

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

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Tidings



February 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. Adam Blagg
Senior Pastor
oumcpastor@hotmail.com

Melissa Miller
Office Manager
oumcdadm@hotmail.com

Gary Edlind
Director of Visitation

Ricky Goodwyn, Jr.
Director of Music Ministries
oumcmusic@hotmail.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 Adam

Otterbein in Prayer

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

Samuel & Judi
Espinoza
Ray Griffith
Fred Hopkins
Emily Joiner
Tina Jolly
Danita Kreeger
Steve Lily
Chuck Macklin
Nancy Miller

Maxine Perry
Judy Pruett
Dot Swartz
Carolyn Stroop
Juanita Taylor
Michelle VanPelt
Hazel Willi
Baby Charlie Woods
Gina Wyse



We are once again
forming a team for the
"Coldest Night of the
Year" fundraiser to

support Open Doors! The event will take place on **February 28th**. Detailed information can be found at <https://cnoy.com/location/harrisonburg> OR, talk to Christy Blagg! Please consider walking with us, or donating in support of our team!

There is a **2026 Flower Calendar** on the bulletin board near the breezeway entrance with many empty spaces! Flowers can be placed in the sanctuary to remember a friend or family member, recognize a special event, or just because. We invite you to take a look at the calendar and help us fill the empty spaces. Please see Julie Clough or Bev Earman if you have questions. The cost for arrangements is \$60.



For Your Information

- *Tidings* deadline for the **March** issue is **Monday, February 16** 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 16th.



Creation Care Taskforce

CREATION CARE TASK FORCE

Sometimes we wonder why bother recycling when most of the world does not? Or it's not

always convenient to take compost to the compost station or save all that plastic, paper, and cardboard. What about the time and space it takes to make it work?

Many Christians may not fully grasp the importance of caring for God's creation, but it's essential to remember that every living being has a role in the ecosystem He designed. We show respect for God in how we treat animals, insects, and plants. By adopting practices that reduce waste and promote sustainability, we can honor the earth as God's creation. The Bible guides us in how we can be mindful of our actions toward nature.

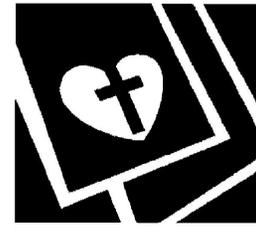
The following are a few verses that can inspire us to take responsibility for our surroundings.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ~Genesis 2:15

*But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or the birds in the sky; and they will tell you;
or speak to the earth, it will teach you,
or let the fish in the sea inform you. ~Job 12:7-8*

*The earth is the Lord's and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it. ~Psalm 24:1*

*Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven. ~Mathew 6:10*



FROM THE PASTOR

Liturgically, February is always a different month. Depending on how early or late Easter is depends on when we start Lent. This year with Easter in early April, Ash Wednesday falls in February, which in my opinion seems right. Lent is a time of preparation for the Easter celebration, marked by a time of solemn reflection on how we can prepare our hearts for a deeper relationship with Christ. Unlike Advent in which we look to the celebration of the birth and the return of Christ, Lent is more internally focused. We as individuals reflect on our need for the salvation Christ offers through his death and resurrection. Lent is marked by fasting and sacrifice, a time to repent and turn towards God once again. Traditionally, it was a time of preparation for baptism at Easter.

We mark Lent by the writing of devotionals, worshipping as community, and a more solemn experience in song and scripture. I will encourage you to refrain from applause during worship and we make sure our music does not have any "alleluias" as we reserve those for Easter. We fast from celebratory worship during Lent. One of the things I have discovered in my practice of spiritual disciplines is that when you remove/fast from something, once you resume it is a wonderful feeling. When I have fasted from food for a day or a Good Friday fast, that first bite after the fast is over is great. Easter is sort of that same thing; as we remove certain things from our lives, both in worship and personally, once Easter comes before us those first verses of *Christ the King is Risen Today* are simply breathtaking.

I hope you take Lent with the appropriate seriousness this year and be attentive to what you remove from your life in preparation for the Easter celebration.

Adam



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!

Our February meeting will be **Tuesday, February 10 at 11 am in Room 204**. Please come prepared for study and fellowship as we learn more about Open Doors, the ministry for and with the homeless population of Harrisonburg. Otterbein has a team for CNOY (Coldest Night of the Year). Please see more information about supporting this effort in the newsletter and the Sunday bulletins. Bring donations of gloves or hats for our clothes closet!

*****Reading program book!*****

Our next focus for discussion is *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times* by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams. Ginny says the audio book is wonderful. Our discussion time will be in April. Questions? Please contact Ginny Whitehill.

Grace & Peace,
Pat Wingert

Gracious God, remind us of our call to be light in the world of darkness. Give us strength to stand as witness to cruelty and injustice. Give us courage to be united in love and mercy for ALL God's children. Give us peace in this world of chaos and evil. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

OOTSP (One of the Sweetest People)

I'd like to highlight an OOTSP person each month as I discover them as I do my visiting of Otterbein UMC members who no longer attend church. Here's one:

Cliff Davis - I've visited him in his house near Central Avenue. We have talked, read scripture, and prayed together.

