



Oak Creek Community United Methodist Church

Newsletter

December, 2025 - January, 2026



The Light of the Season

As winter settles in around us, the days grow shorter and the evenings arrive earlier than many of us would like. For some, these long stretches of darkness can feel heavy. We may find ourselves longing for warmth, for sunlight, for spring. Yet it is often in these very seasons - quiet, cold, and dim - that God invites us to discover a different kind of light.

Scripture reminds us, *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* These words from John's Gospel are not just poetic; they are deeply practical. They teach us that God's light is not dependent on the season, the weather, or even our circumstances. It is a light that reaches us in the middle of our uncertainty, our weariness, and our waiting.

During these winter months, I encourage you to intentionally look for the small but steady lights God provides:

- **The light of community** — a phone call, a shared meal, a word of encouragement.
- **The light of Scripture** — opening a passage and discovering that God speaks into our very moment.
- **The light of prayer** — not always in answers, but in the simple assurance that we are not alone.
- **The light of creation** — even now, God's handiwork is at work underground, preparing for renewal in spring.

And perhaps most importantly, there is **the light of Christ**, which does not flicker or fade with the season. Jesus meets us in every darkness - personal, emotional, or literal - and reminds us that God is at work even when we can't yet see what's growing.

So as we journey through these winter days, may we practice noticing the light that is already present. May we also be bearers of that light for others, offering kindness, compassion, and hope in tangible ways.

Even in the darkest months, we are a people of hope. And hope, like dawn, always returns.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Heidi

Beloved OCCUMC Family,

I want to express my deepest thanks for the Pastor Appreciation cards and gifts. And even more for the love, encouragement, and support you continually show Grayson and I. I truly feel seen and cared for. Serving as your pastor gives me tremendous joy, and I'm grateful every day for this community God has brought together! Thank you for walking with me, praying for me, and allowing me to share life and faith with you.

With a full and grateful heart,

Pastor Heidi

UPCOMING EVENTS

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN!



Come and join us for some **Christmas Caroling** at three Assisted Living Centers in Oak Creek. We will meet at OCCUMC at 10:30 am on Saturday, December 6th, and return at 1:15 pm.

After caroling, carolers are welcome to come back to church for lunch from Cousins Subs.

Back by popular demand...all-church **Puzzle Social!**

Join us for an afternoon of fabulous company and Christmas themed puzzle making on **Saturday December 6th from 2:00 - 4:30 pm in Doyle Hall.**



Christmas cookies and coffee provided.

COOKIE WALK & DECORATING CONTRIBUTED BY ALEX & CHERYL

Saturday, December 20 at 1:00 pm

Sign up by December 7.

Please help fill our cookie tins for the homebound members of our church. Bring a plate of cookies to take part in the cookie walk, and extra cookies for the homebound.

Decorate your own cookies, have hot chocolate, and sign the Christmas cards for the homebound. Everyone that brings a plate of cookies will go home with a plate of cookies. If you bring more than one plate, you can leave with the number of plates you brought; each plate of cookies gives you one ticket for the walk. Please be sure to label all cookies by what type they are.

Brought to you by youth ministries.

If you have questions please talk to Alex or Cheryl Clement-Reichling

UPCOMING EVENTS

You're Invited To Christmas Movie Night

Featured Movie:

Attend and be
entered to win
one of two
movie blankets!

Doors open at 5:30.

Movie begins at 6:10

\$0.50 Hot Dogs

\$0.50 Popcorn



Friday, December 12th

At Oak Creek
Community UMC

BLUE CHRISTMAS CONTRIBUTED BY ALEX & CHERYL



The Christmas season can be particularly difficult for those facing grief, mental health challenges, or illness. To honor these experiences, we invite you and others to explore the **Blue Christmas Service** – a special time for reflection, support, and community connection here at OCCUMC.

Please join us in **Doyle Hall at 3:00 pm on Sunday, December 21st.**

ADVENT SMALL GROUPS



Our **Advent Small Group** will gather to slow down and savor the season by exploring the richness of beloved Christmas carols and the faith they proclaim. Each hymn invites us to listen more deeply to the story of Christ's coming - its hope, its mystery, and its promise for our lives today. As we reflect together, the familiar words and melodies become a pathway to renewed wonder, grounding us in God's love made flesh and guiding us toward a more prayerful, joyful celebration of Christmas.

