

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Permit No. 34

Tidings



SEPTEMBER 2026

The Tidings
Otterbein United Methodist
Church

176 West Market Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Office - (540) 434-7747
oumcharrisonburg.org

Tidings articles are generally due
by the 15th of each month.

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

Sunday Schedule

9:30 am Sunday School
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. Laura Stratton
Senior Pastor
laurastratton@vaumc.org

Melissa Miller
Office Manager
oumcdadm@hotmail.com

Gary Edlind
Director of Visitation

Colin Cossi
Director of Music Ministries
colincossimusic@gmail.com

Dan Curtis
Organist

Drew Dodson
Bell Choir Director

Melvin Falls
Custodian

Bonnie Andrade
Treasurer
oumctreasurer@hotmail.com

Office: 540-434-7747
x200 for Melissa
x201 for Laura

Otterbein in Prayer

David Angier
Rosalie Bailey
Gary Billingsley
Whitney Bradley
Millie Bruce
Rev. Louis Carson
Loretta Crider
Nissa D'Andrea
Cliff Davis
Jo Ellen Dickenson
Mike Earman

Rev. Samuel & Judith
Espinoza
Zach Fickes
Mary Ann Glendye
Ray Griffith
Fred Hopkins
Joel Jordan
Steve Lily
Jackie Lilly
Patty Liskey
Chuck Macklin
Ann Miller

Art Mitchell
Eric Mitchell
Maxine Perry
Judy Pruett
Ann Sebrell
Dot Swartz
Carolyn Stroop
Michelle VanPelt
Hazel Willi
Rachel Wenger
Keith Wright

It's that time of year! The Isaiah 117
House **Community Awareness Lunch**
& **Dinner** take place **September 18th**.

Isaiah 117
Caring for children awaiting foster placement

This is a great time for you to learn
about the mission of Isaiah 117 and hear updates about the Harrisonburg-
Rockingham House!

If you'd like to attend, please email Donna Fickes at djfickes@yahoo.com
with:

1. Your first/last name and the names of any guests you will be bringing.
2. Your preference for Lunch (12-1 pm) or Dinner (6-7:30 pm) on
September 18th.

Please reserve your seat by September 9th. We currently have 2 tables
reserved for lunch and 2 tables reserved for dinner, but we can expand on
that, if needed.

This is a free event! You will have the opportunity to support our local Isaiah 117
House - through financial donations, volunteer opportunities, or onsite
merchandise sales - if you are so led.

For Your Information

Tidings deadline for the **October** issue is **Tuesday, September 15** 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 15th.

Fresh Start

Through generous contributions from members, Otterbein continues to support the work of Fresh Start. Fresh Start supplies needed household items for victims fleeing abusive environments. Many leave situations with only limited personal items so when they leave the shelter, they need all items that any of us needed when we started out housekeeping. Otterbein members make it possible for those individuals to make a Fresh Start with new items of bedding, kitchen and bathroom supplies, cleaning and laundry supplies, and personal care items.

Fresh Start had 4 disbursements in the month of July to First Step, our local Domestic Violence Shelter. See letter below from First Step.

If you would like to help with Fresh Start's worthwhile outreach project, please contact Carla Nemoytin at (540)810-4491. Training is available and all are welcome!

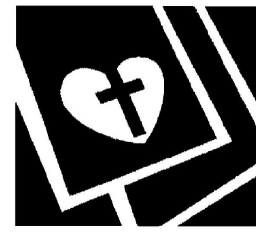


Dear Congregation of Otterbein United Methodist Church and Fresh Start,

We would like to take the time to thank your congregation for your contributions. First Step is a local organization that works with the survivors of domestic violence to empower them to break the cycle of violence and abuse in their lives. Your contributions went toward a single mother of three and a single woman who were able to move into new homes after fleeing violence thanks to our housing program. Your donations of basic household goods allowed them to move forward with dignity and a fresh start.

With Sincere Thanks,

First Step Staff



FROM THE PASTOR

Thank you so much for everyone's participation in the Listening Sessions. I have loved getting to know y'all better and learning more about Otterbein. I want to give a special thank you to everyone who hosted. I really appreciated your hospitality. I have been praying about all that you taught me in these sessions and for God to reveal the way forward for us as Otterbein UMC.

