



Olive Leaves



December 2019 – January 2020

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FROM PASTOR WALT: THE DATE OF CHRISTMAS

Pastor Walter Harper
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You've no doubt heard the critics speak of Christmas. They tell us that we don't know when Jesus was born, "but it certainly wasn't on December 25th." They tell us that the Early Church borrowed from an ancient Roman pagan feast. They tell us that the whole thing is legend and fantasy, better for us adults to leave it behind.

Well, like many things said attacking God's Word, this stuff doesn't hold up...

The Criticism: The Romans didn't take a census very often, and certainly didn't require people to travel.

Answer: In his book, "In the Fullness of Time," Dr. Paul Maier tells us that the Romans took a census every 14 years, and we have records of the requirement to return to one's ancestral lands to register.



The Criticism: We don't know what year Jesus was born.

Answer: In Matthew 2, we're told that the wise men came to Jerusalem while Herod was the King. The Herod referenced here is Herod the Great, and we know that he reigned from 37 to 4 BC. He died in 4 BC. Since the Bible portrays the birth of Jesus as occurring slightly before that, then Jesus was likely born in 5 BC.

The Criticism: But if BC means "Before Christ," then how was Jesus born 5 years "BC"?

Answer: In the ancient world there were calendars used other than our current BC/AD version. For example, the Romans used "UAC," which meant "since the founding of the City." But several centuries after the earthly life of Jesus, when the Church was ascendant in Europe, there was a desire to change the calendar to acknowledge the birth of the Savior. A monk name Dionysius Exiguus ("Dennis the Short," LOL), working in the early 6th century attempted to figure what year Jesus was born. He missed by five years, which is pretty good considering the era.

The Criticism: The Bible says that Jesus was born when Quirinius was governor, and he reigned from AD 6 to 12; much later than His supposed 5 BC birth date.

Answer: Yes, Quirinius reigned from AD 6 to 12. Subsequent research has discovered that Quirinius reigned over Syria twice. The first time was from 12 to 3 BC, spanning exactly the date

of Jesus' birth. One textual thing to know about this: Greek word order can be complicated. In the KJV, Luke 2:2 reads, "And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius (an alternate spelling of the name) was governor of Syria." Other translations wrestle with where to put the word "first." Now we know that the verse is best translated "the first time Quirinius was governor."



The Criticism: Shepherds are never in the fields in December.

The Answer: That criticism makes sense if you live in Europe, or the American northeast. But Bethlehem is one degree of latitude south of Dallas, TX. It is not too cold in Bethlehem in December to be out in the fields. In fact, when Renee and I went to Israel in 2009 we went in December. The weather was very pleasant, with a daily high in the upper 60's to the lower 70's every day. In many ways it may have been preferable to being there in the heat of Summer.

The Criticism: One thing we can be sure of, Jesus wasn't born on December 25th.

Answer: I know that we've learned a high dose of skepticism about claims made in the ancient world. But there's much that goes back pretty early concerning this.

- Pope Telesphorus (reigned from AD 126 to 137) proclaimed a Christmas Midnight Mass on December 24th in AD 130.
- Theophilus (who lived from AD 115 to 181) wrote, "We ought to celebrate the birthday of our Lord on what day so ever the 25th of December shall happen."
- Hippolytus (who lived from AD 170-240) said that December 25 is "The First Advent of our Lord."

Why is the Early Church so consistent on this? Because they'd heard those dates from Christians who had passed it down to them.

The Criticism: Christmas is a matter of the Church appropriating to itself the pagan festival of Sol Invictus.

Answer: Sol Invictus is indeed a pagan festival, which celebrates the "Unconquerable Sun." But which came first? As mentioned above, Pope Telesphorus proclaimed the Christmas Midnight Mass in AD 130. Sol Invictus was proclaimed by Caesar Aurelian in AD 274. Christmas was earlier.

