

Olive Leaves



December 2022 and January 2023

		Table of Contents						
From Pastor Walt	Board of Public Relations	Board of Social Ministry	Dec-Jan Anniversaries &	Announcements				
Page 1	Page 3	Page 5	Birthdays - Page 7	Page 9				
From our President	Mt Olive Preschool	Dec-Jan Lectionaries	Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, &	Kid's Corner				
Page 2	Page 4	Page 6	Cards - Page 7	Page 9				
Sharing God's Love	Board of Education	Board of Trustees	Read the Bible in 3 Years	December Calendar				
Page 2	Page 4	Page 6	Page 8	Page 10				
Board of Stewardship	Bible Classes		Signs of the Season	January Calendar				
Page 3	Page 5		Page 8	Page 11				

From Pastor Walt: Different, But the Same

Pastor Walt Harper walt.harper@mtolivesc.org

Luke 2, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." (KJV)

I'm not quoting, but my memory recalls that somewhere C.S. Lewis mentioned that all holidays have an element of remaining the same, and, at the same time, of being new and different.



He's referring to the fact that, just to take an example, on Thanksgiving you have turkey, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, green beans, and rolls, and then you watch the Detroit Lions, then later the Dallas Cowboys, play football. That's what we did last year, and it's what we'll do next year, and the year after that, and the year after that.

All of that sameness is delightful! It gives the day the feeling of "home." We know how things go, because it's "how we do this here." It's not a strait jacket, it's the familiar and the comfortable. And by the way, doesn't every family have charming stories about such things? Here's a fun example: for many years Renée's maternal grandmother "accidentally" burned the rolls. Only in her much later years did we learn that she did so because she likes burned rolls. Your family has such stories, and they form the rich narrative of "who we are in this family."

At the same time, in the midst of all that sameness, every year is also different. We're in a different house, maybe in a different city. When we look around at the family, and we think across the years, it's not exactly the same people. If you look at a picture from a Christmas long ago you'll find pictures of little children who are now middle-aged; there are grandparents who are now with the Lord; and there's the absence of the current generation of little ones.

Another difference is, "What's going on in the world at the time?" Is the economy good or rough? How was the weather this year? Was the nation at war or enjoying peace?

Every year has Christmas. Much of it is the same; much of it different.

What does this call us to do? Naturally, to focus on the Savior. He's the One promised by the Old Testament, and He's the One who came to save us. That's the Big Thing about what Christmas is.

And be sure to enjoy this particular Christmas. Look around you and see what's familiar and comforting. Think of who's with you, enjoy them, and their phase of life. There are great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, and little ones. All of them are there to celebrate Christmas 2022.

Christmas 2023 will be the same. And different.



From our President: Thanking Mt Olive Workers & Volunteers

Jim Crosland, Congregational President

As I am sitting at my desk thinking about what to write for the newsletter, some of the same topics such as the budget, council discussion, and future projects keep running through my mind. All these topics are extremely important, but this time, I would like to dedicate my article to the workers and volunteers at Mt. Olive.

There is so much that goes on behind the scenes that must happen every week to prepare for our three worship services, Bible study, Sunday school, confirmation class, and preschool. Others are responsible for the day-to-day tasks that include communicating with church staff, identifying and correcting maintenance problems, paying bills, printing bulletins, setting up the altar and paraments, maintaining the website,





and many other tasks that don't just happen on their own. Most of these operations take place in-house, saving the church money and giving folks insight into the operation of the church. Our volunteers are extremely important and we should be very proud of them. If you pass one of our employees or volunteers, please reach out and say a simple thank you. They most definitely deserve it!

Beginning in February, the nominating committee will be meeting to fill vacancies in those volunteer positions. If you feel called to offer your experience or services, please reach out to our Vice President Jason Dennis.



Congratulations to Sharing God's Love

Congratulations to Sharing God's Love and their director, our very own Sherri Selke! The organization made Secretary of State Mark Hammond's list of Angel Organizations for this year in South Carolina! The organizations who are honored are those who use at least 80% of revenue for service to the community without excessive overhead. This demonstrates that giving to Sharing God's Love is a true benefit to the community – money not wasted! Recognition on the Angel list is a big honor and one that is true to the ministry of Sharing God's Love.

Even though the charities we are helping this Christmas aren't on the 2022 Angel List, SisterCare & Lutheran Family Services also use over 80% of their donations in their ministries. Many qualify, but only 10 SC charities make up the list each year.

