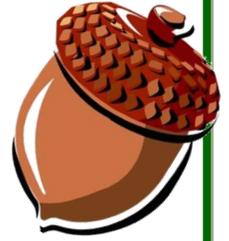


# The Acorn

December 2022/  
January 2023



Monthly publication of The Oak Chapel United Methodist Church  
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## Let Us Rekindle the Enchanted Spirit of Christmas

If it's been awhile since you've truly experienced the Christmas Spirit, you're not alone. As we age, that mystical, magical, euphoric feeling we enjoyed as a child becomes more and more difficult to replicate. Each year, there seems to be an increasing number of things competing for our time during the Advent season, and this hinders us from enjoying the anticipation we experienced while growing up.

I'm not sure we can ever completely capture the excitement we felt as a child, but I would like to suggest that we can set the tone by listening to some of our favorite Christmas hymns and carols. That music can be captivating and take us back to a time of innocence — a time when we may have had less, but cherished it more; a time when we celebrated with loved ones and even our neighbors; a time when we were truly happy and carefree.

Just about everyone has at least one favorite Christmas song. If you're like me, you probably have multiple favorites. I remember leaning over my parents' stereo console and listening to carol after carol to artists like Nat King Cole, Johnny Mathis, and The Ray Conniff Singers. One of my most beloved songs was "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," sung by, among others, the great Frank Sinatra.

What really appeals to me about this classic is its soft and soothing melody and its familiar lyrics that evoke memories of Christmases past. The song sets an appropriate tone for the season when it advises the listener to "let your heart be light" and to "let your troubles be out of sight."

Indeed, Christmas is intended to a peaceful and reflective time as well as a time to gather with "faithful friends who are dear to us," with the hope that "through the years we all will be together."

Another favorite of mine was one made famous by Andy Williams — "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," which also paints a vivid picture of "parties for hosting,

marshmallows for toasting, and caroling out in the snow; scary ghost stories and tales of the glories of Christmases long, long ago."

Over the years, much of the enchantment of Christmas fades, but we need not lose it entirely. As we enter the Advent season — a time of sacred preparation — let's make a pact to slow things down and truly enjoy the season, and we can set the tone by sharing in a new event at Oak Chapel.

Our church will host the inaugural Olde Fashioned Christmas on Saturday, Dec. 3, in Fellowship Hall. The event will feature 12-15 display tables with a variety of Christmas themes, including train sets, nativity scenes, classic toys, vintage games, and historic dolls, as well as decorations that you may remember from your days as a child. There will also be Christmas beverages and cookies certain to please your palate and bring back memories of the way things used to be. Mark it on your calendar, and invite a friend!

Of course, let us not forget about this important time of spiritual preparation. Christmas has always been a special time here at Oak Chapel, and my hope is that this year will have even more significance as we invite others to join us to worship and to celebrate.

Of all of the appropriate Christmas Scripture, Isaiah 9:6-7, which foretells the story of the Messiah long before his birth, is one of the most meaningful to me. This passage is one of hope and promise, and it never gets old because it is eternal. Let us embrace this promise as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior...

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end."

May this year's Christmas be merry, bright, and joyful for you and your family!

Until we meet again, Be Blessed!

*Pastor John*

### Our Daily Bread

Copies of *Our Daily Bread* devotional books are in the Narthex. Feel free to pick one up and place it on your nightstand so that you can easily access it when you wake up in the morning and before you go to bed in the evening.



Pastor John is leading a study of the Book of Revelation. The group meets at 9:30 am on Monday mornings in the Gathering Grounds downstairs. We welcome new participants.

**An Old-Fashioned Christmas** Our inaugural Old Fashioned Christmas is just around the corner—Saturday, December 3 from 10:00 until 3:00. An open-house of sorts to welcome in the Advent season. There will be displays of vintage Christmas lights, decorations, and nativity scenes, as well as toys, games and trains, There will be Christmas cookies, hot chocolate with toppings and other treats. Come, invite a friend, and enjoy some holiday magic and fellowship.

