



# Olive Leaves



February 2021

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## From Pastor Walt: Saint Valentine's Day

*Pastor Walter Harper*  
[walt.harper@mtolivesc.org](mailto:walt.harper@mtolivesc.org)



Years ago Renee worked at a chocolate shop in Bethel, CT. Of course Christmas and Easter were always busy times. She'd also describe Valentine's Day as busy, but only for a day or two. Why so briefly? Because of all the guys putting off their purchases until the last minute.

Not unlike other saints' days, there's a real Saint Valentine in church history; and then there's the modern commemoration with all of its surrounding traditions.

The real Valentine lived from AD 226 to AD 269, meaning that he died at the age of 42 or 43. As is typical of the other saints' days, February 14<sup>th</sup> is the day that Valentine died. Some people learn of this custom and think it's morose. But the church has always celebrated the death of the saint as the date of their "heavenly birthday."

So what do we know of Valentine? Not too terribly much, because he lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Also making it tough on us: when little is known about a saint the church has sometimes "filled in the details" with stories of doubtful origin.

Here's what we can feel pretty solid about: Valentine was a priest and a doctor in the city of Rome. He lived at a time of on-again, off-again persecution of Christians. Sometimes the Roman government figured out that Christians were basically hard-working taxpayers who didn't make much trouble. Other Caesars thought they were an ungovernable bunch of kooks who refused to participate in the civic life of the Empire (by which they really meant: the worship of Caesar).

During the reign of Claudius Gothicus ("Claudius the German," who ruled from AD 268 to 270), Valentine was arrested and thrown into prison. While there, he struck up a friendship with the daughter of the jailer, and even shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with her. When Valentine was condemned to be executed he wrote one final note, cut it into the shape of a heart, and signed it, "Your Valentine."

Like many in that era he went to the executioner bravely, trusting in the eternal life that is ours in Christ. Given the hardship of Roman torture and execution, one wonders if he would be amused by the little candy hearts that we share (why do they taste like Tums, BTW?), or the heart-shaped cards, or the ubiquity of his words "Your Valentine."

In any case, no Christian pastor minds the celebration of love. Love is a tough concept, often hard to define, but always a lot easier to sense.

The Bible is clear: God is a God of love. The Bible tells us that He loved us even when we were still His enemies. It tells us that we love because He first loved us. And everyone's favorite verse (John 3:16) says that God loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ.

So, guys, be forewarned: Go do your shopping before February 13<sup>th</sup>! Ladies, thanks for loving us anyway. And to all the people of God, delight in His love for us, and share that same love with those around you.



### February Lectionary

| Date        | Festival        | First Reading      | Psalm          | Epistle              | Gospel       |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Feb. 7      | Epiphany 5      | Isaiah 40:21-31    | Psalm 147:1-11 | 1 Cor. 9:16-27       | Mark 1:29-39 |
| February 14 | Transfiguration | 2 Kings 2:1-12     | Psalm 50:1-6   | 2 Cor. 3:12-18;4:1-6 | Mark 9:2-9   |
| February 21 | Lent 1          | Genesis 22:1-18    | Psalm 25:1-10  | James 1:12-18        | Mark 1:9-15  |
| February 28 | Lent 2          | Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16 | Psalm 22:23-31 | Romans 5:1-11        | Mark 8:27-38 |

### Lenten Service



**Mid-Week Lenten Services begin this month** on Ash Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. We will offer optional Imposition of Ashes at both services on this day. Wednesday mid-week services will continue through March 24<sup>th</sup>. Service times are 12 Noon and 7:00 pm. in the sanctuary.

### Adult Bible Studies

**Midweek Study:** Pastor Walt will be finishing up his midweek study on eschatology on February 10<sup>th</sup> at either 1:30 or 7pm. Then the Lenten Midweek worship at noon and 7 pm will start February 17<sup>th</sup> (Ash Wednesday) through March 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Sunday Adult Bible Class:** The declining influence of the church in American culture can be of great concern to many believers. However, God has always and will always have a remnant of believers to continue His work. Join us from February 14<sup>th</sup>-March 21<sup>st</sup> for the study "Being the Remnant Church." Sandy Osborne will lead the study in the fellowship hall from 9:15- 10:15am. The study is based on an LCMS blog series with selected scriptures.

## From our President

*Jim Crosland, Congregational President*

Welcome everyone to 2021! As we enter this new year with all of our new resolutions, I truly hope spiritual growth is one of them. If not, please add it to your list. We still have some board positions open if anyone feels called to serve. We would really love to have new volunteers to offer fresh ideas and different perspectives to our boards.

