

# NEWSLETTER



August 3, 2023

**Join Us In-Person or  
Livestream**

**OCUM Church starting at  
10:00a.m.**

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*A place where we "Love Others and Value Everyone"!*

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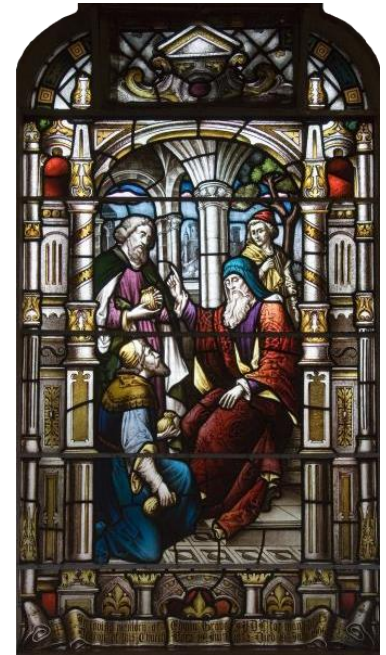


August greetings to the family and friends of OCUMC!

I hope this new month is finding you well and held secure in the love of God and Jesus Christ. It is a beautiful day of sunshine and warmth. Granted, at times it's a bit too warm, and we might long for cooler weather and a touch of that abundant rain we get from mid Fall to mid Spring. None-the-less, this is a day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

This past Sunday I preached on understanding parables in light of context and culture in response to a question about understanding the stories Jesus told. I used the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30 to show how a parable could have multiple meanings depending on how you read it. In the case of this parable, where three servants are given different amounts of money and told to go invest them, I pulled out three meanings.

1. God gives us gifts, each according to our ability, we are meant to use and grow for the good of the kin-dom.
2. God gives us shares of love and mercy we are to spread throughout humanity, growing it and reproducing it, that all may know God's love and mercy.
3. Those who walk in "The Way" (Christianity before it was called Christianity) are called to step out of a system that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.



I was asked a question after Sunday's service about the servant with one talent. *What does it mean for the faithful person who steps out of the system when the master throws them out "into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 25:30, NCV)?* That's a very good question and I wanted to take a moment to answer it.

In this third interpretation, in the honor and shame culture, the master, a harsh man who admits to taking what he did not work for and making his wealth on the backs of others (Matt. 25:24-26), does not put any of his wealth back into society. He builds no honor for himself and would be disrespected in the community. This is one of the reasons Zacchaeus was shown no love before Jesus came to his home for dinner (Luke 19:1-10). He was a rich man who took what was not his and hadn't put anything back into the community.

However, the faithful one who steps out of the system, who does not perpetuate the harmful cycle the master has become wealthy off of, has created honor for themself and would be respected by the community. The master's words carry no weight. The place of darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth is the exact place where this faithful one needs to be... in restorative ministry to the last, the least, and the lost.

So, what *did* happen to the servant who stepped out of the system and was cast out? They broke free from the status quo and found true freedom to be about the work of the kin-dom of God. They were about this work, healing humanity's brokenness, until the Son of Man in Matthew 25:31 (not to be confused with the master) returns to set things right in the final judgment.

Does Jesus not call us in our 21<sup>st</sup> century reality to do the same? Are we not called to step out of a system that continues to make the rich richer and the poor poorer? Are we not called to give voice to the voiceless, to advocate for the oppressed, to liberate the captives, to hold our leaders accountable, to create systems of love and mercy, equity and equality, justice with peace? And we can certainly use God's good gifts to share God's love and mercy in this way.

Just some food for thought.

Pastor Tom

# What's Happening This Week

**Friday, August 4**

**Saturday, August 5**

10:00am – "I'm a Good Person! Isn't That Enough?" Oak Grove United Methodist Church

**Sunday, August 6**

8:30am – Searches Class  
10:00am – Worship Service  
11:00am – Brunch Goodies

**Monday, August 7**

10:00am – SPRT Meeting

**Tuesday, August 8**

**Wednesday, August 9**

1:00pm – HOPE Food Pantry  
5:00pm – Worship Design Team

**Thursday, August 10**

10:00am – Women's Study Group

**Friday, August 11**



# Vacation Bible School

## Food Truck Party

Thank you to all our wonderful, talented, committed and amazing volunteers! A huge thank you to everyone who served on the VBS team, donated time, items, and resources, and was praying for our VBS program, students, and volunteers throughout the week! We could not provide these kinds of opportunities without the support and prayers of our amazing church family!



