



Olive Leaves



December 2020/January 2021

Table of Contents			
From Pastor Walt Page 1	Adult Bible Study Page 4	Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, & Cards Page 8	Announcements Page 10
From our President Page 2	Board of Stewardship Page 5	Read the Bible in Three Years Page 8	Kid's Korner Page 11
Mt. Olive Lutheran Preschool Page 3	Social Ministry Page 6	Pastoral Acts Page 9	25 Ways to Share Christ Page 11
Board of Public Relations Page 3	Special Advent & Christmas Worship Page 7	Anniversaries Page 9	December/January Calendars - Insert
Stephen Ministry Page 4	December/January Lectionary Page 7	Birthdays Page 9	

From Pastor Walt: Thoughts on Christmas

Pastor Walter Harper

walt.harper@mtolivesc.org



- When I was a child I was always the first one awake in the house on Christmas Morning. All kids are excited by the approaching of the 25th of December; I was no different. The challenge was knowing how early we were “allowed” to get up. Is it 7:00? Or can it slide a little earlier, to 6:00? It was torture to wake up well before 6:00, laying there and wondering: When can I come downstairs and get the day started? Alas, I’m 57 years old and I’m still the first one up. I’m thinking that by now this isn’t going away.

- Our family tradition was that we always read from Matthew 1 and 2, or Luke 2 before opening any presents. As a kid I thought that was a long wait. But I remember that over time I decided that it was interesting to listen to the text; eventually even discovering that I thought this was a good tradition.
- My birthday is December 15th, and like most things, there is good and the bad about this. I remember that long ago our entire town was decorated for Christmas. Even the rental office of our apartment complex was decorated. So that meant that my birthday month was a time of lights and color. The downside was all those years of “combined” birthday and Christmas presents. Another downside was when I was the soundman at our Baptist Church. Many times, I was either at the Christmas Program on my birthday or running the soundboard for one of the rehearsals. One year the music was annoying, and of course, as a soundman you hear it over and over again. That year was kind of a bummer.
- Renee and I love Mexican food. It is our favorite cuisine. One year we were sitting at our favorite Mexican restaurant, and they made guacamole at your table in a pestle made of volcanic rock. Thinking ahead, for a change, I thought to myself, “That is what you should get Renee for Christmas this year.” It was a hit and we’ve used it ever since!
- When you are a little kid Christmas is exciting. Then somehow as adults we let Christmas become hectic and stressful. Part of the joy of it is recovered when you have your own kids and you see it through their eyes. A similar thing is true of snow, I’ve noticed. As a kid I loved snow, as an adult without kids I hated snow, then as a dad with little kids I learned to love the snow again. After 19 years of living in New England I’ve gone back to preferring no snow!

- Many people are surprised to learn that Jesus was born in 5 BC, which technically stands for "Before Christ". It raises the question, but how can He be born "before" Himself? The answer is that in the ancient world, people used calendars different from our own BC/AD version. For example, the Romans dated things "since the founding of the city." The Jews dated things "since the creation of the world." In the middle ages the church decided that we should switch to counting time since the Birth of the Savior, since that was the truly history-changing event of all time. So a monk named Dionysius Exiguus (English translation, "Dennis the Short") did his best to calculate, and he missed by a few years. Given that he lived in the 6th century AD, this wasn't half bad, really.
- In these modern times, where everything has been made part of the "culture wars," yes, even the calendar has been. Some people have decided that the problem with BC and AD is that they reference Christ, and this shouldn't be so in a modern, secular, progressive society. Perhaps you've come across the new terms: BCE and CE. They stand for "Before the Common Era," and of course, the "Common Era." I'll be a holdout on this one for all my remaining days. "Before Christ" and "Anno Domini" work just fine for me.
- Putting the busy-ness and the anxiety aside, at some time during this month (maybe even several times), let's pause and reflect on the fact that God is the keeper of His promises. Over and over again He said that He would send a Savior. And He did. Not quite the way anyone expected, but exactly as He had planned. Humble, with loving parents doing the best with their tough circumstances, greeted by angels and shepherds; the Savior was born. Like all of God's plans, not a day early, not a day late. He came "in the fullness of time," the eternal Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, God-in-the-flesh, born for us and to fulfill the plan of salvation. One of my favorite songs remembers why it all took place. "What Child Is This" (LSB #370) sees into the future of the Baby: "Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you." Yes, our Jesus, our Savior, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward men."