Wednesdays throughout Advent in the Library:

10:00 am lead by Liz Imoehl

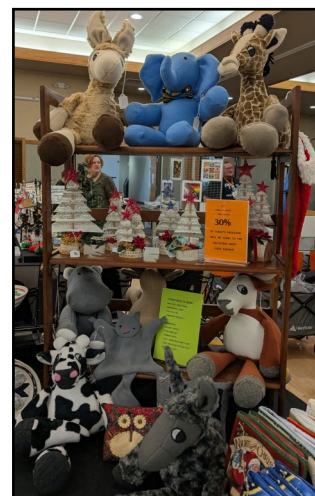
6:00 pm lead by Pastor Heidi

SMALL GROUPS

GOING TO PIECES FIBER ARTISTS CONTRIBUTED BY LOIS DILLON

Going to Pieces fiber artists participated in the annual Holiday Fair at Oak Creek Community Center on November 22nd. This is our yearly fundraiser for the church. This year, we decided to give 30% of our profits to the Salvation Army Food Pantry, with the other 70% reserved for special OCCUMC projects. This craft fair is one of the largest in the area and the amount of people shopping was incredible. We are starting to see a lot of repeat business!! The next day we had a mini "pop-up" sale of the remaining products after church. The support we get from this congregation is amazing and we thank you!... til next year!!

We welcome anyone interested in sewing, quilting, crocheting or simply creating items to be sold with 100% of the profits coming back to our church. If you would like more information, contact Judy at ehomestead02@aol.com or Lois at lsdillon@sbcglobal.net.



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

All women are welcome to join **Sarah Circle** and **Tabitha Circle**, which are a part of United Women in Faith. You do not need to be a member of the church.

- * **Sarah Circle** meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 10:30 am in the Library. The Book Club meets a bit earlier at 9:30 in the church library. Those participating in the UWF Reading Program come to share and discuss books they've read. Our meetings usually include Bible study, sharing our joys and concerns through prayer, planning for future meetings, and enjoying the camaraderie as women in faith. For more information, contact Diane, dianelindsay54@gmail.com.
- * December 18th - we will have a Christmas party, with carol singing, games, food, fun & fellowship.
- * **Tabitha Circle** meets the 2nd Sunday of the month at 2:00 pm for devotions and Christian fellowship. For more information, contact Bonnie at bonnieclement05@gmail.com.
- * December 14th at 2:00 pm will be our cookie exchange and games.



OUTREACH

HALLOWEEN FUN FOR ALL AGES

on October 19th, members of our faith family had fun decorating pumpkins while enjoying fall snacks.




Congratulations to the team voted best trunk at our October 26th Trunk or Treat event, and thanks to all who participated!

GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY

Bright and early on Saturday, November 22nd, a dozen volunteers gathered to put together and distribute 55 Thanksgiving meal boxes to families in our community. This was the latest event over the past year that involved this group of hardworking individuals. The Men's Group would like to thank everyone who helped plan, organize, and support this great opportunity to reach out to those in need in our community.



(as of 12/01/25)



Oak Creek Community United Methodist Church
 8675 South 13th Street (corner of 13th & Puetz Rd)
 Oak Creek, WI 53154
www.occumc.org
 414-762-4600



Church Office Hours: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, Monday - Thursday
office@occumc.org

WORSHIP
with us

Sunday Worship 9:00 am
 Sunday School for all ages @ 10:00 am every Sunday
 Worship on YouTube @ [OCCUMCyoutube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUuMjC9y0u3t3t3t3t3t3t3) at 9:00 am or watch anytime

