



Newsletter

April 2025

Johns Epistle: The Corner of Church & State

As many of you know, I was appointed Pastor at Oak Grove UMC following four years as the Lead Pastor for the Open Door Churches of Salem-Keizer (ODC). If you aren't aware, ODC was and remains an innovative collaborative structure for ministry, in which all the UM Churches in the Salem-Keizer metro area share resources and vision, as well as budget money for Clergy support.

I accepted the appointment to ODC in February of 2020, and arrived in late spring, as the Covid-19 Pandemic was in full swing. It seemed as if almost nothing any of us had planned during those days was working out the way we hoped. Change was a constant of life in those days and my work with ODC was certainly no exception! Over the next two years, we adapted the structure of the organization to be more responsive to the needs of the congregations and I ended up spending most of my time tending to the ministries of Salem First UMC.

I loved working in downtown Salem, where the massive historic Sanctuary of FUMC stands, proudly, just a block from the Oregon State Capitol at the corner of Church and State Streets. It is a great metaphor for all church work, because we all work at the intersection of the church's ministry and the concerns of the world, including the work of government.

Recently, I shared as part of my Message in worship, some thoughts about a statement shared by our President before he was elected for his second term. I thought for a very long time about making that statement before I shared it. As I said in the moment, I did not consider my statement to be a political one. Instead, I was responding to something Mr. Trump said in response to a question that was a matter of faith. (If you have questions about what I said or would like the chance to discuss my statement for any reason, I encourage you to contact me by email at pastor@oakgroveunitedmethodist.com, so that we can arrange a time to chat.)

My purpose in this article is to encourage all of us to think intentionally about how our faith relates to our participation in our society. We should always do this, especially as United Methodists, because applying faith to life in the world is part of our heritage. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Movement in 18th century England, famously described his ministry by saying “The world is my parish.”

The call to be involved in the world around us is especially important in times like these, when the fabric of our society seems to be unravelling at such an alarming rate. Many of the assumptions we have made for most of our lives about the stable nature of our social life are changing rapidly—almost daily, it seems. It is almost like another pandemic is sending shock waves among us, but this time it is one centered around our collective political life—the State in “Church and State.”

Though it may feel as if these things are unprecedented, the fact is that social upheaval of this kind has happened frequently throughout human history. The world in which John Wesley started the Methodist Movement and conducted his ministry was one in which the very foundations of our own democratic republic were being laid, and Wesley himself would have been an observer—from a distance, of course—of the American Revolution and the founding of the United States. He literally lived during the reign of King George, the monarch against whom the Americans rebelled.

It was in that cauldron in which Wesley chose to lead the church into active participation in transforming society according to the values he strongly believed were in line with the Gospel. Wesley led what he referred to as “the People called Methodist” in work to eliminate many of the social evils of his day: child labor, illiteracy and lack of education for the masses, lack of access to health care, rampant alcoholism, the slave trade, and more. The Methodists used their collective resources to great effect in combatting all of these, both in England and in America, where the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed at what became known as the “Christmas Conference” in 1789, the same year the Constitution of the United States was adopted as the basis of all law in the republic.

When—and hopefully that is a “when,” rather than an “if”—we stand at the corner of church and state, we are guided not by a perspective that is primarily influenced by our political alignments nor even what we hope to gain for ourselves, but by the same kinds of things that guided John Wesley himself. The Gospel must be our guide—the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ, who relied heavily on the writings of the Hebrew Prophets to address the similar concerns of his day.

We must not stand back waiting for deliverance, but step forward in faith, responding to the calls of scripture to welcome the stranger and the immigrant, care for those on the margins of society, feed the poor, and advocate for the compassionate, just use of our collective societal resources, especially our governmental resources. Jesus himself, as we will soon be remembering during Holy Week, rode deliberately into Jerusalem knowing exactly what would happen to him when he did, and held the religious and civil authorities to account for the ways they had forsaken the teachings of the Law and the Prophets. Christ is calling us. Are we listening?

