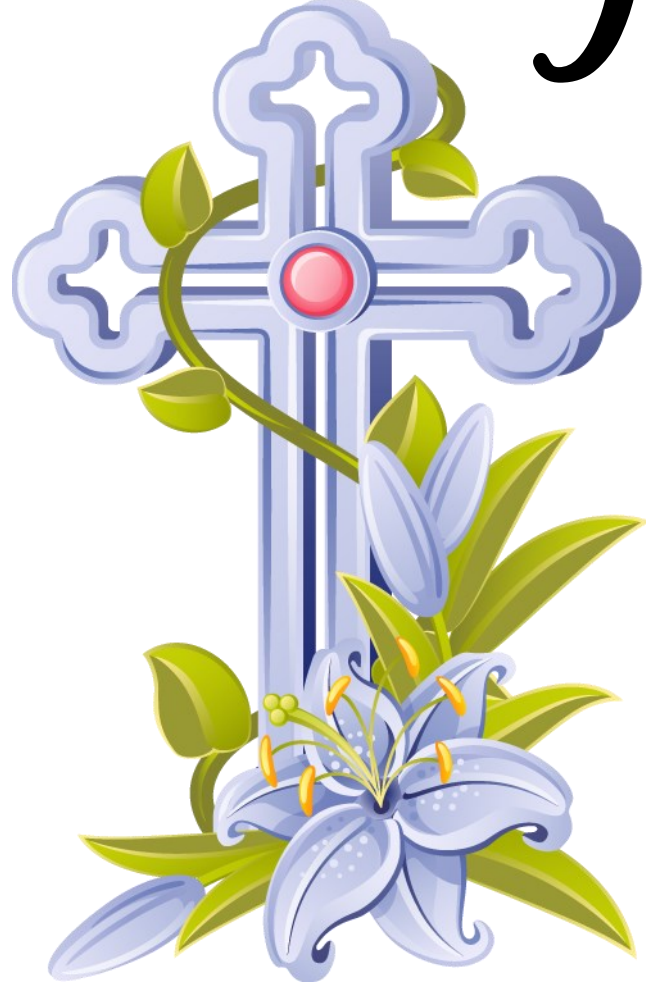


OTTERBEIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
176 West Market Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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# Tidings



# April 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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  
Debbie Cox  
Nissa D'Andrea  
Cliff Davis  
Jo Ellen Dickenson  
Bev Earman

Mike Earman  
Samuel & Judi  
Espinoza  
Mary Ann Glendye  
Ray Griffith  
Harold Grimm  
Fred Hopkins  
Tina Jolly  
Danita Kreeger  
Steve Lily  
Chuck Macklin

Nancy Miller  
Maxine Perry  
Judy Pruett  
Hector Santiago  
Ann Sebrell  
Dot Swartz  
Carolyn Stroop  
Michelle VanPelt  
Hazel Willi  
Keith Wright

Monthly luncheons begin again in April!

**The Village Inn**

**Wednesday, April 15, at 11:30 am.**

Sign up sheet will be on bulletin board in the Education Hallway. All are invited.

Clothes Closet could use men's clothing (including winter) and white socks. Thanks!

New Address:

Dan & Deb Brown  
408 Autumn Harvest Lane  
Lititz, PA 17543



**Save the Date!**

**Great Community Give**

**Wednesday, April 22**

**6 am—8 pm**

**Early giving opens April 7.**

*For Your Information*

- *Tidings* deadline for the May issue is Wednesday, May 15 by 3 pm. 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 15<sup>th</sup>.



## God's Creation in Spring

### CREATION CARE TASK FORCE

Spring reflects God's creation as a season of renewal, rebirth, and the promise of new life. It is a vivid

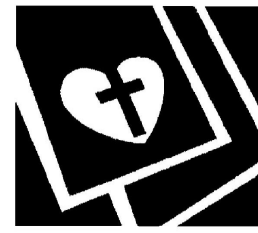
demonstration of God's handiwork, symbolizing the end of winter's barrenness and the awaking of life in nature.

The Bible frequently uses spring imagery to convey spiritual renewal and hope. For example, Song of Solomon 2:11-13 celebrates the blossoming of flowers, the ripening of figs, and the cooing of turtledoves, portraying spring as a time of beauty and joy in God's creation.

Isaiah 35:1-2 describes deserts rejoicing and blooming, illustrating God's power to transform desolation into abundance. Genesis 8:22 emphasizes the cyclical nature of seasons as part of God's covenant, assuring that spring will follow winter as a testament to His faithfulness.

Spring also serves as a metaphor for spiritual renewal. Just as the earth awakens from dormancy, we are called to experience new life in Christ. Revelation 21:5 further highlights God's promise to make all things new, reflecting the transformative power of His creation.

Nature's signs in spring - the blooming flowers, flourishing trees, and singing birds - invite gratitude and reflection on God's care for every detail of creation. This season encourages us to embrace growth, transformation, and hope, mirroring the resurrection and renewal found in the scripture. Spring, therefore, is not only a physical awakening of the earth, but also a spiritual reminder of God's enduring presence, His promises, and the beauty of His creation.