From our President

Jim Crosland, Congregational President

The holidays are upon us already and I truly pray this will bring out the compassion and love that most folks need and are willing to show others. These are still trying times and it seems socially acceptable to be rude and insensitive to each other. Maybe, moving into the 2021 year, many of us can find the compassion, love, and respect for mankind again. Through these tough times, it is so nice to know that we have our church family that is willing to go above and beyond to help when needed. All we have to do is ask! Thank you to church council for being so responsive as we continue to keep business as usual operating. I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable holiday as 2020 comes to an end.

Safety Tip - Record numbers of car break-ins are still occurring. Please lock your cars and keep valuables out of sight. Lastly, be aware of your surroundings, especially when leaving the store with those expensive gifts. Through these current times, we have to really focus on not becoming victims.



"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:7

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. Our Christmas Program, "The Light of Christmas," will look quite different this year, but we are still looking forward to sharing Christmas joy with our preschool families.

THANK YOU for the outpouring of financial gifts through our Tree of Thanksgiving. We are so grateful for your generous hearts and faithful support of the preschool ministry. Because of this, our scholarship donations are now fully funded and we also have the opportunity to purchase some items that have needed replacing for some time. We are 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 4th ready to see what the Lord has in store for us in 2021. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me.



The Board of Public Relations: Traditions

Sue Strouse, Chairperson

You are all sons of God through Jesus Christ, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Gal 3:26

Martin Luther was the first man to celebrate Christmas in Germany. Back in 1536, Luther was walking through a forest, admiring God's creation, in his home in Germany, when he happened to catch a glimpse of stars through a pine tree's branches. This inspired him to bring a tree inside and decorate it with candles to remind children about the wonders of heaven. From there, the traditions continued to grow year after year, adding new festivities every year.



When we lived in Minnesota with all the relatives close by, we would go to the Strouses to celebrate Christmas Eve. Mike's mom would bake kolches, apple and prune breads, and cloverleaf rolls. For the Christmas Eve dinner we had walleye (the Minnesota state fish), perogi (a potato and cheese dumpling), and honey wheat. As we thanked God for our food, we looked upon the empty chair and place setting for Jesus.

Especially as this time of year, we need to be gracious and kind to people who do not have family or friends to spend time with during Christmas. We may not be able to invite others over because of the virus, but we can offer God's Word and tell everyone that He sent His Son, Jesus, to be with us and we are all part of His Family. What a wonderful blessing that is. God Bless everyone this holiday season!

Stephen Ministry: Six Ways to Fight Loneliness

Bill Boykin, Leader

Taken from an email subscription from
Pr. Phil Ressler at philressler.com

"And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20b

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Loneliness has become a secondary pandemic. It is not only a physical issue, but also a spiritual one. One of the most successful lies Satan tells people is that "you are alone." It is times when we are separated from our church family that we are most susceptible to this lie.



1. **Know you are NOT alone.** Jesus is always with us. This is a truth we receive by faith. Loneliness is a feeling, not a fact. Our brains can manipulate feelings based on our circumstances. Trust that Jesus is here, living in you.

2. **Pray.** Because God is always with you, you can talk with Him about anything, including your feelings of loneliness. He will hear you. He will help you beat this. Just ask for His help.

3. **Write and talk about it.** Many of us are reluctant or afraid to share our struggles. Simply expressing our frustrations and fears can be helpful. This is where our Stephen Ministers fit in. You can share confidentially with them. They will listen to and pray with you. When you bring your struggles to light, they have nowhere to hide.

4. **Pay attention to media consumption.** With all the ways people are able to stay connected, it does not seem that loneliness would be such a problem. Where would Mt. Olive be without our website, YouTube sermons, Facebook, and Zoom meetings? I am thankful for these technologies that keep us connected; however, they are no substitute for real face-to-face interaction. Folks have turned to binge watching TV, or focusing on the election or the stock market. Please remember that when you are on any kind of technology, you are isolating yourself even more.

5. **Make the move.** When you are feeling down or lonely, force yourself to engage in productive activity. The first step is always the hardest. Once you get going, it becomes much easier.

6. **Be a friend.** Loneliness often comes from a lack of connection with others. We wait on a phone call, a letter, an invitation, or for someone to "Like" our social media. Remember that many others are waiting on these same things. Why not pick up the phone yourself? The best way to find a friend is to be a friend. God will work through you when you reach out to someone who is feeling isolated. Listen to God. Is he stirring in your heart to minister to others? Follow Him!



