

The Grapevine

Oxford United Methodist Church ~ Rev. Dr. Julius E. Del Pino, Pastor
Issue 10 | March / April 2022

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit..." John 15:5

OUR MISSION

*Uniting in Jesus Christ
we spread God's love*

OUR FOCUS

We envision a church with a vibrant Christian spiritual life where we welcome and value all God's people... Where we grow, discover, and share our gifts in the church and in the world.

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March 2, 2022

Distribution of Ashes in south parking lot - 12pm & 8pm

Ash Wednesday Worship - 7:30pm

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. Our tradition on Ash Wednesday is to smudge a black cross on the center of the forehead. The ashes symbolize our remorse and pain for the words and deeds we have done to separate ourselves from God's will for our lives.

- Holy Week -

Palm Sunday Worship - 10am

Palm Sunday is the day we remember how they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem - as a King. He humbly rode a donkey and the townspeople waved palm branches to welcome him. We also wave palms on this day to welcome him into our lives.



April 10, 2022



April 14, 2022

Maundy Thursday (also known as Holy Thursday) is the day before Good Friday. It brings to our attention what happened to Jesus the night before he died, when he shared in the Passover meal with his friends and disciples.



April 15, 2022

Good Friday is the day people all over the world remember the death of Jesus and the horrendous pain He experienced on our behalf. Good Friday services are held in most communities. Some churches hold noon day services to intentionally include the business community.

Easter Sunday Worship - 10am

Easter is the culmination of Jesus defeating death and gives us hope to embrace and believe in life eternal. While people still die, Jesus, through his life and ministry made it possible to have a relationship with God now while on earth, and also to spend eternity in heaven with our Creator.



April 17, 2022

Invite others to share Lent with us! All are welcome!



This is a partial reprint from the February Grapevine for your reflection...

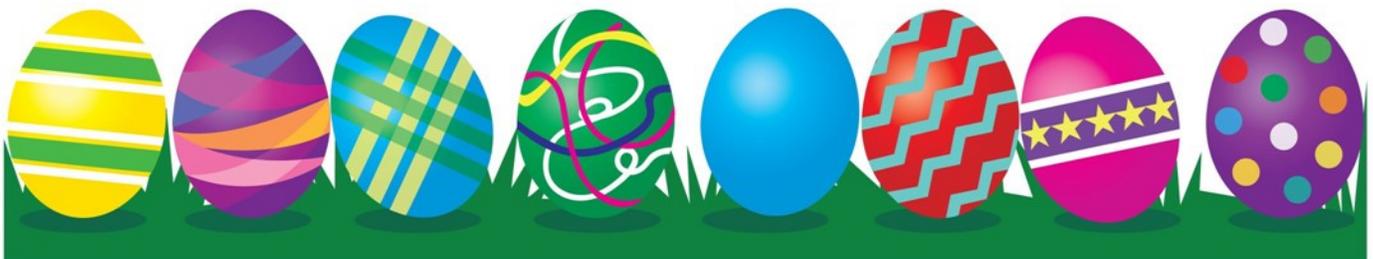
Prepare YOUR Heart and Mind for Easter

Many of you have asked “*what can I do to make this season of Lent truly meaningful and to help our church continue to change and grow for the better?*” I offer these suggestions to you to include in your journey...

- 1 Pray to be more merciful.
- 2 Attend worship regularly and invite a friend or neighbor to come with you.
- 3 Practice fasting by giving something up (related to the sacrifices of Jesus).
- 4 Give generously more resources to your church for its ministries as we grow more in the likeness of Christ and in commitment to growing a healthier stewardship foundation.
- 5 Serve and greet people at the front door with the Pastor on Sunday mornings.
- 6 Visit a person who is homebound, if health allows, or send a card of love and concern.
- 7 Take time to tell someone about your church’s Lenten services and the children and youth ministries that are in development.
- 8 Make a commitment to usher for a month or more.
- 9 Make a concerted effort to sing with the Praise Team before Easter Sunday.
- 10 Read daily the devotional provided by the church - “Drawn to the Cross” by Henri J.M. Nouwen. It may be found in the Sanctuary and on the kiosk.
- 11 Offer to do the Word for Children after Easter. (Notify Michele Mumbrue (248)969-9173)
- 12 Attend and possibly help out our People Feeding People team.
- 13 Bring food and/or personal items for the FISH food pantry. Please note that monetary gifts are also appreciated as it allows them to purchase fresh foods for the pantry such as meat and milk.
- 14 Join the prayer team in remembering those who are having health issues or other concerns.
- 15 Be intentional in developing new relationships with families and their children.

May you and your loved ones feel the presence of the **Holy** as we prepare to go deeper into the heart of God!

Julius E. Del Pino, Pastor



From the Bishop

February 25, 2022



Dear Friends in Christ in the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church,

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, who is our peace and who encourages us to be peacemakers when he says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”

This past Wednesday, Russian forces invaded Ukraine under orders from President Vladimir Putin. It is the most significant violation of territorial integrity in Europe since World War II. Much of the world is outraged by this unjustifiable military intervention and anxious about what lies ahead. Lives will be lost. Communities will be seriously damaged. Ripple effects will be experienced by us all. And we are uncertain about the extent of Russia’s military adventurism.