# Thank

Thank you all very much for your prayers, notes, and compassion during the passing of my stepfather, Mike McGriff. His death was somewhat expected but it did not make things easier. He raised me from the age of three and molded me into the way I am today (Good, Bad, and Ugly). Many of you would recognize him or even purchased a car from him. He owned McMotors Inc., a car lot that first opened in the 80's, located next to the old C-Mart. He continued to open five other lots in Irmo during the rest of the 80's and 90's. We know Pop, and Charlie Sandt, too, are in heaven with our Almighty God.

Safety Tip: Watch your bank and credit card accounts for suspicious charges. The bad people are writing down your card information or taking pictures of them in restaurants and other places that you use your cards.

Blessings!



## Stephen Ministry: Are You Experiencing Pandemic Fatigue?

*Bill Boykin, Leader*

**"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,  
and I will give you rest." —Matthew 11:28**

Are you feeling exhausted from all the disruptions to life brought on by the pandemic?  
Are you or someone you know struggling with challenges like:



- ❖ Isolation and loneliness;
- ❖ Anxiety over health;
- ❖ Grief due to many different kinds of losses;
- ❖ Tension from juggling work, childcare, and schooling;
- ❖ Financial strain or job loss;
- ❖ Uncertainty about the future; or
- ❖ Other unexpected life challenges?

If so, you don't have to face it alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support.

A Stephen Minister will meet with you privately—by phone, by video chat, or, if safely possible, in person—to offer care and support. It's free and completely confidential. For more information, contact Stephen Leader Bill Boykin.

## **The Board of Public Relations: Lent**

*Sue Strouse, Chairperson*

**19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19 (NIV)**

Lent is starting in February and it lasts 40 days. The 40 days commemorate the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert. Like Jesus, we should also take this time to pray and to re-evaluate our walk with God and how we can spread His Word to others. Sometimes we get so involved with our lives that we forget that our time here on earth is just a blink of an eye in God's time. We need to focus on what God wants for us and trust in Him to show us the way.

### **Member's Web Page**

If you cannot log in to the website's secure member's page, please contact Aresa Boykin at 803-260-7198 (call or text), aresaboykin@sc.rr.com, or aresaboykin@gmail.com. There is a glitch with the firewall that is locking some of us out. Meghan Smith is working hard from Texas to trouble shoot the problem.

If you have not joined the secure member's page, you can register on our website at <http://mtolivesc.org>, > Member Login > Directory. The glitch is not a problem to new users.



### **Board of Trustees**

*Chris Slaughter, Board Member*

First and foremost, please keep the family of our fellow Trustee, Charlie Sandt, in your prayers. He was called to his Heavenly home on Friday, January 15th. Charlie was a great friend, an excellent Trustee, and a fantastic brother in Christ. We will all greatly miss him, but we rejoice that he has joined all of the Saints who have gone before us in Heaven.

The Trustees have been busy making improvements to the church in December and January. During the last two months, we completed the following projects:

- replaced light fixtures and light bulbs over the pews in the sanctuary, kitchen, fellowship hall, preschool, restrooms, and choir balcony;
- replaced wall pack lights, which illuminate the parking lot and back of the church, and the parking lots between the education building and nursery entrance and the Wagner House, and the light bulbs above the church sign;
- re-labeled and re-numbered the breaker panel in the education building, and have begun labeling all of our light switches with a description of the lights that are operated by the switch.



We have accomplished a lot of work so far, but we are always looking for help with various projects. If you are willing to help, please contact Charlie Stuck, Board of Trustees Chairperson.

## Preschool News

*Anna Brent, Preschool Director*

*803-781-7180 - preschool@mtolivesc.org*

*Web: mtolivesc.org/preschool - Facebook.com/mountolivepreschool*



The 33 students and their families who are being served this school year in the preschool are flourishing! We are so, so thankful that we have had the opportunity to open our doors and continue learning since September. Our amazing staff, a warm and loving environment, small class sizes and high-quality learning experiences are just a few of the reasons that our preschool is loved by many. The students learn about God's love for them and His desire for them to be their best while they learn about and explore His world.

**Do you know any families with young children who would benefit from our school?** Encourage them to call, email, check out the website or Facebook page. Anna is always happy to talk with families and provide tours of the preschool.

**Registration for congregation members and current students begins on February 1<sup>st</sup>** and for new students and families on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Registration materials are available on the bulletin board near the Fellowship Hall, on our website, and downstairs on the table near the preschool entrance.



## Sunday School

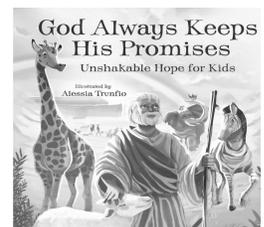
*Jessica Dennis, Sunday School Superintendent*

Hi Mt Olive families and Sunday School friends!