And One Final Point: In Luke 1:5 we are told that Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was in the priestly division of Abijah. A little history: the divisions of the priests were each assigned to serve at the Temple, twice yearly, for one week each time. In Nehemiah 12 we're given the list of the divisions, and from that we know that the division of Abijah served in the Spring and the Fall.

In which time was Zechariah serving when the Angel Gabriel announced the coming birth of John the Baptist? Tradition has always said that he was there at the Temple during the time of the Day of Atonement, which happens in September.

So do the math on this: Zechariah was told in September that his previously barren wife, Elizabeth, would have a son. If she became pregnant in September, then John the Baptist was born in June. According to Luke 1:26 Jesus is six months younger than John. So if John was born in June, then Jesus was born in December.

Merry Christmas! Enjoy the celebration of the birth of our Savior.



BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Natalie Crosland, Chairperson

"The glory we need is the glory of the cross. Your labor is not in vain".

1 Corinthians 15:58

It is easy to forget: This world isn't your home. You are going to spend eternity with Christ in a home specially prepared for you. When you get to heaven you will be rewarded for how well you fulfilled your God-given assignment here on earth.

Merry Christmas!!! The BOE is very excited at all the upcoming opportunities to serve and learn of our blessed Savior. The Ladies Bible Study has started back and will be held on Tuesdays December 17th & January 21st at 6:30 PM. The high school youth have decided to join the downstairs Adult Bible Class until someone volunteers to teach.

Happy New Year!!! Beginning in January, Pr. Walt will be teaching an adult Bible study on Wednesday afternoons and evenings so that folks can choose which time suits them best. Please stay posted for more information. Plus Pr. Walt will be teaching new members classes beginning January 12th through February 16th. New Members Sunday will be February 23rd.



It is already VBS planning time! Save the dates! We have scheduled it for Monday-Friday, June 22nd-26th. We are in the beginning phase and have yet to come up with a theme. If you are interested in planning, or have any ideas, please see any of the Board of Christian Education members.



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Jessica Dennis, Sunday School

Thank you all for sharing your children with us for Sunday School! We have been practicing our Christmas song with Mrs. Karen Meetze for three weeks now! There are few things more joyful than hearing little ones sing about the coming of our Savior, with big smiles and excitement!



Advent is always one of Sunday School's favorite seasons to celebrate and learn about! Last year we made Advent wreaths and added ornaments with all of the names that Jesus is called throughout the Bible! We have more fun in store this year!

Wishing you and yours all of God's blessings this Christmas season!



THOUGHTS, PRAYERS, CALLS, & CARDS

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Ephesians 1:3



Please remember our homebound during the Christmas season. Make a special effort to pray for, send cards, phone, and visit them. Cards are so very meaningful because they can be saved and read over and over. You may include others who are on the weekly prayer page in the bulletin. Don't forget about family members and care givers, too. Contact information is in the church directory.

Phil Carter	Virginia Gable	Bonnie Jones	Anita Meetze	Mary Schott
Cleta Dunaway	Betty Hunter	Mike McGriff	Gladys Meetze	Shirlean Sons

BOARD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Aresa Boykin, Chairperson

***“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”
Ephesians 1:17***

November has been an exciting month! With the arrival of Pr. Walt, Mt. Olive’s website needed major updating! Check it out at mtolivesc.org. You can see that there are many new photos of Pastor, his new bio, and contact information. And in case you don’t make it home with your weekly bulletin/Olive Seeds, you can keep up with your daily Bible readings via the calendar on the home page. On the Worship page, there are new sections about the 3-year lectionary, our weekly scriptures, and our signs, located in the pit, that help us celebrate the Church seasons. Yes, there are still some photos that take us down memory lane like the one of the little Sunday School kids who are now in middle and high school – but they are so cute! One day, these, too, will be replaced.



Mt. Olive’s Facebook page, facebook.com/mtolivesc, has lots of pictures from Pr. Walt’s installation and the “This Week” calendar that comes out each Thursday at 9:00 AM also includes the daily Bible readings. And, for those who don’t use computers, please make it down the hall toward the fellowship hall to see these same photos.

