



OAKWOOD
CHURCH

Annual Report

'23-

'24

Table of Contents

01

Lead Pastor

02

Elders

03

Operations

04

Community Partners

05

Global Partners

06

Worship + Creative Arts

07

Guest Care

08

Mens Ministry

09

Womens Ministry

10

Student Ministry

11

Kids Ministry

12

Communications

13

Building + Grounds

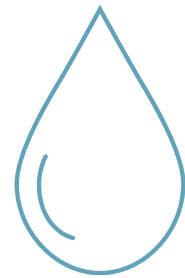
14

Stories

Oakwood,

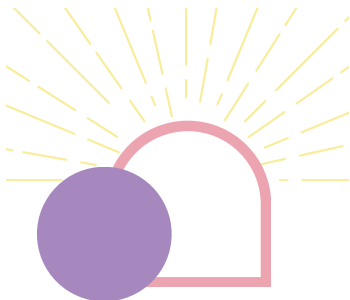
First, let me thank you for calling me to be your Lead Pastor in November. I can't tell you how much I appreciate Daryl Donovan's work as the Interim Pastor, as well as the work of the Elders, Transition Team, and Search Team. Many hours of thought, prayer, and hard work have gone into this transition process, and I can see the health it has produced as I have stepped into my new role.

Looking back, we have seen God do amazing things. Take a look at the infographics in this letter to see a few highlights. We've also made a few staff-related changes this year. First, I have removed the Associate Pastor position. As the church continues to grow and budget allows, we can add this position. For now, I will work with the staff to oversee programs and with the elders to shepherd our people. Sarah Hayden will be moving from a part-time role to a full-time role to oversee a discipleship pathway, as well as key ministry areas (small groups, women, etc.). We also hired Caleb Garnett to be Oakwood's next Youth Pastor. Finally, we contracted with Triun3, a consulting company that will be working with our treasurer, staff, and me to enhance our financial processes and procedures, build future budgets, and more.



8 Baptisms This Year

Easter Weekend



12 Completed Connect Cards
3 Committed to Christ
1 Baptism

On Good Friday we tried something new by having both a soup and bread dinner, as well as the Good Friday service. On that day we had 12 new people fill out connect cards, numerous people fill out prayer requests, three say they want to commit to Christ for the first time, 12 people say that they want to re-commit to Christ, and one person made a decision to be baptized. Then on Easter Sunday, our elders prayed for people in the lobby over several commitments to church, to mission, as well as other needs. And, perhaps the biggest highlight for me, throughout the year we have witnessed eight people publicly declare their faith in Jesus through Baptism. There is no doubt that we have seen God do some incredible things this year at Oakwood! I'm confident that as you read through the reports from our staff and elders you will be encouraged by all that God has done this year.

So, what is in store for us this next year at Oakwood? I can't predict the future, but I know one thing – God will be at work in it. Throughout the year you have heard the elders share about moving to a governance structure. This has had many benefits, including discerning God's direction for Oakwood, who He wants us to reach, and what impact we can have on peoples' lives. Rather than put a particular deadline on this work, we have continued to faithfully make progress. Once that work is done, staff will determine how to achieve the ends to which God is calling us. We will then share this with the congregation and work toward those ends together as a church. I am excited about this process and can't wait to see what God will reveal through it! In the meantime, we will continue to carry out our vision to be a community that loves Jesus and lives to make His love known.



Giving increased
by **13%**

We will:

- Seek to be living in authentic relationships
- Worship the Lord Jesus
- Boldly declare our love for Him in our community
- Find ways to love and serve one another
- Worship and pray together
- Serve our community and support our local partners
- Seek to glorify God in the way that we live

I shared with one of our elders that I truly believe God is setting up to do something amazing here at Oakwood, and I'm privileged to have a front row seat for it. I hope you feel the same!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Haslar".

