

December 2024 / January 2025



Beloved Oakmont United Methodist Church Family,

Since our last newsletter, The United States of America has elected the 47th president. The months leading up to the election received tremendous media coverage. Journalists, pundits, and ordinary people tried their best to predict the outcome of the election. Election is more than Election Day! The messages that are packaged and delivered through rallies, endorsements, interviews, campaigning, canvassing, and people voting are critical to the process.

The electorate had a wide selection of messages to choose from. The results show the message that has resonated. Though the outcome might or might not be to our taste and liking, by voting you have demonstrated that your vote is important and that you are a responsible citizen. This idea of being a responsible citizen extends to how we regard each other and whether we can be cordial, say hello to each other going forward.

Years ago at a Christmas dinner, we were all deaf to the sound of music, until we realized that a child was enjoying Adele's hit, 'Hello.' Though her favorite line was "*hello from the other side,*" that message of "hello," as she sang it, added much joy and lightness to the moment and changed the mood of everyone present. The host played the refrain more than a dozen times just to hear her sing the line – "*hello from the other side.*"

This is a reminder that amid our seriousness, amid our busyness, God's message continues to permeate the air, gladden our hearts, and put smiles on our faces. Let us understand the transforming power of the word 'hello' and pray that God strengthen our bond of togetherness and mutual respect for all. We are one in Christ and God calls us to reconcile our differences in obedience to Christ.

Advent invites us to make manifest the rule of God in our hearts as responsible citizens and heirs to the kingdom of God. We do so when we say hello and extend God's peace to everyone we meet.

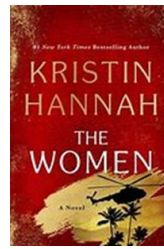
Your Pastor,
Rev. Natoya Thomas-Smith



Oakmont United Methodist Church

419 Maryland Ave
Oakmont, PA 15139

HOPE CIRCLE BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



Hope Circle will meet on Thursday, Jan. 9th, at 11:00 a.m. in the Adult Sunday School Room to discuss *The Women* by Kristin Hannah.

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances “Frankie” McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path. As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is overwhelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets—and becomes one of—the lucky, the brave, the broken, and the lost. But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters, and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm’s way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era. (from the publisher)

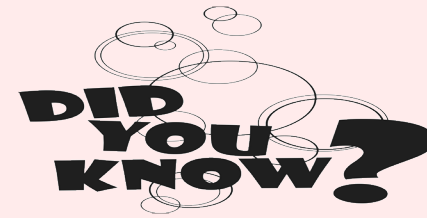
Please consider Hope Circle, a place to enjoy fellowship and conversation.

Friends Together

Friends Together is an informal small group that is open to all who enjoy a meal with friends and good conversation. The group will meet for breakfast at 9:00 a.m. on Dec. 3rd & Jan. 7th at Freedom Square Diner in Verona. No reservation is needed, just come if you are able. Laughter and lots of good coffee are guaranteed!

GENERAL FUND NUMBERS FOR OCTOBER

Balance	9/30	\$312.43
Income		\$13,530.00
Expenses		\$24,399.26
Balance	10/31	\$10,556.83



Did you know that you can earn money for OUMC by simply buying gift cards through the RaiseRight Program OUMC enrolled in. You should have received an email invitation to enroll in the program from RaiseRight on behalf of OUMC. If you haven’t received an invite, please make sure the Church has your current email address on record or check your junk emails. The invitation could have been captured there.

For each gift card you purchase at face value OUMC receives anywhere from 2-20% depending on the card you buy. With Christmas right around the corner this is a good way to purchase your gift cards or make your purchases of gifts using gift cards and help the Church at the same time. There are over 700 retailer gift cards available for purchase. They include cards for gas, groceries, entertainment, restaurants and department stores. You can really get creative and use gift cards for your everyday expenses and earn even more money for OUMC. Prayerfully consider joining to help the Church support its general expenses and to fund the upcoming need for a new roof and air conditioning. If you have any questions call Liz Rajkowski, Finance Chair at 412-780-7863 or you can call Michele at the Church office at 413-828-9499.

The purpose of the Oakmont United Methodist Church is to grow in our dedication to the worship of God, the teaching of God’s word and the caring ministry of Christ. We do this through Jesus’ grace, mercy, and love which we share with the world through our daily living.