And as always, as you are reading through our website and social media, if you see any typos or mistakes, please let me know so that I can correct them. It is a huge responsibility to represent our church to the world and I want everything to be right and up-to-date, especially for those who are looking for a church home.



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Jim Crosland, Congregational President

Exciting times are ahead as the Christmas holidays approach! I am so thankful that our focus is first on Jesus, and then on our families and friends. Please remember your neighbors and friends in need who may not have loved ones around. They just may need a little company to make their holidays wonderful!



My pet peeve: I use to get irritated every time I saw that the word *Christmas* or *Christ* was replaced with “Xmas”. It seemed so dishonorable, unspeakable, and completely wrong until I did a little research like Pr. Walt is teaching us. *Chi*, or *X*, is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ. In the early days of the Christian church when persecution was rampant, Christians used the letter *X* as a secret symbol to indicate to others that they were followers of Jesus. I totally understand, but to me, it still feels disrespectful to our Savior. Don’t mind me – you can decide for yourselves.

SAFETY TIPS The bad people are at it again! They are placing skimmers on gas pumps and ATM’s. Skimmers are little devices that slip over the card readers and capture all your account information. Take the time to grab the card reader and wiggle it a little. It should feel solid, and won’t budge if it’s authentic. If it doesn’t have anything protruding, check to make sure the entire strip is intact. To be even safer, only use your debit card at trustworthy places where your card is never out of sight. Use your credit card at gas stations, restaurants, and at other places because these companies offer more security and you will not be charged for fraudulent purchases.

Please call me if you have any questions about skimmers, telemarketers, or credit cards. Take care, be safe, and Merry Christmas!



JOIN US FOR A SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS!

December 2019 – January 2020 Sunday School & Bible Classes – 9:15 AM			
Infants – age 2	Nursery	Parents may stay with their infants & toddlers in the nursery, as we are in between caregivers. Please listen to the worship service through the speaker.	
Circle of Friends	Downstairs Classroom	Katie Tyczynski & Faithful Group of Volunteers	Bringing Jesus to Special Needs Children
PK3 – 4th Grade	Upstairs Classrooms	Pat LaGrange, Laura Laprise, Kaley Laprise, Jessica Dennis	Bible Heroes from the Old Testament
5 th Grade & Older and their parents	Wagner House	Pr. Walt Harper	A multi-year study of The Bible & Martin Luther’s Small Catechism for Confirmation
Middle Schoolers	Wagner House	Rick Baden	A variety of lessons from the Bible
Adults & High Schoolers	Downstairs Classroom	Sandy Osborne	<i>The Book of Jonah</i> - How does Jonah’s experience point us to Christ? What does God tell us about His mercy & sovereignty?
Adults & High Schoolers	Fellowship Hall	Barry Bost	A Longer Look at the Lessons – A study of the weekly lectionary scriptures
Adults & High Schoolers	Choir Room	Eddie Magic	<i>Lutheranism 101</i> – The basic tenets of being Lutheran
Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator.			

READING THE BIBLE IN THREE YEARS

Aresa Boykin, Newsletter Editor



I am so excited that Pr. Walt has created a 3-year Bible reading plan to help more of us get into God’s Holy Word every day. In this plan, we usually read only one chapter per day. The exception will be the more lengthy books – Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel – one book each year, where we will read two chapters so that we can read them in a month’s time.

When Pr. Walt first gave us the plan, the readings were in the middle of Nehemiah and by now, we should have completed five books of the Minor Prophets. These books can be difficult to understand, especially if this is the first time you have read through the Bible, and it’s easy to get discouraged. Here are some suggestions that might help you understand what’s happening.

