



OCUMC Newsletter

October 29, 2020

Dear friends and family of OCUMC:



The church I grew up in was a small white clapboard church in town of 300. For whatever reason, they put the clock right behind the pastor and pulpit. As a small kid, I learned how to tell time by watching the minute hand go ever so slowly as the preacher gave her message. Those twenty minutes felt like a lot longer, for we kids were waiting for Sunday School to start right after church in the basement. And Sunday School had a small sandbox where the bible stories would be shared and acted out with figurines. Of course, after Sunday School, we would bring out our star wars action figures (original) and the Sands of Sinai would become Tatooine - but that's a different story. Sad to say, I don't remember my Sunday School teacher's name.

We had Cub and Boy Scouts in the church basement as well. We met every Wednesday to do scout activities. I progressed along in my badges and eventually became a Patrol Leader. Went to scout camp and everything. Sad to say, I don't remember by Scout Master's name.

Our church had a small choir, although not as large as Oregon City's. While in high school, without asking my parents, I joined the choir one night at their rehearsal and they let me stay. The only qualification for being in the choir was if you could be at practice and if you could navigate the stairs to the choir loft. I was the youngest voice in the choir for those years. Sad to say, I don't remember the choir director's name.

From the church nursery to the youth group, a confirmation sponsor and secret scholarship giver to my time in seminary - my faith life has been blessed with a multitude of saints whom I do not outright remember. But I wouldn't be here today without them.

Who are the saints in your life who helped you in your faith walk? Blessings to you if you remember them. And blessings to them if you don't - for their sacrifice and faithfulness has been blessed with a fruit that outlasted them.

Our church historian Mike Smith has created a report called "A Decade in Review" for the Conference Archives. Every ten years, we are to give a short description of the life and times of our church. A full report would be chapters and chapters long - the archives want only a few pages. Just for fun, his report is listed in today's newsletter. Of course, in a short report like this names will be missed and activities overlooked - but we've done a lot in ten years!

This Sunday is All Saints Day, where we remember the saints of old and the saints in our lives, that we might be a saint to someone else someday. Even if we are not remembered.

See you in virtual church this Sunday!

Pastor Mike



Oregon City United Methodist Church **2011 - 2020** **Ten Year Historic Report**



During these ten years OCUMC has had two pastors: Rev. Jerry Hill (2009-2013) and Rev. Mike Benischek (2013- Present). In those ten years we have had 90 individuals join the church, with 35 baptisms recorded. During this decade our pastors have officiated 90 funerals and more than 100 weddings.

In 2015, OCUMC celebrated its 175 year serving the Oregon City with a special service with several of the former pastors attending and involved in the service. In 2020 we celebrate the 180 years of service to the Oregon City Community.

We have a staff longevity that many churches would envy. Christa Palmer has been church secretary since 2010. Rick Wilson has been Music Director all ten years (he started as organist in 1988. TA (Slim) Norris has been music team drummer since 2005. Lesli Magee was hired as Education Director in 2014. Before that, Christa Palmer and Laura McGraw ran the children's program for the first part of the decade. Cat Johnston has been our custodian since 2015. Before her, were Leslie Moothart, Diane Fields and two college students Jacob Sytsma and Chelsea Myers. Our nursery has been led by Heather Cruikshank for most of the decade, and Carrie Meyers began in 2018 after Donna Fourier retired.

Speaking of longevity, our Financial Secretary, Mary Gifford and her team have been at it for decades. Treasurer, Kitsie Parkinson has been writing the checks for most of this decade taking over for Marty Engel. Our church council chairs have been Jim Shaver, Jane Myers, Jay Bolger, and Sandra Lawson.

In 2011 OCUMC had a debt of over \$1,000,000. As of March, 2020, we as a church are debt free. To reach that goal, the church sold 5 acres of adjoining property and several church members stepped forward with additional contributions along with a matching gift. Our "Help the Wallers Reach Oregon City" campaign knocked out the last \$85,000. In 2018, with a grant from the Snyder estate, we were able to renovate our sanctuary and a 2019 remodel/update of the Tech Booth.

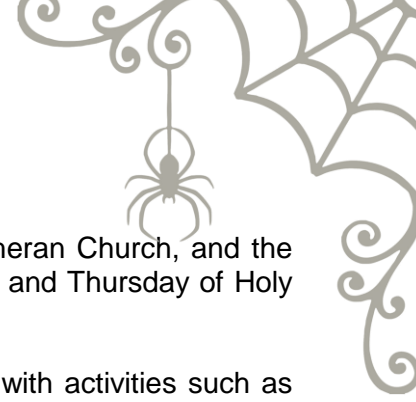
We continue to have a strong education program with children's classes offered during the 10 am church service and several adult classes and Bible study groups throughout the week. We have a very strong Women's Ministry program offering Women's Night Out, Book Discussion Groups, Lunch Buddies, and Mission Possible which collects items and raises funds for various service groups in the community. Lunch groups, and an annual Women's Retreat held, recently, at a camp near Silver Creek Falls Park. We have an active men's group, with Men's Night Out and a Retired Men's group headed by John Ronfeld and Marv Fourier, that work on special projects for the church.