Adult Bible Study



A new 6-week Sunday Bible class will be starting November 29th. Sandy Osborne will offer the classes in the Fellowship Hall during the Sunday School hour at 9:15 AM. We will begin with *The Songs of Christmas: Zechariah's Song, Mary's Song, and Simeon's Song*. Next we will have two Christmas studies, and end with an Epiphany lesson on January 3, 2021.

Board of Stewardship

Naven Olson, Chairperson

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

II Corinthians 8:9 NASB

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:11 KJV

A few years ago a Christian co-worker at the University of South Carolina gave me a Christmas card. The front her card had a drawing of the foot of a small infant and the text "**Unto you is born this day...**" and on the inside a drawing of the bloody nail-pierced hand of a 33 year old man and the text "**...a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.**" This year I will be sending out Christmas cards which have on the front a manger scene and the text "**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" **John1:29bNASB.**

I personally think that at this time of year we always should remember to link together the historical events connected to the first Christmas and the historical events connected to the first Holy Week. (After all, the celebration of the birth of an important historical figure is a celebration of the whole life of that person, not just a celebration of his birth.) So I try to send Christmas cards that connect Christmas and Holy Week, although they get harder to find each year.

And as II Corinthians 8:9 states Jesus did become poor. He left the glories of heaven to dwell with Mary and Joseph, who were poor. Luke 2:24 NASB states that on the 40th day after Jesus' birth, they brought as the required purification sacrifice "**a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons**". Leviticus 12:8 states that the option of bringing two birds (instead of a lamb and a bird) was only available to those who could not afford a lamb.

And He became even poorer. Philippians 2:8 NASB states "**And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**" Crucifixion was certainly one of the cruelest, if not the cruelest, means of execution ever used by man and was reserved only for those most despised by those with earthly power.

And while dying He became even poorer, II Corinthians 5:21 NASB states "**He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**"

Isaiah 53:5a NASB states "**But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities.**" I certainly would think that bearing the sin of every sinner from Adam and Eve to the people alive at the time of His return (over 10 billion I would guess) and also bearing His Father's just wrath against those sins would be VERY crushing.

And finally we come to His glorious resurrection and ascension and the words of Philippians 2:9-11 NASB which state "**Therefore God highly exalted Him, and He bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**"

This strange year is almost over and in a few weeks a new year will start. Even though many in politics, in the media, in Hollywood, in academia and in some big corporations are hostile to Biblical Christianity, let us continue to use our resources to proclaim Jesus Christ crucified for our sins and raised for our justification to a lost and dying world.



Board of Social Ministry: Advent

Norma Hessary, Board Member

*In the midst of all the busyness of Christmas this year,
ask God to help you keep Christ at the center of everything you do.*

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

2 Corinthians 9:15

*For
Unto
us a
CHILD
is born
Unto us a Son
is given, and the
Government shall be
Upon His shoulders,
and His Name shall be called,
Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!*
Isaiah 9:6

**Christmas Giving Tree
& Advent Food Drive**

Shopping of any kind may be a bit cumbersome this year, but as we are called to share our blessings and extend a loving hand to our neighbor, let’s make this year especially memorable for our community in need.

As always, we are partnering with Sharing God’s Love to support the Christmas Giving Tree and the Advent Food Drive. There are two opportunities to help by choosing one or both for your family Christmas Project!

The Christmas Giving Tree will be in the narthex starting the First Sunday in Advent. Christmas stocking ornaments will be placed on the tree with details inside. Simply remove a stocking from the tree and enjoy shopping for the child or senior listed. Please attach the stocking/description to your gift bag, and place them under the Christmas tree. **Please place your items in gift bags only.** The collection will conclude on Sunday, December 13th. Sharing God’s Love will distribute the gifts to Midlands families.

Shopping bags for **The Advent Food Drive** will be available in the narthex the first Sunday of Advent, November 29th. The grocery list detailing the pantry needs will be attached to each bag. Filling the bag can be easily done from your pantry or your local grocery store using curbside pick up or delivery. We have so many shopping options available today! Please bring your bag to the church and place in the collection area in the narthex. A delivery to Sharing God’s Love will be made each week, so we will have room for the next week’s collection. If possible, please bring your final week’s items by Sunday, December 20th so the narthex will be less cluttered for Christmas Eve.

