



Heart to Heart
WOMEN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER



Dear Oakwood Sisters...

"The seed had been planted in good soil near plenty of water. Then it could produce branches and bear fruit. It could become a beautiful vine." Ezekiel 17:8 NIRV

Yay! Spring is here! It's time to open the windows and let in the fresh air. It's a new season. The winter in Michigan was long and cold, but now we see signs of new life everywhere. God is so good!

Here at Oakwood, we've begun a new season with Pastor Don Jackson joining us! Can you feel the excitement as we look forward to what God has in store for Oakwood? What is God – the Master Gardener – planning for His "garden" at Oakwood? And what does He have in store for His daughters, His "beautiful vines"? I believe we ought to be preparing to be used by God. How exactly do we prepare?

Anyone who has planted a garden knows that before you begin planting, you need to prepare the soil. We begin by breaking it up and turning it over so that the soil won't be too hard for our delicate little seedlings. We want the soil to be a place where it is easy to grow – full of essential nutrients and lots of water. Similarly, we want Oakwood to be a church where believers can grow spiritually. We want

them to get lots of essential nutrients (Holy Spirit) and lots of the water of God's Word.

We prepare soil by getting rid of any twigs, weeds, rocks or other obstacles that might hinder growth. Remember the tiny sprouts are very fragile. It doesn't take much to break them. And in the church, we want to remove any obstacles to our young seedling's spiritual growth. Things like gossip, complaining, criticism and judgmental attitudes can hinder spiritual growth. Let's get rid of them before they choke someone. Let's do our best to encourage – not discourage – growth.

Are you one of Oakwood's fragile seedlings (just beginning your spiritual journey)? If so, don't worry. Trust in the Master Gardener's love for you. You are always on His mind. He will water and care for you.

Or are you one of Oakwood's healthier vines that is steadily growing stronger daily? We praise the Lord for you. The Gardener will value your steadiness and strength while the seedlings are growing.

Or maybe you are an older wiser vine in the Master's Garden. Your spiritual fruit provides nourishment to the other vines. Thank you for sharing! We desperately need your wisdom.

Each of us is on a spiritual journey, growing like vines in the Master's Garden. We all grow in our own unique way, but when we come together as a church – we become a single body – made for God's purpose and His glory. We are all one in Christ.

At Oakwood we have a women's ministry called "Heart-to-Heart". If you are a female over 18 – then you are a part of the women's ministry. Our older women need the fellowship of our younger women to help us stay current and to energize us. Younger women need the fellowship of older women to share their experiences and wisdom so we can avoid the pitfalls. We all need one another.

When is the last time you attended an event for women at Oakwood? Please consider coming to the events that are planned with you in mind. If possible, come to the next Heart-to-Heart meeting and get involved in the process. We need you. We especially hope to see more young women step up and get involved so that the planners have all ages in mind. From the youngest seedlings to the strongest vine, you are beautiful in God's eyes. And you are beautiful to us – your Oakwood Sisters.

—Cheryl Bongiorno

SOUL FOOD

Scriptures that nourish our soul

Some (seed) fell on good soil. It grew up and produced a crop 30, 60, or even 100 times more than the farmer planted.

—Mark 4:8

Your next Heart-to-Heart Women's Ministry meeting is Tuesday, April 21st at 7pm in the church library. We hope to see you there!



Grace Adventures Retreat on October 2-4

Grace Adventures Retreat Center has been the destination for the Oakwood Ladies Fall Retreat for several years. It's located on beautiful Silver Lake in western Michigan near Muskegon. We guarantee that women of all ages will be pampered both physically and spiritually. Ask anyone who attended last year for a personal recommendation!

This year's speaker is Amy Carroll. Amy's passion is "living the untied life". Amy's story is about her journey to be untied from the things that held her back from experiencing a joyful life and a deeper love of Christ. "It's so easy to get tied up in earning acceptance and working to meet others' expectations." Amy loves teaching scripture and her background as an

educator enhances her ability to share His big truths in small, understandable bites.

This year, we have reserved 32 spaces for October 2-4 at Grace Adventures. Registration will begin on May 1st. Save the date now and make plans to be renewed and refreshed at the Fall Retreat.



Praying for Husbands and Children

Did you know that God has commanded us to pray? If we are obedient to His will, then prayer must be part of our life in Him. *Focus on the Family* lists 12 reasons to pray:

1. God's Word calls us to pray
2. Jesus prayed regularly
3. Prayer is how we communicate with God
4. Prayer allows us to participate in God's works
5. Prayer gives us power over evil

6. Prayer is always available
7. Prayer keeps us humble before God
8. Prayer grants us the privilege of experiencing God
9. Answered prayer is a potential witness
10. Prayer strengthens the bond between believers
11. Prayer can succeed where other means have failed
12. Prayer fulfills our emotional needs

Come and join us for a time of prayer specifically for our husbands and children on **Sunday evening, April 26th between 6:30 and 9:00pm.**

Stay as long as your schedule allows. A handout will be available with scripture verses, printed prayers and information to continue praying for your family at home.



Informal Get-Togethers for Women of All Ages

To accomplish one of our Heart-to-Heart goals, we have arranged for several informal opportunities for women to get to know one another and form friendships.

Come join us for dinner! For those who live farther away, Wendy Penzien will arrange a carpool from church.

MacPhees Restaurant
in Ortonville
Thursday, April 16th
Dinner at 7:00

Blind Fish Restaurant
in Lapeer
Wednesday, May 20
Dinner at 7:00

Heart-to-Heart Leadership Team

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