First, if you have a *Lutheran Study Bible*, you can read the introduction to each group of books (i.e. “The Books of the Prophets,” p. 1077-1083) and also the short information at the start of each book. The longer introduction helps place the books in context. If you have other study Bibles, you can read their introductions, too, or simply *Google* the current book.

Second, if you remember back to 2017, the 500th anniversary of The Reformation, you were encouraged to read the Bible in a year using *The Bible Project’s* plan. This plan has a short video at the beginning of each book, only 5-8 minutes long. If you watched any of these videos, you might remember how Pr. Tim and Jon made the books come to life and they connected each one to the rest of the Bible. These videos are free to everyone and can be accessed from your phones, tablets, or computers. You can go to their website, thebibleproject.com or subscribe to their YouTube channel. Then just scroll down to either “Old Testament,” “New Testament,” or simply search for the book’s name.



Third, if you use daily devotions from an app such as YouVersion or Bible Gateway, you can search for a devotion that accompanies the current book. I found a great one for Habakkuk on YouVersion.

Hope you will be able to use one of these ideas, or come up with others, so that in three years, in November 2022, you can say, “I have read the entire Bible!”



BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP: CHRISTMAS SERIES

John Meyerhoff, Chairperson

As we approach Christmas, we sometimes forget to put God first. We are so busy buying presents, planning parties, and preparing for family gatherings that we forget the real reason we are celebrating. We also often put *stewardship* (and common sense) on the back burner. We max out our credit cards, spending more than we can afford on presents; then, as a result, we miss out on giving our first fruits to God. It is the season of giving, but with God's Word in mind.

I recently read an article from *Back to the Bible*, "10 Financial Principals that are Biblical," written by George Fooshee. The guidelines in this piece will help us better understand stewardship from God's perspective. It will center our financial focus, enabling us to be good stewards of everything with which God has blessed us. It will help us to follow God's command to give Him our first fruits and tithe. Here is a brief summary of the first four points covered in the article:

- 1) **God Is The Source of Everything** – Philippians 4:19 says, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." 2 Corinthians 9:8 states, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you; so that in having all things at all times, having all you need you will abound in every good work."
- 2) **Giving is Essential** – Luke 6:38 says, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured to you." According to Deuteronomy 14:23, one purpose of tithing was to teach the people of Israel to put God first.
- 3) **Live on a Margin** – Simply put, this means to allow room for unexpected things to happen. Have savings to cover emergencies. Allow enough time in the day for quiet time, devotions, and time to thank God in prayer for what He has given us.
- 4) **The Bible Backs Saving** – Proverbs 21:20 says, "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has."



Look for principals 5-10, two each week, in the December 1st, 8th, and 15th Olive Seeds.

I pray that all of you have a very blessed Christmas and that we all begin the New Year with a commitment to be faithful stewards of all the blessings God has bestowed on us.



BOARD OF EVANGELISM: SHARING WITH EVERYONE

Richard Shealy, Chairperson

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

Many of us think that the toughest witnessing we can attempt is to complete strangers. But I have found that the process can be less stressful than witnessing to friends or family. The reason is: we have nothing to lose if we are rejected while witnessing to a stranger, because we know that we will not meet again. But with a family member, we fear that if our witnessing falls on unreceptive ears, we may cause a rift in family relationships. If that happens, the next family gathering could include short conversations or cold shoulders.

Sharing our faith with family, friends, and strangers is what God expects us to do. We see that in Jesus' ministry with his disciples in the four Gospels, the first books of the New Testament. And his disciples shared the Gospel with family, friends, and strangers through teaching, preaching, and daily life-style examples. Sharing the Good News should be part of our conversations with everyone. It's the major part of loving one another.

BOARD OF PARISH FELLOWSHIP

Marlene Nes'bit & Kathie Voyles, Co-Chairpersons

What wonderful attendance and food we had for Pastor Walt's installation! Thank you to the many members who helped to decorate and clean up after this event, including Bill Boykin, Gary Meetze, Gerry Fletcher, Neva Meyerhoff, Susie Slaughter, Jan McCarthy, Pete and Rita Witt, Mary Keller, Charlene Meetze, and Randy Voyles. Pr. Walt and Renee are such blessings to us!