✓	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

Advent and Christmas Special Worship Schedule
Come Worship with Us

Date	Service	Service Times
December 2	Mid-Week Advent 1	Noon Service; Evening Service 7:00 pm
December 9	Mid-Week Advent 2	Noon Service; Evening Service 7:00 pm
December 16	Mid-Week Advent 3	Noon Service; Evening Service 7:00 pm
December 24	Christmas Eve – Early	5:00 pm - No Holy Communion
	Christmas Eve – Late	7:00 pm – No Holy Communion/Candles
December 25	Christmas Day	10:30 am – Holy Communion
December 27	1 st Sunday after Christmas	Saturday – 5 pm, Sunday – 8 am & 10:30 am, and 3:00 pm – Worship with Facemasks Required



DECEMBER LECTIONARY

Nov. 29	First Sunday in Advent	Isaiah 64:1–9	Psalms 80:1–7	1 Corinthians 1:3–9	Mark 13:24–37
Dec. 6	Second Sunday in Advent	Isaiah 40:1–11	Psalms 85	2 Peter 3:8–14	Mark 1:1–8
Dec. 13	Third Sunday in Advent	Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11	Psalms 126	1 Thessalonians 5:16–24	John 1:6–8, 19–28
Dec. 20	Fourth Sunday in Advent	2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16	Psalms 89:1–5	Romans 16:25–27	Luke 1:26–38
Dec. 24	The Nativity of Our Lord	Isaiah 7:10–14	Psalms 110:1–4	1 John 4:7–16	Matthew 1:18–25
Dec. 25	The Nativity of Our Lord	Isaiah 52:7–10	Psalms 2	Hebrews 1:1–9	John 1:1–14
Dec. 27	First Sunday after Christmas	Isaiah 61:10–62:3	Psalms 111	Galatians 4:4–7	Luke 2:22–40

JANUARY LECTIONARY

Jan. 3	Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1–6	Psalms 72:1–11	Ephesians 3:1–12	Matthew 2:1–12
Jan. 10	The Baptism of Our Lord	Genesis 1:1–5	Psalms 29	Romans 6:1–11	Mark 1:4–11
Jan. 17	Second S. a. the Epiphany	1 Samuel 3:1–10	Psalms 139:1–10	1 Corinthians 6:12–20	John 1:43–51
Jan. 24	Third S. a. the Epiphany	Jonah 3:1–5, 10	Psalms 62	1 Corinthians 7:29–31	Mark 1:14–20
Jan. 31	Fourth S. a. the Epiphany	Deuteronomy 18:15–20	Psalms 111	1 Cor. 8:1–13	Mark 1:21–28

Thoughts, Prayers, Calls & Cards

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35

Please remember our homebound during the Christmas season. Make a special effort send a special card, make a phone call, and keep them in prayer. Cards are so very meaningful because they can be saved and read over and over. Don't forget about family members and care givers, too. Contact information is in the church directory or you can contact the church office.

CHRISTMAS
Joy ☆

Don Angen	Nadia R. BouFawaz	Phil Carter	Cleta Dunaway	Virginia Gable
Bill Hoefler	Betty Hunter	Bonnie Jones	Judy Jones	Ron LaGrange
Mary Lawhorne	Herb Loebis	Margaret Ludwig	Mike McGriff	Carolyn McCartha
Anita Meetze	Laura Meetze	Kathryn Meetze	Margaret Meetze	C.R. Miller
Carole Myers	Ed Nelson	Dorothy Prater	Eddie Roland	Polly Roland
Myrna Rush	Henry Schmidt	Linda Schmidt	Mary Schott	Molly Kate Shealy
Shirlean Sons	Dan Stocker	Flora Weed	Henry Weed	Louise Weed



Read the Bible in Three Years: December 2020 – January 2021

As December begins, we will be half way through reading Isaiah and then finish out 2020 by reading Romans. This will be a great review for us as many of Pr. Walt's summer sermons took us on a journey through Romans. 2021 begins with the Gospel of Mark, the primary Gospel for Year B in the Church Year Calendar. We will finish January in the prophet Zechariah, and begin Job on the 31st.