Our Mission Project for VBS was to help stock the HOPE Food Pantry with CEREAL!!!



**AUGUST 5TH 10AM-3PM**

"I'm a Good Person!  
Isn't That Enough?"

OAK GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
503-654-3161

**REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH & FREE BOOK FOR THE FIRST 100 PEOPLE**

**Debby Irving**  
RACIAL JUSTICE  
EDUCATOR  
AND AUTHOR

As we talk about walking the M.I.L.E. in this season, we have an opportunity to engage with the "E" - Elimination of Racism. We are invited to attend a community event at Oak Grove UMC with Debby Irving, a racial justice educator and author.



WHITEHEAD, VINCENT	08/02
MARGESON, SANDEE	08/10
PALMER, CHRISTA	08/10
STERLE, DENISE	08/10
JOHNSON, SHARI	08/11
FERGUSON, DICK	08/13
SPAINHOWER, KATHY	08/16
WARD, GAIL	08/18
ENGEL, DAWN	08/31

## Challenge the Preacher Sermon Series

Pastor Tom asked you to submit your hard questions about Scripture and faith. You all did not disappoint! Pastor Tom will be preaching on your questions through the Summer. Here is the line-up of sermons to come through the next five weeks. If you submitted a sermon suggestion, you can check here, or on our website (click or hover over *Worship*, then go to *This Week & Beyond*) to see when Pastor Tom will preach on your question.

Some submissions have been combined due to similarity of topic.



### Challenge the Preacher

#### Sunday, August 6

*Why Do We Believe in Christ?*  
Colossians 1:15-20 & John 6:26-40

**Original questions:** “Why do we believe in Christ?”  
“And is it possible to clarify *Son of Man* and *Son of God*?”

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#### Sunday, August 13

*A Question of Worth*  
John 15:9-17, Romans 3:21-25a

**Original question:** “God seems so far away. I don’t feel worthy of God’s forgiveness. How can I be God’s servant?”

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#### Sunday, August 20

*Vanity of Vanities*  
Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

**Original question:** “I have trouble with Ecclesiastes 1:2. It seems rather negative.”

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#### Sunday, August 27

*Created in the Image*  
Genesis 1:26-28a, 2:7-8, 15-20a

**Original question:** “How do we understand the image of God? How are we created in the image of God?”

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#### Sunday, September 3

*What Did God Say?*  
2 Peter 1:12-21

**Original question:** “What is the best version of the Bible? How accurate is the translation?”

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We  
love  
because  
He first  
loved us.

1 John 4:19

## Upcoming EVENTS

### Brunch Goodies

Sunday, August 6 @ 11:00am

Please come and enjoy some Brunch Goodies and great fellowship after service.

### SPRT Meeting

Monday, August 7 @ 10:00am

### Fellowship Conversations

Sunday, August 13 @ 11:00am

In recognizing our identity as a "Reconciling Congregation", we are being asked to live into this identity more fully. This has the potential to create questions, concerns, and anxiety. "Fellowship Conversations" is an opportunity to raise those questions and concerns in a safe space, be heard, and receive a response in gentleness. Please join us for this mealtime conversation.



### Church Council Meeting

Sunday, August 20 @ 11:15am

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## Our Weekly Giving Moment

Men's Ministry Sunday celebrates men's ministry within and beyond the local church. The observance includes organized [United Methodist Men](#) units; men's Emmaus reunion communities, work teams, prayer groups, Bible study and enrichment groups; and other places and organizations where men of The United Methodist Church join for fellowship, nurture, spiritual development, witness and outreach.

Why is men's ministry important?

- Men lead others best by modeling Jesus Christ in thoughts, words and deeds.
- Spiritual maturity is signified in spiritual reproduction, as the faith of mature disciples passes on in others.
- Men growing in Christ become effective spiritual leaders in their homes and congregations, working as partners with their spouses and congregational leaders—both lay and clergy.
- Spiritually growing men help congregations to become vital and alive.
- Everything desired from and through men comes as a result of men growing spiritually and maturing as disciples: family blessings, stewardship, service, outreach, prayer, spiritual leadership, lifestyle evangelism and faithful obedience. Men are foundational to the life and health of the church.
- When a man lives daily in surrendered faith, God is honored and many lives are blessed. Transformed hearts are forged only within Christ-centered lives—nothing less is our acceptable offering; nothing less truly reveals Christ.

(from <https://www.gcumm.org/ministry-to-men>)