I also really appreciate everyone who filled out the interest survey! This survey has been a great way for me to get to know you. Please know that I have read and prayed over each response and will use this as a guide over the coming months.

In one Listening Session, I was asked - *what can we as the congregation do for me as the pastor?* I thought that was a great question because I think it recognizes that ministry, the work of the church, is about more than me. As the pastor, I am the set-apart leader of the church, but the actual ministry and missions of the church happen because of y'all. I can't do the work God has for us to do alone, nor do I want to. I want our time in ministry together to be a partnership, where we all show up and use our gifts and graces for God's work and glory. I am really looking forward to working with you and continuing to learn from you.

Here are a few things that are coming up:

Bible Study Resumes: We will resume Bible study in September! Our initial meeting will be on **Tuesday, September 8 at 6 pm** and **Wednesday, September 9 at 10 am**, and I will use this time to get to know you and to learn what kind of Bible study interests

continued next page..

you. I have ideas, but I also know that you have been studying the Bible for a long time, and I want to focus on areas that are of most interest and benefit to you. We will then take a week off, because I will be out of town for Board of Ordained Ministry work, but we will start back the week of September 22 and 23.

New Member Orientation: Are you interested in joining Otterbein United Methodist Church? Want to learn more about how to join, what membership means, or about the UMC denomination? Plan to stay **after worship** on **Sunday, September 20** for lunch and an orientation. The lunch and orientation will last 1.5-2 hours, depending on questions. If you can't make this time, please let me know, and we will find an alternate time that works for you. Also, if you want to come and have any food allergies or restrictions, please let me know!

In Christ,
Pastor Laura

You're Invited to the Ladies Autumn Tea

Please plan to attend the second annual OUMC Ladies Tea!

Saturday, September 12

2:00 - 3:30 pm

Guests Welcome.

Please RSVP on the clipboard in the Education Hallway
Anthony Malabad will be the guest speaker and will tell us about the origin of tea. You will also have the opportunity to support one of our church missions, Fresh Start, with a donation. Mark your calendar!

Welcome to our new Director of Music Ministries!



Composer. Teacher. Conductor. Mentor. Scholar. Choral Artist. These are just a few of the words that describe our new Director of Music Ministries, **Colin Cossi**, who began this role in July. And, if you're thinking to yourself, "hmmm...he looks familiar," it's because Colin conducted Fauré Requiem, which was presented here at Otterbein on Good Friday (2025). He also lent his voice to the tenor section of the Asbury UMC choir for the past two years.

Colin's duties at Otterbein comprise just a small portion of his expanding professional résumé. After receiving his Bachelor of Music from the University of Oregon (2016), he taught choral music for six years in elementary, middle, and high schools in Kelso, WA. He then went on to earn a Master of Music in choral conducting from Arizona State University (2024), and served as assistant conductor for two acclaimed Grammy-award winning choral groups in Phoenix, AZ. He founded and directs a community choral group in the Shenandoah Valley, and has been commissioned to compose and conduct music throughout the United States and even Canada.

But that's not all! This busy musician is currently serving as a graduate assistant in JMU's choral department while simultaneously pursuing his Doctor of Music Arts in Choral Conducting at JMU, with projected completion Spring 2027.

Already, Otterbein choir members are expressing how happy they are with Colin's leadership style. They are also enjoying sharing Wednesday evening practices with Colin's faithful four-legged-friend, an Australian Shepherd dog named Prince.

We welcome Colin to Otterbein and look forward to this year as he leads our music program with his expertise, talent, and energy.

Otterbein UMM News



The Otterbein UMMen continue to gather during their regular monthly breakfast meetings in the coming months. The dates are

Saturday, August 22, Saturday, September 26 and Saturday, October 24 beginning at **7:30 am** in Memorial Hall at the church. Breakfast is provided and there will be a short business meeting and prayer time. You are most welcomed to join us! Bring a friend! If you plan to have breakfast with us, please let us know by the Wednesday before by contacting Bill Pollard, text at (540) 421-3256 or email pollard716@gmail.com.