I call upon all Michigan United Methodists to pray for peace in Ukraine at this critical moment. I invite very United Methodist congregation in this conference to pray for peace at their weekly worship services this coming weekend and carry prayers for peace into the holy season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 2.

A Love-filled Victory

It’s tough to read about Jesus’ agony on the cross, where he felt “forsaken” by God (see Matthew 27:46). But as Philip Yancey explains in *Where Is God When It Hurts?* the Father didn’t desert Jesus — and doesn’t desert us:

“God was not ‘up there’ watching the tragic events conspire ‘down here.’ God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,” he writes. “If Jesus was a mere man, his death would prove God’s cruelty; the fact that he was God’s Son proves instead that God fully identifies with suffering humanity. On the cross, God himself absorbed the awful pain of this world.

“To some, the image of a pale body glimmering on a dark night whispers of defeat,” Yancey continues. “But another sound can be heard: the shout of a God crying out to human beings, ‘I LOVE YOU.’ Love was compressed for all history in that lonely figure on the cross, who said that he could call down angels at any moment on a rescue mission, but chose not to — because of us.”

He concludes: “Any discussion of how pain and suffering fit into God’s scheme ultimately leads back to the cross.”

According to the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, “We deplore war and urge the peaceful settlement of disputes among nations.... We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.” Let us pray out of this deep yearning for peace and a better world.

United Methodist Bishop Christian Alstead of the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area has written: “We stand with the United Methodists in Ukraine in prayer for protection, reconciliation, and peace.” Bishop Eduard Kheday, of the Eurasia Episcopal Area in Northern Europe and the Eurasian Central Conference, which includes both Russia and the Ukraine, has written simply and directly: “Ask for peace for Ukraine.”

Friends, let us ask for peace for Ukraine. Pray for a world where people will live in peace and justice, and there will be no more war. Watch for upcoming opportunities to pray with others for peace. Pray, and let us “pursue what makes for peace” (Romans 14:19).

Grace and Peace,

David A Bard



David Alan Bard
Michigan Area Bishop

Why Friday is “Good”

To participate in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ is to live already in his kingdom. This is the essence of the Christian message, the heart of the Good News, and it is why the cross has become the chief Christian symbol.

A cross of all things — a guillotine, a gallows — but the cross at the same time as the crossroads of eternity and time, as the place where such a mighty heart was broken that the healing power of God himself could flow through it into a sick and broken world. It was for this reason that of all the possible words they could have used to describe the day of his death, the word they settled on was “good.” *Good Friday.*

—Frederick Buechner



[reprinted by permission from the Newsletter Newsletter]



Birthdays

March 2 - Holly Cischke
 Jon Gross
 March 3 - Lynda Bertich
 Karen Etherton
 Cameron Mumbrue
 March 5 - Steve Clay
 March 11 - David Von Knorring
 March 18 - Millie Solon
 March 19 - David Cischke
 March 20 - Lorrin Schwartz
 March 23 - Mari Jo Bierwirth
 March 26 - Ginny Conrad
 March 27 - Teri Jacobsen
 March 31 - Marta Acheson

April 2 - Larry Bradford
 April 3 - Cecelia Nicholson
 April 7 - Lilly Prawdzik
 April 14 - Shirley Conner
 April 15 - Renae Shagena
 April 19 - Shirley Acheson
 April 20 - Jordyn Meersseman
 April 22 - Michael Nelson
 April 24 - Kimberly Rizzo
 April 27 - Matthew Rizzo
 April 28 - Mary Garrard
 April 30 - Carolyn Foss

Anniversaries

March 11 - Mike & Lucinda Bellairs
 March 23 - Ron & Karen Etherton



PRAY for and Encourage One Another Daily

Lord - we lift up these people to you by name:

Roselyn Van Wagoner Bruce Conrad Tom Bertich John Poole Ron Shedlowsky
 Charles Nelson - *Father of Fred Nelson* Robert Willobee Kristina Del Pino Ron Bunker
 Charlie Garrard Chuck & Linda McIntyre Shirley Conner Sue Enekes

We ask your blessings upon:

All those affected by the Oxford High School Shooting
 All of our brothers and sisters who deal with racism & hatred
 First responders, caregivers, medical personnel and all affected by Covid-19
 Those with mental illnesses, are lonely, or do not have someone to pray for them
 All our school children and graduates, their teachers and administrators
 Our local and national representatives in all three branches of government
 Those in the military serving on our behalf
 Those affected by Natural Disasters & Violence in the US and worldwide
 Oxford UMC, Pastor, Staff, Guests, United Methodists, and Christians everywhere
 Our Revived Church - *that Oxford UMC may be a great source of love
 for this community and that we may revive our vision*

We also pray for those whose names are unmentioned, dear Lord, for you know and love them.
 We ask all these things in your name, Lord Jesus.

Amen!



