

Oak Leaves

*Newsletter of Oakton United Methodist Church
"The Friendly Church on the Corner"*

December 2009



*2951 Chain Bridge Road Oakton, VA 22124
703-938-1234
WWW.OAKTONUMC.ORG*

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESKTOP - December, 2009

Dear Friends,

One of my favorite Christmas carols is a story of Good King Wenceslas—a carol we do not sing in church during the holidays—because it is not in our hymnbooks that we use at church. But it is still a favorite of mine.

From within his warm palace on a crisp, winter's day the king sees a peasant man gathering kindling wood in the snow. He summons his page and inquires about the man, only to find he lives quite a distance from the palace.

The king feels compassion for the peasant and instructs his page to bring "flesh and wine and pine logs," for they will dine with the man and his humble dwelling this very night. So the page and the monarch embarked on their mission of love. As they trudged through the deep snow, the cold becomes more than the page can bear. Fearing he can go no farther, he calls out to the king. The king tells the boy to walk in his tracks:

Mark my footsteps, my good page
Tread thou in them boldly.
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.

And, so, the young man does just that:

In his master steps he trod
Where the snow lay dinted.
He was in the very sod
which the Saint had printed.

Every time I hear this carol I think of the one in whose footsteps we are to walk – our wonderful Jesus Christ! He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there you may be also."

There is great hope found in God as we follow in the footsteps of our king. The world's way is to give "tit for tat." On the other hand, divine love gives freely, without thought of return. The world's way is to separate people into groups, classes, or even churches. God's peace sees all as equals. The world counts the cost. Divine love responds to the need and gives unconditionally. The world waits to be done unto. Divine love serves and gives in joy! That's the spirit of Christmas.

Let us follow the footsteps of our king this Christmas and we all will be a blessing to our world!

Therefore, Christian men be sure
Wealth or rank possessing.
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing!

May you have the blessing of God's Joy this Christmas.

Pastor Don

Worship and Preaching Plan for Advent and Christmas



December

- 06 SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY -- Luke 3:1-6 -- Advent 2
- 13 Advent 3
08.30 -- A Service of Lessons and Carols
10.55 -- "Come To Bethlehem- a Storybook Christmas Celebration" presented by the Sanctuary, Glory Sound, and Chapel Choirs
- 20 LET IT BE -- Luke 1.39-56 -- Advent 4 & Confirmation Service
- 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
5.00 -- FAMILY SERVICE
7.30 -- CANDLELIGHTING & COMMUNION SERVICE -- What in the World Is God Doing? -- Luke 2:1-20
11.00 -- CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE -- What In the World Is God Doing? -- Luke 2.1-20
- 27 Guest Speaker

Christmas Eve Services

Again this year there will be three services on Christmas Eve. There will be an early Christmas Eve Service at 5:00PM and it's planned with children in mind!!! Come join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus -the true meaning of Christmas. The service will be a short one focused on children. Following the service, we will go downstairs to share a "Happy Birthday Jesus" cake in the large social hall. We hope that this earlier and shorter service will help those with young children celebrate and enjoy a Christmas Eve Family service before returning home in time to prepare for all that Christmas Day brings.

Our family service will be followed by services at 7:30 and 11:00PM. These two services will include inspirational Christmas carols and anthems. Pastor Don will speak on the topic of "What in the World is God Doing?" at both services. Each service will end with a candle lighting ceremony. We will sing **Silent Night** as the single candle of the Spirit of Christmas is passed from one to another to **fill our hearts with a renewed light of hope and peace**. You, your household and your friends and neighbors are invited to spend Christmas Eve together at one of these services.

Sunday School News

Christians in Action...Sunday School Volunteers

If you want to see Christians in action, come to any Sunday School room at OUMC on a Sunday morning. It is that simple. It takes the entire church to open Sunday School, and we have had a great response to the call for volunteers. From the nursery to the adult classes, our dedicated volunteers are sharing their Christian spirit in so many ways. Teaching, infant care, children's music, confirmation class, making coffee...a seemingly endless list. Thanks to all of you who are sharing your spirit and skills.

