

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

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Tidings



January 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 oumcadm@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.



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

oumcadm@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

Weekday Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Otterbein in Prayer

David Angier
Rosalie Bailey
Gary Billingsley
Marilyn Blagg
Whitney Bradley
Millie Bruce
Earl Cannon
Rev. Louis Carson
Nissa D'Andrea
Cliff Davis
Diane Cline Davis
Jo Ellen Dickenson

Tammy Duxbury
Mike Earman
Judi Espinoza
Ed Gaines
Ray Griffith
Fred Hopkins
Emily Joiner
Tina Jolly
Danita Kreeger
Deb Leap
Steve Lily
Chuck Macklin

Peggy Miller
Art & Mary Jo Mitchell
Maxine Perry
Judy Pruitt
Dot Swartz
Carolyn Stroop
Juanita Taylor
Michelle VanPelt
John Walsh
Hazel Willi
Baby Charlie Woods
Gina Wyse

Chili Luncheon

On Sunday, February 1, the Faith Builders Sunday School class will host their annual Chili Luncheon. It will begin following the worship service until 1:00 pm. We will be serving mild beef chili with beans, white chicken chili, hot dogs, pimento cheese sandwiches, and ice cream. A freewill offering will be collected to go towards the College Chorale Scholarship Fund and class missions. Everyone is invited to come join the fellowship.



In case of inclement weather, the church office will follow the status of Harrisonburg City Schools. When the schools close for bad weather, the office will be closed and activities will be cancelled. If the schools are delayed 1 or 2 hours, the office will open at 9 am and activities will proceed as planned. Check WHSV-TV and email for information about worship service cancellations.

For Your Information

- *Tidings* deadline for the February issue is Monday, January 19 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 oumcadm@hotmail.com by the 19th.

Welcome New Members

During worship on Sunday, November 30, Carolyn and Gary Edlind, Sr. were received into Otterbein UMC membership by transfer from First Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg. The Edlinds have been attending Otterbein since early summer, and Gary was first introduced in a previous edition of *Tidings* upon being hired as our Director of Visitation in August.

Prior to moving to Harrisonburg in 2003, the couple had lived in Warrenton, VA. Gary specialized in nuclear submarine propulsion as a mechanical engineer with the U.S. Navy.

Now retired, Carolyn enjoys her hobbies of baking, biking, and gardening. We can all attest to her green thumb as many lovely floral arrangements have graced the sanctuary, and bouquets have been shared with home-bound members that Gary routinely visits. Carolyn also finds time to volunteer at a local food bank every Friday.

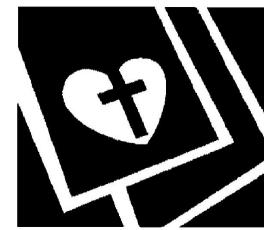
Married for 56 years, the Edlinds and have been blessed with 5 children and 6 grandchildren. Their dog, Amos is also counted as a beloved member of the family.

Along with his busy schedule of visitation, in his spare time you might find Gary working on the restoration of his 1959 Nash Metropolitan sedan. He also volunteers at Sunnyside Health Center leading a monthly Bible Study. Right here at Otterbein, Gary has joined the activities of the United Methodist Men as well as lending his voice to the Sanctuary Choir.

Gary shares that he made an early decision for Jesus when he was in first grade, and was baptized nine years later in 1962. He reconfirmed his faith in Christ during college and says he's always felt that he "wanted to be used of God."

Gary was drawn to OUMC after reading the Bible-message banners displayed at the West Market and High St. corner, as well as by the Tower Chimes ringing out favorite hymns each Sunday.

We extend a heartfelt welcome to Carolyn and Gary, and look forward to sharing together in fellowship, service, and spiritual growth.



FROM THE PASTOR

Happy New Year! What a joyous time Christmas is! We always make a big deal about waiting for Christmas during Advent and not rushing ahead; part of that reasoning is that when we do come to Christmas, it is special. Twelve days of celebration, food, family time, worship, and hopefully not a lot of bothersome things like work, sickness, or bad weather. (I'll let you define what "bad" weather is.)