Thank
You!



Thanks to those who provided dessert for the Alan Rush funeral: Sue O'Dell, Peggy Weed, Pat LaGrange, Jan McCarthy, Dianne BouFawaz, Marilyn Bauer, Rita Witt, Mike Knowles, and Carolyn Kibler. Fellowship appreciates your loving response.

Fellowship is now accepting non-perishable, individually wrapped food items for the Christmas baskets. The elders will distribute them to members who are experiencing special circumstances. Suggested items include, but are not limited to, cocoa and oatmeal packets, peanut butter crackers, fruit cups, Little Debbie cakes, raisins, sugar free and regular candies (no chocolate, please). Fresh fruit and baked items will be accepted on the weekend that the baskets will be delivered, December 15th.



The Wednesday Advent meals will be held on December 4th, 11th, and 18th after the noon worship. Fellowship will provide the main dish and is asking for the donation of side items. A list of meals and requested items will be posted in the narthex. Thanks for all your support.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Bill Boykin, Stephen Leader

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

In January, the Stephen Ministry team will continue honing their caring skills by focusing on making one-time connections to people whose participation in congregational life has dropped off or stopped entirely. We are not speaking of homebound members who would give anything to worship at church. We are looking to connect and encourage those who come only once or twice a year or those who have stopped coming completely. We will learn how to reassure people who have drifted away and how to show understanding and respect for people's reasons for staying away from church. The 6-week course is *Caring for Inactive Members: How to Make God's House a Home*. As always, the skills we learn in Stephen Ministry will help us grow in our relationships with our family members, friends, coworkers, and the people we happen upon in the community.

If you are going through one of life's usual crises or you are overwhelmed by your circumstances, and would like to talk with one of our Stephen Ministers, please contact one of our leaders: Bill or Aresa Boykin, Dianne BouFawaz, or Charlie Sandt. Remember that everything you talk about with a Stephen Minister is confidential.



"STEPHEN MINISTRY IS CHRIST CARING FOR PEOPLE THROUGH PEOPLE."

PASTORAL ACTS

	MEMORIAL SERVICE Alan Francis Rush March 11, 1930 – October 25, 2019 November 2, 2019	MEMORIAL SERVICE Sandra Eargle Howe July 12, 1938 – November 15, 2019 November 22, 2019	
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BOARD OF SOCIAL MINISTRY

Charlene Meetze, Chairperson

“Christmas is forever, not for just one day.

For loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away.”

“The Christmas spirit is a spirit of giving and forgiving as the message of loving one another was put on our hearts by Jesus.” (Anonymous)

Your Social Board has been busy this fall conducting the collection for the USO at the Columbia Airport and with veterans’ recognition on Sunday, November 10th. Thank you to everyone who donated snacks and toiletries for the USO, and veterans, thank you for your service to our amazing country.

December is always a special giving month! We will have our Christmas Giving Tree in the narthex and you also will have the opportunity to donate food items to the Advent Challenge. ***Please note that you can choose to participate in either OR both projects.*** Here are short descriptions:

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE



Pull a card from the tree and shop for a child’s Christmas gift. Please wrap the gift and tape the card from the tree onto the gift before returning. This collection will conclude on Sunday, December 15th. Sharing God’s Love will distribute these gifts to families in The Midlands.

ADVENT CHALLENGE FOOD DRIVE



Advent Challenge

Daily, collect the listed item(s) and bring your weekly collection to deposit in the boxes at the Christmas tree in the narthex. A delivery to Sharing God’s Love will be made on the following Monday leaving the boxes empty for the next week’s collection. Shopping bags will be provided in the narthex starting the weekend of November 23rd-24th.