Adult Christian Education – Three Classes Sunday Mornings

Bible Study 1: The continuing study of the Book of Psalms, led by Allen Barnes

Bible Study 2: The Book of John, studies led by Geddis Kerr

Adult elective: "Proving Genesis – The convergence of scientific and biblical wisdom" led by Karen Budd

These classes began November 1 and will run through December 20. Based on class size, locations may vary. Check for signs to direct you on Sunday mornings. The next adult series will start on January 3.

Adult Bible Study – Meets Sunday Afternoons at OUMC, 2:30 – 4:30pm

The Adult Bible Study group, led by Phil and Kimiko Hannum, is meeting on Sunday afternoons at OUMC, **Room 11**. For more information, please call Phil or Kimiko at 703-378-8507.



Oakton Christian Preschool

Oakton Christian Preschool has been busy this November and December. In November, we learned about the colors of the seasons and prepared for Thanksgiving. The children enjoyed learning about sharing, caring and being thankful for all God's gifts. As part of our "Fabulous Family Unit", we invited our Dads to visit our classrooms and shared some yummy donuts during our first annual "Donuts for Dads". Finally, with the help of the United Methodist Men and Women, our families were able to participate in the Operation Christmas Child-Shoebbox Project.

The Advent Season was spent preparing for Christmas. The children enjoyed making advent wreaths, calendars, and ornaments. Through the generosity of our families, OCP participated in the "Adopt-a-Family Program" through Our Daily Bread. The children helped fill the baskets and learned what Christmas is really about. Our Christmas Season culminated with our annual "Breakfast for Santa" filled with singing and a special visitor. We are especially thankful for all the support we have been given from OUMC and look forward to a wonderful 2010.

The Christmas Holidays or the Christmas Blues?

Christmas season is here again, and you are at the end of your rope. You haven't planned your Christmas dinner and you haven't done your holiday shopping. You've waited until the last minute and now you're anxious, stressed out, or even depressed. Perhaps you can't afford expensive gifts this year. Maybe you're depressed because you have no one special to spend Christmas with. And maybe you fear the holiday won't live up to your expectation.

Cheer up! You are not alone. "'Tis the season to be jolly" and 25% of us may have a bout with holiday depression. The potential is high this time of year for psychological, physical, and financial stress. Sometimes it is the thought of who will show up for Christmas dinner, not the fear of being alone.

Holiday Blues can be kept at bay by applying the three R's:

- Be Realistic
- Be Reasonable
- Get some Rest

You can always give the one gift that really counts – Love. And remember: It is not your birthday anyway! The real reason for the season is the birth of Jesus. Try to get the Holy back in the Holidays and leave the materialism behind.

If the joy of Christmas is still turning into a time of painful loneliness and emptiness help is available. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide confidential, one-to-one, Christian care. They will listen, care, encourage, pray with and for you, and support you through the holidays and as long as your need persists. If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders. Please contact Pastor Don Hawks (hawks.don@gmail.com) or Stephen Leader, Carol Friesen (carolfriesen@gmail.com). **Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!**

Outreach Committee Activities

The Lamb Center -

The committee continues to prepare and deliver lunch once a month to the homeless and the working poor at The Lamb Center in Fairfax. We currently have enough volunteers.

FACETS -

Members of the church family participated in the FACETS Community Walkathon on Saturday, November 7th.

Martha's Table -

While the committee sponsors a volunteer trip to Martha's Table on the 4th Saturday of each month, scheduling conflicts necessitate the cancelling of the trip planned for December 26th. Mark your calendar for Saturday, January 23, 2010, when committee members will lead another group of volunteers to Martha's Table..

For more information about any the above, please call Barbara McGilvray at 703-264-0383 or email her at mcgilvrayj@aol.com.