Matthew Haslar
Lead Pastor



287

Members assigned to an elder representative



Convened a subcommittee to review and recommend changes to our bylaws

3

Developed and enacted these governance policies:

- **Board-Senior Pastor Linkage Policy:** How the board interacts with the Lead Pastor
- **Governance Process Policy:** How the board will ensure Oakwood achieves its mission and avoids unacceptable actions and situations
- **Executive Limitations Policy:** Nine limitations the Lead Pastor must abide by in executing the church mission



Looking Back

- Celebrated Pastor Daryl and Elaine, and welcomed Pastor Matthew and the Haslar family. What a joy to see the Lord's work over the transition come to fruition.
- Prayerfully shifted to a shepherding role to care for the Oakwood community
- Joyfully prayed for the needs of our congregation
- Discerned the Lord's desire for us to shore up our governance and administration to make more room for shepherding. A local consultant who specializes in governance came along side us to show us a better way.

Looking Ahead

- Continuing to discern the Lord's will and purpose for Oakwood, including completing the work we're doing to define the impacts we want to make within our church and the broader community
- Completing the governance changes that will empower us to spend more time living out the shepherding responsibilities to make Oakwood a genuine community of people that loves Jesus and lives to make His love known

Scott Walker
Elder Chairman



740

Hours filled by volunteer receptionists Dana Murdock, Ann Gapinski, and Sally Schultz

17

Different groups or individuals using our facilities (building and/or grounds) for their events



1,700

Guests came through our doors during three large music concerts open to the public



Looking Back

- Created a team of volunteers to serve at funeral services and receptions here at Oakwood. Thank you to Gail Pope and Judy Witas for leading a team that cares for Oakwood attendees and friends during a difficult time
- Worked with His Human Resources Team to create a new employee handbook with several changes to better support our staff
- Welcomed Donna Bandler as an Administrative Assistant in August
- Significant upgrades and improvements to Oakwood's many support systems (internet, IT, phones, etc.) for both staff and volunteer efficiency

Looking Ahead

- Increasing the amount of volunteer coverage time in the office from 44% to 65%
- Installing a new telephone and building access system to be run out of the church office to improve functional use and safety of our physical building, and provide a better usage experience for our staff, volunteers, and guests

Becki Behrens
Director of Operations



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

04

220

Operation Christmas Child boxes filled through Oakwood, which means 220 kids heard the gospel

330

Meals for Family Promise and Partners in Hope, including 84 hours of volunteer time serving meals



165

Boxes/packages of diapers donated to HeartLove Place

43

Back-to-school kits for kids in Milwaukee through our partner HeartLove Place



Looking Back

- Added Community Warehouse/Partners in Hope as a new, financially-supported Community Partner after four years of praying and searching for the right partner to add
- Shared the love of Jesus with two of our Community Partners Family Promise (gifts for homeless families) and Exploit No More (female trafficking survivors) during Mission Christmas
- Served monthly at Family Promise, providing meals and spending time with families in their program
- Hosted most of our Community Partners during the 2023 Summer Picnic

Looking Ahead

- Holding Community Partnership Day at Oakwood on Oct. 13 as a new way to connect partners with attendees, giving them the opportunity to sign up to serve and share Jesus with others
- Looking for new and ongoing opportunities to serve our Community Partners throughout the year (be sure to sign up for the new Outreach email list to hear more about these opportunities!)



Gerrylynn Ferguson
Community Partnership Coordinator

15

Global Partners after
adding three new partners

192

Languages launched a
Scripture translation with
our support (71 completed
the New Testament and 6
completed the Old
Testament)



6

Primers and readers
created in a previously
unwritten language thanks
to our support of Susie

22

Language communities in
Africa and Asia received the
New Testament



Looking Back

- The Promise Home in Congo sent its first young man with a disability to theological school to become a pastor
- Hosted two educational/informational sessions about the persecuted church, led by Isaac and Abraham from the MENA region
- Sent a team of 23 teens and adults to minister to orphans at Esperanza Viva in Mexico in June. This is our third consecutive trip to this orphanage

Looking Ahead

- Visiting Don and Kim Gillaspie in Canada in October 2024 with a team of five from Oakwood
- Hosting a Global Partners weekend in March 2025
- ReachGlobal partners launching a new team in an unreached region of North Africa