The Otterbein Men (sporting their fancy red aprons!) will be assisting during the Women's Autumn Tea on **Saturday, September 12** in Memorial Hall. For additional details about the Tea, see the article at the beginning of this newsletter.

The Otterbein UMMen continue our Canned Food Drive, collecting on the first Sunday of each month in 2026. Our colorful buckets will be out again to accept your generous donations on **Sunday, September 6th**. If you forget, that's OK!! Buckets are always out in the hallway as you enter from the back parking lot. All donations support the important work of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

The UMM look forward to serving up their Pancake Brunch in Memorial Hall on **Sunday, December 6** following Morning Worship in the Sanctuary. Mark your calendar now. Additional details to follow!



Want to know more?

Contact any member of our planning team: Bill Pollard, Carter Ritchie, and Mike Earman, or check our website: <https://www.oumcharrisonburg.org/united-methodist-men>



United
Women
in Faith

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.

Greetings, sisters in faith!

Our August meeting included our annual "Candle Burning" celebration for our friends in faith who have paved the way for our work in mission around the world. We give thanks for their faithful work and witness to the love of God through Jesus Christ. We continue that legacy through the missions that we support locally and globally.

On September 8, all women are invited to join us for our program presented by Ginny Whitehill: "Reorienting Ourselves," learning to be open to new perspectives and ways of looking at things. Please invite a friend. Light snacks will be available, because we know that sharing food brings us closer together! **September 8 at 11 am in Room 204.**

We are collecting **toothpaste** again for **Kingsway Prison Ministries**. Their goal is over 8,300 tubes of toothpaste for their Christmas outreach program. Tubes must be 3-6 oz., individually boxed, and alcohol-free. A basket is available for your donations. Collection will continue through October.

"He has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8

Grace & Peace,
Pat Wingert



Baby Steps

CREATION CARE TASK FORCE

According to AI, the definition of Creation Care is, "valuing, respecting, and protecting all of God's creation, including the environment and living creatures, as a part of fulfilling biblical stewardship. It involves stopping harmful activities and participating in actions that promote ecological health and justice."

In searching the internet for information to include in this article, it became apparent there was not enough time to include all the "stop doing, now!" activities that would bring us in line as to what it means to be a good steward of God's creation. Some could be overwhelmed by the enormity of information and would just throw up their hands and do nothing.

So, what does a Christian do if they are aware of what God has told us to do, but are too overwhelmed by how much they would have to change their habits? You **can start small with baby steps**. We've all heard the explanation of how Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle are habits that minimize humans' impact on the environment. But they do require some thoughtful planning. Start by adding just one of these activities. Maybe start recycling #1 plastics. Or before buying new items, visit a second-hand store. By shopping at second-hand stores, you are not only reducing the materials used to produce new items, but you are also saving money and, in many cases, supporting worthwhile organizations. You can reduce energy consumption by hanging laundry outside to dry or on racks inside. Replace plastic containers with glass ones. **All baby steps!** None of these suggestions are new ideas, but by choosing one

continued next page...

thoughtfully, planning with intention, and acknowledging that this is your contribution towards the call of stewardship, you can begin your journey to becoming what God intended for us.

The Creation Care Taskforce

After a long hiatus,
**Otterbein Signature
Coconut Cakes & Cupcakes**
will be returning for sale!
**Orders will be taken during
the month of September**, with orders being delivered by
Sunday, November 1st, just in time for the holiday season!
Because of limited freezer space, **we'll be limiting the
number of cakes available to 50**. 8" cakes, priced at \$30,
and mini-cupcakes, priced at \$15, will be available for
sale. There will be a sign-up sheet at the water fountain
hallway on the main floor. **Cakes will be sold on a first
come, first served basis**; members may sell to family and
friends.

*Otterbein's
Signature
Coconut Cakes*

You'll list your name and phone number separately for each cake you are ordering, for example: If you want 3 cakes, list your name 3 times. For Cupcakes, list for each dozen you are ordering. **Final pick up date will be Sunday, November 1st**. Cakes & cupcakes will be frozen.

If you have any questions, please contact Vicki Gaines at (540)820-3841 or Carla Nemoytin at (540)810-4491.

All proceeds will be donated to Otterbein's Outreach Projects.