Homebound Communion

On the first Sunday of each month, the OUMC congregation observes the Lord's Supper. If you, a friend, or a family member are homebound and wish to receive communion, please call the church office at 703-938-1234 or send an email to oumc@oaktonumc.org



**CONFIRMATION SERVICE--
Sunday, December 20, 2009--10:55am Worship Service**

This year's group of confirmands will be received into the church as full, professing members during the 10:55 service on December 20. You are invited to be there and share in this important step taken by the 2009 Confirmation Class. There are 18 students in the Confirmation class under the leadership of Pastor Don, Carol Friesen, and Kirk Smith. In addition to their weekly Sunday morning sessions, the class has been on two field trips and experienced a dinner event provided by the Rumi Forum.

The group attended a service during their High Holy Days in September to the Jewish Congregation in Fairfax. As part of this visit, the congregation's president discussed the practices and beliefs of the Jewish faith. The students also attended a contemporary service at Fairfax Community Church. In October, The Rumi Forum came to church small hall to offer a meal and share in dialog with the confirmands and their parents about the need for peace and understanding among the various religious groups in the DC area. In addition, the leader of the local Islamic mosque discussed the beliefs and practices of the Islam faith.

Our prayers are with the confirmands who will choose to profess the Christian faith during the December 20th service.



Flower Calendar

The Flower Calendar for 2010 will be hanging on the wall of the Narthex [at the "Bob Short door"] by the time this issue of the Oak Leaves reaches you. This is a wonderful opportunity to remember a special person, occasion or event. Floral arrangements provided by a call to you from the Flower Committee are \$45.00; or you may provide flowers of your own. In any event, it is important that you let Barbara Feurtado know what you wish printed in the Sunday Bulletin no later than Wednesday of the week of publication.



When did you start to see the signs of Christmas appearing this year? Was it right after Halloween when the Christmas displays went up in the grocery stores and malls? Was it in November when you were still preparing for Thanksgiving? Did you turn on your radio or XM and begin to hear round-the-clock Christmas music before December had even begun? It seems that each year the signs of Christmas start arriving earlier and earlier in the commercial world around us, so much so that by the time Christmas finally arrives, it can feel, well, a bit anticlimactic.

In the church, we celebrate the first signs of Christmas with the season of Advent, which began this year on November 29. In the dictionary, Advent is defined as an “arrival that has been awaited (especially of something momentous). During this liturgical season, we await Christ’s arrival over the four weeks preceding Christmas, lighting a candle each week to symbolize repentance/hope, Christ as The Way, joy, and peace. The fifth candle, or Christ candle, is lit on Christmas Eve, and represents the light of Christ shining in the darkness and fulfilling Isaiah’s prophesy: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the shadow of death a light has dawned...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”. (Isaiah 9:2-9). The idea is, we start in darkness, needing Christ’s light, and when all the waiting finally brings us to our Christmas celebration, we feel a renewed sense of hope, comfort, and joy through the birth of our Savior. Yet, how can we truly recognize that darkness and the relief Christ’s light brings when the world around us is celebrating Christmas in flashing neon lights and blaring carols... from the end of October?

You might have noticed that Advent at Oakton UMC began a bit more quietly this year. Our hanging of the greens service had a little less pomp and circumstance, and a little more time for pondering. Our music was a little less festive and a bit more contemplative. Our candle lighting ceremony was a bit more somber than in years past. There was a reason for this change. It is my hope that through the music at Oakton, this year our journey toward Christmas might be a more gradual one, with time to recognize the darkness each of us struggles with in our lives, and our intense need for Christ to bring light to that darkness. Just as a musical phrase can build from soft to loud, so our worship through music will crescendo throughout the Advent season- beginning quietly with the plaintive longing of “O Come O Come, Emmanuel”, celebrating the Christmas story through our choral Cantata on December 13, and ending on Christmas Eve with the loud proclamation, “Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come!”.

May your Advent bring you closer to Christ as you reach out through the darkness, and may we all find a renewed sense of peace and hope this year as we journey toward the Light.

In Christ,

Shannon

**OUMC UNITED METHODIST WOMEN (UMW)
Invites Women of the Church and Community**

FELLOWSHIP meets the second Saturday of each month (Dec 12, 2009) in the small social hall at 8:30 am. Bring your own breakfast.