**Seekers Adult Sunday School Class** meets at 9:30 Sunday mornings. Leader is Bruce Bloch.

**Young Adults** meet the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 11:30 a.m. in the Gathering Grounds. Anyone is welcome to join us!



From the Custodian—Winter is upon us and that means snow, ice, salt, etc. We have a snappy new entrance mat for winter weather. Feel free to wipe your feet over and over again! Those who would like to wear boots and bring shoes, slippers

or fuzzy socks are welcome to change at one of the benches and stash them underneath. Just remember to put them back on before you leave!

### Care of our Building

Lots of signs get put up inside during the year. Please use the following guidelines. **DO NOT TAPE ANYTHING TO WOOD!** No matter what type of tape is used, it takes off the finish. Please tape things to glass or painted block. Masking tape is best. Sticky Tac is low on the list. Use only if it is very temporary, as the stuff dries out and has to be chipped off. \*\* If you want to use the bulletin board, the pins are on the windowsill in the Narthex hall.



### Feed My Sheep

Oak Chapel will continue to collect food on the first Sunday of each month as we come to the Lord's table. Food collected now will help support our in-house food pantry. Any surplus items will be shared with People to People Ministries.



**Thanks** to everyone for the wonderful support of our food pantry! It is serving the community every single day! How exciting! As a reminder, we cannot accept anything that is not in tamper-resistant packaging. Nor can we take perishable foods. Please donate only shelf stable items. Thank You!

### Financial Information

Tithes and Offerings needed each Sunday for budgeted expenses (October 2022): \$1,709  
Received last month:

10/02 - \$4,036	10/09 - \$1,642
10/16 - \$2,242	10/23 - \$663
10/30 - \$4,399	

As of 10/31/2022, we received about 152% of our budgeted income for the month of October and 89% YTD. We are slightly ahead of last year at this time, which was 133% and 87%, respectively. The Food Pantry is in the black, but the funds do not purchase as much food as a year ago. We're still making a difference. Thumbs up Oak Chapel!



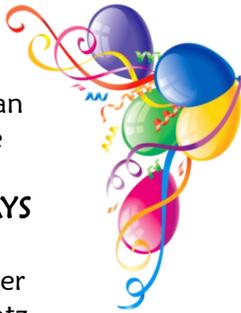
**Acorn Submissions**—The next issue is **February 2023**.  
Deadline is January 15.

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 5 Cindy and Stuart Mykrantz
- 14 Donna and David Anderson
- 22 Brianna and Will Lockhart

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 7 Cyndi Boyer
- 9 Alice Giffin
- 10 Jen Moser
- 24 Alison Flanagan  
Carol Gossage



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Jennifer Adair
- 5 Cheryl Rastetter
- 6 Cindy Mykrantz
- 9 Susan Mykrantz  
Mark Ritchey
- 12 Darrell Moser
- 18 Elliot Miller
- 21 Dave Zech
- 24 Simon Kitchen
- 28 Carol Gasser
- 27 Nancy Miller  
Andy Troutman
- 28 Natalie Bunt

## Wish your neighbor a Happy day!

This information comes from our membership database. Please contact the church office if there are any corrections or additions.



### Ten Winter Holiday Tips

- 1) Don't skip breakfast
- 2) Eat what's good for you *first*, filling half your plate with fresh fruits and veggies.
- 3) Keep a food journal
- 4) Make activities instead of food, be the focus of your get-together
- 5) Try to keep a positive outlook
- 6) Eat more, move more
- 7) Don't drink and drive
- 8) Eat homemade vs. processed foods
- 9) Stay well hydrated
- 10) REST. RELAX. REFRESH!

Oak Chapel UWF has **Layettes** available for you to share with new mothers in our community. Pick one up in the room across from the office and sign the appropriate list, or contact Robin Kitchen if you would like help. Supply donations are also appreciated.

**Retirees Breakfast—Tuesday December 6** and January 10. Join us at Buehler's Town Market at 8:30 am for great conversation. No agenda, just fellowship!



