



# Olive Leaves



February 2025

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## From Our Pastor: “Faith and Science,” Part 1

*Pastor Walt Harper*

I am pretty sure that all of us have frequently encountered the attitude that “No thinking person can be a believer.” From several high school science teachers who regularly ridiculed the faith, to the on-line discussion threads in which faith is ridiculed, the constant message I’ve heard is that faith is for the weak, and the not every bright. We get the message. But like anything else, the real question is: Is it true?

**Argument One:** We are told that “Nearly all scientists are atheists.”

By this argument, it’s meant that people with actual degrees in scientific fields tend not to be believers. Maybe your Sunday School teacher is a believer; maybe your pastor is a believer; but they don’t know much. Professional scientists, academics, researchers, so we are told, are unbelievers.

The question remains: Is that true? Like many “commonly known” truths, this turns out not to be so. Not only is it not so, the reality is that once you start searching you find there’s nearly no end of it. (In preparing for this article, I found so much material I eventually had to stop reading, so that I could sit down and write.)

A quick search through Google will take you to a web-site labelled “34 Great Scientists Who Were Committed Christians.” This article lists some of the greatest thinkers ever—people such as Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, Michael Faraday, and Werner Heisenberg.



Here’s another fun fact: in 2005 Baruch Shalev published an article “100 Years of Nobel Prizes.” In that article he disclosed that in the 100 years of the Nobel Prize 73% of all winners for Chemistry were self-identified Christians. For other fields it goes like this: Physics, 65%; Medicine, 62%; Economics, 54%; and overall, 65%. Those numbers are slightly lower than the general population, but we have been told that “nearly no scientists” are Christians. It turns out that the clear majority of Nobel Prize winners in the scientific fields are in fact believers.

A 2016 article in the Huffington Post, “12 Famous Scientists on the Possibility of God” explored the topic of scientists who either believed in God, or admitted the possibility of a deity. Several of these would technically be agnostics, and not Christian. But still, the article concluded that 51% of scientists either believed in God, or at least in some form of “Mind”

standing behind the physical universe. Once again, where is this “nearly all” that we are constantly being told about?

One interesting fellow to look up is Francis Collins, a geneticist. He was the head of the Human Genome Project for 9 years, and the head of the National Institutes of Health for 11 years. Early in his life he was an agnostic. Over time, he lost even that, and became an atheist. When he got interested in medicine he observed that faith was a tremendous strength for people facing disease. When he decided to explore faith, he read “Mere Christianity” by C.S. Lewis, and became a believer. Dr. Collins was born in 1950, and you can easily find him on YouTube, or whatever video source you prefer.

Psalm 19:1-3 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.”

How similar are these words from Johannes Kepler, who came up with his Laws of Planetary Motion, and who was a devout Christian: “The wisdom of the Lord is infinite, as are also His glory and His power. Ye heavens, sing His praises; sun, moon, and planets, glorify Him in your ineffable language! Praise Him, celestial harmonies, and all ye who can comprehend them! And thou, my soul, praise thy Creator! It is by Him and in Him that all exists.”



## From our Associate Pastor: Love, Love, and Love

*Pastor Colin Ford*

With Valentine's Day approaching, love is in the air. No doubt many of you reading this are getting ready for the holiday and planning to spend it with your loved ones.



Love, on the surface, seems like a simple word. We can love our spouse, love a good meal, love our friends, or love the sun shining on a nice day. In the Bible, we see the word “love” used frequently, but in the New Testament, the Greek language differentiates between different kinds of love.

**Philia** is the first type of love. This word refers to the love shared among family and close friends. It is where we get the word *Philadelphia*, known as the “City of Brotherly Love.” Philia represents deep, committed love between friends and is often used to describe the love Christians should have for one another within the community of faith. This is best seen in John 13:35, where Jesus says, *“By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”*

Next is **Eros**, which refers to physical or romantic love. While this word was used by the Greek-speaking world at the time, it does not appear in the New Testament. However, this does not mean that physical love is bad or unspoken of in Scripture. Rather, physical love is affirmed within the context of marriage, as seen in *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:4-5*: *“The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”*

Finally, we come to **Agapē**, the highest form of love. This is the unconditional, sacrificial love that comes from God toward His people. It is the love Christ demonstrated on the cross for His Church. One of the most well-known verses that express this love is *John 3:16*: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

As Valentine's Day approaches, take time to reflect on the love you have for your brothers and sisters in Christ, for your spouse, and most importantly, the unconditional love the Lord has for you.