We are very much looking forward to the day when we can begin Sunday School classes again. In the meantime, I'd like to extend the offer of meeting your children in the way that would best suit them. Are your children missing Sunday School classes? Would they like to have a Zoom class with a few SS friends? Would you like to start seeing SS lesson videos shared, along with sermons? Can I meet your child for a driveway, socially distanced lesson once a month?

Whatever your and your child's preference may be, would you email or call me to discuss and arrange? We know that many children are "over" virtual learning. But if some are enjoying that, let me know and we will start posting lessons again! If your child is craving a visit and you are comfortable (outside/socially distanced), please reach out!

If you'd like a great, at home lesson book to read with your children, we've been reading Max Lucado's, "God Always Keeps His Promises." It is full of God's promises and hope for children!



Please let us know how we can reach your child best, until we are able to resume classes upstairs! My contact information is in the directory.

Praying for all of God's blessings to shower you in the New Year we've been given.

## Board of Stewardship

*Naven Olson, Chairperson*

All Biblical quotations are from the NASB

**"We have an altar, from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come." Hebrews 13:10-14**

In John 16:33b Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage: I have overcome the world." Jesus never told his followers to expect to be appreciated by the world. Jesus said, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." John 15:18 And Romans 12:2 urges, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Being changed by God to be different from the unbelieving world and being used by Him in changing others are more realistic goals than fixing the world. It is what it is.

Persecution of Christians continues around the world. It is being ramped up by a Communist government in China and by a Hindu nationalist government in India and continues unabated in Muslim countries. It may be coming to America. See this link from Answers in Genesis: <https://answersingenesis.org/culture/religious-freedom-under-assault-america-2021/> A letter I got in the mail before the 2016 election from the Institute for Creation Research included this opinion about that election, "This election will empower the secular worldview – no matter who wins." That seems prophetic now.

The LCMS web page <https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/synod-chaplain-issues-scripture-memory-challenge> contains the following quote: "We never know when persecution may come, when technology or even access to Bibles and churches may go away." So what shall we do if this happens?

Remember Jesus' promises: "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:10b and "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20b. Be in church whenever possible; involved in Bible study; in prayer for yourself, family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and this church and the church at large. Reach out to family, friends, neighbors and coworkers with the gospel of Christ crucified for our sins and raised for our justification. Generously support this church with your time, talents and resources.



### February 2021 Anniversaries

|      |                          |      |                       |
|------|--------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| 2/7  | Philip & Beth Clauss     | 2/25 | Jens & Liz Rosinski   |
| 2/10 | Todd & Elizabeth Barrett | 2/26 | Henry & Linda Schmidt |
| 2/14 | Dennis & Tina Dixon      |      |                       |

## February 2021 Birthdays

|      |               |      |                  |      |                    |
|------|---------------|------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| 2/1  | Dot Monts     | 2/12 | Daniel Zahn      | 2/19 | Carole Mueller     |
| 2/2  | Chuck Bauer   | 2/12 | Rosemary Sharpe  | 2-19 | Susan Strouse      |
| 2/2  | C.R. Miller   | 2/13 | Kathie Bost      | 2/20 | Kathy Eargle       |
| 2/3  | Susie Hoffman | 2/14 | Trent Boykin     | 2/21 | Chris McKinney     |
| 2/7  | Sally Kinard  | 2/14 | Paula Helming    | 2/22 | David Buck         |
| 2/8  | Beth Lipkin   | 2/14 | Xander Polkowsky | 2/23 | Teresa Hoefler     |
| 2/10 | Phil Carter   | 2/15 | Hannah Hennigan  | 2/24 | Barbara Spadaccini |
| 2/10 | Joshua Thrun  | 2/15 | Jeff Thrun       | 2/25 | Kelsey Whitaker    |
| 2/11 | Seth Duncan   | 2/16 | Scott Birkelien  | 2/26 | Henry Schmidt      |
| 2/11 | Bailey Stuck  | 2/16 | James Crosland   | 2/26 | Dan Stocker        |
| 2/11 | Carly Stuck   | 2/17 | Rachel Lewis     | 2/27 | Hunter Robinson    |
| 2/12 | Noah Laney    | 2/18 | Natalie Crosland | 2/27 | Suzi Slaughter     |
| 2/12 | Herb Loeb     | 2/19 | William Baden    |      |                    |



### Thoughts, Prayers, Calls & Cards

**<sup>12</sup> May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. 1 Thessalonians 3:12 (NIV)**



When we pick up the phone and call someone, there is a connection through hearing each other's voices that uniquely says, "I care and haven't forgotten about you." A card with a handwritten note is also a thoughtful way to brighten someone's day especially during these seemingly endless months of isolation.

