



OAKWOOD
CHURCH

Annual Report

24-

25

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Stories

Oakwood,

What an incredible ministry year we had! I want to thank our elders for their incredible leadership and shepherding, our staff for their hard work and dedication, and all of you for your faithful and active participation in our local body of believers. Let me recap some things we have seen God do this past year and share what we can look forward to next.

Fall

We had our annual Summer Picnic and we continue to broaden its scope to reach our community. We had a lot of success this year through invitations, social ads, and the raffle give away. **We ended up with 33 new people completing connect cards.** We also had our first annual Community Partner Day. We received a lot of positive feedback as people were able to learn more about our Community Partners and find places to serve. I'm hopeful that as we continue to have this day each fall, we will not only be more aware of our partners, but we will be plugging in to volunteer directly with those organizations.



Winter

In December, we tried an experiment with our Reverse Caroling event. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate with us. Even still, we had several visitors and people from Oakwood connected with each other as we told the story of the gospel through singing and reading. In January, we launched our **first set of DNA Sundays**, which will be days dedicated to talking about our mission, vision, and values. Our January series just scratched the surface, and we plan to have more DNA Sundays throughout the year.



Spring

We had our first Global Partner Day on March 9. What a blessing to have so many of our partners with us! My hope is this will be an annual rhythm, just like the Community Partner Day, to increase our awareness of our partners and find more ways to connect with them and bless them. Then came the **surprise gift in December** that led to the Mortgage Match campaign. Take a minute to read the elder report for more information on that effort.



We saw a 5% increase in attendance year-over-year (that's more than 20 people a week) and we celebrated 9 baptisms. As the pastor, I get the bird's-eye view of so much that happens at Oakwood and have had the privilege of seeing meals provided for people in need, elders praying over members of their flocks and hosting potlucks, people serving our Community Partners, small groups serving others in the church, couples being counseled, the sick being lifted up in prayer, people growing in their faith, and a church glorifying God. Indeed, we have much to be thankful for this ministry year!



8

Baptisms

If you had asked me this time last year if we would run a campaign to pay off our mortgage, I probably would have said you are crazy. So, let us not boast about tomorrow and trust that God knows what we really need! That said, here are a few initiatives we plan to continue this year:

- Talk about our mission, vision, and values through our DNA Sundays and other opportunities
- Have each department work on developing leadership pipelines that will include clear ministry role descriptions, trainings, and a leadership structure
- See multiple capital improvement projects being worked on
- Continue to be a community that loves Jesus and lives to make His love known!

Keep the Faith,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Haslar'.

Matthew Haslar
Lead Pastor



~100

Unique givers raised \$280,910.46 during the elder-driven Mortgage Match campaign. Not only did we pay off the mortgage, but we also raised \$171,939.29 for capital improvements

3

New performance evaluation resources:

- **Lead Pastor 365 Review:** a new process that will ensure helpful, developmental, and supportive feedback.
- **Performance Feedback Form:** new digital forms help the elder board collect feedback from the lead pastor, staff, and elders for the lead pastor review process
- **Online Elder Board Self-Evaluation:** each elder provides feedback on how well the board is performing its responsibilities and collaborating with each other



Looking Back

- Completed the Oakwood Ends Policy, which guides staff in leading Oakwood to live out its mission to be a community that loves Jesus and lives to make His love known. It uses Oakwood's strengths combined with the needs in our community to help staff create effective goals for Oakwood ministries
- Worked with other members of the church to define a formal elder training pipeline that will help us develop future elders who can carry forward Oakwood's mission

Looking Ahead

- We look forward to developing a more extensive shepherding model at Oakwood that can scale as we increase membership. As the needs increase, it will not be possible for the staff and elders alone to bear the needs of a growing church.

Scott Walker
Elder Chairman





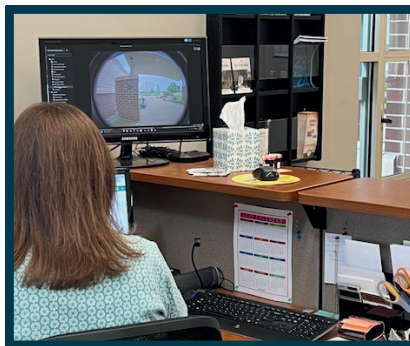
Invested in new printers that greatly improve quality and efficiency of in-house projects, ultimately reducing costs

37

Different groups or individuals used our facility for an event, meeting, or ministry



Secured a new financial secretary, Dan Ertel, who greatly enriches the financial department.