Board of Stewardship: Jesus Christ's Second Coming

Naven Olson, Chairperson

This Advent season the article will discuss Jesus Christ's second coming rather than His first. Jesus said regarding His second coming, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" Matthew 24:36. Jesus did say, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come" Matthew 24:14. I would think only God would know when the gospel has been fully preached.

Scripture warns us that the unbelieving world will persecute Christians. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:12, "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Jesus stated in Matthew 24:9, "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name." Our Christian brethren in China, North Korea, India, and many Muslim countries face severe persecution. In Greece, Vassilis Tsiartis, a legendary soccer star, received a jail sentence and a fine for posting "transphobic" social media posts citing the Genesis creation account. In Finland, the prosecutor (or persecutor) is appealing the acquittal on "hate speech" charges of Dr. Päivi Räsänen (a medical doctor, member of parliament, mother of 5, and grandmother of 10) for expressing Biblical views concerning homosexuality.

Doubtless some Americans would like to see similar prosecutions (or persecutions) here. /logs.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." We need to read our Bibles daily. And we need to hear the message. And we need to hear the message again and again.

Let us be in church weekly, in prayer and Bible study daily, and in Bible class when possible. Let us support this church with our time, effort, and resources. Let us reach out to our unbelieving and unchurched family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. And let us remember Jesus' words from **Revelation 2:10**, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."



The Board of Public Relations: Looking at the Altar

Sue Strouse, Chairperson



The candles on the altar represent the Gospel and the Epistle. When facing the altar, the left side is called the Gospel side. The right side is called the Epistle side. The Epistle candle is lit first, then the Gospel candle last, and they are extinguished in reverse order. They are lit and extinguished in this order so that the Gospel side candle is never burning alone. Since the Gospel is the light that Jesus is for the world, it must always be shining, knowing that the Epistles (letters) came after His Death.



The Sanctuary Lamp (aka "Eternal Flame") is the red glass globe with a candle burning inside it that is attached to the ceiling and hung down. The red coloration of the candle shield reminds us of Jesus' tremendous price for the redemption of the world—the willing self-sacrifice of God's One and onlybegotten Son, who died for us. The continuous burning symbolizes that God is eternal and we will inherit eternal life through belief in His Son.

Preschool News: "Who is Coming to Our House?"

Anna Brent, Preschool Dírector 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 looking forward to sharing the joy of the season with our preschool families in person this year.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! We will have a special performance for church members on Wednesday, December 14 at 11:15 am in the Fellowship Hall. Please plan to join us to watch our short program, "Who is Coming to Our House?" before the noon Advent service. We will have another program for preschool families and their guests at a separate time.



We are so thankful for your generous hearts and faithful support, and feel privileged to have the opportunity to serve our preschool children and their families, and spread the good news of the Gospel. Be on the lookout for preschool prayer cards! Each one has a picture of a preschool student and a prayer based on Colossians 1:9-14. Please use these as a reminder to pray for the preschool ministry.

The hallways will be quiet during the Christmas break from school, but we will return on January 3rd, ready to see what the Lord has in store for us in 2023. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me!



The Board of Education: A Night in Bethlehem

Jessica Dennis, Superintendent

The Board of Education is very excited about "A Night in Bethlehem" on December 2, from 6-8pm. And we're so grateful that you all are as well! Our volunteer turn-out for this event has been SO encouraging. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to "work" the event, painted props, and brought in items to use. We hope that this event becomes something that Mt. Olive's children can look forward to every year going forward.



Children upstairs will begin searching for the "Star From Afar" nativity pieces (the shepherds, wise men, stable animals, Mary, and Joseph) each Sunday morning through Advent. This is one of my favorite Sunday School (and at home) traditions! The kids love it. So, if you hear a stampede and lots of excited little ones upstairs, they're just trying to find that last piece to return to the stable. If you don't have one of these sets at home, I highly recommend it as it helps little ones remember every day why we are preparing for Christmas. Baby Jesus will be found there on Christmas morning! Also, children will be singing Christmas songs at the 10:30 service, on December 11th. Plan to attend this service if you want to hear their sweet voices.

The youth group had SO much fun playing Laser Tag and Putt Putt this past month! The older boys beat everyone at Laser Tag. They took this task very seriously. However, Mr. Joel (their youth leader) was relentless and put everyone to shame at mini golf! It was a great time for all. The youth group is hoping to squeeze in a lock-in over Christmas break. Stay tuned for details on that!

Advent & Christmas blessings to all.