January 2026

(as of 12/01/25)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Offices Closed 	2 Pastor's Sabbath Day	3
4 COMMUNION SUNDAY Epiphany 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Sunday School, Bible Study, Small Group	5 7:00 pm AA Meeting	6 4:00 pm Merry Mat Makers 9:00 - 11:30 am Preschool	7 7:00 pm Choir Practice 7:00 pm AA Meeting	8	9 Pastor's Sabbath Day	10
11 Baptism of the Lord 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Bistro 10:15 am Sunday School, Bible Study, Small Group 10:15 am 365 Bible Group 2:00 pm Tabitha Circle	12 9:30 am GTP Meeting 6:00 pm 365 Bible via zoom 7:00 pm AA Meeting	13 4:00 pm Merry Mat Makers 6:30 pm Trustees Team Mtg 9:00 - 11:30 am Preschool	14 7:00 pm Choir Practice 7:00 pm AA Meeting	15 9:30 am UWF Book Club 10:00 am Sarah Circle	16 Pastor's Sabbath Day	17 9:00 am Men's Group
18 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Sunday School, Bible Study, Small Group	19  7:00 pm AA Meeting	20 4:00 pm Merry Mat Makers 6:30 pm Finance Team Mtg 9:00 - 11:30 am Preschool	21 7:00 pm Choir Practice 7:00 pm AA Meeting	22	23 Pastor's Sabbath Day	24
25 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am Coffee Bistro 10:15 am Sunday School, Bible Study, Small Group	26 7:00 pm AA Meeting	27 4:00 pm Merry Mat Makers 6:30 pm Leadership Team Mtg 9:00 - 11:30 am Preschool	28 7:00 pm Choir Practice 7:00 pm AA Meeting	29	30 Pastor's Sabbath Day	31



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Worship on YouTube @ [OCCUMC](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUUMC) youtube at 9:00 am
or watch anytime

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office@occumc.org

FINANCIAL NEWS

ENVELOPES

Remember: You only need to write one check. You can designate amounts to different funds on the envelope or in the memo section of your check.

APPORTIONMENT UPDATE

Help us "Race to the Finish" with 2025 Apportionments! At this writing, we need \$10,844 to meet our apportionment goal of \$33,846 for this year.

We need your help -- whether you're a seasoned runner, someone who races to the bottom of a popcorn bucket, or the person who only runs in circles -- you qualify to help us make it to the finish line!

If you have questions or ideas about apportionments, please contact Jenny vH, jennyvonhelms@gmail.com
Michelle G, jeffandmichellegibbs@hotmail.com

The Finish Line
is in Sight!



OCCUMC FINANCIAL CENTER

		2025	2024
<u>Month of October</u>	General Fund Income	\$19,642.59	\$17,441.60
	Expenses	\$25,693.36	\$28,428.76
<u>Fiscal / Calendar Year to October</u>	General Fund Income	\$234,784.93	\$219,913.16
	Expenses	\$257,347.97	\$242,690.87
<u>Apportionment</u>	Annual Total Given	\$23,002.00	\$25,228.15
	Annual Goal	\$33,846.00	\$31,884.00

Contributions for Calendar Year 2025

Please note: All offerings post-marked by 12/31/25 will be counted toward your 2025 giving. All offerings post-marked 1/1/26 and later will be counted toward your 2026 giving.



You will receive your year-end statement soon. If you see any discrepancies, please let the Finance Secretary know asap, finance@occumc.org.

Those using Offering Envelopes, please make sure you use the 2026 envelopes beginning with your January offering.

Church Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday
9:00 am - Noon

Our Staff:

Rev. Heidi Loomis

Pastor
pastor@occumc.org

Jane Lentz

Office Administrator
office@occumc.org

Michelle Peirce

Treasurer
treasurer@occumc.org

Ed Kubes

Assistant Treasurer

TBD

Financial Secretary
finance@occumc.org

Amber Yeary

Asst. Financial Secretary

Shelly Swodzinski

Altar Choir Director

Todd Anderson

Organist

Lindsay Gardenier

Choir Accompanist

Steven Siepert

Media & Technology

Cheryl Clement-Reichling

Nursery Coordinator

Heather Paniagua

Nursery Care Support

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Pastor Heidi will be on vacation December 28th - January 2nd.
Please call the office if you experience any emergency pastoral needs during these times.