Looking Back

- Completed administrative work more efficiently and effectively by engaging the staff and volunteers to use each of their gifts and strengths across the many ways we serve
- Improved our internal process for scheduling and communicating volunteer schedules with the dozens of individuals who serve on various Oakwood teams (Welcome, Prayer, Cafe, and more)
- Screened guests and vendors before entering the building thanks to the new camera security system

Looking Ahead

- Recruiting day-time volunteers is a challenge we will continue to address to meet the needs of the ministries of Oakwood
- Reviewing and revising safety policies and building procedures to strengthen and enhance Oakwood's hospitality and welcoming environment
- Welcoming Irene Tranchita to serve as the volunteer coordinator for wedding/reception events at Oakwood

Becki Behrens
Director of Operations



107

Interactions with guests who've connected with Oakwood for the first time

70

Guests hosted at a Newcomers' Reception, 56% have participated in an Oakwood ministry since



14

New members welcomed



Looking Back

- Guest Care Team (including welcoming, security, medical, and coffee teams) faithfully served in more integrated ways to ensure guests feel welcomed and comfortable every Sunday
- Transitioned to new leaders for security and medical teams
- Created brochures for Guest Care teams to help with recruiting and training
- Improved systems of documenting guest connections and new member information

Looking Ahead

- Updating the upper-level welcome center
- Building a team for Newcomers' Receptions

Sarah Hayden
Adult Discipleship Director



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

06

4

Blood drives hosted
at Oakwood

181

Operation Christmas Child
boxes donated

5

New, regular volunteers
for Family Promise



285

Individuals received a meal
from Oakwood through our
partners Family Promise
and Community Warehouse



Looking Back

- Shared the love of Jesus and served our community alongside Family Promise several times by providing meals and serving families experiencing homelessness, as well as individuals staying in the shelter
- Cleaned up Family Promise this spring with a group of 10 people from Oakwood
- Blessed a Community Partner (Royal Family Kids Camp) and a Global Partner (Global Fingerprints Classroom in the Congo) through a simple giving effort at Christmas time
- Hosted our first annual Community Partnerships Day on Oct. 13. God orchestrated all our partners to come together to educate us on ways we can serve them

Looking Ahead

- Hosting the second annual Community Partnership Day on Oct. 12.
- Exploring new and continuing ongoing opportunities to serve our Community Partners at their locations
- Considering partnering with a new organization in Lake Country and/or hosting an additional event with our Community Partners

Gerrylynn Ferguson
Community Partnership Coordinator



63

People shared Jesus and enjoyed community while serving on short-term mission trips

8

Global Partners blessed Oakwood Church by visiting during the year



8

Diverse individuals on our Missions Team are growing in unity, knowledge, and discernment as the Spirit leads them



Looking Back

- Made Jesus' love known to vulnerable children by serving at Royal Family Kids Camp in August
- Served and encouraged our Global Partners, Don and Kim, in B.C., Canada with five individuals from Oakwood who lived out their God-given purpose
- Used Oakwood's gift of hospitality by hosting several of our Global Partners in March for Global Partner Day
- Experienced true community as a team of 28 individuals (ages 7 to senior citizen) helped the staff and children at Esperanza Viva orphanage in Puebla, Mexico
- Glorified God when financial assistance was made available from Oakwood Church to open a Tabitha Center in Congo and make repairs to the Promise Home wall there

Looking Ahead

- Enjoying a visit from Susie, one of our Global Partners in Africa, who is coming to Oakwood July - August when she will share her progress toward fulfilling the Great Commission through Bible translation
- Sharing the love of Jesus at Royal Family Kids Camp in August
- Hosting a second Global Partner Day in March
- Living out our gift of hospitality as we fellowship with and learn from our Global Partners
- Planning the next trip to Esperanza Viva in 2026. Stay tuned for dates!

Sonja Anderson
Missions Coordinator



WORSHIP + CREATIVE ARTS

08

10

New volunteers for the worship team, including two Ethnos360 students

~50

Loaves of fresh bread baked for communion (thanks, Jill Low!)