Join a Bible Class

December 2022 – January 2023 Sunday School & Bible Classes – 9:15 AM								
Infants – age 2	Nursery	Parents may stay with their infants & toddlers in the nursery. Please listen to the worship service through the speaker and sanitize the toys with which your child has played.						
Circle of Friends	Preschool Area	Katie Tyczynski & Faithful Group of Volunteers	Bringing Jesus to Special Needs Children					
PK3 – 4th Grade	Upstairs Classroom	Jessica Dennis, Megan Weed, & Brandy Maye	God's Creation					
Confirmation Class (5th grade & up)	Preschool Big Room	Pr. Walt Harper	A two-year study of The Small Catechism & The Bible					
Middle School, including recently confirmed students	Wagner House	Rick Baden	Bible Study					
High School Youth	Wagner House	Joel & April Fancey	Bible Study					
Adults	Fellowship Hall	Barry Bost	A deeper study of the Sunday Lectionary epistles					
	Downstairs Cla	assrooms are accessible by stairs and	d elevator.					



The Board Social Ministry: Giving

Mary Keller, Chairperson

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Christmas Giving Tree

This year we are supporting two well-known agencies in the area, Sister Care and Lutheran Family Services. Sister Care provided 16 families for us to sponsor totaling 43 people. These are moms with children who are staying at the shelter for safety. Lutheran Child and Family Services provided 11 people who are residing in their facility recovery group. Both agencies know the specific needs of each person and Mt. Olive has a special opportunity to purchase a specific "Christmas Wish List" gift!

It's wonderful that so many people have a sponsor already! But we still have 17 tags from Sister Care remaining on the board. Please pray that the people remaining are sponsored! They aren't asking for a lot, most wishes are basic needs, even from the children.

Christmas Giving Tree Board (in Narthex by the Christmas Tree):

- 1) Print your name and email address by the person/family you are sponsoring.
- 2) Remove the tag from the board, <u>AND</u> be sure to take a complete Wish List home to reference the details of your person's "Wish List" for Christmas.
- 3) Important! Put you gift in a Christmas bag (<u>DO NOT WRAP</u>) and <u>please</u> remember to include the tag!
 - 4) Gift purchase deadline is Sunday, December 11th.

Social Ministry Save the Dates in January:

Red Cross Blood Drive – January 30^{th} from 9:30 am – 2:30 pm **Seniors' Ministry** – Thursday, January 12^{th} – 10:00 am – 11:00 am AND Tuesday, January 31^{st} – 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

December 2022 Lectionary

Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
December 4	Advent 2	Isaiah 11:1-10	Psalm 72:1-7	Rom. 15:4–13	Matt. 3:1–12
December 11	Advent 3	Isaiah 35:1-10	Psalm 146	James 5:7-11	Matt. 11:2-15
December 18	Advent 4	Isaiah 7:10-17	Psalm 24	Rom. 1:1–7	Matt. 1:18–25
December 24	Christmas Eve	Isaiah 7:10-14	Psalm 110:1-4	1 John 4:7-16	Matthew 1:18-25
December 25	Christmas Day	Isaiah 62:10-12	Psalm 24	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:1-20

January 2023 Lectionary

Date	Festival	First Reading Psalm		Epistle	Gospel
January 1	Christmas 1	Isaiah 63:7-14	Psalm 111	Galatians 4:4–7	Matthew 2:13–23
January 8	Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-11	Eph. 3:1-12	Matt. 2:1–12
January 15	Epiphany 2	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1–11	1 Cor. 1:1–9	John 1:29-42a
January 22	Epiphany 3	Isaiah 9:1-4	Psalm 27:1-9	1 Cor. 1:10–18	Matt. 4:12–25
January 29	Epiphany 4	Micah 6:1–8	Psalm 15	1 Cor. 1:18–31	Matt. 5:1–12



The Board of Trustees: Update on Church Enhancement

Chris Slaughter, Trustee

Over the last month, the Trustees have been busy repairing and enhancing the church. The following repairs have been completed:

- Replaced the broken latches in the restroom stalls near the fellowship hall with new easier to use latches which are ADA-compliant.
- Repaired a broken air supply duct in the Wagner House. Thank you to Mike Prater for performing this work.

Improvements and repairs have been made to the church's internet, Wi-Fi network, and audio/visual system:

- Added Wi-Fi antennas, or "nodes," in the education building, which allows for full Wi-Fi coverage throughout the building.
- Ran over 300 feet of new ethernet cable throughout the church, and directly connected all of the Wi-Fi nodes to our network switches, which greatly improved the Wi-Fi signal throughout the church.
- Added a donated wall-mounted equipment rack in the choir office. The rack contains a new network switch that powers and connects the Wi-Fi nodes in the education building and AV equipment.
- Connected the sanctuary audio mixer to the church Wi-Fi network.
- Upgraded the sanctuary video recording device to a newer model.
- Upgraded the fellowship hall audio mixer to one that is identical to the sanctuary mixer. Thankfully, we received this mixer at a 55% discount.

