
Church Council meets the last Monday of the even months at 7pm. All are welcome to attend.

(Next meeting - August 28th)



We meet every Friday from 1-3pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us if you enjoy any type of needle work. We are always willing to teach anyone who would like to learn. If you have any questions, please call Mary Garrard, 248-613-4505.

Piece Makers Quilting



You are invited to attend the Piece Makers group and help with our prayer quilts. They usually meet on Tuesday afternoons (1st and 3rd weeks) starting at 1pm.

Do you know someone who would like the comfort of the prayers woven into a quilt during its creation? These quilts are intended for *anyone* who could use a hug and a prayer during challenging times.

If you have any questions, please contact Linda McIntyre (248-245-7898). Please keep praying!

Lahaina UMC Update



Before



After

TAKEN FROM: United Methodists Pour Out Support for Burned Maui Church - United Methodist Insight (um-insight.net)

by Cynthia B. Astle

UPDATE Aug. 14, 2023: As expected, Lahaina United Methodist Church was completely destroyed by the wildfire that swept through the historic town on the island of Maui, according to a photo posted on the church's Facebook page Aug. 12.

Pastor John Crewe [seen to the right in a photo with Pastor



Excelsior Bell Choir

If you have any questions or if you would like to learn to be a substitute, please contact

Rosemary Rumbold (248-391-0973)

During the school year (Starting September 6th):

The Bell Choir rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 6:30-8pm

Come to hear us play every third Sunday Please remember to join us for brunch immediately after the service.

Praise Singers

Join us to practice Sunday's songs and hymns. Starting September 6th, rehearsals are at 5pm on Wednesday evenings.

If you have questions or if you would like to be a part of the Praise Singers please contact Renae Shagena (248-969-2225).

Julius Del Pino] expressed the church community's hopes for the future in a post accompanying the [left, burned building] photo:

"When Lahaina town rebuilds we will not emphasize short-term financial goals over people, the environment, and the culture of the people of Maui.

"We will envision a Lahaina with vibrant communities, infrastructure that respects our ecosystem, and a culture that respects and honors the historical roots of Maui and all the Hawaiian people. We must not forget this horrible tragedy and let the same thing happen again! When we rebuild, we must fight to make the people and our environment the priority.

"Jesus told his disciples as he was empowering them to carry on his work, 'A new command I give you: Love one another.

As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

John 16:34-35."

Oxford UMC will soon be sending help to our friends in Lahaina. Please see the Sunday program for more information.



A Jesus Shaped Life

BY JAKE OWENSBY | 8-22-2023 | PUBLISHED IN MINISTRY MATTERS / MIFAIITH (A MI CONFERENCE UMC COMMUNICATION)

After Sunday worship at one of the congregations in my diocese, I met with the church's leadership for the standard review of finances, attendance figures, evangelism strategies, and the like. One of the leaders was visibly angry. He said nothing until we came to the "Other Business" item at the end of the agenda. Referring to my sermon, he said, "Where do you get off telling us to love our enemies? They're our enemies! They're dangerous. We have to defend ourselves."

Taken aback, I couldn't think of anything to say. Several seconds passed. The priest of the parish broke the silence. "The Bishop was quoting Jesus. Those words are from the Sermon on the Mount. It's in Matthew's Gospel." My critic didn't respond, but he was still fuming and remained unconvinced.

This exchange came to mind recently as I listened to an interview with *Christianity Today's* editor-in-chief Russell Moore. Here's what he said:

[Multiple] pastors tell me, essentially, the same story about quoting the Sermon on the Mount, parenthetically, in their preaching — "turn the other cheek" — [and] to have someone come up after to say, "Where did you get those liberal talking points?" And what was alarming to me is that in most of these scenarios, when the pastor would say, "I'm literally quoting Jesus Christ," the response would not be, "I apologize." The response would be, "Yes, but that doesn't work anymore. That's weak." And when we get to the point where the teachings of Jesus himself are seen as subversive to us, then we're in a crisis.[1]

In other words, Christianity is in crisis because self-identified Christians are using their own political, social, moral, and cultural views to assess the soundness and relevance of Jesus' teaching. Strictly speaking, for Christians it should be the other way around. We should test the validity of our thoughts and the trustworthiness of our passions by whether or not they adhere to what Jesus says.