Sonja Anderson
Missions Coordinator



WORSHIP + CREATIVE ARTS

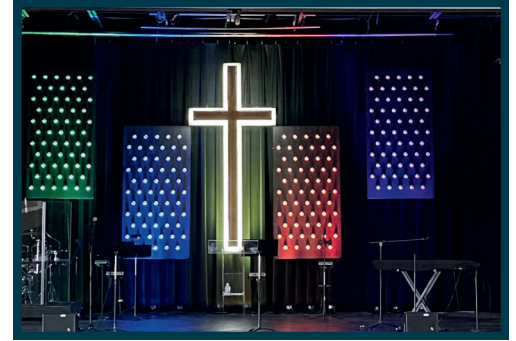
06

800+

People involved in
Gracenotes concerts,
including some who don't
know Jesus

150+

Videos recorded, edited,
and shared



15

Sundays in which kids and
youth were a part of the
worship service



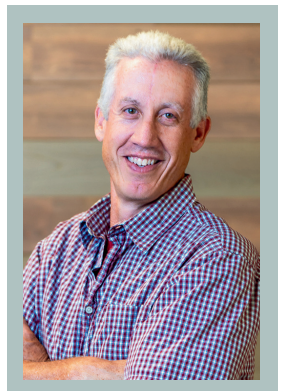
Looking Back

- Updated the stage design to take advantage of the colored lighting capabilities we have
- Introduced new people to Oakwood through the Gracenotes Orchestra concerts at Christmas and in the spring
- Increased Kids Ministry participation in Sunday worship services
- Clearer overall sound and monitor mixes with the integration of an in-ear monitor system

Looking Ahead

- Continuing to feature opportunities during which music and the arts can connect people to Jesus, such as the Gracenotes jazz ensemble playing at the Summer Picnic, and Gracenotes Orchestra playing on Nov. 30, 2024 and May 3, 2025

Tom Hooper
Worship + Creative Arts Director



30

New Oakwood members

92

Welcome emails sent to
guests (as of June 1)



30

People hosted at
Newcomers' Receptions



Looking Back

- Selected new book for guest packets
- Hosted a Medical Team Open House and set up a new scheduling system
- Formed a more robust Guest Care Team, including leads for welcoming, medical, security, and Newcomers' Reception teams to better coordinate the hospitality ministries
- Refined a cohesive membership process with new vision and values included
- Sent monthly communications for guests to invite them to Oakwood ministry participation

Looking Ahead

- Increasing Guest Care Team leadership development and coordination
- Integrating Guest Care initiatives into other church ministries

Sarah Hayden
Guest Care Director



2

Baptisms at the Fall Retreat (35 men total in attendance)

4

New Iron Sharpening Iron small groups that contain 2-3 men walking with Christ together



40

Men attended the No Regrets Conference in February and half came back to Oakwood to participate in the debrief event

2

Bridgebuilders projects, including a team to drive Sally Dillner to church and fixing the roof at Milwaukee House of Prayer



Looking Back

- Sent regular communications that include a devotional, event information, and group opportunities so men could connect and grow their faith
- Ensured regular programming for men, including the Father/Son Bonfire in July when we found a gap in the schedule - an easy addition with a big impact
- Saw a growth spurt at MMOG and watched as God answered many of our prayers

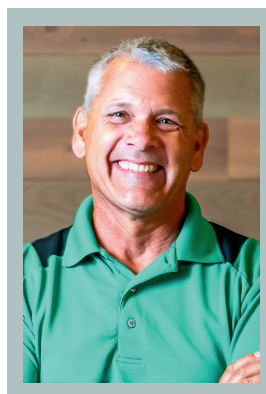
Looking Ahead

- Promoting the Iron Sharpening Iron small group concept (2-3 men) and increasing the number of men walking together as we follow Christ
- Hosting the Fall Kickoff again - a light way to engage more men
- Introducing a new fall study group during Wednesday Night Community

Matthew Haslar
Lead Pastor



Don Douglas
Facilities Manager



WOMENS MINISTRY

09

240

Women attended the Women's Christmas Event with 40% of those who filled out the feedback form being first-time attendees

\$5,000

Raised for Esperanza Viva during the Women's Christmas Event through 35 donated experiences for the silent auction



100

Women attended the Whatever Is True Women's Conference with 15% of attendees under the age of 30

34

Moms regularly attended Just Among Moms this winter during Love and Logic parenting classes, with 14 of them new to the ministry