Additional volunteers are needed for our AV team, and the improvements made to the church's systems have been geared toward making the equipment easier to operate. Training and guidance will be provided. Please prayerfully consider serving on our AV team.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions for the trustees, and/or if you are interested in serving on the Mt. Olive AV team, please email us at trustees@mtolivesc.org

December 2022-January 2023 Anniversaries

12/2	Charlie & Jaime Stuck	12/28	Harold & Sarah Jones
12/4	Tim & Shanna Stuck	12/29	Richard & Barbara Chesley
12/17	Don & Gloria Meetze	12/31	Johnny & Joe Ann Barrett
12/19	Kevin & Mandy Kibler	1/14	James & Carolyn Kibler
12/22	Eric & Natalie Smith	1/20	Eddie & Dana Magic
12/23	Matthew & Page Fletcher	1/25	David & Sandra Stepanovic
12/28	Pat & Lu Donlon		

December 2022-January 2023 Birthdays

12/1	Connor Weed	12/22	James Kibler	1/16	Laura Shealy
12/4	Greg Ervin	12/22	Lee Meetze Jr.	1/17	Stephanie Lewis
12/4	Richard Weed	12/22	Austin Perkins	1/18	Johnna Duncan
12/8	Noelle Franzen	12/23	Charles Fletcher	1/19	Mitch Greer
12/8	Jenn Weed	12/23	John Meyerhoff	1/19	Louie Selle
12/10	Laura Laprise	12/23	Shari Selke	1/19	Shirley Vogel
12/11	Samuel Fancey	12/26	Natalie Osborne-Smith	1/21	Carol Fong
12/11	Wanda Witt	12/28	David Fletcher	1/21	Kim Perkins
12/12	Janet Jabs	12/30	Don Angen	1/25	Andrew Rosinski
12/12	Rich Keller	12/30	Sherry Ervin	1/25	Abigail Setterlund
12/12	Christopher Meetze	1/1	Timothy Schaefer	1/25	Richard Shealy
12/13	Elinor Watford	1/3	Page Fletcher	1/25	Evan Williams
12/15	Blake Cook	1/5	Rebecca Selle	1/26	Kim BouFawaz
12/15	Lu Donlon	1/7	Mary Lou Tedder	1/26	Emma Dennis
12/15	Pastor Walt Harper	1/9	Shanna Stuck	1/28	Sheryl Springer
12/16	Liezl Baden	1/9	Peggy Weed	1/30	Geri Harper
12/17	Abigail Sharpe	1/10	Dianne BouFawaz	1/30	Rachelle Kapalka
12/18	Todd Barrett	1/13	Dimitri Harper	1/31	Cindy Soto
		1/14	Hal Hoffman		



"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Continue to remember our homebound during the Christmas and winter seasons. Many of these saints may experience profound loneliness as they are unable to attend family get-togethers. With the colder weather, they may not get out very much and have fewer interactions. Please encourage our saints by lifting them up to God in prayer. And, do send cards and/or phone them, too.



You may include others who are on the weekly prayer page in the bulletin. Remember the family members and care givers, too. Contact information is in the church directory. Let's make a special effort to connect with one another!

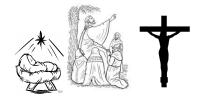
Don Angen	Cleta Dunaway	Anita Meetze	Eva Mae Monts	Linda Schmidt
Nadia R. BouFawaz	Teresa Hoefer	Charles/Laura Meetze	Cyndi Nelson	Shirlean Sons
Phil Carter	Betty Hunter	Laurie Meetze	Polly Roland	Flora Weed
Shirley Curry	Harold/Sarah Jones	Margaret Meetze	Twila Sandt	Henry/Louise Weed
Jim/Andrea Doty	Carolyn McCartha	Thelma Miller	Mandy Schultz	