It seems to me that Jesus was getting at something like this when he asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13-20) He was challenging his followers to examine where he really fits into their lives? To use a common way of putting it here in the South, is Jesus really their Lord and Savior?

In a previous essay I discussed what it means to lean on Jesus as savior. In this context let's consider what it means for Jesus to be our Lord. Jesus is neither a coercive drill sergeant nor a micromanaging boss. He is a wise friend.

Wisdom is the art of navigating life's complexities. Nobody is born wise. And advanced age does not guarantee wisdom. Nevertheless, we acquire wisdom over time if we acquire it at all.

Opening our heart, mind, and soul to a person who



~ image by YakubovAlim from Getty Images Pro

possesses wisdom is crucial to learning it. We become wise by patterning our lives on how a wise person walks through this world on their ordinary days. How they think, feel, and act in a variety of situations.

The Bible teaches us that the wise don't merely observe the world around them and figure out its patterns all on their own. Instead, they spend a lifetime connecting with the very source of the creation's deep, governing algorithm. Their lives are shaped by the habitual practices of worship, prayer, study, works of mercy, and the pursuit of justice. These practices open us to God's presence in our everyday lives.

Jesus is wisdom incarnate. Accepting Jesus as our Lord means that we turn to him to teach us how to navigate our often messy, confusing life. As Proverbs instructs us, we don't get this life thing right by relying solely on our own cleverness and wit. We need a mentor. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

In other words, Jesus shows us how to live. What he teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount and in his many parables and by his personal example may upend some of our fiercely-held assumptions or rein in some of our strongest impulses. But when we recognize that we need a mentor to be fully human—to live into being the image of God we were created to be—we're admitting that there's much that we do not know and more than a few things that we've gotten wrong along the way.

God knows that we're a work in progress. That's why repentance is one of Christianity's traditional practices. We need to admit our missteps and shortsightedness to ourselves over and over. Not to get God off our backs. But to accept the helping hand we're always being mercifully offered. Besides, once we finally realize that God has accepted us all along, loving our imperfect self gets a lot easier.

In short, I suppose that we say who Jesus is by living a Jesus-shaped life. By passing on to our neighbor the love that God keeps giving us no matter what.

Excerpted from Jake Owensby's blog, used with the author's permission.

[1] Scott Detrow, Gabriel J. Sanchez, Sarah Handel, NPR, August 8, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/2023/08/08/1192663920/southern-baptist-convention-donald-trump-christianity>

Summer Fun

Megan Imirowicz, Morgan Imirowicz, Ian Imirowicz (Grandchildren of the Conrads) & Evan Sweeder having fun playing a Canadian game called Crokinole at the Pastor's home...



Some of our soon-to-be new members going out for a birthday brunch after church...



Birthday Blessings



Just for Fun...

Puzzle!

Use the clues to discover the names of some Old Testament prophets. Then unscramble the circled letters to describe what prophets are.

I was called to preach to the people of Nineveh but ran from God instead. (My book is #32 in the Bible.)

___ ___

I spoke God's message when the temple was being built. (My book is #37.)

___ ___

Israel's unfaithfulness to God is compared to my unfaithful wife. (My book is #28.)

___ ___

My book predicts punishment for wickedness and promises comfort. (It is #23.)

___ ___

I had dreams and visions. (My book is #27.)

___ ___

Because of my predictions, I was often in danger and angered officials. (My book is #24.)

___ ___

I was a shepherd from Judah who called people to turn to God and leave their selfish lives. (My book is #30.)

___ ___

My book contains descriptions of strange visions. (It is #26.)

___ ___ ___

PROPHETS ARE _____ .

Answers: Jonah, Haggai, Hosea, Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Amos, Ezekiel; Messengers