**The Church is always open for prayer! Come anytime when it is open or when there is a meeting.
 Need prayer with Pastor? Sign up on the sheet outside the office.**

Our Sunday Servants

	Ash Wednesday March 2	March 6 Holy Communion 1st Sunday in Lent	March 13 2nd Sunday in Lent (Daylight Savings Time begins)	March 20 3rd Sunday in Lent	March 27 4th Sunday in Lent UMCOR Sunday
Liturgist		Sue Rizzo	Steve Laidlaw	Bernie Rumbold	Michelle Wood
Minister of Children's Word	-	Cindy Vincentini	Michelle Wood	Cindy Vincentini	Mary Dempsey
Acolyte	-	Dominick Vincentini		Nate Vincentini	
Ushers (2)	-				Lynda Bertich
Greeters (2-4)		Lynda Bertich Michelle Wood		Steve & Kathy Laidlaw	
Youth Room (2)	-	Cindy Vincentini	Michelle Wood	Cindy Vincentini	Mary Dempsey
Tech Team		David Cischke	Fred Nelson	Tom Bertich	David Cischke
Friendship Hour (Team)	-	Revive Team	Piece Makers	Brunch	Children's Ministry

	April 3 Holy Communion 5th Sunday in Lent	April 10 Palm Sunday	April 15 Good Friday (@ noon)	April 17 Easter Sunday	April 24 2nd Sunday of Easter
Liturgist		Christy Turk		Michelle Wood	Jon Gross
Minister of Children's Word	Cindy Vincentini	Christy & Courtney Turk		Cindy Vincentini	
Acolyte	Dominick Vincentini	Courtney Turk		Nate Vincentini	
Ushers (2)		Courtney Turk			
Greeters (2-4)		Pastor Julius		Pastor Julius	
Youth Room (2)	Cindy Vincentini	Lynda Bertich		Cindy Vincentini	
Tech Team	Tom Bertich or David Cischke	Tom Bertich		David Cischke	Fred Nelson
Friendship Hour (Team)	Worship Team	Wednesday Bible Study		Brunch	Bells



Please contact Michelle Mumbroe or a member of the Worship Team to be a Sunday Servant in the open areas.
We very much appreciate your service!

2022 Commitment Card

[Please cut out and mail to the church]



*"Do all the good you can,
in all the places you can,
to all the people you can."*

Rev. John Wesley (founder of Methodism)



2022 Commitment Card (Estimate of Giving)

We thank God for our blessings!
I/We commit to giving our
_____ prayers
_____ volunteer service

My/Our Financial Commitment

\$_____ weekly (for 52 weeks)
\$_____ monthly (for 12 months)
\$_____ Electronic Giving

*[Please include authorization form
and submit with voided check]*

Offering Envelopes Request (check one):

Weekly envelopes (52) Monthly envelopes (12)

Name(s) (print): _____

Signature: _____

Finance Update

Thank you for your faithful giving each month to God's Church. We as a Finance team keep track of giving and expenses each month. Thank you for your faithfulness. Please help monthly with our General Fund.

January Giving	\$ 5,965.00
February Giving	\$ 5,642.00
Budget for 2022	\$ 115,725.00

If you prefer to write a check or donate with cash please use your offering envelopes (now available).

If you need envelopes, please call the church office or Larry Bradford, financial secretary.

Please consider giving your donation electronically! It will be paid as you decide and directly deposited into the church account.

It is so easy! And no more check writing!

There is no fee to join.

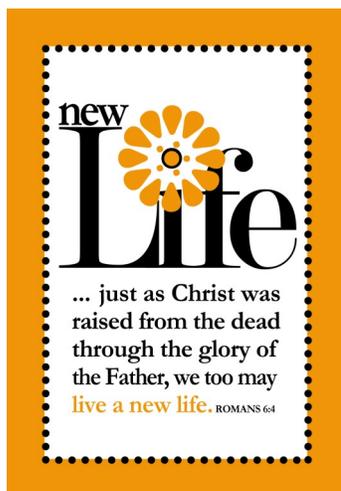
Safe and secure.

Forms are available from the office.

*"For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also."*

Matthew 6:21

*It's not too late to make a
financial commitment to
Oxford UMC for 2022!*



Local Missions & Outreach

Oxford / Orion FISH Food Pantry

“Neighbors Helping Neighbors”

We have resumed collecting FISH donations on the first Sunday of each month. You may also make out a check to Oxford UMC and put “FISH Food Pantry” in the memo line and we will make sure that your donation gets there. “Thank You!”

DURING LENT - LETS REALLY SHOW OXFORD HOW MUCH WE SUPPORT FISH - BRING IN AS MUCH TO FEED OUR NEIGHBORS AS YOU CAN!

To receive food from FISH: (248) 628-3933

*FISH Location: 1060 S. Lapeer Rd., Oxford
Website: www.oxfordorionfish.org*

Current Hours -

Office: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9 to noon
Pantry: Tues 1-2:45pm; Wed 10-11:45am; Th 1-4:45pm and 4-5 pm; Sat - 3rd Sat of month 9:45-11:30am

Any questions, contact Julie Langley (248-628-9619) or John & Devon Warren (248-778-8735)

Remember, FISH is a 100% volunteer organization and they need your help.
All donations are tax deductible.