Grace and peace,

Pastor John

Women's Retreat

Registration is open for the United Women in Faith 2025 retreat day. It is on Saturday, May 10 at the Alton Collins Retreat Center in Eagle Creek.

This is a spirit and fellowship filled day in a beautiful, wooded setting with incomparable views, paths and a meditation labyrinth...

The theme is "Through the Door: A Journey in Faith" exploring the spirit and fellowship through Nature, God's creation. Sure to evoke old memories of "God moments" and make new ones.

The day is from 9:45am to 3:30pm and car pooling will be available. Cost is \$35 each including a terrific lunch. Pre-registration required with cut off on April 16, so register now to ensure your place.

You can register on-line by clicking on the QR code or URL on the flier or sign-up in person through Donna Metcalf at church or at donna1metcalf@comcast.net or 503-200-9716.

This is a not to be missed event. You will be so grateful you went...

You are invited to:
United Women in Faith Women's retreat

Through The Door: A Journey in Faith

An Exploration in Spirit and Fellowship

- **Saturday May 10th. 9:45am-3:30pm**
- **Alton Collins Retreat Center**
- **Cost \$35 and includes lunch**
- **You must register by April 16th**
- **All are welcome to attend**

Register here:



<https://forms.gle/4EcsWpgLxUFTWtkk9>

Contact Donna Metcalf (503-200-9716) or donna1metcalf@comcast.net
for more information

Joyful Appreciation from Your Lay Leader

Greetings! As I spent time working on my message for worship on March 30th, I spent a fair amount of time considering what it means to have a giving heart or to be in service from the heart. I read a number of articles, I prayed about what God intends it to mean to me, and to ultimately answer the question for myself, "So what are you going to do about it?"

First, let me share a few bits of understanding I have gained from my readings and where God is guiding me.

The idea of "service from the heart" is giving to others with genuine, compassionate service. Each action is from the heart showing the love of God with each action.

The idea of "service from the heart" comes from an honest motivation to serve with a genuine desire to make a difference in someone's life whether that be long-term or in the moment; whether that be serving one person or a group of people. Each action is filled with the love of God.

The idea of "service from the heart" requires understanding the needs of others, acknowledging those needs, and acting upon them with compassion, knowledge, and empathy – and doing so with the love of God glowing from your heart.

In general, my definition of "service from the heart" is a way of living that emphasizes kindness, empathy, and a commitment to making a positive impact on the world – showing God's love in each action – and using the gifts that God gave me!

Yes, as I consider the direction that God has been leading me and continues to lead me, I recognize that there are God-Given gifts that I am expected to use in my life – those include administrative gifts, organizational gifts, decision-making gifts, and others. When I consider what brings me joy, I realize that this congregation has given me the treasured gift of a service heart. You allow me to do things that bring me joy including the OGUMC Winter Blitz program, giving of time to work in the Sack Lunch program in a couple of ways each month, giving of my financial resources to this church, and to give of my time and knowledge to this congregation whether that be organizing an event, serving as your Lay Leader, preparing curriculum for our Sunday School program, leading the chime choir, or serving in various administrative roles. My heart is filled with love and joy when I am guided and allowed to serve you in God's name.

With much appreciation for each of you!

Deb Payne

Your Lay Leader



A REMINDER!

Save the Dates!

Sundays, April 27 & May 18

11:30am-2:00pm

Discerning the Unique Character & Purpose of Oak Grove UMC

OUR CHARISM

The Charism of our congregation refers to the unique spirit that animates our church community. During these two sessions, we will reflect together on shared experiences of Oak Grove UMC and join in a process to help us identify the guiding purpose of our congregation. Our work together will ultimately aid in setting a mission statement for Oak Grove UMC which will provide direction, unify the congregation, align our activities and program, guide decision-making, and inspire us all to actively participate in the church's ministry and outreach efforts.

You are invited to be a part of this important work! While together on April 27 and May 18, we'll hear things about our congregation's history, we'll learn about the work we do together and individually, and we'll discover together who we are as a congregation when we show up as our best selves.