# FROM THE PASTOR

Holy Week this year coincides pretty closely with the April *Tidings*. Holy Week gives us the range of the Christian experience in one week; it begins in celebration, acknowledging King Jesus as he enters the Holy City. It continues, if you follow the lectionary, with Jesus' anointing, a theological conversation about his own death, and him acknowledging that Judas will betray him (See John 12 & 13). We move then to Maundy Thursday, which derives its name from the Latin word for commandment, as in Jesus' commandment to his disciples at the last supper. We can remember this in several different ways during worship: foot washing, holy communion, a message about the new commandment that Jesus gives (love one another), and even stripping the church of the significant symbols, acknowledging that Christ is to be betrayed and crucified. Good Friday is the day when the church is stripped bare of all the signs of our faith, the day where darkness covered the earth, the day Jesus died. We gather that somberness to hear the story told again in word and song, leaving in silence, knowing that more is to come. On Saturday we sit in vigil waiting for the light of Easter. In our faith tradition this often means gathering for a sunrise service; in other expressions it is a long night of prayer and scripture waiting for the light of Christ to emerge from the tomb. As the sun rises and we acknowledge that Christ defeated death, we come together to worship in song and scripture, familiar stories, familiar songs, a church full of lilies and friends; it could possibly be the best Sunday of the year.

This week allows us to see the fullness

*continued next page..*

of life, the hope of what is to come, the closeness of friends around the table, the pain of betrayal, the consequences of sin, the destructive nature of authoritative power, the rawness of grief, the glimmer of hope at dawn, and the full celebration of new life. All of us will experience all of this in our lives, and Holy Week places all of these experiences in the context of God's divine grace poured out on all through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. I hope you have come to appreciate the nature of Holy Week and the way it mirrors our own lived experiences while still pointing to the deep traditions of our received faith. You will find several different ways to engage during Holy Week in these pages. I hope you take the opportunity to participate in the ways that are most meaningful for your faith journey.

*Adam*

## **Downtown Cross Walk**

**Friday, April 3  
Noon—1 pm**

The 39<sup>th</sup> annual Harrisonburg downtown ecumenical Good Friday prayer walk, based on the "Stations of the Cross," **begins at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, and ends at St. Stephens United Church of Christ,** stopping at a total of 10 downtown churches and public buildings.

Led by someone carrying a large cross, the group stops at each station where a member of the "Biblical Storytellers Guild" will tell a passage from the Gospel of Matthew and a local pastor responds with a prayer. This is a contemplative, communal, and spiritual practice of shared ecumenical worship and witness that has been going on every year in downtown Harrisonburg for nearly four decades. Please join us! The walking route is accessible for wheelchairs and strollers.



## **Holy Week Services**

We invite you to join in our practice of worshipping together in community during Holy Week. While each of our services provide community, our joint practice of worshipping under combined leadership of Asbury and Otterbein for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday provide a deeper witness to our broader Christian community. Palm Sunday is a little Easter, showing the joy of worshipping Jesus as he enters Jerusalem prior to his Passion, a hint of what is to come on Easter morning. On Maundy Thursday we remember the Last Supper and Jesus' giving of a new commandment to his disciples. The vivid image of the sanctuary being stripped points us towards the solemn nature of Good Friday. In Harrisonburg there has been a practice of public witness to our faith through the downtown prayer walk. And as the night falls we gather again for a Tenebrae service where we hear the passion story told through scripture and song. We end the service with the haunting sound of the tomb being closed and we depart in silence. Dawn breaks on Sunday morning at the Sunrise Service at West Rockingham, again worshipping in community as we acknowledge the power of a new day in Christ. We end with the great joy of being together again at Otterbein on Easter morning, hearing that message that Christ is Alive!

### **Palm Sunday**

Sunday, March 29, 10:30 am, Otterbein UMC

### **Maundy Thursday**

Thursday, April 2, 7:00 pm, Asbury UMC

### **Downtown Cross Walk**

Friday, April 3, 12:00 pm, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church

### **Good Friday**

Friday, April 3, 7:00 pm, Otterbein UMC

### **Easter Sunrise**

Sunday, April 5, 6:30 am, West Rockingham Ruritan Park

### **Easter Worship**

Sunday, April 5, 10:30 am, Otterbein UMC



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!

On **Tuesday, April 14 at 10:30 am**, we will gather for discussion and reflection about ***The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times*** by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams. Anyone who has read this book is welcome to attend. Please join us!

**Our regular monthly meeting begins at 11 am in Memorial Hall followed by a Taco Salad lunch.** As United Women in Faith, we continue to learn and celebrate what it means for us to be in community with and for each other and in solidarity with all women, children, and youth in God's good creation. Our meeting will be a closer look at our purpose statement and what we mean when we talk about "Living Into Our Purpose." **Sharon Harold**, Shenandoah District Education & Interpretation Coordinator, will lead us in our discussion and discovery of who we claim to be. We will conclude our meeting with food and fellowship around the table. All are welcome to join us. If you have questions, please contact me (540-405-2204).