Looking Back

- Provided financial support for women to invite guests to the Women's Christmas Event, including a lower ticket price, table discounts, and free tickets for guests
- Increased involvement of young women and students (attending Wednesday Night Community, serving on worship and drama teams for special events, attending the Women's Conference)
- Formed a women's council that meets regularly to set and evaluate goals
- Co-led breakout session about discipling in women's ministry at the FLD spring conference
- Added women's group options, including Wednesday mornings and multiple options for the fall Wednesday Night Community, with steadily growing attendance

Looking Ahead

- Developing plans for further investing in young women
- Equipping Oakwood women to engage unbelieving women

Sarah Hayden
Womens Ministry Director



1

Student chose to take his faith public through baptism

15

Roles filled by key volunteers each week

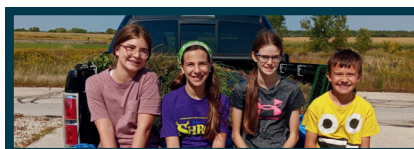
6

Students went on the Mexico Mission Trip

30

Average number of students attending Sunday and Wednesday programming learning about:

- Jesus on every page of the Bible
- Individual Books of the Bible studies
- Topical studies
- Evidence for the Bible



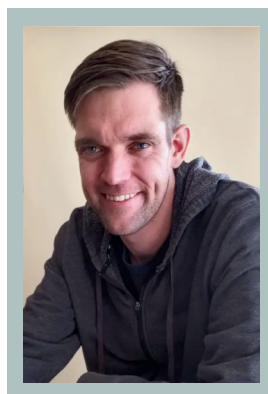
Looking Back

- Increased understanding of how Jesus is on every page of the Bible as five students and three leaders laughed and built relationships during the fall Middle School Camp
- Deepened faith through experiences of intentional learning and corporate worship for the 12 high school students able to make it to Districts (no thanks to the snow for forcing many to stay behind)
- Hosted a learning event for students and adults featuring Jay Seegert, who shared how science shows that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God
- Introduced 11 guests to Oakwood Student Ministries through the 29 middle school and 5th grade students who came to Survivor Night (consuming 15 pounds of food, 10 of which were gummy worms)
- Offered three service projects and four social gatherings for further relationship building

Looking Ahead

- Enhancing Oakwood Student Ministry with a new Youth Pastor
- Providing faith-building opportunities, including intentional programming, trips, and opportunities to develop relationships
- Recruiting more volunteers (special thanks to the dedicated crew who has stuck with us through the transition)

Chris Schmidt
Interim Student Ministry Director



60

Kids Ministry volunteers,
including 7 who are new
this year

\$1,140.83

Raised in Kids Ministry
offering that funded four
special projects



77/26

Sunday and Wednesday night
attendance averages,
respectively

3

Kids baptized this year!

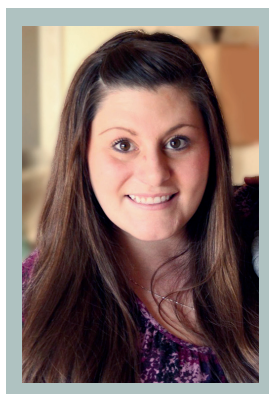


Looking Back

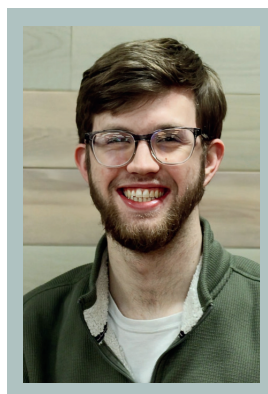
- Hosted the 2nd Annual Kids Day Camp where kids learned Psalm 25:4, "Show me your ways Lord; teach me your path." For the 3rd Annual Kids Day Camp on July 31, we expanded with a morning session for preschoolers and a "bring a friend for free" option.
- Sold out the interactive I Spy Easter event that drew in eight guest families. Participants walked through stations learning the events of Easter and teaching families new ways to engage with kids throughout the holiday.
- Updated the Family Resource Board (in the upper hallway near The Cafe) with resource recommendations for parents and upcoming event information
- Welcomed Seth Smith to the Kids Ministry Staff from January – July. His primary focus was leading Wednesday Night Community kids programming and teaming with volunteers on Survivor Night to help bridge the 5th graders into Oakwood Student Ministry.