**United  
Women  
in Faith**

Thanks to all who contributed to the November Goodie Bags for our Shut ins! I am sure they were well

received. The Bazaar is in the books and after all is said and done, we did really well. People are already saying things that start with "Next year..."

December is for winding down our 2022 projects and January is for gearing up for 2023. The Executive Team will be deciding our disbursements of funds, doing some evaluating and making plans for next year. In 2023, Phyllis Weaver will be our new UWF President, Pam Domer, Vice President; Miriam Zech, Treasurer; and Elizabeth Feldman, Secretary. If you have ideas for 2023, please let us know.

I would like to say Thanks to all who helped in any way during the year, whether it was taking on a project, helping out, or contributing funds. Every thing you do helps us with our Purpose and our mission to help others locally and away.

Remember our Fellowship Dinners continue through March. They are on the 3rd Sunday! Beverages are provided. If you can, please bring a dish to share and your table service. If for any reason this is hard—you've been traveling, busy or just forgot, please come anyway. There always seems to be plenty of yummy food. (We are Methodists after all!)

**Bookworms**—A group of friends that read the same book and come together for discussion. Join us on **Tuesday, January 24 at 7:00 pm.** (The fourth Tuesday.) The book for January is *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas Balzer. Starr, 16, moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and her fancy suburban prep school. This uneasy balance is shattered when she witnesses the fatal police shooting of her childhood best friend, Khalil. Soon after, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, a drug dealer or a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets.



Cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What really went down that night? The only person who can answer that is Starr.

United Women in Faith has two baking and gift giving fundraisers now available.  
Nuts and Snack Fundraiser



AND



- ♥ You may order 24/7, 365 days a year.
- ♥ Both links are on the home page of Oak Chapel's website, [oakchapelumc.com](http://oakchapelumc.com)
- ♥ Proceeds will support our mission projects.
- ♥ You can pick up a postcard in the Narthex with more information.
- ♥ If you have questions, please call Elizabeth Feldman at 333.465.5782.

**Prayer Shawls**—Our Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to make beautiful shawls for us to distribute to people we want to bless. Anyone can pick up a shawl to give to another. While most of them go to those who could use some comfort and healing, we encourage everyone to think of a happy reason to celebrate as well.

Currently the shawls live in the closet in the Crib Room which is next to the Elevator on the main floor. Step 1. Choose a shawl to give. There are some gift bags if you want to use them. Step 2. Pick up a card from Oak Chapel to deliver with it. Step 3. (A VERY important step) Find the blue folder. Inside you will see the lists of those who have received shawls. Please add the recipient's name(s), date and your name. We want to make sure we do not miss anyone or accidentally duplicate someone. No reasons need to be added.

We are always looking for more people to make shawls too! We are used to seeing crocheted and knitted ones, but fleece and quilted ones are also an idea! Fleece should be hemmed but not fringed and knotted, as someone in a wheelchair or bed could get it tangled up. Lap robes are also a nice alternative to shawls.

### **Moneysaving Tip - Qualified Charitable Distribution**

If you are an eligible mature donor (at least age 70-1/2), you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your Traditional IRA. The income from deductible contributions and earnings is normally taxable, but not when directly gifted to a qualified charity. A QCD will lower your taxable income and concurrently satisfy part or all your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), if the QCD is distributed first. This is a win-win solution for both the donor and the charitable organization, like your local church. If a QCD sounds like good stewardship and a tax benefit for you, check with your IRA trustee/custodian. And, don't forget to inform your tax preparer.

Note: If you are a mature donor with taxable compensation, you can open or contribute to a Traditional IRA, then use the QCD option for your distribution. For more information, see IRS Pub 590-B, Distributions from Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs).

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided taxpayers a new provision to deduct \$300 even if the taxpayer did not itemize for 2020. That amount doubled in 2021 for married taxpayers filing jointly. However, the provision expired in 2022.