The names below are a few of our Mt. Olive family that would welcome a card, personal note, or a phone call. You may even think of other family and friends too! Ask God what He wants you to do during the Pandemic, and what He has planned for you to accomplish. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. (1Thessalonians 3:12).

|               |                   |                 |                  |                |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Don Angen     | Nadia R. BouFawaz | Phil Carter     | Cleta Dunaway    | Virginia Gable |
| Bill Hoefler  | Betty Hunter      | Bonnie Jones    | Judy Jones       | Ron LaGrange   |
| Mary Lawhorne | Herb Loeb         | Margaret Ludwig | Carolyn McCartha | Anita Meetze   |
| Laura Meetze  | Kathryn Meetze    | Margaret Meetze | C.R. Miller      | Carole Myers   |
| Ed Nelson     | Dorothy Prater    | Polly Roland    | 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: February 2021

We began the book of Job on January 31st and will continue through February and on through half of March. The book is considered to be the oldest book in the Bible. Job, a righteous man, suffers through considerable loss and illnesses, and through it all, he continues to praise God. He says to his wife, "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 2:10)

Job is a book that will make much more sense to you if you use a written or audio commentary or a Bible app to help you. Some you might consider are: Through the Word (audio commentary on each chapter), The Bible Project (overview), Bible Gateway, or YouVersion.

| February 2021 |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Feb 1         | Job 2 | Feb 8  | Job 9  | Feb 15 | Job 16 | Feb 22 | Job 23 |
| Feb 2         | Job 3 | Feb 9  | Job 10 | Feb 16 | Job 17 | Feb 23 | Job 24 |
| Feb 3         | Job 4 | Feb 10 | Job 11 | Feb 17 | Job 18 | Feb 24 | Job 25 |
| Feb 4         | Job 5 | Feb 11 | Job 12 | Feb 18 | Job 19 | Feb 25 | Job 26 |
| Feb 5         | Job 6 | Feb 12 | Job 13 | Feb 19 | Job 20 | Feb 26 | Job 27 |
| Feb 6         | Job 7 | Feb 13 | Job 14 | Feb 20 | Job 21 | Feb 27 | Job 28 |
| Feb 7         | Job 8 | Feb 14 | Job 15 | Feb 21 | Job 22 | Feb 28 | Job 29 |



### Announcements & Opportunities

#### **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.)

#### **Face Mask Service the last Sunday of the month**

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 28<sup>th</sup>.



#### **March Newsletter Deadline –February 19th**

Your next deadline for submitting articles for the March 2021 issue of the Olive Leaves is **Friday, February 19th**. Remember to send them to Sue Strouse at [slstrouse@gmail.com](mailto:slstrouse@gmail.com).



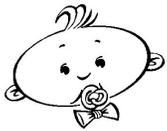
## **Secure E Giving Reminder**

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](http://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.

## **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.



## **A Prayer for Our Nation**

*Excerpt from **Prayers for Our Lives: 95 Lifelines to God for Everyday Circumstances** by Mel Lawrenz.*

Dear God,

You have blessed us with the gift of life, and so, with every breath we take, we are your testimony of the value and sanctity of life. You have blessed us by putting us in a world that is your spectacular creation full of wonder; and you allow us to live in a nation rich with natural resources and incredible beauty. Help us to marvel at the blessings of your creation and to be responsible stewards of the land you have made.

You have blessed us with marriage and family and friendship. And so we ask you to help us cherish and respect these relationships you have woven into the human race, and may we honor those relationships by living them out with grace and truth.

You have blessed us with the gift of freedom.

The freedom by which we can gather together.

The freedom by which we make sober choices about how we conduct ourselves as a nation.

The freedom by which we can show acts of mercy to those who suffer or are disadvantaged.

The freedom by which we as citizens may exercise responsible discernment in the selection of our leaders.

The freedom by which we as fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, and friends and neighbors and fellow-workers can build each other up to be the people you created us to be.

We pray for the leaders of our nation. Please bless and empower and guide them in these days which are the stepping stones to our future.

We acknowledge our daily need for your forgiveness of our shortcomings, and acknowledge our need for your protection against those who would harm and destroy. We are citizens of this nation, but we know that, to you, all the nations are together like a drop in a bucket, as dust on the scales.

We are today and always under your watchful eye as loving Father, saving Son, and purifying Holy Spirit. Amen.

Kid's Korner

# Puzzle!

Use the code to complete the blanks — and find out how God wants us to treat people.

CODE:



1,2 3    6 5 7,8 2,3    1 7,8 2,3

2 8 7 8,9 1 10 10 5 8 7,8 1 10,11 3

10,11 8    8 7,8 3    1 7,8 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10'

3,4 8 9,10 4    5 11,12 5 7,8 4    3 1 2 4,5

8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10'    5,6 11 10 10,11    1 10

5 7,8    2 4,5 9,10 5 10 10,11    4 8 2,3

3,4 8 9,10 4    1 11,12 3    13 8 11'

EPHESIANS 4:32, NIV