Grace & Peace,  
Pat Wingert

***Everlasting God, in this time of distrust and ill intent, we pray that you sustain our faith to be bold advocates for justice, trusting in your faithfulness to make ways for a better tomorrow. Amen.***

Judith Pierre-Okerson, Order of Deaconess & Home Missioner,  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miramar, FL

## Spaghetti Supper to be held Saturday, April 25



The Otterbein Men's Fellowship will host their **Annual Spaghetti Supper on Saturday, April 25 beginning at 4:30 pm**. The menu includes yummy spaghetti with meat sauce, tasty garlic bread, crispy salad with choice of dressing, drink, and dessert. *Vicki Gaines' coconut cupcakes will be one of the featured*



*desserts!* The men will meet at the church on Saturday, April 25 at 1:00 pm to prepare the meal. Please make plans to join us and support this annual fundraiser.

The Otterbein Men continue to accept donations for two ongoing projects. On the first Sunday of every month brightly colored buckets will be at the front of the Sanctuary to accept your donations of canned food items. Your donations go to support the work of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and other area food pantries. The second project is a partnership with Community Mennonite Church as we accept donations of one-pound bags of dried beans (any variety) and rice. CMC's Patchwork Pantry prepares backpacks with rice, beans and other food items for Waterman Elementary students to take home so that families have food for the weekend. For this donation each Sunday through the month of May, a designated bucket will be available in the breezeway as you enter the church from the Elizabeth St. Parking lot.

Have you been thinking about becoming involved in our group? We are now meeting at Otterbein UMC in Memorial Hall! Our next regular meeting will be **Saturday, May 23** beginning at **7:30 am**. Breakfast is followed by a short business meeting concluding with a time of devotions and prayer. Check the website below for additional meeting and event dates in 2026. Please join us!

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

## OOTSP (One of the Sweetest People)

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

**Rev. Samuel Espinoza** - I have visited him several times in Woodland Park 1336 in Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community. He's doing well there. I have also visited his wife, Judith, in Dogwood 202, Crestwood, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community - She is a sweet person, too.

Samuel was born March 14, 1941 in Monterrey, Mexico. He grew up and went to school in Mexico City, where his father was the senior pastor of a large Methodist Church. Samuel accepted Christ as his Savior at 17 years old and felt called to be a minister. After high school, Samuel's father found a scholarship for him to Vennard College, a Bible College in the farmland of Iowa. He said it was a big adjustment for him moving from the big metropolis of Mexico City to a village in Iowa. Also, he had to improve his English, but he graduated with a degree in theology. He met Judith in 1966 and they married and moved to Mexico. Then they returned and he taught Spanish for 2 years at Eastern Mennonite University. He was an associate pastor at Otterbein Church from 1970 to 1972. He and Judith had a daughter, Michelle, who now lives in Idaho Falls, and a son, Joshua, who lives in Austin, Texas. He said they are now both strong Christians who text him every night!

Samuel was a youth minister in two Methodist churches in Front Royal until 1977 and Judith assisted, forming a strong team! Then he had pastorates in Richmond, Falls Church, Sterling, and Fairfax until he retired in 2003 and they became members of Otterbein United Methodist Church. Besides lovingly supporting him, Judith had a career as a systems analyst in Washington, DC.

He recalls being told "I don't believe in God!" and he'd respond "Oh, really. Tell me why you say that." Or another *continued next page...*

person would say "Why does God let bad things happen to good people?" and he'd respond "I don't know the answer to that, because I'm not God. But you need to become a Christian to start getting spiritual understanding. Let's pray."

Rev. Samuel feels bad about not being able to get to church. He prays for Pastor Adam and Otterbein United Methodist Church. If you remember Samuel (or not) send him a card or text him a greeting! He is truly One Of The Sweetest People!

Gary Edlind, Sr - Director of Visitation - OUMC

## Attention Graduates

We will be celebrating **Graduate Recognition Sunday on June 7**. If there are members of our church family who are graduating this summer or who have graduated this winter, please inform the church office with the graduate's name, school, month of graduation, parents' names if applicable, and future plans. Information can be sent to the church office ([oumcadm@hotmail.com](mailto:oumcadm@hotmail.com)) or Garole Barber ([Garolehetzerbarber@gmail.com](mailto:Garolehetzerbarber@gmail.com)).



## Welcome!

On Sunday, March 15, we celebrated the baptisms of **Cody Wayne Bynaker** and **Willow Catherine Bynaker**. Four-month-old Willow is the daughter of Cody and Mary Bynaker, and granddaughter of Claudia Andes.

It is with joy and thanksgiving that we welcome Cody Wayne and Willow Catherine as members of the family of Christ, and to the fellowship of Otterbein UMC