Conduct yourselves...



so that...

they may see your



honorable deeds and



glorify God.

1 Peter 2:12

Oxford UMC Meal Outreach



ALL ARE WELCOME!

All are invited to the community **Free!** meal program at OUMC!!



On Saturday mornings we are serving breakfast at PFP (People Feeding People)! We encourage you to attend and not only be fed by food but also with fellowship. We are lifting people up through nutrition and friendship. We are providing a hot breakfast and most weeks a sack lunch for people in the Fellowship Hall (the 3rd week is carryout). If you are interested in helping in any way please contact Kathy Laidlaw (248) 701-5910. We hope that you come and enjoy!!!

WHERE: Oxford United Methodist Church
WHEN: Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 am

Community Free Meals

If you or someone you know would like a **Free!** hot meal please invite them to visit:

Lake Orion UMC (Mondays)

Immanuel Congregational (Tuesdays)

and/or Lakepoint Church (Thursdays) from 5:30-6:30pm



Love in the Name of Christ (Love INC) of North Oakland County is a non-profit network of churches in the area, including Oxford UMC. The mission of Love INC is to mobilize local volunteers and churches to help those in need and transform lives in the name of Christ. They try to provide any help that

is beyond the scope of the churches on their own. If you would like to donate your time or money to help your neighbors in need please contact them:

Website - www.loveincfnoc.org or call 248-693-4357 for more information.

Fellowship, Music & Service Groups



Knit Knack

Our group has been enjoying meeting together again on a regular basis. We haven't selected our first project for 2022, but watch for updates in later Grapevine articles.

We meet every Friday from 2-4pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Please join us if you enjoy any type of needle work. We are always willing to teach anyone who would like to learn. If you have any questions, please call Mary Garrard, 248-613-4505.



If you have experience with music, please consider joining one of these groups...

Bell Choir

The Excelsior Bell Choir rehearsals are on Wednesdays (6:30-8pm)

If you have any questions please contact Rosemary Rumbold (248-391-0973)

Praise Singers

Join us to practice Sunday's songs and hymns.

Rehearsal days and times are midweek.

If you have questions or if you would like to be a part of the Praise Singers please contact Renae Shagena (248-969-2225).

Reading for Enjoyment



Do you enjoy reading? We do!!! Below is our winter reading list. We will **not** be meeting in person in March. Come April, we hope to meet on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm at OUMC.

See you in April.

Wednesday, March 9, 2022: *The Girl Who Came Home* by Hazel Gaynor. Fourteen members of a small village set sail on RMS Titanic, hoping to find a better life in America. For seventeen-year-old Maggie Murphy, the journey is bittersweet. Though her future lies in an unknown new place, her heart remains in Ireland with Séamus, the sweetheart she left behind. When disaster

2022 Church Council

- Church Council Chairperson: Michelle Wood (248)969-2545
- General Fund Treasurer: Becky Sallans (248)628-1289
- Designated Fund Treasurer: Kevin Kater (248)628-7804
- Financial Secretary: Larry Bradford (248)628-5759
- Finance Co-Chairpersons: Bernie Rumbold (248) 391-0973 and AmyBeth Fleischer
- Board of Trustees: David Cischke (248)863-8037 and Michelle Wood (248)969-2545
- SPRC Chairperson: John Warren (248)778-8735
- Worship Team: Michelle Mumbrue (248)969-9173
- Missions & Outreach: John & Devon Warren (248)778-8735
- Adult Bible Study: Sue Rizzo (248)628-1787 and Rosemary Rumbold (248)391-0973
- Education Team: Lynda & Adam Bertich (810)656-1629, Mary Dempsey (810)797-5736, and Amie Von Knorring (248)342-8051
- Camp Ed. Coordinator:
- Marketing:
- Revive Team: Steve Laidlaw (248)801-5924
- UMM President: Fred Nelson (248)628-9826
- UMW / Rachel Circle: Carolyn Lawrie (586)925-2687
- Lay Member to Annual Conference: John Warren (248)778-8735

Church Council meets the last Monday of the odd month at 7pm. All are welcome to attend.

strikes, Maggie is one of the few passengers in steerage to survive. Waking up alone in a New York hospital, she vows never to speak of the terror and panic of that fateful night again. Inspired by true events, *The Girl Who Came Home* poignantly blends fact and fiction to explore the Titanic tragedy's impact and its lasting repercussions on survivors and their descendants.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Bogus (248 747-7544). Hope to see you at Book Discussion!



UM Women: Rachel Circle

Rachel Circle is a true sisterhood of Christian women. We support one another through all of life's challenges.

If you like to enjoy the 4 F's* Come Join Us !

*(Faith, Fellowship, Friendship & Food)

If you are interested in being a Rachel Circle member but cannot fit another meeting into your schedule, Let us know you would like to be in on our events & our church support.