Cliff was born in Covington, VA and grew up in Salem. He joined the Navy in 1952, just after the Korean War, and served on the same destroyer as his brother - the William M. Wood, DDR-715! It was an enjoyable time in his life. He still has many dear friends from the Navy and he got to see a lot of the world. Once in Rotterdam, Netherlands, he and his buddy ordered big steaks, medium rare, in a restaurant. The waiter brought two very rare steaks. His buddy remarked that he had seen cows in Texas with worse sunburns than that, and they lived! Then they got their correct steaks!

He left the Navy in 1956 and was married to his first wife for 27 years. They had 5 children. His daughter lives in Warrenton (as mine does) and his sons live in Salem, Roanoke, and Bedford, Virginia. Later, when he worked in the Harrisonburg radio station WSWA, he met his second wife, Jean, in a TV cable office. He kept returning with "complaints" about his cable service! She was a member of Otterbein UMC and one of their first dates was at the annual church pancake supper! They married a year later in Williamsburg. They went out to lunch on that "pink" day: Jean wore pink, the chapel was decorated in pink, and the restaurant had pink table cloths and pink carnations! They took that as a sign of a promising marriage and it lasted 41 years until she passed away in October 2024. He still misses her love and her "smile that would light up any room!"

He feels bad about not being able to get to church. If you remember Cliff (or not) pay him a visit or a call or a card. He is truly One Of The Sweetest People. Also, please put your used Christian magazines into the "Donations for Equipping the Saints" box on the shelf in the church breezeway - I know many other church members who would enjoy reading them. Thank you,

Gary Edlind, Sr - Director of Visitation - OUMC

From Your Outreach Ministry Team

For there will never cease to be poor in the land.

Therefore, I command you, you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.

Deuteronomy 15:11

Ongoing Projects

Mercy House – *Susan Pollard, point person*

Otterbein supplies needed grocery items to Mercy House residents in those months with a 5th Sunday. Susan reports 5 gallons of milk, 4 loaves of bread, 4 dozen eggs, and 2 packages of stick margarine were delivered to Mercy House.

Fresh Start – *Carla Nemoytin, point person*

Fresh Start had one distribution in December. Two people had been homeless for 10 years because of family issues, a mother to care for, and then experienced health issues of their own. This had been a long, difficult time for them, but they are now in a home, have jobs, and because of the generous support of the Otterbein Fresh Start program, can begin anew.

Donations from the Hospitality Committee's Autumn Tea and UWF allowed Fresh Start to restock and be ready for future requests.

Soup Kitchen – *Susan Pollard, point person*

The Soup Kitchen served 79 guests in December!

Clothes Closet – *Linda Conrad, point person*

Because of inclement weather and the holidays, the Clothes Closet was open for two Mondays in December. 18 men and women shopped in December.

Gleaning – *Vicki Gaines, point person*

As reported last month, gleaning for 2025 has come to an end. To Otterbein's Gleaning Teams—Mike & Bev Earman, Joe & Ginny Whitehill, Emmy Paradise & Family, Vicki Gaines & Deb Leap, and Tara Eckenroad—Thank You for volunteering. Because of your service, many benefitted from this worthwhile project.

The UMM of Manor Memorial UMC in New Market invite all men of the district to a Dinner Meeting and Rally on **Monday, March 2**, at Manor Memorial. In the spirit of the gatherings of days gone by, we will come together to share a meal, enjoy fellowship and conversation, exchange news and updates, and most importantly, hear the Word of God. We are honored that our new District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Kyungsook Cho, has graciously accepted our invitation to be the featured speaker for the evening. The theme for the event is "Connecting Together Again." It is our hope that you will mark your calendars and plan to join us as we reconnect as United Methodist Men working together for the Kingdom of God—truly "Connecting Together Again." Advance registrations are being taken now and the **deadline to RSVP is Thursday, February 19**. For details to register or if you need a ride, please contact Bill Pollard, Carter Ritchie, or Mike Earman.



The Otterbein United Methodist Men's Fellowship continues to meet monthly in 2026 right in our own church! Meetings for the next several months will be **February 28** and **March 28**, all Saturday mornings at **7:30 am** in **Memorial Hall**. Following breakfast there is a short business meeting followed by devotions, sharing prayer requests and prayer time. *If you plan to attend please call or text Bill Pollard (540-421-3256) so enough food can be prepared.*

Why engage in Men's Ministry? (As taken from the General Commission of United Methodist Men)

- Men lead others best by modeling Jesus Christ in thoughts, words, and deeds.
- Spiritual maturity is signified in spiritual reproduction, as the faith of mature disciples passes on in others.
- Men growing in Christ become effective spiritual leaders in their homes and congregations, working as partners with their spouses and congregational leaders—both lay and clergy.
- Spiritually growing men help congregations to become vital and alive.
- Everything desired from and through men comes as a result of men growing spiritually and maturing as disciples: family blessings, stewardship, service, outreach, prayer, spiritual leadership, lifestyle evangelism, and faithful obedience. Men are foundational to the life and health of the church.
- When a man lives daily in surrendered faith, God is honored, and many lives are blessed. Transformed hearts are forged only within Christ-centered lives—nothing less is our acceptable offering; nothing less truly reveals Christ.