DECEMBER Birthdays

- 3 JoAnn Hildebrand
Jessica Jacka
- 5 Cory Kircher
Aiden Sciuлло
- 6 Becky Houston
Maggie Kate Steimer
- 8 Jim Anderson
Terri Aubele
- 9 Gwyneth Fichte
Leah Lacey
- 13 Duncan Jones
- 15 Ashley Rajkowski
- 16 Barbara Charlton
Jennifer Binkley
- 18 Bonnie Allison
- 20 Randal Burdelski
Matthew Rajkowski
Marcus Shaffer
- 21 Derek Banas
James Denny
- 25 Colleen Briggs
- 26 Cheryl McClain
Angel Steimer
- 27 Donald Dezzutti
Gregory Gaughan
- 30 Joy Cottrill
- 31 Genevieve Casarcia

We apologize if we inadvertently missed your birthday.

Please call the church office and let us know about your very special day!

JANUARY Birthdays

- 1 Laurel Rotter
- 4 William Ashbaugh
Alex Caruso
- 7 Carol Ovamio
- 10 Terry Kaminsky
- 11 Julia Lenkey
Diane McCutcheon
Jason Smierciak
- 12 Bo Anderson
- 16 Oliver Huha
Christine Smith
- 19 Kylie Briggs
- 20 Ryley Handyside
Rose Miller
- 22 Jim Beiber
Chris Chapa
- 26 Gladys Fichte
Beth Harley
- 27 Michelle Walsh
- 28 Candice Awes
Bruce DeTurck
Steven Hein
- 29 Taylor Kennedy
- 30 Marty Kennedy
Beth Orbin
Arika Simmers



As the Advent season is once again upon us, it's a time to be reminded of all our blessings and to keep in mind the true meaning of Christmas. As we prepare for Christmas and the sharing of gifts with our families and friends, let's also remember to show our love and appreciation to our hard working staff for all they do for us. We are thankful for our staff as they all give so much time and effort to keep our church running smoothly. SPRC will be collecting money to distribute to our staff as a Christmas present from the OUMC. Please deliver your contributions to either the church office or to any SPRC member by December 15. If you place a check in the collection plate or bag, please be sure to mark "staff Christmas gift" on the check. Thank you very much for your consideration of this request!



We will be undecorating the church on January 5 following the 11:00 AM worship service.

Cookies are needed by the Caring Ministry to be delivered to our homebound friends. If you can make cookies, please drop them off in the church kitchen by 11 AM on December 15th.

Thank you!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles are due by January **15th** for the February newsletter.

If you would like to receive your newsletter by e-mail, please call the church office or send us a message at oakmontumc@gmail.com

42nd Annual Christmas Carol Walk

Sunday, December 8th, 2024

This festive event features a progressive sharing of the Christmas story through the Festival of Lessons and Carols. We look forward to celebrating the joy of the season with you!

6:00 pm – Holy Family Parish/St. Irenaeus Church
(385 Maryland Avenue)

6:30 pm – Oakmont Presbyterian Church
(corner of 5th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue)

7:00 pm – Oakmont United Methodist Church
(corner of Fifth Street & Maryland Avenue)

7:30 pm – St. Thomas Memorial Episcopal Church with St. Paul Baptist Church
(corner of Fourth Street & Delaware Avenue)
A cookie reception will follow.

All are welcome and bring a friend!



PRAYER CONCERNS

Audra Assad, Randal Burdelski, Barbara Charlton, EmmaLee Crannell, Diane and Donald Dezzutti, Mark Dicocco, Lew Ferguson, John Froehlich, Beth Harley, Joann Hildebrand, John Hildebrand, , Sharen Lenkey, Marigene Nelson, Cathy Smierciak, Ron Standifur, Jane Sykes



December 22
10:00 AM
Children's Pageant
11:00 AM Breakfast

December 29
10:00 Combined Service

February 21, 22, 23
Mystery Dinner

Reminder Calls

You will receive a call from Julia Lenkey if you wish to be reminded of combined services. Let the church office know if you would like to be included on her call list.



Poinsettias to surround the altar on Christmas Eve must be ordered and paid for by **December 8** at a cost of \$11.00 each. Please complete the form below and return it to the church office with your check made payable to OUMC. **You may take your poinsettias following the Christmas Eve service.**

_____ RED _____ WHITE

Ordered by _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

You also have the option of making donations toward the purchase of Giant Eagle gift certificates for the local food bank. Your name will also be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin with the names of those who order poinsettias. Donations must be received by **December 8**

Amount donated for the food bank _____

By _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____