### From our President

*Jason Dennis, President*

The church council met, for the first time this year, January 14, 2025. The council has been busy with the business of the church! As usual there is so much to be thankful for, and with that brings opportunities for us to be good stewards. A few highlights were reiterating the 2025 voters' meeting dates, discussion of church surplus funds, and creating a dedicated line item in the budget for an organ fund.

The 2025 voters' meeting dates are as follows: February 23, May 25, September 21 and November 23. The more voting members the better, so please update your calendars! Also, our church is blessed with generous members who willingly donate. On the February 23 voters' agenda, the council will propose that we give 10% of our surplus to some local or national causes which align with our Christian values. The council will prepare a few options for the surplus donations. Speaking of surplus and being good stewards of God's Blessings, we have voted to purchase a drop safe to keep those cash donations secure prior to bank deposit.

Furthermore, the council voted to have a line item in our dedicated funds for the organ as it is aging and will need to be replaced in the future. Organs are very, very expensive and we need to prepare ahead for its replacement.

Finally, in the spirit of generosity, Mt. Olive can really benefit from all our collective talents and abilities which God has blessed us with. If you can find some time in your busy schedules to donate some time in service to our church, you won't be turned away! You can speak with any member of the council or about where you might be able to donate your time and talents.



### Mount Olive Preschool

*Anna Brent, Preschool Director*

803-781-7180 - [preschool@mtolivesc.org](mailto:preschool@mtolivesc.org)

Web: [mtolivesc.org/preschool](http://mtolivesc.org/preschool) - [Facebook.com/mountolivepreschool](https://www.facebook.com/mountolivepreschool)

**Do you know any families with young children who would benefit from our school?**

**It is hard to believe it, but it is time to begin registration for the 2025-2026 school year!**

Encourage them to call, email, or check out the website. 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

**Preschool Registration**  
2025-2026

Open to current families and church members on **February 1st**  
Open to the public on **February 15th**

Registration is considered complete once the online form is submitted and registration fee is paid.

Registration Form  
Online Payment Option

Registration Form  
Online Payment Option

## Board of Christian Education

*Liezl Baden*

Are you ready to inspire and teach our youth? The board of Christian Education is looking for fresh new faces to join our Children’s ministry. Open positions are Superintendent, Youth Group Leader, Teacher for Circle of Friends, and Sunday School Teachers. If interested, please reach out to Jess Dennis, Pastor Walt Harper, or Liezl Baden.



Our youth have raised 43% of the goal for their trip to the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering this summer in New Orleans, LA. There was a Calendar Fundraiser in January where everyone who purchased a day got a handmade piece of pottery made by Mrs. Sue Strouse. A few more events are planned this month and during the Easter season.

Lastly, it is time to start planning for Vacation Bible School and planning begins with volunteers. There are a variety of areas where we can use your help. A list with all the tasks for this wonderful event is in the Narthex. Please review the list and kindly sign up as a volunteer. We cannot extend the VBS program to the children this summer without assistance from the Mt Olive Church family. Thanks in advance.



### Join a Bible Class

Winter 2025 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. Please sanitize the toys with which your child has played.	
Circle of Friends	Preschool Area	Faithful Group of Volunteers	Bringing Jesus to Special Needs Children
PK3 – 4th Grade	Upstairs Classroom	Jessica Dennis, Megan Weed, Brandy Maye, & Amanda Dalton	Favorite Bible Stories
Confirmation Class	Preschool Area	Pr. Colin Ford	A two-year study of Luther’s Small Catechism and the Bible
Middle & High School Youth	Wagner House	April Fancey, Rick Baden, & Jenn Weed	Bible Study
Adults	Fellowship Hall	Pr. Walt Harper	The Book of Daniel
Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator.			