Susanna Circle meets the second Tuesday of each month (Dec 8, 2009) in the small social hall at 12:00 noon for pot luck lunch.

Each meeting has a combination of social, nurturing, and spiritual activity. We welcome and encourage all women to join us. You need not be a member of the OUMC.

UMW Fellowship Meeting on Dec 12, 2009 at 8:30 am will have a special program. **Everyone** (men, women and guests) is invited to hear **Dr. Eric Terrell** of Horizon Chiropractic and Wellness. He will be speaking to us about "The Habit That Can Save Your Life."

**Family Ministry's Fund Raiser
A Thank You from Family Ministries**



It has now been two years since Family Ministries started selling Giant and Shoppers Food Warehouse gift cards. We are now recovering enough to repay the loan the church gave us for this project. Two weeks ago, we made our first payment of \$500.00. Recently we completed the quilt project. The quilt was made by ladies in our congregation. It had been without a permanent home in our church. It now has been framed and hangs in the sanctuary. Because of you, our church family, this has been possible. All money earned from the selling of the cards is being used for church programs and ministries.

Our "best customers" are people who are familiar with this project. They have purchased these cards before to support school activities e.g. buying band uniforms. These customers realize how easy it is to contribute to this Church Fund Raiser. Buying the gift card gives you the same purchasing power as cash. Meanwhile, the church receives 4-5% of the value of the card depending on the merchant. Our shoppers also tell us they like the convenience of the gift cards.

We learned recently that these store gift cards can also be used to purchase stamps and other gift cards in the stores. These gift cards would make wonderful Christmas gifts. (Also make your Christmas shopping easier.) If you haven't bought the Food Gift Cards give it a try. While you are buying your groceries, you are also contributing to worthwhile programs in your church. Thank you for your support.

UMW Annual Christmas Party

On Dec 6, 2009, the UMW will sponsor this annual event for the families, members, and guests of the OUMC and the Oakton Christian Preschool. This Christmas activity will follow the 11 am service in the Large Social Hall. We are hoping to create tradition and memories of the joy of Christmas for our children through their activities at Church. Craft activities and a special children's table area are planned. For the adults, it gives us an opportunity to see the wonder and joy of the Season through the eyes of a child. Please plan to join us.

UMW-Food Gift Cards

The OUMC UMW need your help in supporting the Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS). NVFS anticipates that over 1,000 families in our area will need help with food this Christmas. If you would like to assist in this mission, envelopes are available in the Narthex for you to purchase the \$25 Giant or Shopper's Gift Cards from OUMC Family Ministries. Just complete the information on the envelope and have it recorded as a donation (you benefit). Envelopes will be available through Sunday, Dec 1, 2009.

Holiday Benefit Concert

Sunday, December 20th Time: 4:00pm
Oakton U.M.C. Sanctuary

Concert Highlights

Soloists, Blue Grass Ensemble, Vale UMC's Flute Choir

All proceeds go to the Child Rescue Centre in Sierra Leone W. Africa
<http://www.childrescuecenter.org/>
who supports orphans in one of poorest countries in the world

The mission of the Child Rescue Centre is to provide for the spiritual, intellectual, physical and social needs of children and youth who have become victims of neglect, abuse, poverty, hunger, culture, war and corrupt political systems.

African Proverb: DAT REN WE BIT BITA-LIF SOTE I BITA, NA-IN BIT SUGA KEN SOTE I SWIT.
(The same rain that beats bitter-leaf until its bitter beats sugar cane until it's sweet.)



OUMC Photo Directory is Put to Bed

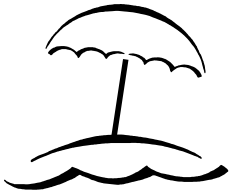
By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have completed taking pictures for the 2010 Photo Directory. If you missed an opportunity to have your photo taken, but have a digital photo you would like to have included, please email immediately to jmririe@yahoo.com and she'll try to slip it under the covers!