We will gladly add you to our new email newsletter.

Things to know :

We meet the second Monday of each month

Sept. through June at 10am.

The March meeting will be March 14th

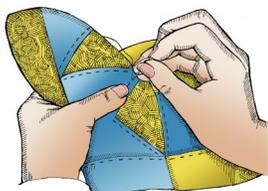
You do not need to be a member of this church to attend, everyone is welcome.



Questions? contact
Carolyn Lawrie
Rachel Circle President

Piece Makers

You are invited to attend the Piece Makers group and help with our prayer quilts. They usually meet on Tuesday afternoons (1st and 3rd weeks) starting at 1pm.



QUILTING GROUP

Do you know someone who would like the comfort of the prayers woven into a quilt during its creation? These quilts are intended for *anyone* who could use a hug and a prayer during challenging times.

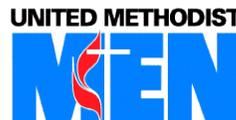
If you have any questions, please contact Linda McIntyre (248-245-7898).

Please keep praying!

UM Men: Band of Brothers

The United Methodist Men focus on Evangelism, Missions, and Spiritual Development.

Questions? Please contact
Fred Nelson, UMM President
(248-628-9826) or
John Warren (248-778-8735).

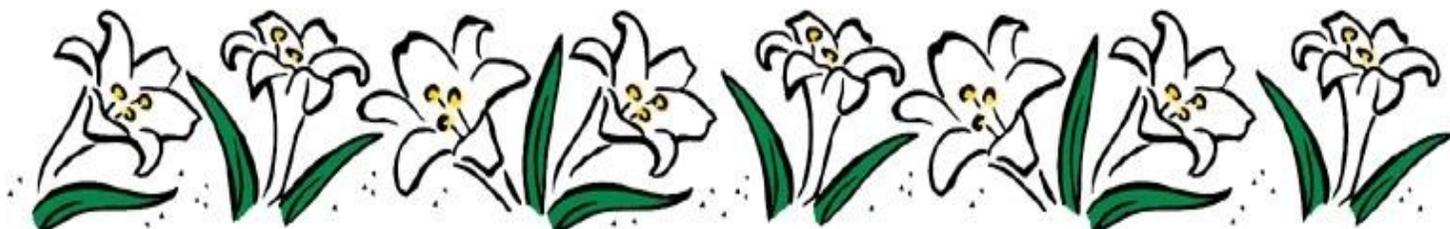


UMC Camping

It's the time of year to think about signing up for Camp! There are many choices at our Michigan United Methodist Camps for all ages and interests. Be sure to go online [www.umcamping.org] to find out the schedule for this year. Forms are also available on the kiosk.

Summer camps are already taking registrations and you can save \$ by registering by April 30th.

Scholarships are also available both from the church and the camps if needed. Contact the church office [248-628-1289] if you need more information.



Education

Mark your Calendars:



March 18th - Game Night
hosted by the Education
Team - 6:30pm

- Bingo will be the main game. Children can bring their own games. More info to follow.



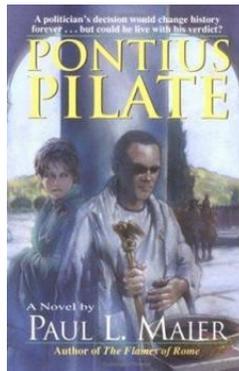
Week of April 10th
(dates/times TBD) -
Confirmation Classes

- Open to 6th graders (entering 7th grade in Fall 2022) and up
- Our Pastor and Mary Dempsey will be leading this class

the Education team - Lynda Bertich, Adam Bertich, Mary Dempsey and Amie Von Knorring

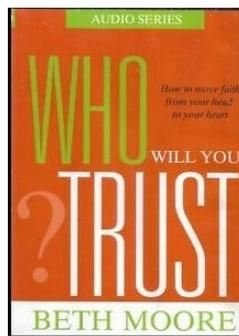
Oxford UMC Book Studies

All Are Welcome!



Wednesday Mornings
Book Study
10:30am
Led by Sue Rizzo &
Rosemary Rumbold

The dramatic, behind-the-scenes story of an ambitious Roman politician whose fateful decision changes the course of history.