200

Videos created, edited, or shared

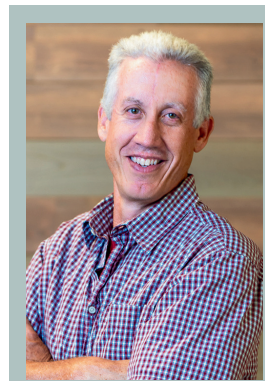


Looking Back

- Identified and trained many new volunteers serving with the worship ministry
- Found communion prep volunteers and equipped each team to serve
- Continued to grow our close relationship with Gracenotes Orchestra, including hosting two concerts here at Oakwood, plus Gracenotes Jazz playing for the annual picnic

Looking Ahead

- Enjoying the summer weather with our community while Gracenotes Jazz performs at the church picnic on Aug. 24 (after a great worship service at 9:30 a.m.)
- Reimagining the Gracenotes Orchestra Christmas concert in November
- Upgrading our worship service livestream experience as a way to reach people beyond our building



Tom Hooper
Worship + Creative Arts Director

9

Adult group offerings for
Wednesday Night
Community from
September through May

24

People attended "How to
Study the Bible" class
in May



145

People attended co-ed in-
home Oakwood groups
(approximately 35% of
Oakwood attenders)



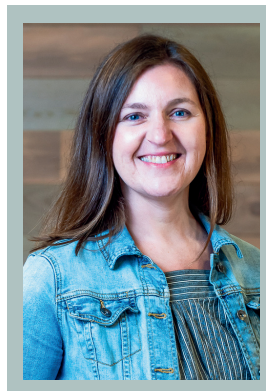
Looking Back

- Gathered leaders together for Catalyst group leader training twice where we discussed what healthy leaders and groups look like
- Offered several groups during Wednesday Night Community for practical application of biblical principles, including the topics of marriage, emotional health, and finances.
- Developed a new class on Oakwood's value "Centered on God's Word," which trained people to use the inductive Bible study method

Looking Ahead

- Developing healthy group indicators for leaders to use to evaluate and grow their groups' practices.
- Adding one more class based on Oakwood's values as part of the healthy discipleship pathway.
- Developing coaches to support group leaders.

Sarah Hayden
Adult Discipleship Director



36

Men served during the women's Christmas event

17-20

Men served during each Bridge Builders event



13

Guys in Iron Sharpening Iron (ISI) small group



Looking Back

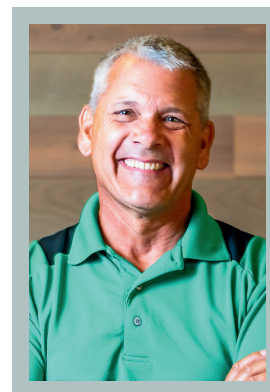
- Hosted an event for fathers and sons in Summer 2024 where we played games, grilled, and heard a short devotional
- Focused on the No Regrets theme of "Rescued" all year, including a message at a Men's Breakfast, attending the conference, a debrief after the conference, and a men's small group
- Continued to serve, which is a priority of Men's Ministry, including helping a family move, a small group doing yard work for those who can't, and partnering with another ministry to do a car wash downtown Milwaukee



Matthew Haslar
Lead Pastor

Looking Ahead

- We are building a new Men's Ministry lead team for the year ahead, using Oakwood's vision to guide the ministry
- We are Faithfully expecting to see God using our current ministries, like the Men's Breakfast, Iron Sharpens Iron small groups, and Mighty Men of God to strengthen the men at Oakwood



Don Douglas
Facilities Manager

146

Meals provided in the last 12 months through Care Connection



8

Teenagers (9% of total) attended the Women's Conference in April

24

Moms attended Just Among Moms this year, with 10 of these new to the group this year

47%

Women who attended the Women's Christmas Event who don't attend Oakwood and 7% don't attend church at all

Looking Back

- Mentored a new leader for the role of women's special events coordinator
- Engaged multiple generations of women in summer, fall, and spring groups
- Developed leadership gifts of 6 participants in the year-long young women's cohort (E-WIN)
- Used gifts of worship, teaching, administration, etc. of 50+ Oakwood women during women's events
- Crafted opportunities for women to invite friends, family, and neighbors, including the Women's Christmas Event and Gather events