The Directory Committee has received a few inquiries about what to do if you DO NOT WISH to have your contact information listed in the Directory. If that is the case, please contact the church office or Jill Ririe right away. All "opt out requests" must be received before December 15th or we can not promise they will be honored.

At the present time, we expect to distribute directories in January. For those who are able, you may pick up your copy in the chapel or sanctuary after Sunday services. Out of town members and those who are not able to attend church will receive a copy in the mail.

Finally, don't miss the opportunity to advertise your business in the directory. Advertising rates are low, \$25.00 - \$100.00, and your sponsorship will help off-set printing costs. For more information contact Penny Bladich at pjblackich@gmail.com or 703-537-0883.

Look for more information about the Directory in the January edition of the Oak Leaves.



Seasons of the Year

The Virginian-Aires Choir of The Virginian Retirement Home will present a winter concert, "Seasons of the Year", at 7:15 p.m., Monday, December 7th. The concert will be held in the Assembly Room of the Virginian, 9229 Arlington Blvd (near Fairfax Circle). Jane Brewer and Janice Murley are the Director and Accompanist for this choir.

This is a FREE Concert, and you'll get to sing-a-long on many of your favorites.

Come and enjoy this evening of music sharing with our neighbors ! Our very own Andy Margolis will be a special guest performing during the Concert.

December Birthdays at OUMC

Dec.	3	Jenny Fraser
	4	Nancy Saylor
	6	Sally Bradford
	7	Brad Ivey
	10	Lauren Turner
	11	Sam Rauch
	11	Jim Walton
	16	Bill Doughten
	19	Melissa Goodwin
	19	Janet Colvin
	22	Shirley Young
	23	Noah Koellisch
	24	Cindy Nagle
	24	Kim Sheard
	25	Virginia Mylks
	27	Danny Prentice
	28	Allen Barnes
	30	Jessica Chan
	31	Justice Allen
	31	Joyce Heller



If we missed your special day, please call the Church Office at 703-938-1234 or please email oumc@oaktonumc.org and let us know your special date!



Tired of Waiting for the Oak Leaves to Arrive?

We have just started distributing the Oak Leaves via e-mail. If you would like to be added to this distribution list, please contact Jill Ririe at jmriirie@yahoo.com. When you contact Jill, please also let her know if you wish to be taken off the distribution list to have your copy of the Oak Leaves distributed via "snail mail" (U.S. Postal delivery). Finally, please be aware you can always find the last four issues of the Oak Leaves on our web site at: <http://www.oaktonumc.org/aboutus/pastnewsletters.html>



We're Down to the Final Mile, Help Close the Gap

The Nominations Committee is still looking for volunteers for the following roles. In particular, we need Coordinators for Stewardship and Sunday School. If you are interested in learning more about either role, please contact Pastor Don or Bruce Long respectively. Here is a brief description of each.

Stewardship Coordinator

Stewardship involves more than conducting the annual giving campaign. It is a year-round task; and while it includes money, Christian stewardship includes far more than money. Your main responsibilities *could* include the following activities, but you will have a lot of flexibility in deciding how to structure the role:

1. Plan and promote a year-round agenda for developing Christian stewards. This may include stewardship education, spiritual giftedness, ecological stewardship, proportionate giving and tithing, guiding an annual giving campaign, planned giving, personal budget planning, and Christian lifestyle promotion.
2. Interpret the biblical and theological basis for Christian stewardship using resources consistent with the doctrines and polity of The United Methodist Church.
3. Promote earning, saving, giving, and spending habits consistent with a Christian lifestyle.
4. Work with the Finance Committee to review their processes so that the financial aspects of the church are consistent with faithful stewardship theology and practice. Encourage processes that build accountability and trust.