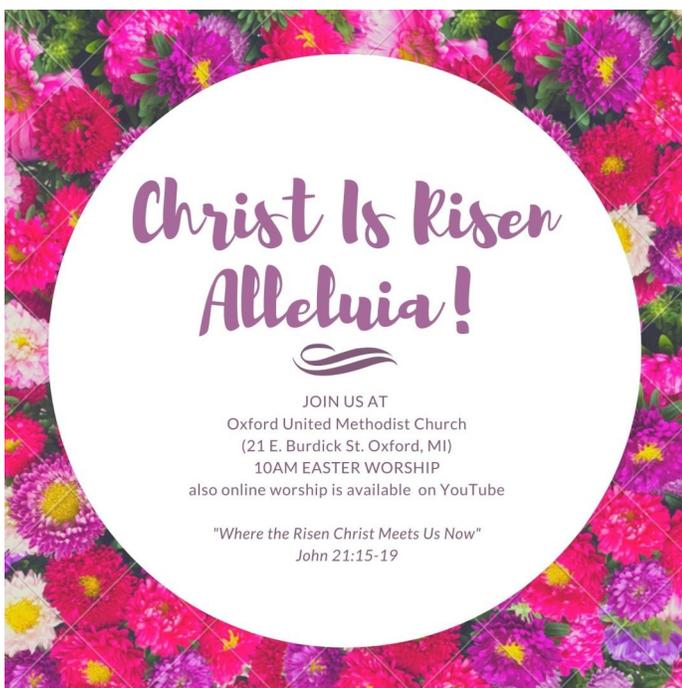


Thursday Evenings
Bible Study
6:30pm
Led by Shawn Gross

you will discover the principles of trusting God in every day life. We must move our faith from the head--just knowing about God and His ability to work in our lives--to the heart where we experience the fullness of a new life in Christ.

↓ *Cut this out and give to a friend!*

Lenten Devotions "Drawn to the Cross" are available - pick yours up on Sunday mornings!



Lent

2022

first day of lent: 3/2/2022

Do something **NICE** for a teacher or pastor.

Make a cross with things you find in nature. *two*

Read a Bible story or book. *3*

Play your favorite game with someone. *four*



four

5



Give someone a hug.

NO sweets today!

six

7

Learn an Easter song.



8

Make a cottonball lamb & think about how Jesus is the Lamb of God.

four



ST

ns why e Easter.

one



22

Draw or purchase an Easter Lily for a friend.

twenty three

Read John 13:1-17 and wash someone's feet.

Have a palm parade around your home.

twenty four

GIVE

one for hing they to you.

25

Draw an Easter picture for your family.

twenty six

Talk to someone or think about why we celebrate Easter.

27

Read about Good Friday. (John 19:16-37)

Go on a nature scavenger hunt & find things that remind you of Jesus.



28



9

Give away something to someone.

Help someone today.

ten

Draw or decorate colorful Easter eggs. *11*



12

Surprise someone with a **SPECIAL NOTE.**



three Play a n the dark ashlights.

Tell someone why you love Jesus.

34



Play stack the Peeps. (See who can stack the most Peeps in a minute.)

35

Collect items in a basket that remind you of Easter.



32

thirty six

GIVE UP Something for the day.



13

Draw a picture with chalk outside.

14

Pray for someone.



GIVE SOMEONE A COMPLIMENT.

15

16

Help with yardwork or pick up a piece of litter.



twenty

Tell God what you are thankful for.

seventeen

Share a meal with someone.

Perform a random act of **KINDNESS.**

18

Download Easter coloring pages, print and color.



19

He is Risen

37

thirty eight

Hold the door open for someone.

39

Read about Jesus' resurrection. (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20)



Attend an Easter service.

Oxford UMC
21 E. Burdick St
Oxford, MI

oumc.office@sbcglobal.net

IT WORKS FOR ME!

GLENN M. WAGNER

Michigan Conference Communications

It has been 49 years since a man asked Glenn Wagner the question, "Why are you a Christian?" He then works years growing in his ability to witness for Jesus.

In 1973, as an exchange student at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, I was introduced to my roommate. Afif, a faithful Sunni Moslem, has since become a cherished long-time friend. One of Afif's first questions after meeting me was, "What is your religion?" His second question followed, "Why are you a Christian?" At the time, I was ill-prepared to answer.

I changed the subject and asked Afif about his faith. He was ready with a reasoned response about why he is a Moslem. He articulately and confidently introduced me to the Five Pillars of Islam, another monotheistic faith that traces its lineage back through Abraham like Christianity and Judaism.

My fumbled initial response when given an opportunity to share my faith convinced me, at that moment, to grow in my understanding of Christianity and in my ability to witness for Jesus.

If anyone asks me today, "Glenn, why are you a Christian?" my simple answer is, "Believing in Jesus and living as his disciple works for me. I believe that, for me, following Jesus is better than any of the many other alternatives offered by our world."

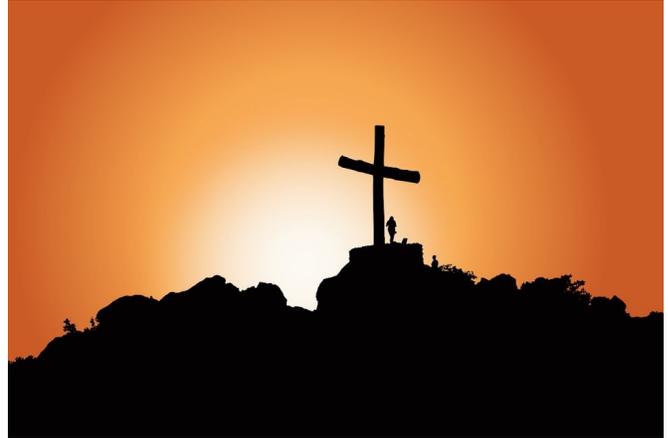
I am a Christian because of ... Jesus.

