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Otterbein United Methodist Church
176 West Market Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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Tidings



November 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.

Our Staff

Rev. Laura Stratton
Senior Pastor
laurastratton@vaumc.org

Melissa Miller
Office Manager
oumcadm@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

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!

Otterbein in Prayer

David Angier
Rosalie Bailey
Gary Billingsley
Whitney Bradley
Rev. Louis Carson
Lt. Col. Sam Cartee
Loretta Crider
Nissa D'Andrea
Cliff Davis
Jo Ellen Dickenson
Mike Earman
Rev. Samuel & Judith Espinoza
Zach Fickes
Halcie Fishback
Mary Ann Glendye
Ray Griffith
Fred Hopkins
Joel Jordan
Deb Leap & Family
Patty Liskey
Chuck Macklin
Art Mitchell
Eric Mitchell
Maxine Perry
Judy Pruett
Ann Sebrell
Dot Swartz
Carolyn Stroop
Michelle VanPelt
Hazel Willi
Keith Wright

First Step
A Response to Domestic Violence

129 Franklin Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22801
(540)434-0295
firststepva.com

09/18/26

Dear Congregation of Otterbein United Methodist Church and Fresh Start,

A huge thank you for your continued support of First Step and our mission. We are so grateful for your willingness to help those in need. In the past month, First Step has assisted two families that moved into permanent housing. Fresh Start supplied these families with the items they need, like bedding, cookware, and cleaning products, to start anew in their own homes. These necessary items helped these survivors to feel safe and comfortable in their homes. We appreciate your congregation and all that you continue to do for survivors in your community!

Thank You,

Britsch

Megan Britsch

Director of Outreach and Volunteer Services

For Your Information

***Tidings* deadline** for the **December** issue is **Monday, November 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 oumcadm@hotmail.com by the 16th.

A Note about the College Chorale

The Otterbein College Chorale is an outstanding group of young musicians. Each Wednesday, they sing as section leaders amongst the congregational choir and stay for at least an extra hour to prepare a selection of special music. Their extraordinary efforts mean Sunday services almost always feature two choral selections. They are an integral part of the spiritual experience every Sunday, during special services and performances, not to mention the kindness and radiance they bring to our spiritual community! As such, our Administrative Council has generously agreed to increase their scholarship amount to $1,500 per Semester beginning in Spring 2027. We hope this reflects our gratitude for their extraordinary commitment to the Otterbein community and helps maintain the excellence of our musical offerings for years to come. Thank you for your generosity in your "second-mile" giving over and above your regular offerings to help support this important ministry of Otterbein UMC. To make a donation, make your check payable to OUMC and designate "College Chorale" in the memo line.

Grown & Growing - A Young-ish Adult Group

Grown in life. Growing in faith. Adulting isn't easy. Neither is faith. Let's do both together. Grown & Growing is a monthly gathering for adults - from early 20s through your 40s - who want to share a meal, make friends, have some fun, and grow in faith. Whether you're single or married, new to church or have been around it for years, there's a place for you. Come for the food. Stay for the conversation, community, laughter, and faith. Each gathering includes time to connect, a meaningful worship or Bible-study component, and plenty of fun. Childcare will be provided. Upcoming events will be announced!

FROM THE PASTOR

In November our thoughts turn towards Thanksgiving – both the holiday and the idea of naming those things for which we are grateful. But perhaps you are like me, and sometimes, I find it difficult to name things for which I want to give thanks. I can name the broad categories, such as family, friends, shelter, and my job. Yet if I have to name specifics, I freeze. My mind goes blank. I can come up with specific concerns fairly easily. But specific thanksgivings? That is harder.

I was reminded of this struggle in our recent Bible study session on James 3. This chapter reminds us of the dangers of our words and the need we have to guard our tongues, to watch what we say. One of the participants posited the question – why is it easier for us humans to be negative than it is for us to positive? I thought that was a good question and a convicting question, and I don't have an answer for it. But I think it is related to why I struggle with naming specific thanksgivings. We humans seem to have to work harder to be positive.

So, this month I challenge us, myself included, to be specific in our thanksgivings, to do the hard work of being encouraging and positive in our thoughts and words.

For example, as I write these words, I think back on my weekend, and I give thanks for a drink of cool water that refreshes me after a workout. I give thanks for the JMU students who held a trunk-or-treat at Bluestone Elementary School. I give thanks for warm blankets on these cooler nights and mornings. I give thanks for authors like Richard Osman who write wonderful books. I give thanks for potlucks where I get to taste everyone's delicious food. I give thanks for the times when all four us get to hang out together – such as going to a play or going to the trunk-or-treat.

How about you? What are some of your specific thanksgivings?

In Christ,

Pastor Laura

Otterbein United Methodist Church

BOOK CLUB

Faith, Life & Good Books

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2026
The Return of the Prodigal Son - Henri Nouwen

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2027
The Good and Beautiful God - James Byran Smith

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2027
Searching for Sunday - Rachel Held Evans

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2027
An Altar in the World - Barbara Brown Taylor



7:00-8:00pm
Room 204



Fresh Start

Fresh Start had an amazing month, our busiest month ever. Otterbein helped 3 families from Bridge of Hope and 2 from First Step who were transitioning to permanent housing. We also welcomed Anna Steel and Marylee Huffman to the **Fresh Start** team!

bridge of hope® Harrisonburg-Rockingham

CHURCHES RESPOND. HOMELESSNESS ENDS. HOPE BEGINS.