Looking Ahead

- Hosting a booth at Hartland's National Night Out to connect with local families and invite them to Oakwood
- Partnering with kids and parents by offering three additional life-stage classes
- Hiring a part-time Kids Ministry Coordinator



Ashley Schmidt
Kids Ministry Director



Seth Smith
Kids Ministry Coordinator

30,000+

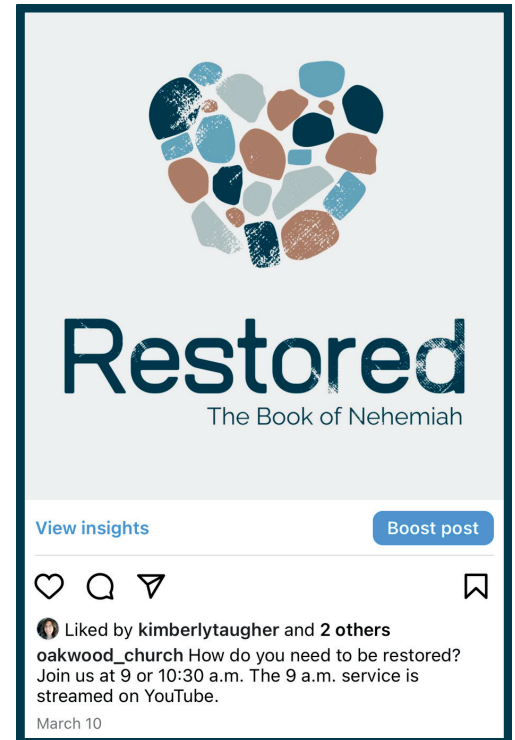
People reached on social media (Instagram and Facebook are the primary channels)

\$1,552

Given to student trips from The Cafe proceeds

18%

More YouTube subscribers who are watching Oakwood sermons and instructional videos



Looking Back

- Executed a few social media advertising campaigns that have proven to be fruitful for awareness of Oakwood and its ministries at a minimal cost
- Created a variety of intentional graphics for sermon series, events, social media, and more
- Streamlined how internal and external ministry events are shared across Oakwood's many communications channels, which has improved day-to-day operations and enhanced long-term planning
- Formalized processes for The Cafe, including student reimbursement guidelines, volunteer job descriptions and responsibilities, and feedback and clean up procedures

Looking Ahead

- Leveraging the success we've had with external ads and communications to draw people to Oakwood's ministries and, inevitably, Jesus
- Continuing to improve The Cafe offerings on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings and increase the amount of volunteers. Thank you to Mary Jo McClure for doing an excellent job planning, managing inventory, and developing volunteer teams in The Cafe.

Sarah Duwe
Communications Director



BUILDING + GROUNDS

13

30+

Volunteers helped clean up the grounds in May during a work day at Oakwood

\$0

Paid for new security cameras that go with the new security system, which we received at cost

+2

Volunteers added to the mowing team for a total of 8, so each team can mow less



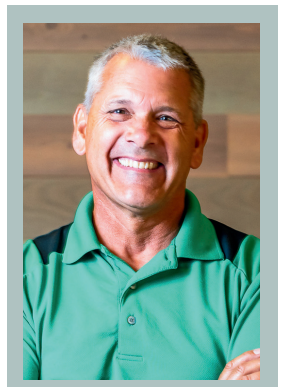
Looking Back

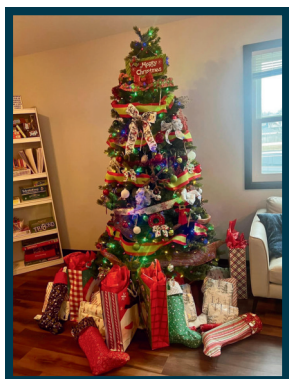
- Installed new LED parking lot lighting
- Received a load of donated plantings that are now growing throughout the grounds
- Inspected the roof and discovered hail damage, which allowed us to receive new roofing to all shingled areas for only the cost of our deductible - a huge blessing
- Re-established the Building and Grounds Committee, and began monthly meetings in June

Looking Ahead

- Adding to our security system new cameras for the parking lot, worship center, and high school room
- Looking into adding a wheelchair-accessible door entry system for the lower entry area
- With our 3-5-year visionary budget, we will be enhancing the curb appeal to the entryways and around the grounds
- Anticipating a re-pavement project to begin soon after the mortgage payments are completed

Don Douglas
Facilities Manager





“In December when I was delivering Christmas items to Exploit No More (ENM), I was able to have a conversation with a staff member and she shared the need for help with organizing donations and clothing that had recently been dropped off. She was overwhelmed. We put the request out for volunteers and we had 10 people sign up to serve for four-and-a-half hours! We worked as a team getting everything organized and the ENM staff was so appreciative. This was a huge blessing. I'm so grateful for Oakwood's volunteers that are here to serve our Community Partners.”