Read the Bible in Three Years - December 2022

	December 2022										
Dec 1	Romans 1	Dec 9	Romans 9	Dec 17	Philippians 1	Dec 25	Matthew 1				
Dec 2	Romans 2	Dec 10	Romans 10	Dec 18	Philippians 2	Dec 26	Matthew 2				
Dec 3	Romans 3	Dec 11	Romans 11	Dec 19	Philippians 3	Dec 27	Matthew 3				
Dec 4	Romans 4	Dec 12	Romans 12	Dec 20	Philippians 4	Dec 28	Matthew 4				
Dec 5	Romans 5	Dec 13	Romans 13	Dec 21	Ruth 1	Dec 29	Matthew 5				
Dec 6	Romans 6	Dec 14	Romans 14	Dec 22	Ruth 2	Dec 30	Matthew 6				
Dec 7	Romans 7	Dec 15	Romans 15	Dec 23	Ruth 3	Dec 31	Matthew 7				
Dec 8	Romans 8	Dec 16	Romans 16	Dec 24	Ruth 4						

Read the Bible in Three Years - January 2023

	January 2023										
Jan 1	Matthew 8	Jan 9	Matthew 16	Jan 17	Matthew 24	Jan 25	I Samuel 4				
Jan 2	Matthew 9	Jan 10	Matthew 17	Jan 18	Matthew 25	Jan 26	I Samuel 5				
Jan 3	Matthew 10	Jan 11	Matthew 18	Jan 19	Matthew 26	Jan 27	I Samuel 6				
Jan 4	Matthew 11	Jan 12	Matthew 19	Jan 20	Matthew 27	Jan 28	I Samuel 7				
Jan 5	Matthew 12	Jan 13	Matthew 20	Jan 21	Matthew 28	Jan 29	I Samuel 8				
Jan 6	Matthew 13	Jan 14	Matthew 21	Jan 22	I Samuel 1	Jan 30	I Samuel 9				
Jan 7	Matthew 14	Jan 15	Matthew 22	Jan 23	I Samuel 2	Jan 31	I Samuel 10				
Jan 8	Matthew 15	Jan 16	Matthew 23	Jan 24	I Samuel 3						



The Signs at the Entrance

The church year begins with the Season of Advent for the first three Sundays. During Advent we await and anticipate the first coming of Jesus on earth as a baby. Next comes the Season of Christmas where we experience Jesus' birth. Then comes the longer Season of Epiphany where Jesus is revealed to the world as God's Son.







Of course, the color versions are more pleasant to the eye. As you come into the church why not take the ramp and pause a few moments by the sign to help you prepare for worship. If you follow Mt. Olive on social media (mtolivesc) you will have read weekly posts of the lectionary readings, so you can always use your smart phone to help you in your search.

Announcements & Opportunities

Women's Book Club



The Women's Book Club will meet on Tuesdays, December 6th, January 3rd and 17th at 7 PM. ALL women of the congregation are welcome to join in at this twice monthly class in the Fellowship Hall. We are reading from the book, *Promised Rest* by Michelle Diercks. If you want to purchase the book, it is available from CPH.com for \$18.52.

February Newsletter Deadline -January 27, 2023

Your next deadline for submitting articles for February 2023 issue of the Olive Leaves is **January 27, 2023.** Remember to send your ½ page articles 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.

Nursery "Cry Room" Reminder



Mt. Olive has a newly renovated 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 tidy up and sanitize the toys with which your child has played.



Kids Korner: Seeking the Story

Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.

Т	В	W	Y	Α	Z	K	Е	S	Н	N	G	D	J	K
Q	0	Y	Α	Р	R	Α	L	В	F	Р	I	С	Q	L
N	R	W	X	В	Е	Y	R	М	В	D	М	0	Е	Е
S	N	0	N	W	G	Α	I	В	Α	С	D	0	Т	D
R	G	X	J	F	I	W	М	V	В	R	R	С	Е	0
Р	S	С	Е	N	S	U	S	Н	Y	U	Y	F	Р	Ν
0	Т	Р	I	G	Т	Q	С	Ν	Т	G	М	U	S	T
0	Α	N	D	В	Е	С	Н	I	L	D	Ν	Z	F	Α
Α	Т	В	Α	U	R	W	Н	G	F	V	Α	В	U	М
Т	R	Α	V	Е	L	J	C	Н	V	0	Z	G	N	Н
F	В	Q	I	W	D	X	Р	Т	Е	Ν	Α	0	L	Q
Z	С	R	D	Q	S	Н	Е	Р	Н	Е	R	D	S	V
R	U	V	Y	K	Ν	ı	R	Т	K	G	Е	Y	ı	R
K	V	Α	Z	X	L	S	Н	Y	Т	Р	T	J	S	K
L	L	Е	S	М	J	Z	L	Q	R	U	Н	V	W	X

"Today in the town of David a __ _ _ _ _ _ has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV

WORD BANK

Shepherds

Child

Nazareth

Census

Baby

David

Mary

Travel

Town

Register

Born

Night