Olive Leaves

August 2025

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From Our Pastor:
So, We're Back from the LCMS Youth Gathering

Pastor Walt Harper

Every three years the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod holds a Youth Gathering, which is intended for every youth group in our church body. Not all churches send a group, but everyone is invited, and many, many teens (and their chaperones) attend. You never hear an exact number, but this year's Youth Gathering was said to have around 20,000 participants.

One way many church members become aware of the Gathering is that they have experienced the fundraising efforts of the teens prior to the trip. As it always is, Mt. Olive was once again generous in your support of the Youth.

The first thing many people ask is: Why isn't it every year? Well, the Youth Gathering is a massive undertaking. There are guest speakers, guest musicians, servant events, hotels, restaurants, a large convention center, and a nearby sports arena. It takes years to plan it. So every three years it is.

The Gathering takes place in different cities around the country. The first necessity is that the host city must be able to accommodate a convention of 20,000 people. It's literally true that not all cities can handle us!

This year the Gathering was in New Orleans, which is a great host city. There is much to see and do in New Orleans, and the city is always very serious about our safety. The fact that New Orleans is a great host city is matched with all the good reports we get from local businesses that our kids have been great guests.

This year we sent nine teens and three adults. Obviously the pastor should say "They were a great group." But aside from the fact that "you're supposed to say that," the truth is that we really did have a great group. Our entire group was teens who really attend church here, and whose families are also connected to the life of the Church.

If your family went on a family vacation with twelve people you know that once in a while there would be some "stubbed toes." New Orleans is hot in July, and we walked everywhere. So now and again someone was a little tired, or a little cranky. But we mostly got along with each other. No, more than that, we loved each other, and walked in grace and patience almost constantly.

Of course this is a Church gathering, and so we weren't just vacationing. There were really wonderful sessions about growing in the faith. Pastors, District Presidents, Deaconesses, and other church leaders had much to share. Some of it was challenging, some of it was encouraging. Happily, the Gospel prevailed in all that was said and sung.

Ask the kids what they loved the most. You will soon see a highlights video of what we did. But I would say these things about this Gathering:

- A constant comment following every Gathering is that our teens "didn't know there were that many Lutherans." This is an important part of the Gathering, for our teens to know that they are one member of a "great company."
- We had a poet, Tanner Olson, who was fantastic. When he was introduced I'm sure most people thought, "A poet, in these modern times?" But his words were authentic, well-spoken, and full of faith.
- The "Rend Collective," an Irish Christian rock band was very well-received. They were more or less the "headliner," and they brought a lot of energy, with their blend of Irish Folk Music and rock 'n roll. Again, words full of faith.
- Bethany Hamilton, the surfer who lost an arm in a shark attack, spoke brilliantly. I knew that she was a Christian, but did not know that she's an LCMS Lutheran. She was very encouraging about walking with God through anything.
- The closing worship service was a real high point for me. In years past, the worship service (which includes communion!) was held at the beginning of the Gathering to "get things started." Now it is held on the last day, and I really love it as a close to the Gathering. For the second Gathering in a row the preacher was our Synodical President Matthew Harrison. His message was powerful, and I'd encourage you to find it on YouTube. His Gospel presentation was clear and strong, and he concluded with an appeal that some of these young people would consider a career in church work.

So, we're back from the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering. For the first couple days we'll be pretty exhausted. But once we catch up on sleep, I pray that all of our participants have been strengthened in their faith, and empowered "to endure." (Heb. 12:1-3)

YouTube link: https://youtu.be/Is43-NXVuyI

August 2025 Lectionary

Date	Festival	Old Testament	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
Aug. 3	**Proper 13**	Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12–14; 2:18–26	Psalm 100	Colossians 3:1–11	Luke 12:13–21
Aug. 10	**Proper 14**	Genesis 15:1–6	Psalm 33:12–22	Hebrews 11:1–16	Luke 12:22–34
Aug. 17	**Proper 15**	Jeremiah 23:16–29	Psalm 119:81–88	Hebrews 11:17–31; 12:1–3	Luke 12:49–53
Aug. 24	**Proper 16**	Isaiah 66:18–23	Psalm 50:1–15	Hebrews 12:4–24	Luke 13:22–30
Aug. 31	**Proper 17**	Prov. 25:2–10	Psalm 131	Hebrews 13:1–17	Luke 14:1–14