Looking Ahead

- Leveraging community and intergenerational strength of Women's Ministry to encourage women to invite others to events and groups
- Providing leadership development opportunities for women within ministries

Sarah Hayden
Adult Discipleship Director



30%

Increase in the number of students attending programming, including 12 students from the 6th grade class

12

Middle school students attended the Fall Retreat in 2025



17

High school students attended Districts Youth Conference in Green Bay in January



Looking Back

- Completed my first full year as youth pastor
- Added small groups to our Wednesday night program, which started slow, but we saw great progress as the year went along
- Incorporated a time of worship into student programming

Looking Ahead

- Relaunching Student Ministry under a new name with a full renovation of the upstairs youth space
- Introducing a new student leadership team for High School
- Hoping to take students to summer camp in 2026!

Caleb Garnett
Youth Pastor



4

Kids were baptized

90

Kids (24 of them were guests!) attended the 2024 Kids Summer Day Camp



33

regular volunteers and 13 substitute volunteers stepped in to maintain kids' programming on Sundays and Wednesdays while I was unexpectedly out on extended medical leave



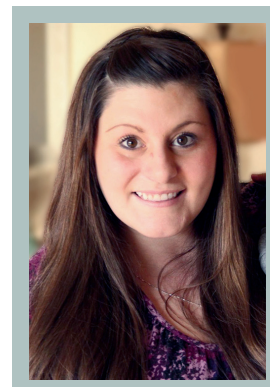
Looking Back

- Equipped parents to teach their children at home through the Bible Basics cards, which have age-specific goals to build a biblical foundation. The Bible Basics are also on the website and include links to resources and interactive classes.
- Updated and printed booklets for various areas of Kids Ministry, one of which was baptism and was used in a class led by Pastor Caleb to engage families and kids in the decision to be baptized.

Looking Ahead

- Hosting the 4th annual Kids Summer Day Camp at Oakwood. This year's theme is True North, and we are welcoming Grace Church to shadow and potentially partner with us next year. As of early June, about 40% of registered campers invited a friend!
- Kicking off Wednesday Night Community in the fall with the same momentum as the Kids Summer Day Camp by continuing to use the True North VBS curriculum and theme used at camp.

Ashley Schmidt
Kids Ministry Director



1019

YouTube subscribers who have viewed 3,900+ hours of sermons and inspirational videos on our channel

41

Guests completed connect cards during community events for which we purchased ads (Summer Picnic, Christmas, Good Friday/ Easter)

43,000+

People reached on Instagram and Facebook (up 43% from last year)

\$3,278

Given from The Cafe to Missions and Student Trips - more than double last year!



Looking Back

- Creatively engaged in ministry efforts through a variety of communications mediums, from merchandise to door hangers
- Hired a communications intern to bring fresh ideas and day-to-day support for all ministries to allow for long-range planning and execution
- Redirected the Cafe ministry by reducing hours to Sunday mornings and limiting the menu so the Cafe can still accomplish its mission while accommodating the decline in volunteerism

Looking Ahead

- Increasing digital advertising (as compared to print) to continue inviting guests from the surrounding community to attend Oakwood services and events
- Enhancing Oakwood events to attract our target audience: the disconnected and complacent people in Lake Country

Sarah Duwe
Communications Director



BUILDING + GROUNDS

15

10

New cameras and 4 new
entry keypad units



Painted all Kids Ministry and
Student Ministry hallways,
including new classroom
name door panels



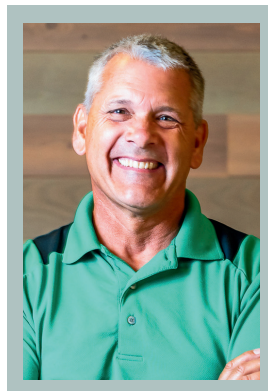
Looking Back

- Completed security upgrades for a new system for locking/entering the building, with cameras installed to help with incident reports
- Upgraded the lighting in the entire building to LEDs
- Worked on a prioritized list of building and grounds improvements

Looking Ahead

- Creating a volunteer group for the youth room renovation project
- Adding new volunteers to do gardening development on the grounds
- Making plans for much-needed parking lot upgrades
- Updating the failing trim work on the exterior of the building