### Pastoral Acts

	<p><b>Holy Baptism</b></p> <p><b>James Richard Dosen,</b></p> <p><b>January 19, 2025</b></p>	
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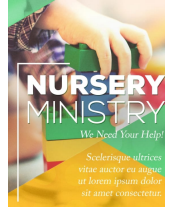
## Board of Worship

*Liz Rosinski, Chairperson*

**"And Jesus took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.'" (Mark 9:36-37)**

**Mt. Olive's Worship Committee is seeking an individual to provide Nursery coverage on Sunday mornings.**

This person's role is to provide safe, secure, nurturing, clean and efficient care to the children (ages 0 – 3 years old). The intent is to fill the position to offer nursery coverage for each service on Sunday morning (8 am and 10:30 am). There may be flexibility in hiring one person for both services or two individuals – one at each service. Alternatively, the committee may also consider coverage that includes Bible Class/Sunday School (9:15 am) through conclusion of the late service only.



**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:** The successful candidate shall:

1. Be a Christian.
2. Possess a high school diploma or hold a general education degree (GED) certificate.
3. Have had experience in working with children ages 0 to 3 years old.
4. Demonstrate a basic love for children.
5. Be in good health, able to bend, stoop, lift, and physically take care of children.
6. Be at least 18 years of age.
7. Be certified in CPR and First Aid. Interested candidates who are not certified may be considered but will be required to obtain certifications within three months of hire.
8. Pass a required background check.

If you are interested in applying for this position or have any questions, please contact Liz Rosinski at [lizrosinski@me.com](mailto:lizrosinski@me.com) or 803-413-3364.



## The Board of Evangelism: "Reproducing Christians"

*Aresa Boykin, Chairperson*

**"If you love me, obey my commandments." John 14:15 NLT**

As a child of God, everything has changed for you. God has a plan and a purpose for your life. Part of His plan is for you to reproduce! Oh, don't get excited! I am not talking about adding babies but adding new believers.

Jesus gave very specific instructions to His followers in **Matthew 28:18-19a:** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...."**



Do you recognize that Jesus is giving His followers a command? Not optional. Not if we feel like it. Not a suggestion. Obeying His command is how we show our love for Him. **Stop! Think about that!** Followers *follow* out of love.

You may very well be a brand-new follower of Christ. Your Bible knowledge may not be the greatest. Nonetheless, that is not an excuse to be quiet. Why? Because we have a testimony! We can share how Jesus is at work in our lives and how He means everything to us. No one can argue with that!

God will open doors for you to share with friends, family, and sometimes strangers. That sounds hard, but it's easier than you think. Make a plan by putting time with God at the top of your list. Pray for opportunities to share, whether it be in your neighborhood, at work, with a family member, or at the grocery store check-out. Trust God to equip you and empower you to carry out your assignment.



## Board of Stewardship

*Naven Olson, Board Member*

(All Scripture verses are from NASB)

***"And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."* Romans 12:6-8 NASB**

I was at a loss in regards to what I should write about this month and after church council discussed needing help in several areas, Pastor Walt suggested I discuss the need for volunteers. I sent an email to the other board chairs to get a better grasp of the need.

There seemed to be general agreement that more counters were needed and that most boards could use more help. More than one person stated that additional elders were needed. Other needs mentioned were a Sunday School superintendent, youth group leader, Sunday School teachers for elementary age children, helpers in compiling the newsletter, photographers to document special church events, people to "apprentice" church officers, small group leaders, people to help with special children's activities, and people with technical Audio-Visual skills.



One very necessary group not requiring "special" skills was also mentioned by Aresa Boykin (kudos to her): people who will take time to speak to visitors and interact with them. God gives us many blessings both material and spiritual and He gives them to us so that we can use His blessings to make known the **greatest** blessing: Jesus Christ crucified for our sins and raised for our justification. So let us make use of our blessings (both material and spiritual: our time, our abilities, and our possessions) so that others may know Jesus' love and let us not be preoccupied or excessively concerned with the affairs of this world. God is always in control.