Sunday School Coordinator

The Sunday School Coordinator oversees all aspects of the Sunday School Program including:

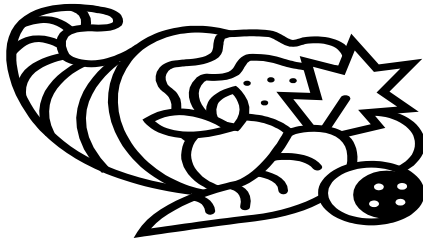
- Recruiting and assigning teachers
- Ordering curricula materials and ensuring they are available each Sunday
- Preparing an annual budget
- Facilitating special programs involving the Sunday School such as Rally Day
- Advising and assisting teachers, as needed
- Attending Nurturing Committee meetings

We Are Also Seeking:

- Reserve Member to the Annual Conference Meeting, June 2010
- At Large Member of the Church Council (1)
- Oakton Christian Preschool Board Member (2)
- Nominations (Committee on Lay Leadership) Member (2)
- Bulletin Board Coordinator

If you are interested in performing any of these roles, please contact Pastor Don.

Young Adults Pot Luck Event



YA Potluck @ Chip Empfield's Home

Date: Saturday December 12, 2009

Time: 6:30 pm - 10:30 pm

603 Dranesville Road, Herndon, VA 20170, (703) 577-0806

Please bring a dish to share and a wrapped White Elephant item for the "auction" gift exchange (one per adult or family, your choice & if new should not exceed \$7, but remember it often turns out that someone else's junk becomes another's treasure & it's supposed to be Fun, so please RECYCLE whenever possible!) Don't forget your loose change for the Pennies for Change jar! Childcare will be available on site. Please be kind and RSVP, including how many children so we can plan childcare accordingly. Hope to see everyone there with bells on!

NOTE: We are still in need of Hosts for January, unless we want to take a month off to recuperate from the holiday bustle, so please be thinking on if you are able to host & let me know the date so we can mark calendars! The February host are the Turner's and Fellows are targeting March, but most other months are still available. Hosting is as easy as opening the door to us and providing the utensils and soft drinks.

The Oakton United Methodist "Young Adult group" (OUM-YA) welcomes any person attending church services who is in their 20s - 50s, so if you aren't ready to start drawing your fulltime retirement, trust me you fit into OUMC's "Young Adults"!!! Childcare is usually available on site at the Potluck dinners.

Joining us or Hosting is very simple, please contact Lisa Lanser (usually in the red choir robe) or Wayne Malick (usually in balcony running sound or otherwise running around the church) either at church or lisalanser@yahoo.com if you are interested. If you're not sure who either of us are, I think most of the OUMC folks could point us out to you. We'd love to meet you!

Local Church Events Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity now has TWO Restores in No. VA! Alexandria ReStore, and our newest location in Chantilly! Both stores are closed on Sunday.

Hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 10am-5pm and Saturdays, 9am-5pm.

ALEXANDRIA: # 703-360-6700 7770 Richmond Hwy, Alex., VA 22306

CHANTILLY location: # 703-953-3747 4262 Entre Court, Chantilly, VA 20151

- located 100 yards west of the intersection of Walney and Willard Road.

ReStore is a resale business that sells new and used building materials and home improvement items to the general public. All materials are donated by local retail businesses, building contractors, suppliers and individuals, and are made available for sale to the public at 50% to 90% below retail prices.

As word of the ReStore has spread, we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of donors in our community. Our 16,000 sq. ft. warehouse is filled with hundreds of brand-new and almost-new refrigerators, dishwashers, and other appliances; top-of-the line carpet and tile; never-used cabinets, windows, and doors; and much, much more. The ReStore is a bargain-hunter's dream!

The ReStore opened in Alexandria in October of 2004 and makes a difference in the community by supporting the mission of Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia to build safe, decent and affordable homes for low income families in Northern Virginia.

Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia's mission is to provide safe, decent and affordable housing for low income families in Northern Virginia. Habitat has been working in Northern Virginia since 1990 and since then has built 65 homes. We are currently building a 9 unit condominium in Fairfax that will be completed by 2010.

The ReStore supports the work of Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia by providing a space where members of the community can donate materials that are re-sold and all proceeds benefit Habitat.

Articles for the Oak Leaves

If you wish to send an article for inclusion in the Oak Leaves, please forward it to oakleaves@oaktonumc.org by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