Pastoral Acts

Caroline Weed McCartha

May 8, 1931 – June 20, 2025
Funeral: June 28, 2025

Holy Baptism

John Thomas Carlson

June 19, 2025

Holy Baptism

Aiden Justin Coutant

July 15, 2025

Holy Baptism

Gannon Michael Coutant

July 15, 2025

Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, & Cards

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul." Psalm 23:1-3a

We have entered the dog days of summer! In fact, it seems like the entire summer has felt like dog days! Remember to encourage our saints by lifting them up to God in prayer. And please send cards 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	Polly Roland
Nadia R. BouFawaz	Betty Hunter	Laura Meetze	Eva Mae Monts	Mandy Schultz
Phil Carter	Harold/Sarah Jones	Laurie Meetze	Cyndi Nelson	Linda Schmidt
		Margaret Meetze		

Board of Stewardship

Naven Olson, Board Member

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." Hebrews 12:1-3

I spent much of today reading the June/July 2025 issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. It is dedicated to the LCMS National Youth Gathering that was held July 19-23 in New Orleans. The theme was "ENDURE". Several of our Mt. Olive youth went. The theme was based on Hebrews 12:1-3.

I will quote the refrain of a famous poem by C. T. Studd:

Only one life, 'twill soon be past Only what's done for Christ will last.

And I will quote some Bible verses:

"We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day, night is coming, when no man can work." **John 9:4** (words of Jesus)

"And there is salvation in no one else; for* there *is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

We need to consider and reflect on the price Christ paid for us on Golgotha. We need to be in prayer and Bible study daily and in church (and hopefully Sunday School) weekly. We need to support this church with our time, talents and resources. And we need to reach out to others.

Board of Social Ministry:
Celebrating Pastor Colin and Abigail Ford: A Church Family Blessing

Mary Keller, Chairperson

As a church family, we are blessed with the opportunity to gather and extend heartfelt blessings! So, let's come together as a church family to shower Pastor Colin and Abigail with blessings and love as they begin their life together. Whether you have a treasured family recipe, a bit of marriage wisdom passed down through generations, or a simple, warm wish, your contributions will become a meaningful part of a keepsake for the newlyweds. Every note, every shared tradition, and hopeful blessing will be woven into the fabric of their journey together as husband and wife.

In celebration, a Christmas tree and a special display honoring Pastor Colin and Abigail will grace our narthex over the next couple of weeks. We invite you to take a moment to stop by, reflect, and add your own message or token of love. Your participation will help ensure that their journey is surrounded by the prayers and best wishes of those who care for them most.

We will complete the celebration at a reception on August 10th following the late service (cake and beverages will be served).

Join us in welcoming their new journey together and take this opportunity to express your joy and support!

(Abigail & Colin Gift Registry: https://www.pastorcolinandmrsford.com/)

Choir Director: Give Choir A Try!

Renee Harper, Director

"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth."
Psalm 96:1

Summer has wound down and we are getting organized to start choir practices again! This is the best time for you to come join in the fun! We don't require you to be an opera star, just willing to learn and practice! We will start practicing on August 24th at 5:00pm upstairs in the choir loft! Please give choir a try!

Handbells will start on August 24th at 4:00pm in the front of the church.

Please prayerfully consider lending your talents to the Glory of God in our worship services. Contact Renee Harper, 203-885-6733 waltandrenee@att.net

Board of Worship: Allen Organ Update

Liz Rosinski, Chairperson

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." **James 1:17**

The Worship Committee would like to acknowledge the overwhelming generosity from members and friends of this congregation in your donations for a new organ.

These incredible gifts - received in only four months of fundraising - have allowed us to be at 99% of our goal of $92,000, raising $90,725! And the verse reminds all of us that our gifts to the church - including the tremendous response to the organ fundraising - are truly gifts from God.

On behalf of the Worship and Organ Fundraising committee members, we give thanks – to all of you and the Lord God Almighty for the support of music in our Liturgy – and not just the instruments but those who bring their talents to the church through playing, singing and directing.

In May 2025, the congregation voted to approve the purchase of a new organ and the first of three installments was paid. The order was placed in June 2025 and it is expected to be shipped in September. We will get more updates as the organ moves further along in the production process and we will be sure to keep you posted.

In the meantime, check out this video posted by Allen Organ that shows all that is involved in the building of a new organ. You can also access it as a link on the Organ Donation page at https://mtolivesc.org/.

The Board of Evangelism: Step into the "field" of God

Aresa Boykin, Chairperson

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" — Luke 10:2 NIV

Have you ever stopped to consider the depth of this statement? Picture a field brimming with ripe crops, waiting to be gathered. In spiritual terms, the field is the world, and the harvest represents people ready to hear and respond to the Gospel. Their hearts have been prepared by God, even though you may not see the full extent of His work.