During the two sessions, we will gather following Worship, enjoy a simple lunch, and work together to discover our Charism. All are invited to these two uniquely different sessions, but if you can only attend one or the other, please sign up for that session! The sign-up sheets will be made available in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, March 30th or you can notify either Deb Payne or the Church Office that you will be attending. We ask that you sign-up by April 20th to make sure that we have lunch ready for you!

The Renewal Team

Wichita Center Focused Needs



April

**New or gently used clothes
and shoes for kids up
through 12th grade**

**Clackamas Service Center
Focused Needs**



April

**Canned Vegetable
&
Deodorant**

KIWANIS SPAGHETTI DINNER

Saturday, April 26, 2025
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Oak Grove United Methodist Church
4700 SE Rupert Drive
Oak Grove, OR. 97276

\$20

Stay and Eat
or Carry-out

**MENU: Spaghetti, Salad,
Garlic Bread, and Spumoni
Ice Cream**

- **All Funds Raised go to Support Scholarships for Key Club Students**
- **Kiwanis Main Focus is on Serving Children in our Community**
- **Your Participation and Support Makes a Difference**



Kids Need People Who Care

A Very Special Evening

Saturday, May 3rd at 5:30pm

In the Church Fellowship Hall

We're gathering for a special evening of entertainment by our very own, very talented Pastor John Fleming on May 3rd featuring a wide selection of music including original pieces from John's "Tones" CD.

A simple supper will be provided by Francie Naftzger and Deb Payne.

If you missed out on getting tickets for this wonderful concert at the Fall FUNdraiser and would like to attend the concert, please see Deb or Gloria Payne for tickets April 6-27 or call the church office and make a reservation. Tickets are \$20 each (cash or checks made out to the church).

Join us for food, friends, fun, and fabulous music!



Throwback Concert with Mark Ortloff & Friends

A Musical Celebration of Decades Past

Saturday, June 14th at 4:00pm

Did you buy a ticket for the Throwback Concert at our Fall FUNdraiser? If yes, make sure you have the re-scheduled date of Saturday, June 14th at 4:00pm on your calendar! If you missed out on getting tickets for this wonderful concert and would like to attend the concert please see Deb or Gloria Payne for tickets through May 25 or call the church office and make a reservation. Cost: \$15 each (cash or checks made out to the church). A fun time will be had by all! You don't want to miss out on this special time together!



*Articles for the May
Newsletter are due
Monday, April 28th.*



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

April May

April 3 Adrian Blackman

April 5 Norma Campbell

April 8 Mark Ortloff

April 10 Joe Dryden

April 13 Donna Hall

April 14 Tami Busch

April 18 Vena Edwards

April 19 Deb Payne

April 21 Jeannie Lambert

April 21 Alyssa Bolger

April 21 Amy Persad

April 24 Patricia Doyle

April 24 Geri Nelson



May 9 Linda Erland

May 16 Gloria Arts

May 18 Samantha Persad

May 25 Norma Flink

May 28 Donna Raschio

May 29 Camie Estes

May 30 Linda Dorfi

May 31 Joe Fairbairn

Are we missing a birthday? Let us know! Contact the office 503-654-3161 officeogumc@gmail.com

Connect with us

Facebook: OakGroveUnitedMethodistChurch-Oregon

YouTube: Oak Grove United Methodist Church Oregon

Website: www.OakGroveUnitedMethodist.com

Phone: 503-654-3161

Email: officeogumc@gmail.com

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 68238

Oak Grove, OR 97268

Street Address: 14700 SE Rupert Drive

Oak Grove, OR 97267

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday

9am-12pm & 1pm-3pm

Weekly Events

- Sundays at 10:30am Worship Service in-person and online
- Tuesdays at 10:00am Men's Bible reading class
- Wednesdays at 12:00 pm AA Women's group
- Wednesdays at 6:00 pm AA group
- Wednesdays at 7:30 pm AI-Anon
- Thursdays at 10:00 am Quilters
- Thursdays at 10:00am AI-Anon