PRESCHOOL CONTRIBUTED BY STEPHANIE PASZKIEWICZ



Thank you for helping our preschool by enjoying meals at Cousins in Franklin. This year, we have received \$1,132.04 back for use in our preschool program. Our next fundraiser at Cousins will be February 15th from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.

We also have a **few openings** for 3-5 year old children. Oak Creek Community Preschool offers 2, 3, or 4-day programs, Monday – Thursday, 9:00 – 11:30 am. We offer a quality preschool, licensed by the State of Wisconsin. Contact our Preschool Director Stephanie at occpreschool@gmail.com or 414-762-4600 to set up a tour.

JOIN THE CHOIR



Choir practice **takes place in the sanctuary every Wednesday at 7:00 pm**. Rehearsals last until about 8:30. We welcome everyone from 9th grade to age 99. We sing all types of music....from traditional to contemporary. We welcome singers, percussionists, and other musicians.

If you have any questions, please contact Shelly after worship or call her at 414-801-1940. Otherwise, just come on Wednesday. We'll be in the Sanctuary. **We'll have music waiting for you! Bring a friend!**

WORSHIP & THE ARTS CONTRIBUTED BY LOIS DILLON

Our goal is to enhance your worship experience. We have already planned decorations through the end of the year!! There are going to be beautiful things on the Altar and in the Sanctuary.

We hope you all enjoyed the summer series on Sunday School Bible Stories. Advent and Christmas will be beautiful. The exciting part is that **all of you** will be helping decorate the sanctuary for Christmas this year!! Details coming soon!!!



EMBRACING OUR COMMUNITY WITH PRAYERS

Please show your care for members and friends of our congregation who are homebound, ill, having surgery, experiencing anxiety, depression or sadness, or in need of encouragement or support, by using one or all of the below:

- ♦ The Sarah Circle **Card Ministry** has cards available every Sunday in the Gathering Area;
- ♦ Yellow **Prayer Request/Praise Card** are located on the back of the chairs in the Sanctuary. If you are worshipping virtually, please email your information/request to office@occumc.org;
- ♦ **Prayer & Pocket Shawls** in the basket next to the coat area that you can give someone to wrap around themselves to provide comfort, or to feel like a hug. All we ask is that you let us know who you gave it to, so we may keep them in prayer as well.

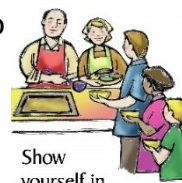
*We always thank
God for all of you
and continually
mention you in
our prayers.*

MISSIONS

THE CATHEDRAL CENTER

CONTRIBUTED BY JOANNE MUELLER

Thank You to the crew who helped at the Cathedral Center this past year. You know who you are. A special thanks to Diane W and Jim W who helped as co-chairs this year. And also thanks to all who made food. Without your help, this mission would not be possible.



We will be going back monthly from April to October of 2026. We look forward to your continuing support. Thanks again.



You can still make donations with your regular offering. Just designate the amount you want donated to The Cathedral Center on your check in the memo section. You may also give online at occumc.org > Online Giving > Donate Now > The Cathedral Center.

LAYETTE MISSION PROJECT

CONTRIBUTED BY JOAN KETCHUM

As 2025 ends, we are so grateful to all of you who contribute to this Project by purchasing, creating and praying for its success. Through December of this year, we will have collected, laundered, packaged and delivered one hundred layettes to the following recipients: La Causa Children's Crisis Nursery and Respite Center, Aurora Sinai Hospital and Sixteenth Street Clinic.

You have also been very generous giving us clothing for the Hospital's Women's Closet and children's clothing for La Causa's young clients. We are a most giving congregation and Sarah Circle is proud to be able to continue doing what we do with your help.



Our needs are: Sleepers and onesies in sizes newborn to 9 months, one yard of flannel for receiving blankets, and any crocheted, knitted, or quilted blankets that you would like to donate. We appreciate your prayers for our Mission and for the families that receive the layettes and clothing. Thank you for your help. If you have any comments or questions, please contact Joan @ 414-215-7088 or joanmketchum@gmail.com.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

CONTRIBUTED BY DIANE LINDSAY



There is a chill in the air and someone may need a little comfort. Do you know of anyone who may be experiencing feelings of anxiety, loneliness, or uncertainty? A prayer shawl may provide comfort and warmth and remind them they are loved. If a prayer shawl is too big, a pocket shawl could provide the same feelings of reassurance. Shawls are available in the basket in Gathering Area.