This reality presents both an incredible opportunity and a sobering challenge. While the harvest is ready, Jesus notes that there are too few workers willing to go into the field. He isn't just talking to pastors, missionaries, or church leaders. He's talking to all believers. He's talking to you! If you follow Jesus, you are called to participate in gathering the harvest. You don't need a degree in theology or a perfectly rehearsed presentation of the Gospel. What you need is a willing heart and the courage to step out in faith. **God's work in preparing the harvest isn't something we initiate; it's something we join.**

Consider the people you encounter every day—family, friends, coworkers, or neighbors. These are your mission field. When you engage with them authentically and share God's love, you're helping to bring in the harvest. Start by praying for God to open your eyes to the opportunities around you. Then, step into His field with faith, trusting that He has already prepared the way. Sharing the Gospel may not always yield immediate results, but every faith conversation, act of love, or prayer is a seed sown for the Kingdom.

Let today be the day you take your first step toward answering Jesus' call.

How can you step into the "field" God has placed you in today?

Pray: *Lord, open my eyes to the opportunities around me. Help me see the people in my life who are ready to hear Your message. Give me the courage to step out in faith and share Your love with those around me. Use me as a laborer in Your harvest field. Amen.*

(YouVersion Bible App: The Harvest is Ready)

Mount Olive Preschool

Jaime Burns, Preschool Director

803-403-3480 - preschool@mtolivesc.org

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

Mt. Olive Lutheran Preschool has been in this community for 19 YEARS! What an answer to prayers to see this ministry thriving! We are ready to have another great year. Teachers arrive back at the preschool on August 26th and the school year will begin with, as always, our Parent Meeting on September 2nd. We will have many new and returning students that will fill the classrooms and it is a blessing to serve the families that have chosen Mt. Olive Preschool.

We have over 30 preschool children enrolled, and we are excited for a new year to begin! Please be in prayer for our preschool students and families, staff, and preschool board. Pray that the Lord would provide a hedge of protection, new discipleship opportunities, grace-filled spirits, and most importantly, that the Gospel would be spread and that the Lord would be glorified.

This preschool ministry continues to be an amazing mission field, fostering a commitment to children and young families. To God be the glory!

Board of Christian Education

Liezl Baden

Vacation Bible School "Greatest OT Hits" was a 5-night success. It was centered around some of the most beloved bible stories of the Old Testament. Thirty children attended and had a wonderful time. Thanks to all the volunteers that helped make it fun for everyone.

The youth group finally made it to the LCMS NYG in New Orleans. During the 5 days of the Gathering, our youth spent time together in God's Word, worship, service, and fellowship with others from across the synod. They participated in a service project at the New Orleans Mission where they packed hygiene kits for the homeless. They also experienced homelessness through a digital challenge where they had to navigate through real life choices that people face that lead to homelessness. Big thanks to the congregation for supporting the very numerous fundraisers so that our youth could experience this event.

Mark your calendars, the Rally Day "Fiesta" is set for August 31 after the 10:30 service. Rally Day is to celebrate the 2025-2026 children, youth, and adult Sunday morning classes for Christian education. The BOE will provide a Taco and Salad bar and if you wish to keep with the theme, please bring your favorite Hispanic themed dish or dessert. There will also be fun and games for everyone to relax and enjoy. See you there!

Join a Bible Class

Summer 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	Summer break	
Confirmation Class	Preschool Area	Summer break	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 Matthew
Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator.			

The Board of Public Relations: New PR Members

Sue Strouse, Chairperson

This is my last Olive Leaves to edit. It has been my honor to have served the allotted two terms (6 years) as chairperson. I would like for all church members to consider volunteering for our wonderful church. We are a great congregation and you can see that as you spend time with members that you may not have been acquainted with.

The new board members will begin their terms on September 1, 2025. The Public Relations board has 3 members: Shanna Stuck (Shanna.Stuck@hotmail.com), chairperson and Olives Leaves Editor; Audrey Harper, videoing sermons and children's messages; and Linda Gifford, social media and Olive Leaves. Welcome!