Helen Bennett started the decade as church historian and Mike Smith took over when she retired.

We have an active youth group that meets regularly led by Joe and Ann Mallen., who have been advisors for the youth group for this whole decade. They have a wide range of activities including an annual Mission Trip out in the Great Northwest. Some recent projects have been to Bend, OR, Portland, OR, Seattle, WA and Twinlow, ID. We have several children and adults attend Church Camp at Camp Magruder and at Suttle Lake Camp. Each summer we host a Vacation Bible School with an attendance of more than 100, with volunteer help and leadership provided by both the youth and adults.

Jane Myers was awarded the 2016 Denman Evangelism Award by the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

In 2015, Oregon City United Methodist Church became a Reconciling Congregation, Welcoming everyone to our community - living up to our motto: Love Others Value Everyone.



Twice a year we join with the Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, the Zion Lutheran Church, and the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and in a combined service for Thanksgiving Eve, and Thursday of Holy Week.

Each year members of the church come together to celebrate the Advent Season with activities such as the Hanging of the Greens, Advent Festival, and A Night in Bethlehem. Each Christmas, church members provide gifts and funds to provide a Christmas for families in need, working with other community groups to do this.

The Worship Design Team for nearly twenty years has work to assist the current pastor with planning, decorating, tech support, and production of our weekly worship service. At this time members include, pastor Mike Benischek, Marian Olivas, Susan Ronfeld, John Ronfeld, Marv Fourier, Mike Smith, and Rick Wilson.

HOPE (Helping Other People Eat) has provided a food pantry for the community on Wednesdays. They serve hundreds of families each month. The decade started with Margaret Poff directing the program, and when she retired, Sharon Thonstad and Ron Schlosser and their team took up the reins.

Ron Schlosser also farms the HOPE food garden which provides more than 2,000 pounds of produce to HOPE annually.

We have continued to provide a Wednesday evening meal each week. Carol Forncrook headed this mission for several years before turning it over to Cat Johnston for a few years. For the past several years, a group of willing volunteers has provided the meals. We have a full schedule most weeks with Wednesday Night Dinner, Choir Practice, Bible Study and sometimes children and/or youth groups.

Our church yard is kept in good shape by a group of volunteers headed by Mary Gifford. Early in the decade Harold Black kept the gardens in shape. Marty Engel keeps the lawn in shape with his riding lawnmower.

Cornerstone Preschool has continued to provide classes for our preschool community. Current teachers include Beth Werber, Carla Christensen and Danielle Swatman.

We continue to have a choir of 15+ members under the direction of Rick Wilson. We have a three-member song leader group to lead congregational singing and a five piece band. In these Covid times when vocals are not possible, we've created a bell choir.

The community continues to use the building for various activities and meetings during the last ten years, among those uses have been Red Cross community blood drives, community and governmental groups, neighborhood association meetings, exercise and well-being groups. YMCA childcare and kitchen ministries have also used the building. Willamette Falls Symphony uses the building regularly for rehearsal and concerts. The church is used for many social, family, and special group gatherings.

Dawn Engel visits home bound and hospitalized members, visiting, praying, singing, and delivering Communion. Dick Ferguson visits and phones men of the church that are shut-in or hospitalized. We have an active Prayer Chain led by Jodi Wilson which is used to notify members of prayer concerns.

Early in the decade we hosted, each summer, a Neighborhood Block Party where we invited the community to a fun summer activity including, Bar-B-Q, kids games, live music, and an antique car show, held in our parking lot. We now have a pot-luck party in the park.

For a number of years OCUMC conducted a city-wide canned-food drive for the HOPE Food Pantry, under the direction of Dick Ferguson and Doug Forncrook. It was turned over to other community groups early in the decade.

OCUMC is actively involved with LOVE Inc., a community group that assists families in need of assistance in setting up a new household; our church was active in the OCERF program, a city-wide relief program. We currently help needy with the Pastor Love Fund. In the past year, we've given away thousands of dollars to help fund school lunches, mission needs, and emergency support.

With 2020, came the Covid-19 pandemic and a change to everything we do. Starting in March we were not allowed to meet in groups for service. As a result the Worship Design Team put together and started providing an on-line service. In order to keep in-touch, the Women's Ministry Team started a Tuesday "Porch Wave," where several women and sometimes husbands would meet at the church and drive by church members homes and give them a wave. On World Communion Sunday, Pastor Mike got permission to have a Social-Distance Communion Service in the Park.