### Read the Bible in Three Years – February 2025

February 2025							
Feb 1	Acts 16	Feb 8	Acts 23	Feb 15	Leviticus 2	Feb 22	Leviticus 9
Feb 2	Acts 17	Feb 9	Acts 24	Feb 16	Leviticus 3	Feb 23	Leviticus 10
Feb 3	Acts 18	Feb 10	Acts 25	Feb 17	Leviticus 4	Feb 24	Leviticus 11
Feb 4	Acts 19	Feb 11	Acts 26	Feb 18	Leviticus 5	Feb 25	Leviticus 12
Feb 5	Acts 20	Feb 12	Acts 27	Feb 19	Leviticus 6	Feb 26	Leviticus 13
Feb 6	Acts 21	Feb 13	Acts 28	Feb 20	Leviticus 7	Feb 27	Leviticus 14
Feb 7	Acts 22	Feb 14	Leviticus 1	Feb 21	Leviticus 8	Feb 28	Leviticus 15

The first half of February, we will continue to read through the book of Acts, following the spread of Christianity throughout the area around the Mediterranean Sea.

Next, we will jump back to the Old Testament and read the book of Leviticus. The purpose of Leviticus is to provide instruction and laws to guide a sinful, yet redeemed people in their relationship with a holy God. There is an emphasis in Leviticus on the need for personal holiness in response to a holy God. Sin must be atoned for through the offering of proper sacrifices. Other topics covered in the book are diet, childbirth, and diseases. Furthermore, the people of God are to be intentional in their personal, moral, and social living, in contrast to the practices of the pagan peoples who live around them.

## The Board of Public Relations: Valentine's Day

*Sue Strouse, Chairperson*

A common hagiography (biography of a saint or ecclesiastical leader) describes Saint Valentine as a priest of Rome or as the former Bishop of Terni, an important town of Umbria, in central Italy. While under house arrest of Judge Asterius, and discussing his faith with him, Valentinus (the Latin version of his name) was discussing the validity of Jesus. The judge put Valentinus to the test and brought to him the judge's adopted blind daughter. If Valentinus succeeded in restoring the girl's sight, Asterius would do whatever he asked. Valentinus, praying to God, laid his hands on her eyes and the child's vision was restored.



Immediately humbled, the judge asked Valentinus what he should do. Valentinus replied that all of the idols around the judge's house should be broken, and that the judge should fast for three days and then undergo the Christian sacrament of baptism. The judge obeyed and, as a result of his fasting and prayer, freed all the Christian inmates under his authority. The judge, his family, and his forty-four member household of adult family members and servants were baptized.

Valentinus was later arrested again for continuing to evangelize. He was sent to the prefect of Rome, to the emperor Claudius Gothicus (Claudius II) himself. Claudius took a liking to him until Valentinus tried to convince Claudius to embrace Christianity. Claudius refused and condemned Valentinus to death, commanding that Valentinus either renounce his faith or he would be beaten with clubs and beheaded. Valentinus refused and was executed outside the Flaminian Gate on February 14, 269. (taken from Wikipedia)



### Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, & Cards

**“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Philippians 2:3-4**

The darkness of winter is upon us and people may feel sad and lonely because of the shortness of daylight hours. God uses His family to express His encouragement to those who need it most. Let's continue our ministry to those in our congregation by lifting them up to God in prayer. And please send cards and valentines and/or phone them, too.



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. Let's make a special effort to connect with one another!

Don Angen	Cleta Dunaway	Anita Meetze	Thelma Miller	Mandy Schultz
Nadia R. BouFawaz	Betty Hunter	Laura Meetze	Eva Mae Monts	Linda Schmidt
Phil Carter	Harold/Sarah Jones	Laurie Meetze	Cyndi Nelson	Henry Weed
Shirley Curry	Carolyn McCartha	Margaret Meetze	Polly Roland	

## February 2025 Lectionary

Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
February 2	Epiphany 4	Jer. 1:4-10	Psalm 71:1-6	1 Cor. 12:31b-13:13	Luke 4:31-44
February 9	Epiphany 5	Isaiah 6:1-8	Psalm 138	1 Cor. 14:12b-20	Luke 5:1-11
February 16	Epiphany 6	Jer. 17:5-8	Psalm 1	1 Cor. 15: 12-20	Luke 6:17-26
February 23	Epiphany 7	Gen. 45:3-15	Psalm 103:1-13	1 Cor. 15:21-26, 30-42	Luke 6:27-38