Don Douglas
Facilities Manager



“ I learned so much from verses I had read before and never caught the meaning/correlations. The ‘How to Study the Bible’ group encouraged me to keep going deeper into the Word and a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Cherrie Larson
Group Participant

“ As someone who has witnessed people close to me undergo major life transformations, I have a heart for those who have been a victim of life circumstances or have made poor choices, but have a desire to turn things around and live a better life. Although I have only had the opportunity to serve at the Partners in Hope Wednesday Huddle a couple of times, I have been deeply moved and inspired by the people and the work they are doing with the clients that come to them for help. It is evident that they are deeply committed to the people they serve and to the ministry based on the number of outgoing/returning clients and former clients who now serve in the ministry. The love and sense of community is palpable when you share a meal and hear the highs and lows and the support of those who are there. I hope to continue to serve and am considering becoming a mentor at some point, if I feel like God is leading me in that direction. The transformed lives that came from Partners in Hope are living examples that with love, hope, community, and the power of prayer, nothing is impossible with God.”

Heidi Beauchamp
Oakwood Volunteer

“ As I look back, I think the most impactful story I heard was from Chad Whalen. He asked me who was doing the roof work for Oakwood. In turn I said I would consider using the company he works for. He told me he was always looking for a way he could bless Oakwood through his work. When Chad and I did a walk around the roof, he noticed we had hail damage. That would never have been realized if he didn't ask me about roofing needs. We had a new roof put on for only the cost of the deductible, saving us the immense cost of this project that would have been needed in the next few years. Thank you, Chad.”

Don Douglas
Building + Grounds

“ Our Wednesday Morning Men's Group has been meeting weekly for about 3 years to study books of the Bible. We are in our tenth book. When I asked if anyone would be interested in serving members of Oakwood doing outside yard clean up, trimming shrubs, weeding, etc., everyone said yes. Three names were suggested that could use some help and when they were contacted, they were very grateful for the offer and immediately said yes to the help. Eight of us did two of the homes on a Wednesday morning in April after our Bible study. We had six of our guys get together on a Saturday morning a week later to do the 3rd home. In May we had another person brought to our attention. Six of us went two Wednesday mornings after our study to clean up her property. Three of the people we helped out are widows and the other is an older couple with physical limitations. We know it has been a blessing to these people because they have expressed that, but it has also been a blessing to us men. We are committed to continue serving others who have a need going forward.”

Rick Mathison
Group Leader



“ In April, the Mission Team unanimously felt led to give a financial gift to one of our partners who serves in a closed country. When this partner was notified about the gift, he said, ‘God must be speaking through you.’ This partner had been trying to discern whether or not to get involved with establishing a children's home in a war-torn, politically unstable country where children are in desperate situations. At first, this endeavor seemed unsustainable, and our partner needed confirmation that God was on board before moving forward. There are a few believers in villages and tribes in this country who are training to share the gospel with their people groups. Due to many unfortunate circumstances, these leaders are forced to leave their homes and children to find work so they can feed their families. The children, who have not had education since the global pandemic, are being taken by the military, by traffickers, or are falling prey to many dangers that occur when children are unattended. These believing parents are desperate for their children to be safe and receive an education, but the only education the government allows is indoctrination in a Buddhist monastery. Many desperate parents have asked a Christian leader in the city where schools are open to take their children so they can go to school and live in a Christian environment, hopefully sparing their lives and redeeming a generation for Christ. The gift from Oakwood was a catalyst to getting this project off the ground. Our Global Partner wrote a proposal and sent it to his supporters, and God opened the hearts of several individuals. Money has now been given to complete the necessary renovations on the home for the children, and enough money has been pledged to sustain the home and the children for one year.”

Sonja Anderson
Global Partner Coordinator

“Two worship team members arrived early to the Gracenotes Orchestra concert and were able to spend time listening to one of the members who was struggling. They provided verbal encouragement and physical support. That person is now attending Oakwood and connecting with some other Oakwood members as part of God’s family here.”

Tom Hooper
Worship and Creative Arts

“Last fall I unexpectedly had to take an extended medical leave. My heart was so full when a decorated shoebox filled with encouraging cards, notes and pictures from Oakwood kids, volunteers, and families was delivered to me. I slowly read (and re-read) my way through them when I needed a little pick-me-up and felt His presence through each one. Plus, a huge thank you to the volunteers and substitutes who stepped in to keep programming running as planned for His kids.”