✓	December 1	Box of Cereal		December 13	Canned Beans
	December 2	Peanut Butter and Jelly		December 14	Box of Saltine Crackers
	December 3	Stuffing Mix		December 15	Package of Rice
	December 4	Boxed Potatoes		December 16	Box of Instant Oatmeal
	December 5	Macaroni ‘n Cheese		December 17	Package of Pasta
	December 6	Canned Fruit		December 18	Spaghetti Sauce
	December 7	Canned Tomatoes		December 19	Chicken Noodle Soup
	December 8	Canned Tuna		December 20	Tomato Soup
	December 9	Pork ‘n Beans		December 21	Canned Corn
	December 10	Jar of Applesauce		December 22	Canned Mixed Vegetables
	December 11	Canned Sweet Potatoes		December 23	Canned Carrots
	December 12	Cranberry Sauce		December 24	Canned Green Beans



PRESCHOOL NEWS

Anna Brent, Preschool Director

803-781-7180 – preschool@mtolivesc.org

Web: mtolivesc.org/preschool – Facebook.com/mountolivepreschool



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the preschool! Our halls are busy with Christmas crafts, learning about the reason for the season, and practicing for our Christmas program. We are having our Christmas Program, “Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus!” at 6:30 pm on December 11th, followed by cupcakes and drinks. The entire congregation is invited to come see our precious students proclaim the news of Christmas! What a wonderful opportunity to interact with these precious families!

THANK YOU for the outpouring of financial support for the preschool to our Tree of Thanksgiving. We are so thankful for your generous hearts and faithful support of the preschool ministry. Because of this, our scholarship donations were fully funded and we are able to purchase some large items that have needed replacing for some time. We feel privileged to have the opportunity to serve our preschool children and their families and spread the good news of the Gospel.



The hallways will be quiet during the Christmas break from school, but we will return on January 6th ready to see what the Lord has in store for us in 2020! If you have any questions, please contact me.

MARY & JOSEPH “ON A SHELF”?

Aresa Boykin, Newsletter Editor



I’ve never been a fan of the pre-Christmas craze that came out a few years ago, “The Elf on a Shelf.” Parents move the elf each night, stage some sort of mischief that the elf allegedly did, and the children find it the next morning.

Why not try something more biblical this year? I have seen many ideas on Pinterest and other social media that incorporated the Christmas story. There is the *Shepherd on the Search* or *Star from Afar*, where the children must find the shepherds, the star, or wise men. There is also an *Angel on Assignment* and a set of *Kindness Elves*. These can be purchased or you can be a little creative and make one yourself. You will have no trouble finding these on-line for \$20-\$30!

I have seen others where you use your favorite kid-friendly nativity set and each night, hide one of the characters for the kids to find and then place in the scene. There’s another where Mary, Joseph, and the donkey are traveling to Bethlehem, and each morning, the children must find them as they make their way to the manger. You can easily spend a few minutes retelling part of the Christmas stories from Luke and Matthew.

There are plenty of ideas on-line, so why not pick one or get inspiration to create your own and let’s “Keep Christ in Christmas” this year!

DECEMBER 2019 – JANUARY 2020 ANNIVERSARIES

12/2	Charlie & Jaime Stuck	12/28	Harold & Sarah Jones
12/4	Tim & Shanna Stuck	12/29	Richard & Barbara Chesley
12/13	Eddie & Polly Roland	12/31	Johnny & Joe Ann Barrett
12/17	Don & Gloria Meetze	1/14	James & Carolyn Kibler
12/19	Kevin & Mandy Kibler	1/17	Scott & Wendy Barrett
12/22	Natalie & Eric Smith	1/20	Eddie & Dana Magic
12/23	Matthew & Page Fletcher	1/23	Mike & Linda McGriff
12/28	Lu & Pat Donlon		