Read the Bible in Three Years –August 2025

August 2025							
Aug 1	I Chronicles 22	Aug 9	II Chronicles 1	Aug 17	II Chronicles 9	Aug 25	II Chronicles 17
Aug 2	I Chronicles 23	Aug 10	II Chronicles 2	Aug 18	II Chronicles 10	Aug 26	II Chronicles 18
Aug 3	I Chronicles 24	Aug 11	II Chronicles 3	Aug 19	II Chronicles 11	Aug 27	II Chronicles 19
Aug 4	I Chronicles 25	Aug 12	II Chronicles 4	Aug 20	II Chronicles 12	Aug 28	II Chronicles 20
Aug 5	I Chronicles 26	Aug 13	II Chronicles 5	Aug 21	II Chronicles 13	Aug 29	II Chronicles 21
Aug 6	I Chronicles 27	Aug 14	II Chronicles 6	Aug 22	II Chronicles 14	Aug 30	II Chronicles 22
Aug 7	I Chronicles 28	Aug 15	II Chronicles 7	Aug 23	II Chronicles 15	Aug 31	II Chronicles 23
Aug 8	I Chronicles 29	Aug 16	II Chronicles 8	Aug 24	II Chronicles 16		

The books of Chronicles retell Israel's history under the reigns of Kings Saul, David, and Solomon through the reigns of the kings of Judah in the southern kingdom until the return of the people from the Babylonian exile. In August, we begin reading near the end of King David's reign where he is compiling the plans for God's temple. Next, we read of King Solomon's building the temple and his glorious reign. We end the month reading the ups and downs of Judah through a succession of kings, both the faithful and unfaithful to the one true God. If you like history and watching God work, these books are for you!

Signs at the Church Entrance

The church is well into the longest of the church seasons, The Season after Pentecost. Because this season lasts through November, the monthly signs will be based on the Gospel lessons as outlined in the Year C Lectionary.

To the right is the preview of the August sign. As you come into the church why not take the ramp and pause a few moments by the sign to pick out the key words from the week's Gospel. 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.

August 2025 Anniversaries

8/4	Nancy & Nelson Thompson	8/18	Merle & Peggy Weed Jr.
8/10	Pastor Walt & Renee Harper	8/24	Chuck & Marilyn Bauer
8/11	David & Joy Fletcher	8/29	Matthew & Bailey Barnett
8/11	Randy & Linda Gifford	8/30	Harold & Kathryn Meetze Sr.
8/15	Mark & Linda Selle	8/31	Thomas & Tiffany Meetze
8/16	Shuler & Olivia Houck		

August 2025 Birthdays

8/1	August Kibler	8/11	C.J. Meetze Jr.	8/20	Sandy Osborne
8/2	Charlie Stuck	8/13	Diane James	8/20	James Prag
8/2	Megan Weed	8/13	Fred Stalbaum	8/22	Grady Crosland
8/4	Barry Bost	8/13	Brooksie Waldrop	8/22	Twila Sandt
8/5	Paul Selle	8/14	Savannah Lewis	8/22	Kaysen Weed
8/6	Mikaela Weed	8/14	Hallie Randall	8/23	Aresa Boykin
8/7	Alexander Harper	8/15	Becky Bass	8/23	Michael Dosen
8/7	Gabriella Hennighan	8/16	Joel Fancey	8/23	Leonard Fowler
8/7	Rich O'Dell	8/17	Walter Arnold	8/23	Jacob Gepfert
8/8	Abigail Kibler	8/17	Jacob Thrun	8/27	Lucas Thrun
8/9	James Marberry	8/18	Geneva Meetze	8/27	Theron Weed
8/10	Bobbie Lewis	8/19	Cathy Roof	8/28	Camden Stuck

Announcements

Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club is studying the *Ten Commandments: Love Rules* by Christina Hergenrader. We will be taking a break for August and resuming on September 2, 2025.

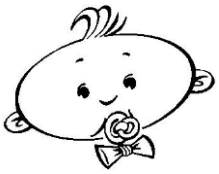
September Newsletter Deadline

Your next deadline for submitting articles for the September issue of the Olive Leaves is August 24, 2025**.** Please send your ½ page, nonpolitical articles to Shanna Stuck at Shanna.Stuck@hotmail.com.

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, including the new Organ Fund, 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

A VALUABLE *command*

God instructs children how to relate to their parents.

Directions: *Arrange the words in alphabetical order. Then insert the circled letters in order to complete Exodus 20:12, NIV.*

son	**mother**	**father**
daughter	**honor**	**home**
respect	**family**	**obey**
	love	

1. _ _ _ _ ◯ _ _ ◯
2. ◯ _ _ _ _ ◯
3. _ _ ◯ _ ◯ _
4. ◯ _ _ _
5. _ _ _ ◯ _
6. ◯ _ ◯ _
7. _ ◯ _ ◯ _ _
8. ◯ _ _ ◯
9. ◯ _ ◯ _ _ _ _

__ono__ your __ather and __our mo__h__r,
so t__at y__u may __i__e l__ng in t__e land
the L__RD __ou__ God i__ givi__g you.

EXODUS 20:12, NIV