Dec 1	Isaiah 37-38	Dec 9	Isaiah 53-54	Dec 17	Romans 2	Dec 25	Romans 10
Dec 2	Isaiah 39-40	Dec 10	Isaiah 55-56	Dec 18	Romans 3	Dec 26	Romans 11
Dec 3	Isaiah 41-42	Dec 11	Isaiah 57-58	Dec 19	Romans 4	Dec 27	Romans 12
Dec 4	Isaiah 43-44	Dec 12	Isaiah 59-60	Dec 20	Romans 5	Dec 28	Romans 13
Dec 5	Isaiah 45-46	Dec 13	Isaiah 61-62	Dec 21	Romans 6	Dec 29	Romans 14
Dec 6	Isaiah 47-48	Dec 14	Isaiah 63-64	Dec 22	Romans 7	Dec 30	Romans 15
Dec 7	Isaiah 49-50	Dec 15	Isaiah 65-66	Dec 23	Romans 8	Dec 31	Romans 16
Dec 8	Isaiah 51-52	Dec 16	Romans 1	Dec 24	Romans 9		

January 2020

Jan 1	Mark 1	Jan 9	Mark 9	Jan 17	Zechariah 1	Jan 25	Zechariah 9
Jan 2	Mark 2	Jan 10	Mark 10	Jan 18	Zechariah 2	Jan 26	Zechariah 10
Jan 3	Mark 3	Jan 11	Mark 11	Jan 19	Zechariah 3	Jan 27	Zechariah 11
Jan 4	Mark 4	Jan 12	Mark 12	Jan 20	Zechariah 4	Jan 28	Zechariah 12
Jan 5	Mark 5	Jan 13	Mark 13	Jan 21	Zechariah 5	Jan 29	Zechariah 13
Jan 6	Mark 6	Jan 14	Mark 14	Jan 22	Zechariah 6	Jan 30	Zechariah 14
Jan 7	Mark 7	Jan 15	Mark 15	Jan 23	Zechariah 7	Jan 31	Job 1
Jan 8	Mark 8	Jan 16	Mark 16	Jan 24	Zechariah 8		

November Pastoral Acts

	<p>Funeral Service Marguerite Schmitzer November 19, 1936 - October 29, 2020 November 2, 2020</p>	
---	---	---



December 2020- January 2021 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	Eric & Natalie Smith	1/20	Eddie & Dana Magic
12/23	Matthew & Page Fletcher	1/23	Mike & Linda McGriff
12/28	Pat & Lu Donlon		



December 2020 - January 2021 Birthdays

12/1	Connor Weed	12/19	Alex Knowles	1/10	Christian Pham
12/4	Greg Ervin	12/21	Eric Hennington	1/12	Justin Pham
12/4	Richard Weed	12/22	James Kibler	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	Robin Bowers- Hennington	12/23	Shari Selke	1/19	Mitch Greer
12/10	Laura Laprise	12/24	Rebecca Shirah	1/19	Shirley Vogel
12/11	Samuel Fancey	12/26	Natalie Osborne- Smith	1/21	August Medlin
12/11	Witt, Wanda	12/28	David Fletcher	1/21	Kim Perkins
12/12	Janet Jabs	12/30	Don Angen	1/23	James Shirah
12/12	Christopher Meetze	12/30	Sherry Ervin	1/25	Andrew Rosinski
12/12	Claudia Schneider	1/2	Otto Folks	1/25	Abigail Setterlund
12/14	Liesel Rutland	1/3	Page Fletcher	1/25	Richard Shealy
12/15	Blake Cook	1/7	Mary Lou Tedder	1/25	Evan Williams
12/15	Lu Donlon	1/8	Kerri Kogelmann	1/26	Kim BouFawaz
12/15	Pastor Walt Harper	1/8	Kerri Kogelmann	1/26	Emma Dennis
12/15	Pastor Walt Harper	1/9	Shanna Stuck	1/26	Sheryl Springer
12/16	Liezl Baden	1/9	Peggy Weed	1/28	Krista Knowles
12/17	Abigail Sharpe	1/9	Peggy Weed	1/29	Tristan Selke
12/17	Abigail Sharpe	1/10	Dianne BouFawaz	1/30	Cindy Soto
12/18	Todd Barrett	1/10	Mary Lawhorne	1/31	
12/19	Olivia Box				

Announcements & Opportunities

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Mt. Olive's next blood drive will be Monday, January 18th from 2 PM – 7 PM. To schedule your appointment, please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter Sponsor Code: OliveLutheran. The ARC has taken extra precautions to keep their donors and volunteers safe. The COVID-19 antibody testing is included with blood donation.



Worship Overflow Area in Fellowship Hall

Have you thought about attending worship services but would prefer a setting with less people? Why not come to Mt. Olive's fellowship hall and watch one of our three entire services that are projected there? Through September, the most that have taken advantage of this setting is 3 people. Tables are socially distanced over 6 feet. If you would like to receive communion, you can either come to the sanctuary or have an elder bring communion to you in the fellowship hall. (Please notify an elder when you arrive if you would like this option.)