DECEMBER 2019 – JANUARY 2020 BIRTHDAYS

12/1	Connor Weed	12/21	Eric Hennington	1/10	Christian Pham
12/4	Greg Ervin	12/22	James Kibler	1/12	Justin Pham
12/4	Richard Weed	12/22	Lee Meetze	1/14	Hal Hoffman
12/5	Ron LaGrange	12/22	Austin Perkins	1/16	Joshua Boatwright
12/7	Eva Folks	12/23	Keith Flenner	1/16	Laura Shealy
12/8	Noelle Franzen	12/23	Charles Fletcher	1/17	Stephanie Lewis
12/8	Jenn Weed	12/23	John Meyerhoff	1/18	Johnna Duncan
12/10	Laura Laprise	12/23	Shari Selke	1/19	Mitch Greer
12/11	Samuel Fancey	12/24	Rebecca Shirah	1/19	Shirley Vogel
12/11	Witt, Wanda	12/26	Natalie Osborne-Smith	1/21	August Medlin
12/12	Janet Jabs	12/28	David Fletcher	1/21	Kim Perkins
12/12	Christopher Meetze	12/30	Don Angen	1/23	James Shirah
12/12	Claudia Schneider	12/30	Sherry Ervin	1/25	Andrew Rosinski
12/15	Blake Cook	1/3	Otto Folks	1/25	Abigail Setterlund
12/15	Lu Donlon	1/3	Page Fletcher	1/25	Richard Shealy
12/15	Pr. Walt Harper	1/7	Mary Lou Tedder	1/25	Evan Williams
12/16	Liezl Baden	1/8	Kerri Kogelmann	1/26	Kim BouFawaz
12/17	Abigail Sharpe	1/9	Shanna Stuck	1/26	Emma Dennis
12/18	Todd Barrett	1/9	Peggy Weed	1/29	Krista Knowles
12/19	Olivia Box	1/10	Dianne BouFawaz	1/30	Tristan Selke
12/19	Alex Knowles	1/10	Mary Lawhorne	1/31	Cindy Soto

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Deck the Halls, Y'all!

We will decorate the church for Christmas on Sunday, Dec. 1, after the 10:30 service. (You can get a head start in the fellowship hall after Bible Class, too.) Stronger men are needed to put up the sanctuary trees, and other folks can join in to help with hanging ornaments, fluffing wreaths, and swagging the garlands. We also need volunteers to feed the workers. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex to bring soup, sandwiches, cookies, & drinks. Join in the true spirit of Christmas as we excitedly prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Christ the Lord! Call Karen Meetze with questions at 240-8710.



February Newsletter Deadline – Monday, January 20th



Since the December-January newsletter is a combined issue, your next deadline for submitting articles for the February 2020 issue of the Olive Leaves is **Monday, January 20th**. And make a special note: Sue Strouse will be taking over the newsletter in 2020, so email your information to slstrouse@gmail.com.

Saturday Worship Service – New Time – 5:00 PM

With darker evenings since the time change, someone suggested that we consider beginning the Saturday service at an earlier time. The Elders approved the change, so beginning Saturday, **November 30th, the service will begin at 5:00 PM** and remain in effect throughout the year.

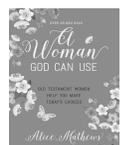
Painting Class & Cookie Exchange

Come paint a nativity on **Saturday, December 7th at 10:00 AM!** Bring \$3 to cover supplies, a lunch item, and several dozen cookies and your recipe to share with the group. Sue will let you know how many cookies to bring depending on how many sign up. **Call or text Sue Strouse at 832-434-4631 or email her at slstrouse@gmail.com by December 1st.** A sample painting is in the narthex. Men, women, teens, and children are welcome to attend and no painting experience is necessary!



Ladies' Bible Study

The ladies' monthly Bible Study will be on **Tuesdays, December 17th & January 21st at 6:30 PM**. All ladies, including teens, are welcome to join. We had 11 ladies last month and hope for even more in December where we will be studying Leah, the Patriarch Jacob's first wife who he was tricked into marrying. You can read up on Leah beginning in Genesis 29-30. Rahab will be the subject of the January study. You will find her in the city of Jericho in Joshua 2. If you would like a book, please see Mary Keller, Natalie Crosland, Aresa Boykin, or Karen Meetze.