While Christmas has taken on a good deal of commercial and non-sacred baggage of the years, at its heart it remains a time to acknowledge the birth of Jesus and the proclamation that God sent his son to dwell with us. Each of the gospel narratives of the birth have their own focus but I find the John 1 text to be the most meaningful. No camels, or shepherds, or angels, no gifts or mangers, or guiding stars, but instead a simple statement of our faith. At the end of the passage it uses the phrase, "*and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*" John 1:14. This simple statement summarizes Christmas for me. It connects to John 3:16, God loved us so much he took on human form and walked along with us for a while. John also tells us that even as Jesus is leaving, the Holy Spirit will remain with us. We are a people who God has chosen to be with throughout the journey of our life. Christmas is that reminder. I like the John text, but the stories in Luke and Matthew say the same thing in different form. God will be with us in a tangible real way. Jesus present, as a baby, knowing what it's like to be alive and face the same things we face. This is Christmas.

I hope you are enjoying this Christmas season and in some way being reminded that God continues to be with us. Merry Christmas!

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 January meeting will be **January 13 at 11 am** in **Room 204**. Please come prepared for study and fellowship as we begin a new year together. We will take time for reflection and planning ahead. It's always good to be together.

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

Following our regular meeting (Tuesday, January 13 at 11 am), we will meet to discuss *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray. This book is on the reading program list for 2026 and available at Massanutten Regional Library. If you love to read, please join us **January 13 at 12 noon** in **Room 204**. Bring your lunch and be ready for lively discussion! **All women and men are invited to participate.** Contact Ginny Whitehill for further information.

Grace & Peace,

Pat Wingert

God, we ask you to light our path and accompany us as we make new roads together. May you be our comfort in uncertainty, our guide in all things, and our bravery when we need it. Amen.

(from *Mapping Our Way Forward*, Program Resource 2026, p. 14)

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.

Happy New Year!
Your Outreach Team!

TOTSP (Two of the Sweetest People)

I'd like to highlight a TOTSP couple as I discovered them as I do my visiting of Otterbein UMC people who can no longer attend church. Here's a couple:

Charles (Charlie) and Lois Glassick moved in 2020 to Sunnyside in Harrisonburg from Hilton Head, SC in order to be central to their children. They were members of St. Andrews by the Sea United Methodist Church. They were impressed with how well they were welcomed at Otterbein United Methodist Church and how important music was to the church. Lois had been a soloist in every one of their previous churches, but her voice was now not what it used to be. Lois was once the receptionist in her first husband's development company until he passed away. Then she became a realtor with much success. Now she's an Assisted Living Advocate representing the AL residents to Sunnyside.

Charlie was a PhD Chemistry professor until he became the President of Gettysburg College. When he retired, he spent 7 years filling in as interim college president of several colleges. He was active in the Carnegie Foundation for Advanced Teaching and said that his job was to "Think great thoughts!" Charlie had health problems when they were at Sunnyside, but now he's doing well. They love the services at the Sunnyside Chapel and the 2 chaplains. They were recently able to attend a family wedding and be together with their 7 children, 23 grandchildren and 26 great grandchildren!

I visit them regularly and keep them connected to the church, bringing them bulletins and reading scripture and praying. They are truly two of the sweetest people and would appreciate your prayers, cards, and visits.

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*

Kingsway Apple Tree Project—Bev Earman, point person

Thanks to Bev and Otterbein for their continued support of this worthwhile project. Over 100 children will receive a gift this Christmas from Otterbein members.

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 no distributions in November. There are eligible families and individuals waiting for a home, but there is limited affordable housing available.

Soup Kitchen – Susan Pollard, point person

The Soup Kitchen served 110 guests in November!

Clothes Closet – Linda Conrad, point person

The Clothes Closet was open four Mondays in November. 43 men and women and 10 children were served, including 7 new shoppers! Please tell your family and friends the Clothes Closet is open with free clothing for all ages every Monday 4:30—6 pm.

*Currently, the Clothes Closet is accepting ONLY winter coats,
hats, scarves, and gloves. Also socks, especially white!*

Gleaning – Vicki Gaines, point person

As reported last month, gleaning for 2025 has come to an end. Over 3,890 lbs. of fresh vegetables were delivered to The Salvation Army, Our Community Place, and Gemeinshhaft. Most of the produce was contributed by the North Mountain Farm. North Mountain received an **Otterbein Signature Coconut Cake** in appreciation of their generosity.