If you have any questions or suggestions for how this ministry may be more effective, please contact Diane (dianelindsay54@gmail.com) or text/phone (414-510-9342).

MERRY MAT MAKERS

CONTRIBUTED BY BONNIE CLEMENT



The Merry Mat Makers have finished 19 sleeping mats.

If you would like to help make these mats come to Room L09 on Tuesdays from 4:00 - 6:00 pm. If this time doesn't work for you, contact Joanne (grandmajo414@hotmail.com). She is happy to show you what to do at a time that is convenient for you. You are welcome to come work on the loom during office hours as your schedule allows or take supplies home to work there.

COMMUNITY NEWS

FOOD PANTRY



We support our community and neighbors in need by supporting the Salvation Army. Please drop off non-perishable food items at the Salvation Army or visit their website to make an online donation at <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/oakcreek/>

The **Oak Creek Centennial Corps Food Pantry on Howell and Centennial Drive** also provides a 2-3-day supply of emergency food to neighborhood individuals and families in these zip codes: 53129, 53130, 53132, & 53154, on **Wednesdays & Thursdays: 9:00 am - Noon and the 1st Monday of the month from 2:00 - 5:00 pm.**

The food is given on the day it is requested and represents breakfast, lunch, and dinner for all members of the household. Those receiving food are also informed about how they can participate in supplemental food programs so they can move beyond visiting food pantries.

The following are required in order to be eligible:

- Client picture ID (Must have current address and be shown every time).
- School record, Birth Record/Birth Certificate for children in household. If you do not have this information you will only be served for yourself and not the other household members.
- 2 proofs of residence (Mail and utility bill from the last 30 days).

MOBILE MARKET

The Mobile Market is a grocery store on wheels that travels throughout Milwaukee County with grocery staples: fruits, vegetables, milk (dairy & non dairy options), chicken, beef, pork, deli meat, cheese, yogurt, etc. Canned items or processed foods are not sold here. The market is an active store, not a food pantry or donation center. Prices are 25% off Piggly Wiggly prices. The market accepts debit cards, credit cards and Quest EBT, but no cash.



- ⇒ 1st Thursday of the month from 2:00 - 3:30 pm at Lake Forest Apartments, 8471 S Chicago Rd, Oak Creek;
- ⇒ 3rd Tuesday of the month from 2:30 - 4:00 pm at Williamstown Bay Apartments, 3400 E Ramsey Ave, Cudahy;
- ⇒ 4th Friday of the month from 10:00 - 11:30 am at Thompson Meadows Apartments, 32120 E Norwich Ave, St. Francis.

SENIOR STOCK BOX DISTRIBUTION

Hunger Task Force is distributing a box of free, healthy food for seniors at different spots around Milwaukee County. All stockboxes include cereal, milk, canned veggies and fruits, pasta or rice, protein, fruit juice, canned meats and 2 pounds of fresh Wisconsin cheese. Qualifications are:



- 60 years or older (Bring an ID showing your age)
- Monthly household income of less than \$1,632 (1 person) or \$2,215 (2 persons)
- Be a resident of Wisconsin
- Paperwork will be filled out at each site by Hunger Task Force employees.

- ⇒ 2nd Thursday of the month from 8:30-10:00 am at Franklin Senior Meals in City Hall, 9229 West Loomis Road;
- ⇒ 3rd Thursday of the month from 12:30-1:30 pm at the Kelly Senior Center, 6100 South Lake Drive, Cudahy

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*No matter where you are on your journey,
ALL are welcome here.*



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Phone: 414-762-4600
Website: www.occumc.org
E-mail: office@occumc.org
youTube: [@OCCUMCyoutube](https://www.youtube.com/@OCCUMCyoutube)

Mission Statement:

Oak Creek Community United Methodist Church is a Christian fellowship whose mission is to worship God, love and serve all people, grow in faith, and invite others to become disciples of Jesus Christ.