Please go to our Otterbein Men's Fellowship page for a complete schedule of meetings and activities for 2026: oumcharrisonburg.org/united-methodist-men

Leadership/Planning Team: Mike Earman, Bill Pollard, & Carter Ritchie

Hidden in Plain Sight—Part 3

The beautiful window at the back of the sanctuary is referred to as Easter Scene and was dedicated in 1918 in memory of Robert and Sarah Liskey.

The far left panel features stylized passion flowers. During the 16th-17th centuries, Spanish missionaries teaching Indigenous peoples in South America used the passion flower's structure to visually tell the story of Christ's suffering and sacrifice (Passion). The symbolic elements of this flower are: 10 Petals: ten faithful apostles (minus Peter and Judas Iscariot). Note that our stained glass artist took liberties with this by designing the flower head with a greater number of petals, but in nature passion flowers have 10 petals. Corona: crown of thorns. 3 Stigmas: three nails used in the crucifixion. 5 Anthers: Christ's five wounds (hands, feet, side). Tendrils: whips used for scourging. Leaf Shape: the spear that pierced Jesus' side. Colors: White (purity), blue (heaven), purple (royalty/passion). I would encourage you to find a photograph of an actual passion flower to discover all of these botanical details.

Also noted in the left panel are three very small crosses far in the distance on the barren hill of Golgotha. This significant element remembering the crucifixion is a detail that I had never even noticed until I began looking more closely at the windows.

The far right panel depicts the city of Jerusalem which lies a mere six miles north of Jesus' birthplace of Bethlehem. The hub of Jewish religious life, Jerusalem was where Jesus often taught in the Temple and celebrated Passover. Here too, he was lauded on his triumphal entry (Palm Sunday). Later that very week Jesus shared the Last Supper with his disciples. He was then arrested, put on trial, crucified, and buried. And because Christ lives, the Holy City of Jerusalem became the site of Pentecost and thus the birthplace of the Christian church.

In this panel you will also see an abundance of lilies. Considered a celebratory flower, lilies have come to signify the resurrection of Christ. From a dormant bulb buried in the ground, they emerge as a symbol of new life and triumph over death. The trumpet-shaped flower alludes to the sounding of God's trumpet when believers will be brought to a new creation in glory. The white petals symbolize Jesus' purity as well as the spiritual cleansing of believers.

The two central panels depict a traditional Easter scene. Here, in this lush green garden with cloudless sky, Mary Magdalene recognizes the resurrected Jesus when he calls her by name. She is knelt in reverence before Jesus who is dressed in robes of white (purity, innocence, and resurrection) and gold (divine glory and magnificence). Also visible are the nail scars of Jesus' hands and feet. At the top, figures with halos hold banners declaring: *"He Is Not Here But Is Risen."* The use *continued next page...*

of clouds and a dark, shadowy hillside can be symbolic as well. Juxtaposed with scenes of light and brightness, the crucifixion can be seen as a metaphor for hope and redemption. Even in the darkest moments there is promise of light and resurrection.

The signature emblem of artist/installer "C. Day Rudy Co. Harrisburg, PA" is found in the green space below the single lily at Jesus' feet. Also, it's interesting to note that in 1980, the lilies featured in this window were the inspiration for the needlepoint upholstery covers of the pulpit chairs still in use today. The crafters of these chair covers were Mona Coffman and Polly Geil.

I hope this window will have special meaning for you as we enter the reflective season of Lent and as we look forward to the celebration of Easter.

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again."

—Carole Gaines

Weekday Religious Education News

The Annual WRE Students **Choral Concert** will be **Saturday, March 14** at **4 pm** in the **Spotswood High School Gymnasium**. If you would like to make a donation to support the concert, call 540-438-9997, 540-908-1964, or email WRERocks1929@gmail.com prior to February 13.

WRE is looking for volunteers to walk with students and assist the teacher with added safety at 2 schools where it is necessary to cross a street. They are also interested in hiring part-time (paid) teacher's assistants. If you have questions or would like to apply, contact Amanda Ritchie at 540-908-1964 or email WRERocks1929@gmail.com. If you are interested in serving on the board, contact Brent Showalter, 540-810-2514.

Lenten Sunday Morning 7-Week Study

Give Up Something Bad for Lent by James W, Moore will be offered **February 15 - April 5 at 9:30 am in Room 204**. During Lent each year, Christians give up something as an act of sacrifice and spiritual discipline. Often it is something like chocolate, knowing that after Easter Sunday they can once again enjoy what they have given up. James Moore invites all to seek God's help to focus on eliminating one habit or attitude that is destructive. Imagine giving up envy, jealousy, self-pity, apathy procrastination, gossip, resentment, or negative thinking. Ron Cartee will lead the discussion. See Linda Conrad for a study booklet.