Gerrylynn Ferguson
Community Partnerships

“A friend's mom recently passed away, and a special song was played at her funeral that had significant meaning to her and her family. We sang that same song (chosen by the Lord) for her first Sunday back at Oakwood. I had scheduled it a week earlier, but the Lord changed my plans by not allowing any of my singers to make it that Sunday, so it was postponed a week to exactly when she came back and was able to be encouraged by hearing us share it. I'm continually reminded of the way the Lord leads our schedules and how His plan and His timing are so much better than ours.”

Tom Hooper
Worship + Creative Arts



“The last few years I have invited my daughter-in-law to the Women's Christmas Event. We have treasured this time together. She had always enjoyed it as a social event, but last Christmas she said she felt something different. For the first time, Bibles were given away and I told her to take one. A friend marked John 3:16, I marked John 14:6, and we told her to read them. When she went home, she read them out loud to my son. I was thrilled for them to be open to reading the Bible! A few months later, my friend and I visited them. We prayed for an opening. I had it in my heart to ask her if I could send her a Scripture verse each week and she said yes. I know she has read some to my son, and after a couple of weeks she said, “keep them coming.” I have sent her one every week with a little explanation, but I do not write out the verse so she can enjoy looking them up herself and learning her Bible.”

Betty Nakielski
On Behalf of Women's Ministry

“Two students from OSM started their own Bible study at their school. Many other students joined them during the course of the year and have been in contact with their small group leaders to discuss what and how to study the Bible. As many as 17 students have attended in a day! The study has spilled into Wednesday nights where several students joined in on regular Wednesday Night Community in the spring.”

Chris Schmidt
Interim Student Ministry Director



“One of the gifts of being a staff member is that we get time to serve each year. Instead of taking that time in one large chunk like a mission trip, I take that time to co-lead a Bible study - Women of the Word on Wednesday mornings. That group of women and time in the Word has grounded me and reminded me of the gift of ministry. And we can see God working through it. Women have brought friends going through hard times or those who don't know Jesus. We've prayed and supported each other, and one of our guests became a regular attendee at Oakwood and was baptized. Praise the Lord for how He uses us in different ways for the good of His Kingdom!”

Sarah Duwe
Communications Director

“Volunteer teaching has been a fun way to do something other than my day job. Originally, I wasn't sure how I'd fit. Since teaching isn't my vocation, I didn't know if I was qualified - I just knew I wanted to learn more about the curriculum my daughters were learning. Having a weekly Leader Study has focused my attention, expanded my own connection to Bible stories, and helped me appreciate the great, meticulous plan of God! Now, as I read through lesson plans, I have my Bible and dictionary side-by-side. I've started taking a deeper dive into the words, making sure I know the meaning and understand what these stories are telling us. I'm having biblical “ah-ha!” moments with the third graders for stories I've heard a hundred times before. I love the Sunday morning high fives, worship dances, “blind Q&A” for snacks, and all the creativity our third graders bring. This is a really great group of kids, and I am honored to be a part of their journey at Oakwood.”

Stef Ottmar
On Behalf of Kids Ministry





“During a chance meeting with Pat Feder during the Christmas holiday, he mentioned Oakwood’s Mighty Men of God (MMOG) and invited me to stop by. I’m so glad I did! I’ve now been attending a few mornings each week for the past five months. It has filled a void in my life that I didn’t even realize existed. In a world full of confusion, division, and discouragement, what a joy it is to start the day in warm fellowship, prayer, and God’s Word. I find myself encouraged in my walk with Christ, challenged to live more like Him, and emboldened to share His gospel. For the past few years my wife and I had been struggling to find a church home. MMOG was the onramp for us to explore membership at Oakwood. As we’ve plugged in, we’ve been so blessed by Pastor Matthew’s teaching and have found a beautiful community of Spirit-filled believers who love Jesus and love each other. We are so thankful that God orchestrated that “chance meeting” with Pat last year. God is so faithful!