Church History Memories

The Public Relations Board is diligently working on the Church History. If you have an anecdotal memories or interesting information that you wish to share, please call or e-mail one of these board members:

Sandy Osborne 803-772-9276 fandsosborne@gmail.com **Sue Strouse** 832-434-4631 slstrouse@gmail.com



Men’s Prayer Breakfast

The next two Men’s prayer breakfasts will be **Saturdays, December 21st & January 18th**. Come and bring your sons and neighbors for a hearty breakfast, devotion, and prayer.

Advent Worship Services & Meals

This year, the Advent lunches will be December 4th, 11th, and 18th after the noon worship services. The Fellowship Board is providing the main course and will have a sign-up sheet for sides and desserts. There will be evening worship at 7:00 PM on December 4th and 18th. Then on December 11th, at 6:30 PM, join in the fun at the preschool Christmas program, followed by a cupcake reception. Please come out and support our preschool ministry and their families on this special evening!

Sharing God’s Love 35th Anniversary Celebration

On **January 26, 2020**, Mt. Olive will be hosting a 35th anniversary celebration for Sharing Gods Love. A meal will be provided to show appreciation for their wonderful volunteers. More details will follow.



Sharing God’s Love: Ongoing Donations

Ongoing needs include cold weather items: All sizes of comforters & blankets, king & queen sheets, tea, coffee, soup, chili, grits, oatmeal, shoes, boots, slippers, all sizes of children’s winter clothing, and always, JELLY! Please bring your items to the grocery cart at church or drop them off at SGL Monday-Saturday, 9 AM – 12 Noon. Thank you for helping!

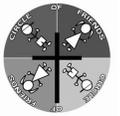
Social Ministry: Save the Dates in February

February 1st-2nd – The Souper Bowl of Caring – Save up your \$\$ to donate to Sharing God’s Love on Super Bowl weekend!

February 7th, 6:30 PM – Love One Another – Watch for our upcoming special announcements and prepare for an evening of good food, good fun, and some interesting entertainment!

Circle of Friends

Katie Tyczynski, a certified special education teacher, is leading our Circle of Friends class. Our faithful volunteers continue to assist. If you know of families who have special needs children, please invite them to Mt. Olive. The Circle of Friends meets during Sunday School and the 10:30 AM worship service.



Nursery Reminder

Mt. Olive has a nursery that is located downstairs, just behind the sanctuary. Parents are welcome to stay with their children during any worship service. There is a speaker so you will be able to hear the worship service. If you know of anyone who loves small children and is interested in a part-time job on Sunday mornings from 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM, please contact the church.

Secure E Giving

Mt. Olive Lutheran Church and Preschool both offer secure electronic giving alternatives. You may set up your accounts from the website links on the home page or scan the QR codes in the Olive Seeds bulletin insert. Both recurring and one-time gift options are available via credit cards or bank draft. If you need help setting up your account or making changes to your existing account, please contact Aresa Boykin, who will be glad to help. Your information will be kept confidential.

KID’S KORNER



Symbols of the Season

Many traditional decorations convey the meaning of Christmas.

Directions: Use the picture clues to the right to complete the words. Then write the boxed letters in order to complete 2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV.

shepherd’s staff _ _ _ _ _

tree that keeps its leaves _ _ _ _ _

shines to lead the way _ _ _ _ _

green for eternal life, _ _ _ _ _ &

red for Jesus’ blood _ _ _ _ _

sounds to announce _ _ _ _ _

good news _ _ _ _ _

has no beginning or end _ _ _ _ _

Th _ _ ks b _ to _ od fo _ _ is
 indesc _ _ ba _ le gif _ !
 2 CORINTHIANS 9:15, NIV