Jesus is history's most compelling person. We learn about Jesus in the Bible and from what scripture remembers of his life and ministry. Jesus is honored as a worker of miracles. He is a man blessed with courage and wisdom. He continues to be made known globally in art, literature, architecture, through the continuing work of the Holy Spirit and in the life-transforming witness of his disciples everywhere. Christianity teaches that Jesus' death on the cross is a sacrifice of enduring consequence. Life offers all of us multiple choices about who to believe and how to best invest our energy. We can learn good things from other teachers; many are worthy of respect. But I believe that Jesus is the one guide for living who matters most.

These seven pillars of my Christian faith support my decision to love and serve Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

1. **Generosity:** The consequences of greed in our world are readily visible. So are the fruits of sacrificial generosity by way of contrast. God's love is a gift. Jesus' sacrifice is a gift. Salvation is a gift. I have been blessed by the gift of growing in a loving Christian home and community. Jesus' loving example, as presented in the New Testament, has inspired me to lean my life in the direction of sharing, which seems like a better alternative with better observable outcomes than selfishness and greed.
2. **Forgiveness:** I know painfully what the toxic residue

Posted on February 22, 2022



~ image by Gordon Johnson from Pixabay

of broken relationships feels like. I have lived in places where vengeance against perceived wrongs is culturally ingrained and where automatic weapons and barbed wire fencing are used to enforce the uneasy peace disrupted by acts of terror. Yet, I have also been blessed to experience forgiveness and reconciliation and to live in communities where people willingly work to get along as Jesus commanded. Jesus' revolutionary teachings about forgiveness align with my preferred experience of growing and sustaining healthy relationships.

3. **Hope:** I am well acquainted with the reality of grief and the relentless evidence of our mortality. History and geology help me connect with a past that is far older than I am, and astronomy can prove that the universe continues to expand at the speed of light in billions of galaxies. The eternal hope and purpose offered by Jesus that transcends our mortal frames connect me with a vision of the future that works better for me than depressed and self-absorbed skepticism. According to church tradition, most of Jesus' closest disciples died violent deaths defending their belief in Jesus' teaching, lordship, and resurrection. Chuck Colson, sentenced to prison for crimes committed during President Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal in 1974, observed after his conversion to Christianity and release that people asked to defend a lie are rarely willing to suffer for a falsehood. Jesus' disciples maintained their faith in Jesus despite the consequences because of their hope in Jesus as risen Lord that they believed to be a truth they were willing to die to defend.
4. **Community:** I have learned in working with suicidal and depressed people in mental health and hospital settings that essential ingredients in a happy, healthy, and productive life are the significant relationships we build in our connections with others. Classmates, family, friends, work colleagues, and parishioners can all be significant contributors to our mental and emotional health. Suicidal and severely depressed people, like a leaf detached from a tree, have lost

life-enriching contact in healthy relationships with others. Active participation in faith communities has grown relationships that sustain and enrich my spirit. It has been my experience that many of the great efforts to improve the world by education, science, medicine, community organizing, and relief efforts in times of disaster have been motivated by Jesus' disciples.

5. **Consequences:** I know many extremely profitable and very public businesses prey upon the foolish and the vulnerable, leaving behind a rising mountain of expensive social consequences. My grandparents called these "sin businesses." I value the disciplines of a United Methodist upbringing that invite life choices as John Wesley encouraged "with a single eye" and striving to give glory and honor to God in all things. I know that churches, like people, can also be guilty of sin, but I have been moved to devote my life to serving with people who are making a difference living out their faith. Loving Jesus helps me say no to personal choices known to lead to destructive ends. I prefer to live so that the small piece of earth I inhabit will be better because I have lived in it as a disciple of Jesus.
6. **Reasonable Boundaries:** After a hike to the summit of Mount Sinai in 1993, I spent some private devotional time overlooking the foreboding wilderness. The insight struck me that God's Ten Commandments reportedly issued to Moses in that location ([Exodus 20:2-17](#)) were essential to help mold a disparate group of former slaves into a surviving community. In 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville observed in his book, *Democracy in America*, that our democracy depends upon an educated and moral citizenry that has the wisdom to choose the good freely. I value the way the Bible has set moral boundaries and promotes the priority of love for God and neighbor. I believe that loving and serving Jesus outweigh the alternatives in helping to support and sustain healthy community life. I know that respecting faithful boundaries works for me.

7. **A growing awareness of God's presence in life:** I am a beneficiary of medicine, science, technology, and good fortune. My ministry has also made me aware of a deeper spiritual dimension to our existence. I have experienced the healing power of prayer and moments of wonder by being present at the birth of a child, the sudden healing of a seriously ill person, and the death of a loved one. I believe that God has designed the miracle of life into the blueprint for creation, and the joy of learning and discovery helps to give the experience of living sustaining purpose. I am grateful for gifted mentors who have helped me appreciate the Holy Spirit's working. Loving Jesus has helped me to deepen my appreciation for life.