October 13, 2026

Otterbein United Methodist Church
176 W. Market Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Dear Otterbein United Methodist Church,

Thank you for extending your Fresh Start program to 3 families in Bridge of Hope's program. The household items are a wonderful resource for families as they get settled into their new homes. Your generosity and awareness of needs within our local community are appreciated. If interested in receiving an in-kind tax donation form, you are welcome to call 540-478-2356 to request this document.

These families had spent a significant time in homelessness. This is such a gift to them, not only their own home but items to help them make that space a real welcoming warm home.

Thank you, once again, for your support of families in Bridge of Hope's program.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Nutter, Program Director
Bridge of Hope Harrisonburg-Rockingham
Office: (540) 478-2356 Cell: (540) 252 5353
Email: carolyn@hr.bridgeofhopeinc.org

Sunday Morning Advent Study

November 22, 29, December 13, and 20
9:30 am in Room 204

Ron Cartee will lead the discussion on the book
Calling All Angels

What would you do if you were not afraid?

Life can be daunting, filled with uncertainty and fears. It wasn't any different two thousand years ago when Jesus was born. An aged priest is told he is about to become a father for the first time. A young woman is told she is going to give birth - outside the protection of marriage. A simple carpenter is asked to believe the impossible. A group of shepherds' night on a hill is interrupted by a bright host of angels in the sky.

Yet, each of these encounters begins with the same refrain: *do not be afraid*.

Those words, though, are not just words of comfort; they are an invitation and a calling from God. In this captivating Advent study and devotional, pastor Erin Wathen challenges us to take this timeless message and apply it to our lives today. Calling *All Angels* asks us to contemplate what would change in our relationships, vocations, congregations, and communities if we have the courage to overcome our fears like Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and the Shepherds in the story.

See Linda Conrad for a book.



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!

This year our **United Women in Faith Sunday** will be **November 8** with the theme: "*Love in Action Can Change the World.*" Our guest speaker will be **Jenny Butcher** from **Isaiah 117 House** to share with us their mission: reduce trauma for children awaiting placement in foster care, lighten the load for child welfare services, and ease the transition for foster families. Learn how we can connect and support this new program that illustrates "love in action."

UWF Book Talk—10:30 am, Tuesday, November 10 in **Room 204**. Our discussion will focus on *They Called Me Lioness: A Palestinian Girl's Fight for Freedom* by Ahed Tamimi & Dena Takruri. All women are invited to attend. Discussion will be led by Ginny Whitehill.

Our **November meeting** will be **Tuesday, November 10** at **11 am** in **Room 204**. We will gather for study and fellowship as we learn about "**World Thank Offering**," one of the five channels of undesignated giving. Our offering will be a celebration of all the ways God has blessed us this past year. Please join us and bring a friend! Our program will be led by Bev Earman.

Thank you to all who have brought toothpaste for Kingsway Prison Ministries. Over and over again, YOU help us live into our mission statement "***Love in Action Can Change the World.***"

Grace & Peace,
Pat Wingert

Let God grant us grace and bless us; let God make his face shine on us, so that your way becomes known on earth, so that your salvation becomes known among all the nations. Let all the people thank you, God! Let all the people thank you! ~Psalm 67:1-3

COMING SOON!!

CREATION CARE TASK FORCE

Sunday, November 15th at 1:30 pm
JMU's C. Wells Planetarium

The Creation Care Taskforce invites you to attend the full dome video show "**Mystery of the Christmas Star**" followed by a live seasonal star talk highlighting the night sky.

Mystery of the Christmas Star allows audiences to journey back 2,000 years to Bethlehem in pursuit of a scientific explanation of the star the wise men followed to find the baby Jesus. This modern telling of the Christmas story is sure to charm and captivate audiences of all ages.

The Planetarium is reserved for the Otterbein congregation and their friends. Seating is limited to 60 people, so it is essential that you reserve a spot on the sign up sheet next to the Creation Care Bulletin Board.

Convenient parking, including handicap parking, is available. See directions and parking details on the bulletin board.

And that's not all. **A delicious meal will be provided following the morning worship service before we head out to the Planetarium**.

Don't miss this enjoyable event to start your Christmas Season!

Otterbein United Methodist Men's News

UMM UNITED METHODIST MEN

The Otterbein UM Men are continuing the **dried beans and rice collection**. All donations will be taken to Community Mennonite Church to be included along with other food for special backpacks for the students of Waterman Elementary so that families will have food for the weekend. Donating one-pound bags of any kind of dried beans or rice is a perfect way to be the "hands and feet of Christ" in our community. The canned food drive for Blue Ridge Area Food Bank continues each month. Collections are accepted on the first Sunday of each month or whenever it is convenient to drop them off at the church in the colorful buckets. Thank you for your continued support of these projects.





The Otterbein Men are preparing to serve a **Family Pancake Brunch** on **Sunday, December 6** in Memorial Hall immediately following the Worship Service. Plan to stay after Worship and enjoy pancakes with syrup and a variety of fruit toppings, sausage, fresh fruit, and a beverage. On **Saturday, December 5 at 7:30 am**, the men will meet in Memorial Hall for a light breakfast and to set up for the brunch. **All donations for the brunch will go to support the College Chorale Scholarship Fund**.

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

Leadership/Planning Team:
Mike Earman
Bill Pollard
Carter Ritchie