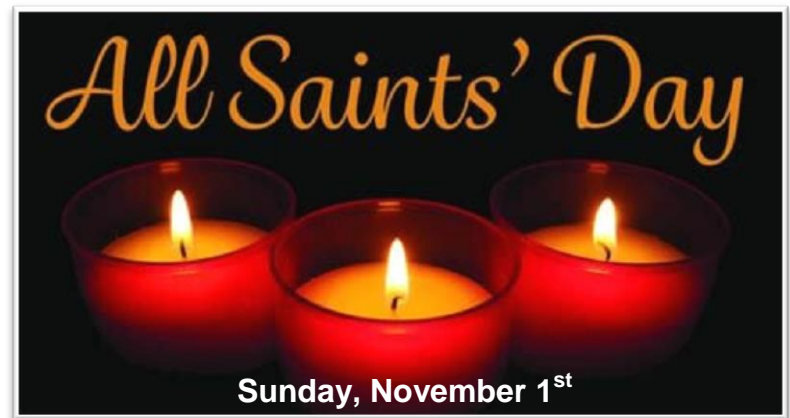
A short report like this is bound to miss many names and contributions. Please read the annual charge conference reports for more detail and accomplishments.

To be sure, 2011 through 2020, has been an interesting period of time for the Oregon City United Methodist Church, We continue to look to the future to bring more people into the Loving Christian Community through "Loving Others and Valuing Everyone"

Submitted October 27, 2020

Mike Smith





Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for your many kind words, cards, well-wishes and gifts during Pastor Appreciation month.

Blessings from the Benischek Family!!



The Zoom Link:

<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/91997608276>

The Zoom link and our Charge Conference Reports (available Friday afternoon) can also be found on our website at:

<https://www.oregoncityumc.com/charge-conference-2020>



MISSION POSSIBLE

Current opportunities to help our community at large

First, we want to thank you for your continued generosity for the mission work we are continuing to provide for our community. All of us have been very aware of the tragic fires and the devastation that faces many people who have either lost everything or received damage to their homes and property.

In response to that we are working in concert with Love, INC to provide cleaning supplies that are needed for those who are returning to homes that need thorough cleaning from the ash, smoke etc. We will be collecting supplies and/or monies through the month of October. You may mark your checks Fire Victims or you may leave cleaning supplies at the church.

Items needed include:

- Mops
- Brooms
- Dustpans
- paper towels
- garbage bags
- window cleaners
- bathroom cleaners and so on



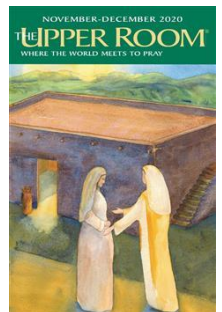
Thank you so much for all the help you provide to those in need.

Mission Possible Team



Upper Room Devotionals

November/December issue of the Upper Room Devotional is now available. If you are not able to pick up a copy at the church, you may request to have the Upper Room mailed to you.



Birthdays

DIFRANCO, KELLY	11/02
OLIVAS, MARIAN	11/05
WARD, PAUL	11/05
DANIELS, CATHIE	11/07
SPRAGUE, ERIC	11/07
HULDEN, SANDRA	11/09
MCCORKLE, JOYDEE	11/10
SYTSMA, JOHN	11/11
SCHULT, EVERETT	11/12
WICKLIFFE, BOB	11/12
CRAVEN, RICHARD	11/20
QUEVEDO, DIEGO	11/20
OLIVAS, JEFF	11/21
HECKERT, CAMI	11/27



Well it is almost Halloween time and here we are again,
beginning to talk about our

Christmas Family Project

It is a very different year and how we accomplish our goal will take creativity, but we are beginning the planning. Once again we are partnering with LOVE INC. to serve 10 to 12 family units. This year's theme is "Family Fun". Since we are not able to go out and do many normal activities because of the pandemic, we are going to organize our gifts around experiences families can do together.

There will be no ornaments to pick off a tree as usual, and as always we will welcome contributions to the Christmas Family Project; but many members like to contribute other items, maybe even get their children's opinions. We will be accepting gift cards from places that celebrate family fun, like ice cream or frozen yogurt places, pizza take out, Mike's Drive In tokens, etc. along with Fred Meyer's to shop for toys of their choice.

We will be doing books again, (Presently waiting for ages of children involved), and games families can play together. We are also thinking about putting baking mixes and kits for special items for cooking, and of course staples like popcorn, hot chocolate mixes and marshmallows. We might do some useful items, like masks, bubble bath, and hand sanitizer as well.

More information will follow but we just wanted you to know that we have not forgotten our special families at Christmas time this year when it is needed perhaps more than ever. We are also searching for ways for our loving congregation to participate in the best way for them.

Remember more information and specifics are coming, but for now put your thinking caps on for ways to help and that will get you in the spirit of serving. You may have a special talent or skill that can add to purchased ideas.

Thank you and bless you, as we love others and value everyone. If questions or ideas, you may contact Dawn Engel, and they will be addressed in our planning sessions.