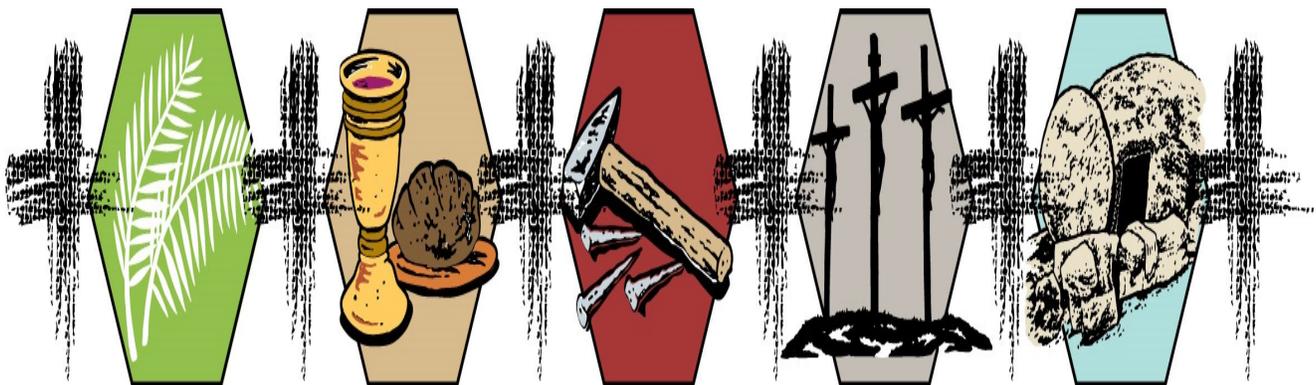
I agree with historian Jon Meacham who writes, "When I am asked, as I occasionally am, how it is that I can believe in God, I answer as honestly and straightforwardly as I can. I believe in God on the same evidence that I believe in love. Both are invisible forces with visible effects." ([The Hope of Glory, p. 68-69](#))

Why are you a Christian?

This surprise question from a friend of a different faith has led me to a lifetime quest for understanding. I pray that similar questions of faith can also be helpful for your spiritual growth.

Prayer: God, help us learn through our experience what we believe and why we believe it. May our convictions then guide our actions and inform our relationships in line with your highest hopes for each of us. And when our beliefs are out of date with your plans for our future, give us the wisdom to adapt our hearts and habits to your better ways. Please help us to give capable witness to our faith.

Posted in [Faith & Life](#), [Faith & Ministry](#)
<https://michiganumc.org/it-works-for-me/>



MARCH

Oxford United
Methodist Church
21 E. Burdick St.
Oxford, MI 48371

2022

[This calendar is online at:
www.oxfordunitedmc.org]

Please Note: We ask all to wear a mask even if you have been vaccinated,
wash your hands often; if you touch something please disinfect if after use.
Please stay home if you are feeling sick.

Usual Events :

<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Mondays</u>	<u>Tuesdays</u>	<u>Wednesdays</u>	<u>Thursdays</u>	<u>Fridays</u>	<u>Saturdays</u>
10a (S) Worship	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 12p Program Deadline 1p (CD/F/K) Quilting Projects (1st & 3rd weeks After February)	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 10:30a (F/FK) Wednesday Book Study 10:30a - 3:30p (P) Pastor Julius' Office Hours (Call for apt.) 6:30p (S) Bell Choir Practice	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 6:30p (MM) Women's Bible Study with Shawn Gross	10:30a (SK) Meals on Wheels 2p (U) Knit Knack	9:30a (F/FK) People Feeding People

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
		1	2  7:30p Worship Ashes 12noon & 8pm	3	4	5
6 1ST SUNDAY IN LENT  HOLY COMMUNION 11:15a (U) Revive Team	7 7p (Zoom) Trustees	8	9	10 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;">(Office Closed)</div>	11	12
13 2ND SUNDAY IN LENT  DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME	14 10a (F/FK) Rachel Circle 7p (Zoom) Worship Team	15	16	17	18 6:30p (W) Game Night	19
20 3RD SUNDAY IN LENT Bells Ring Today Brunch	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 4TH SUNDAY IN LENT	28 7p (Zoom) Church Council					

APRIL 2022

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					1	2
 3 5TH SUNDAY IN LENT HOLY COMMUNION	4	5 6:30p (U) Revive Team	6	7	8	9
10 PALM SUNDAY	11 10a (F/FK) Rachel Circle 7p (Zoom) Worship Team	12	13	14 <i>Maunder Thursday</i>	15 <i>Good Friday</i>	16
17 EASTER SUNDAY <i>Bells Ring Today</i> <i>Brunch</i>	18 <i>(Office Closed)</i>	19	20	21	22	23
24 2ND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	25	26	27	28	29	30

Oxford United Methodist Church
21 E Burdick Street
Oxford, MI 48371

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We thank all who create, fold, mail and read The Grapevine!



Regular Sunday Worship:

(and also join us either online or via radio)

10:00 a.m. Worship

10:20a.m. Sunday School to classes
(during Worship Service, Sept - May)

Coffee & Refreshments after service

All Are Welcome!