## February 2025 Anniversaries

2/10	Todd & Elizabeth Barrett	2/25	Jens & Liz Rosinski
2/14	Dennis & Tina Dixon		

## February 2025 Birthdays

2/2	Chuck Bauer	2/12	Daniel Zahn	2/18	Natalie Crosland
2/3	Susie Hoffman	2/13	Kathie Bost	2/19	William Baden
2/3	Matthew Barnett	2/14	Paula Helming	2/19	Carole Mueller
2/10	Phil Carter	2/14	Eric Matzko	2/19	Susan Strouse
2/10	Joshua Thrun	2/15	Paul Sizemore	2/20	Kathy Eargle
2/11	Seth Duncan	2/15	Hannah Hennigan	2/21	Chris McKinney
2/11	Bailey Barnett	2/15	Jeff Thrun	2/22	David Buck
2/11	Carly Stuck	2/16	James Crosland	2/24	Audrey Harper
2/12	Noah Laney	2/16	Raegan Dalton	2/25	Kelsey Whitaker
2/12	Rosemary Sharpe	2/17	Rachel Lewis	2/27	Hunter Robinson



## Congratulations to Natalie Crosland



Natalie graduated with 18 others in the Public Safety Chaplaincy Certification Training Program from Lenoir Rhyne University's Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. A partnership of the S.C. Law Enforcement Assistance Program, Law Enforcement Chaplaincy of South Carolina, and Lenoir Rhyne University whose goal is to train men and women to serve in the Public Safety Community. She began the program on June 9, 2023, studying Pastoral Theology, Theological/Biblical Concepts and Language, Spiritual Care, Systems Theory, Mass Casualty Response, Addiction, Critical Incident Response, Church and State Issues, Grief and Mourning, Fitness for Duty, Suicide, Mental Impacts on Public Safety, and much more. She will continue to work for SLED, but begin a Clinical Pastoral Education training with Lutheran Partners Accredited Program as part of continued education. She will be accruing classroom and clinical hours for the internship part of her certification by working with the Fire Department.

## Announcements

### Women's Book Club



The Women's Book Club is studying the *Ten Commandments: Love Rules* by Christina Hergenrader. The ladies will meet on February 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>st</sup>, at 7:00 PM in the fellowship hall. ALL women of the congregation & friends are welcome to join in the class.

### March Newsletter Deadline – February 27, 2025

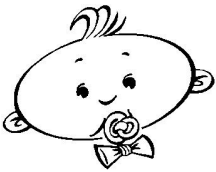
Your next deadline for submitting articles for the March issue of the Olive Leaves is February 27, 2025. Please send your 1/2 page, nonpolitical articles to Sue Strouse.



### Secure E Giving:

E Giving is becoming a more popular way to give. If you would like to set up a new account, the link is on the home page of our church website, mtolivesc.org. You may give through your checking account or by credit card. Once you set up your account and log in, you should see pictures of Mt. Olive above the giving labels. Choose one and follow the prompts. Our e giving is powered by VANCO, a secure company that follows strict guidelines and policies. Even though the e giving page looks like our website, Mt. Olive will have no record of your account, your card/bank account number, or your personal information. If you need help setting up your account, contact Aresa Boykin.

### Nursery "Cry Room" Reminder



Mt. Olive has a 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

Use the clues to fill in the boxes. Then write those letters on the correct numbered lines below to complete 1 John 4:16 (NIV).

A place to live

1	2	3	4	5

Opposite of dark

6	7	8	9	10

Companion

11	12	13	14	15	16

Hand greeting

17	18	19

Male adult

21	22



8	2	16	13	4	6	2	19	5			
17	9	2	5	19	5	12	6	7	19	5	4
13	15	6	2	19	20	6	7	19	14	4	
13	15	8	2	16	18	15	16				
8	2	16	13	23	10	1	14	21			

1 John 4:16, NIV