Ashley Schmidt,
Kids Ministry



“Recently, a parent of two relatively new students came to pick them up after our Wednesday night program. They were incredibly complimentary, sharing how much their kids love coming and how thankful they are for what’s happening in our ministry. They even asked if they could donate to support the program! What makes this especially meaningful is that these students came because a friend invited them. To me, it’s a clear sign that we’re moving in the right direction—and it was a huge encouragement. I give God all the glory for what He’s done this year in student ministry, and I’m praying with great expectation for all He will continue to do in the year ahead.”

Caleb Garnett
Youth Pastor

“The Women’s Conference having an intentional pathway for teens was a great way for them to have relevant teaching time with peers. My daughter had so many exciting things to share with me on the ride home. She was eager to use her new prayer journal and some of the practical techniques that the leaders shared. As a mom, having other Jesus-loving women pour into my child in intentional ways was a highlight of the conference for me.”

Ashley Schmidt
Parent



“After our Senior Fellowship group watched a video, I was pleasantly surprised that I finally understood the sermon due to attending many women’s Bible study classes at Oakwood. I will continue to attend these because each session I learn something new about the Bible and how to apply God’s Word to my own spiritual journey.”

Karen Colonna
Group Participant

“After starting rehab in 2021, I began attending AA. I struggled with overwhelming emotions and begged God daily to bring me peace. For a year I prayed, and then—out of nowhere—He lifted the anxiety and emotional weight I had carried for so long. For the first time in my life, I felt true peace. God has continued to show up in my life. He placed people in my path who pointed me toward Him. A dear friend brought me to Oakwood, and the moment I walked in I felt at home. A few months later, during the Easter service, I witnessed baptisms that moved me deeply. In that moment, I knew I was ready to fully surrender my life to God. I was baptized a few weeks later. I am so grateful for the peace He has given me, for the community He has surrounded me with, and for the new life I’ve found in Him.

Kim Wohead
Oakwood Attender

“In April, I (Stacia) was asked by my landlord to sign a fraudulent lease agreement. In short, I refused, and as a result, Dana and I were given till the end of the month--three weeks--to vacate our apartment. Overwhelmed, I contacted Pastor Matthew asking for prayer support and physical help with packing, etc. We really needed Oakwood, our church home of 8-1/2 years, to step forward and be the church! (James 1:27) Not only did friends reach out as prayer warriors, but we had faithful packers, box providers, and on moving day, several strong movers and efficient apartment cleaners. Pastor Matthew helped find us a U-Haul driver, and the church provided all the helpers that day with refreshments and pizza. Several anonymous money donations came through to us, which were of great help, as we did not have a home to move into come May 1. For many reasons--not the least of which being proximity to friends and extended family--we chose to return to the Twin Cities. Oakwood not only made getting here much less traumatic and difficult for us, but you blessed Dana and me abundantly by showing us love and support, praying and encouraging us every step of the way. Today as I write this it is June 30. We will be finally signing a lease on our new apartment later this week. The in-between part of this journey, from April 30 till now, has been a challenging one, to say the least. Spiritual warfare has been a constant, but why should we be surprised? Whenever we do something God tells us to do, the enemy fights back. We have been crossing the desert, heading for the Jordan River. But just as the priests had to step into the water in faith before the river parted, so too have we learned to grow in faith. (Deut. 31:8 "Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. HE will be with you; He will neither fail you nor abandon you.") Our patience has stretched thin. Our trust in our Lord has grown immeasurably. We have lamented and groaned. We have praised and given thanks. Some days have been more challenging than others. But through it all, we remember the blessing of our Oakwood family. We miss you. We love you. May our Lord greatly bless you for your faithfulness. Thank you so much for everything.”

Stacia Stenholtz
Former Oakwood Member

“All the way back to the first and second Sundays that we had visited, I remember people turning around and introducing themselves and approaching us after the service was over. We also love the great span of age groups at Oakwood. There are some very young families and some very tenured families. I think this adds to the richness of the congregation. Lisa and I wanted to be intentional about being in community with other church members close to home. We both think it's rare to have such a wonderful gospel-teaching church within just a couple minutes of where you lay your head at night.

Chris Wenzler
Oakwood Attender