The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act raised the deduction and eliminated personal exemptions, which made it difficult for most taxpayers to deduct charitable contributions (nearly 9 in 10 taxpayers now use the standard deduction). Standard deduction for married filing jointly: 2017 - \$12,700; 2018 - \$24,000; 2019 - \$24,400; 2020 - \$24,800; 2021 - \$25,100; 2022 - \$25,900; 2023 - \$27,700

The standard deduction continues to increase due to inflation, which makes it harder to meet the threshold. Mortgage interest is usually a sizable portion of itemized deductions and given many mortgages are a fixed rate for a fixed period, mortgage interest expense falls behind inflation, creating an even larger gap. So, what can you do to reduce your taxes through charitable contributions?

Do you have a stewardship idea? Please share it with the Finance Committee. Thanks! Stuart

**The Advent Wreath** is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Lighting its candles is a common practice on the four Sundays leading to Christmas.

Oak Chapel uses three blue and one pink candle around the wreath with one white candle in the center.

The wreath, the candles and the colors all have symbolic significance. Here are just a few of the many and various interpretations:

- The circular green wreath symbolizes the everlasting love of God, having no beginning or end. Green represents eternal life.
- The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. One tradition says that each candle also represents one thousand years. They total 4,000 years — the time from Adam and Eve until the birth of Christ.
- Blue is a symbol of royalty and also the night sky and the anticipation of the announcement of Christ's birth. Blue also symbolizes the beginning of a new creation as in the waters of Genesis 1.
- The first blue candle signifies Hope.
- The second blue candle stands for Peace.
- The pink candle for the third Sunday symbolizes Joy and signifies the halfway point of Advent.
- The final blue candle is for Love.
- The large white candle in the center is the Christ candle. Its light symbolizes Christ the Savior — “the light of the world.”

The beauty and brightness from the glow of all five candles is a reminder that Christ's life was the light for all earth's people — “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (John 1:5, NRSV)

Our next trip to **Eastbrook Mission Barn** will be January 24 at their new location, also in New Castle PA, but easier to get to. They have outgrown the old barn and will have moved to a more modern facility that will be warmer and has updated plumbing! We will continue to verify hygiene kits and build ramp modules. Contact Pam Domer, Outreach team captain, for more information.



## Wear the Colors of Christmas!

November 28: Green  
December 4: Purple  
December 11: Red  
December 18: Blue  
December 24: White  
December 25: Gold

## Join us for these Christmas Celebrations

**Christmas Eve Service—7:00 pm**

Lessons and Carols

**Christmas Day—10:30 am**

Happy Birthday Jesus!



Please visit our website—[oakchapelumc.com](http://oakchapelumc.com)—to view our calendar.

**The Days for Girls** Team will meet again on January 3 and continue on the first and third Tuesdays at 1:00 pm in the room directly across from the church office. We are making progress toward getting another shipment of kits out. We would love to have new participants in this outreach ministry to girls in underdeveloped countries. We also welcome monetary donations to help cover the cost of materials and shipping.

**UNITED METHODIST** Changes are in the air for



UMM. The monthly breakfast will be at

**Ebenezer Lodge**, 140 N

Market St. This is the first building north of the courthouse. There will be an all you can eat breakfast and we will begin at **8:00 a.m.** on **December 10 and January 14**. All men and boys are welcome. Mark your calendar for the 2nd Saturday of each month.



ACORN Newsletter  
 Oak Chapel United Methodist Church  
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**WE INVITE YOU TO WORSHIP WITH US**

Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Worship	10:30 a.m.
Young Adult SS	11:30 a.m.

**Oak Chapel United Methodist Church**

*“Serving Christ and Community through Love, Compassion, Fellowship and Caring”*

Rev. John Finn ..... Pastor  
 Sheri Finn ..... Secretary  
 Jen Moser..... Organist and Choir Director  
 Miriam Zech .....Custodian  
**Church Phone ..... 330-264-2537**  
 Pastor John’s Cell Phone.....330-988-2577

**E-mail addresses:**

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Visit our website: [www.oakchapelumc.com](http://www.oakchapelumc.com)

**WE ARE ON FACEBOOK! CHECK US OUT!**

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