NEW: Face Mask-Required Worship Services: December 29th & January 31st

On the last Sunday of each month at 3:00 PM, there will be an additional worship service where facemasks are required. If you have not been comfortable with worshipping in person, we pray that this will be an opportunity for you to return. As always, social distancing is practiced and additional sanitation measures are in place. During Communion, the usher maintains space between each family. We look forward to seeing you on the last Sunday of the month.



February Newsletter Deadline –January 20th

Your next deadline for submitting articles for the February 2021 issue of the Olive Leaves is **Wednesday, January 20th**. Remember to send them to Sue Strouse at slstrouse@gmail.com.



Secure E Giving Reminder

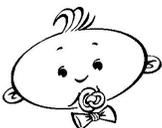
E giving contributions are on the rise. Have you thought about giving this a try? The link to set up your account is on the home page of our church website, mtolivesc.org. You may give through your checking account or credit card. Our e giving is powered by VANCO, a secure company that follows strict and safe policies. Even though the e giving page looks like our website, Mt. Olive will have no record of your account, your card number, or your personal information. If you need help setting up your account, contact Aresa Boykin.

Bulletin Board Photos

It is time to update the Elders and Church Council bulletin boards with the correct photos. If you are a new elder or board chair, please see Aresa before or after worship services to have your picture taken. Let's try to get these done the first two weekends in December.

Nursery "Cry Room" 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. Parents, as you are leaving, please sanitize the toys of which your child has played. Thank you.



Puzzle!

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.



CODE:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q

10	23	13	17	14	6	18	21	21			
11	14	12	10	21	21	14	13				
6	24	23	13	14	1	15	4	21			
12	24	4	23	2	14	21	24	1			
22	18	16	17	3	8	16	24	13			
14	5	14	1	21	10	2	3	18	23	16	
15	10	3	17	14	1	25	1	18	23	12	14
24	15	25	14	10	12	14					

ISAIAH 9:6, NIV

25 WAYS TO SHARE CHRIST at CHRISTMAS

Display a Nativity outdoors. The display of Nativity sets reminds others that Jesus is real -- and that we should celebrate the real gift of the season!

Reenact the first Christmas and invite friends and neighbors! It doesn't have to be elaborate. Humble, handmade costumes are the sweetest.

Give gift cards to a struggling single parent family anonymously.

Leave a generous, much bigger-than-usual, tip for your server at a restaurant and include a note that says "Merry Christmas, Jesus loves you!"

Have a Birthday Party for Jesus! You can make a cake, sing "Happy Birthday," and even put up some birthday decorations.

Stop by a school bus stop and hand out candy canes to all the children waiting.

Sing Christmas hymns door-to-door or in a nursing home, like "Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger" and "Oh Holy Night."

Surprise neighbors with treats and include the "You've Been Jingle'd" special poem that reminds of the true meaning of Christmas. (Courtesy of The Dating Divas)

Leave a nice tip for your mailman and newspaper delivery person.

Hide a \$1 bill in the toy section of the dollar store with a note "Jesus loves you!" --make some little person's day.

Make a Christmas card for your pastor and church staff.

Operation Christmas Child. Pack a shoebox for Christmas Child.

Volunteer to babysit for a single mom so she can do her Christmas shopping.

Give gifts that focus on Christ. Not every gift has to be religious, but children's Christian picture books, Bibles, an inspirational Scripture calendar, or a 365-day devotional all make great Christmas gifts that friends and family can enjoy year-round!

Create and share a Blessings Jar. Read the book "The Blessings Jar" as a family. Then fill your own Christmas jar with blessings and give to someone in need.

Read the Christmas story (the historical accounts directly from the Bible in the gospels of Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2) to senior citizens at a retirement or nursing home.

Shovel a snowy driveway and front walkway for a neighbor, or if you're in a warmer area mow the lawn or take the trash barrels in and out. Leave a note to tell them they are loved by Jesus!

Send Christmas cards to deployed soldiers.

Deliver blankets, warm socks, and toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm) to a homeless shelter.

Call your local hospital or hospice center and find out who doesn't have regular visitors and visit that person with a poinsettia or a mini-tree. Make a new friend!

Deliver a Christmas tree to a family or senior who can't afford one.

Leave cookies or sandwiches at your local fire or police station with a note of thanks and "Merry Christmas! Jesus loves you and we are grateful for you!"

Find a local community center that serves underprivileged children and bring Christmasy snacks, juice boxes, and crafts for a fun playtime afternoon.

Deliver cups of hot cocoa to the bell ringers outside of the stores.