To Otterbein's Gleaning Teams—Mike & Bev

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The Otterbein United Methodist Men's Fellowship would like to thank all who supported our *Christmas Pancake Brunch* in December! Approximately 100 persons enjoyed wonderful fellowship along with

pancakes and strawberry, blueberry, chocolate chips, chocolate syrup, and whipped cream toppings! Generous donations from this project totaled **\$2,836.00**, all going towards the College Chorale Scholarship fund.



The men are initiating a new project in the new year. Beginning the first Sunday of each month in 2026, the men will be collecting canned food for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and any other needy area Food Pantries. Thank you in advance for your support of this monthly project of the OUMM which begins on **January 4th, 2026**.

The Men's Fellowship invites all men to our first Prayer Breakfast meeting of the new year on **Saturday, January 24 starting at 7:30 am**. The group will gather in Memorial Hall at Otterbein UMC. Our attendance grew in numbers during the past year, and we expect to continue to grow during 2026. Come and enjoy the fellowship and a delicious breakfast! Please contact Mike Earman (540-383-2399) if you are planning to attend so enough food can be prepared.

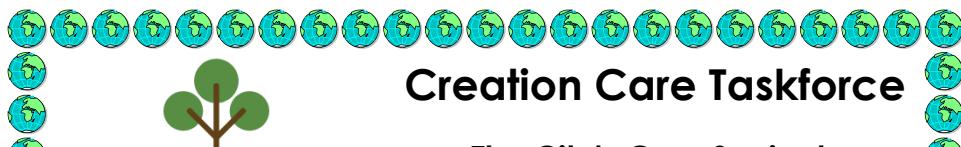


To view all our planned breakfast meetings and other activities, check out the website link below. You can also view pictures from recent projects and hear the Men's Choir singing during the UMM-led Sunday Worship Services over the years.

For additional information concerning our fellowship, please check our website: <https://www.oumcharrisonburg.org/united-methodist-men>

Leadership/Planning Team:

Mike Earman
Bill Pollard
Carter Ritchie



CREATION CARE TASK FORCE

Creation Care Taskforce

The City's Gray Squirrels

If you have trees in your neighborhood, you probably have gray squirrels scampering around. There are over 246 species of squirrels and they are one of the largest families of rodents (gnawing animals).

If you have had to brake for a squirrel running across the street or repair a building they have chewed with their chisel-like front teeth, you might consider them a nuisance and destructive. In our house, we call them fascinating to watch and one of God's creations.

We have an undeveloped wooded area behind our house and when my son began feeding the birds several years ago, squirrels came for breakfast with the birds. Watching the squirrels play was so fascinating that he began adding more birdfeed, suet, and peanuts. The squirrels have their own feeders now and we have between eight and fifteen squirrels gathering daily. The first snow in December brought around twenty.

The gestation period of a gray squirrel is 44 days and they have 2-5 young. At 5 to 8 weeks, the young have fur and begin searching for their own food. They start having their own families at about a year old. They live two to six years in the wild and up to 15 years in captivity.

Squirrels eat corn, seeds, pinecones, berries, nuts, and bird food. They especially love Costco's peanuts. We discovered they like pumpkins

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when they ate the neighborhood's pumpkin decors last year, so now we add pumpkins to their fall food purchases. In autumn, squirrels hunt and hide food for winter. They may forget where they hide their nuts and in time, these nuts sprout and become young trees. They also drink plenty of water.

Squirrels are more active in the mornings and evenings. They use their tails for shade from the sun, as an umbrella when it rains, to balance them when jumping from tree to tree, and as a blanket in their nest on cool nights.

They have two homes. A cool temporary summer one made loosely with twigs and leaves and may fall apart, causing them to rebuild several times. The permanent nest may be a hollow tree or layers of twigs and leaves packed firmly together to keep out rain, snow, and wind. In winter several may share the same nest to keep warm. In cold weather, they may undergo periods of dormancy, but wake every few days for food.

Their enemies include bobcats, cats, coyotes, dogs, foxes, owls, and humans (their greatest enemy), who hunt them for sport, meat, and fur. But no hunting in the city.

To watch the squirrels hunched, eating peanuts or chasing each other as they play or fight for food, is truly a picture to behold. Our backyard is a safe haven for any creature that wonders in. "All things bright and beautiful. All creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all."

Happy New Year!