Jerry (and Ruth) Jacobson
On Behalf of Men’s Ministry

“Ron and I started to attend Oakwood after I woke up with an extraordinarily strong calling to involve ourselves in a church. We were faithful, but unassociated with a church or a particular denomination. We had driven by Oakwood and decided we would try it out. As soon as we entered that first time, we felt welcomed. We were at once greeted and aided in bringing our children to the student locations. Sarah Hayden invited us to attend the Newcomers’ Reception and other members encouraged us to join Wednesday Night Community. This served to help us grow our connections with existing members and further understand the church. I was particularly pleased to see our children feel included so soon. We became members because we knew the truth of Oakwood’s Bible-based approach and we were already experiencing a stronger connection to Christ as a result of attending. We also appreciated how Oakwood takes great care in helping its members find ways to connect with their communities and collectively share a reflection of Christ’s love, which was important to us.”

Heather Utlaut
On Behalf of Guest Care



“Since the start of 2024, the elder board has been inviting the Lord Jesus Christ to not only join our meetings, but to lead our meetings and time together. We have now incorporated a time of worship into one of the two monthly meetings and extended times of prayer to both meetings. These changes have helped us bear good fruit and given us a strong sense of unity and purpose. We are collaborating with unprecedented clarity, focus, and trust as Jesus guides and directs our path. This has enabled us to reach unified decisions with robust dialog and careful consideration in a timely fashion. We are excited to see the Lord at work here at Oakwood and can't wait to see what He does next.



Scott Walker
Elder Board Chairman

“Oakwood has hosted the Classical Conversations Hartland community for the past nine years. Joyfully, we embark on year 10 this coming fall. Our programs serve parents who are privately homeschooling their children ages 4-18. We have grown to a group of roughly 70 students that meet at Oakwood Church. We meet at your facility and serve families who seek Classical Christian Community for 30 weeks each academic year. Additionally, you generously have allowed us to host a free Parent Practicum each summer that serves nearly 100 homeschool moms and dads, coming from Kenosha, Racine, Wauwatosa, Mukwonago, Janesville, Lake Mills, and many towns in between, as they come together to be equipped and encouraged to know God and to make Him known in their homes, and through classical education. Lastly, the kids and families have participated in special events, such as Science Fair, Faces of History, and Mock Trial rehearsals. You have been a blessing to God's people and we are eternally grateful for your partnership in spreading the gospel!



Karina Werner
On Behalf of Operations

“Rakash comes from a village nestled among beautiful, majestic mountains of an unreached tribal group in Southeast Asia. His villagers have relied on nature for sustenance and natural healing. He stood in awe of the healing powers he believed came from his village’s gods and goddesses. Rakash always sought to find right answers from the tribal guides and to be a leader among his people. However, there came a time when Rakash’s faith in these deities was severely tested. His mother and grandmother fell gravely ill and none of the ancestral healing powers helped. His heart was heavy and his hopes in these practices began to crumble. During this time, he heard the Bible being read, inviting the weary and burdened to come to Jesus for rest. He knew little of this God but felt drawn towards Him. He prayed, “I don’t know who You are, but I understand that You are the Creator God who made me. I come to you seeking help.” His mother also heard these words and believed that Jesus Christ had come to die for them. Rakash heard someone preaching on John 3:16, and just two years ago his entire family accepted Christ. They began to grow under the teaching of a key leader, Hoomi.

Hoomi and his church had a profound influence on Rakash’s life. Rakash was trained to lead small groups, encouraging others to accept Christ, and to be sure of their eternity. He has been able to lead 25 families from his tribe to Christ and is praying to bring the light of Jesus to many more of his people. A new church is beginning in his home! Prayer is essential to Rakash and he asks for prayer for the growth of this ministry, their small groups, and the discipleship training. He prays that the Lord will bring many to the light of Jesus, reaching all the hidden regions of his territory. He has completed the 20 Modules of Disciple-Making Training and Mentorship, and has young people who are eager to be trained. Please pray for his family (especially his parents and the new followers of Jesus) as they continue their faith journey together.



Global Partner