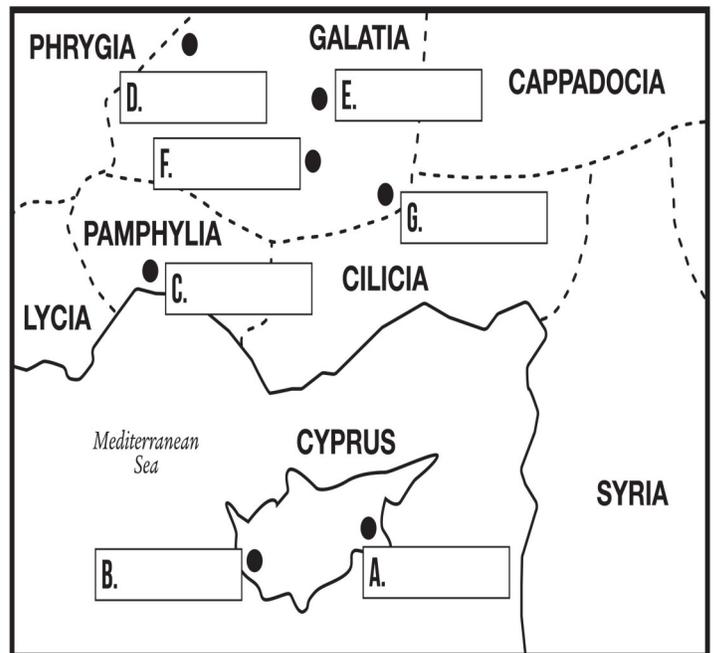
CITY SEARCH

God used Paul to spread the Gospel to many cities during his first missionary journey. Can you find them all?

Directions: From the fragments, guess each city and locate it on the map. Use the Bible references to help.



- A. **SALAMIS** (ACTS 13:5) E. **ICONIUM** (ACTS 13:51)
- B. **PAPHOS** (ACTS 13:6) F. **LYSTRA** (ACTS 14:6)
- C. **PERGA** (ACTS 13:13) G. **ANTIOCH** (ACTS 14:6)
- D. **ANTIOCH** (ACTS 13:14)



Answers: Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe



September 2023

Oxford United
Methodist Church
21 E. Burdick St.
Oxford, MI 48371
[This calendar is online at:
www.oxfordunitedmc.org]

Usual Events :

<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Mondays</u>	<u>Tuesdays</u>	<u>Wednesdays</u>	<u>Thursdays</u>	<u>Fridays</u>	<u>Saturdays</u>
9a (S) Praise Singer Practice 10a (S) Worship	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 12p Program Deadline 1p (CD/F/FK) Piece Makers Quilting Projects (1st & 3rd weeks) 8a-4p (W) Dragonfly Hybrid	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 10:30a - 3:30p (P) Pastor's Office Hours 5p (S) Praise Singers Practice 6:30p (S) Bell Choir Practice	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 8a-4p (W) Dragonfly Hybrid	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 2p (U) Knit Knack	9:30a (F/FK) People Feeding People

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
					1	2 11a (S) Praise Singers Practice
 3 14TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST HOLY COMMUNION	4	5	6 5p (S) Praise Singers Practice & 6:30p (S) Bell Choir Practice <i>Starts for fall!</i> 7p (Y) Trustees	7	8	9
10 15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST "PILLAR" CELEBRATION 11:15a (U) Revive Team "CRT"	11 10a (FH) Rachel Circle 7p (Zoom) Worship Team	12 7p (Zoom) Staff Meeting	13 1p (M) Reading for Fun	14	15	16
 17 16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST NEW MEMBER CELEBRATION BELLS & BRUNCH BEGINS	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	25	26	27	28	29	30

2023



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<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
 <p>1 18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST HOLY COMMUNION</p>	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>8 19TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 11:15a Revive Team "CRT"</p>	<p>9 7p (Zoom) Worship Team</p>	<p>10 7p (Zoom) Staff Meeting</p>	<p>11 1p (M) Reading for Fun</p>	12	13	14
<p>15 20TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST STAFF & LAITY SUNDAY</p>	16	17	18	19	20	21
<p>22 21ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST</p>	<p>23 7p (Zoom) Church Council</p>	24	25	26	27	28
<p>29 22ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Church Conference Forms Due to Church Office</p>	30	31				

Oxford United Methodist Church
21 E Burdick Street
Oxford, MI 48371

First Class
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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



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21 E Burdick Street, Oxford, MI 48371
Church office: 248-628-1289 Fax: 248-628-9411
Website: www.oxfordunitedmc.org
Facebook: Oxford UMC

The Reverend Julius E. Del Pino, Pastor
oumc.office@sbcglobal.net

Becky Sallans, Office Administrator / Editor
oumc.office@sbcglobal.net

Alexander Wolf, Pianist

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We thank all who create and read The Grapevine!



Regular Sunday Worship:

(and also join us either online or via radio)

10:00 a.m. Worship

10:20a.m. Sunday School to classes
(during Worship Service, Sept - May)

Coffee & Refreshments after service

All Are Welcome!