



Olive Leaves



December 2025/January 2026

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From Our Pastor: A Theology of Work

Pastor Walt Harper

This newsletter article will be longer than typical. You might even recognize this as the sermon from November 16th. I had several people ask for a copy of the sermon, and finally someone said, "Why not make that your newsletter article?" So, here it is, *A Theology of Work*, in print.

Frequent topics surrounding work are:

- How do I maintain Work-Life Balance?
- Am I satisfied with my career?
- What sort of work might God have me do?
- How do I make decisions about all of this?

These questions come up a lot. So I've finally decided to put some thoughts down on paper. This will not be exhaustive, but has some broad principles to guide our thoughts.

By the way, I've already introduced something that, to me, is a key point. And that is this: The Bible tends to give us Broad Principles, and then we live our lives within those Principles, but with many particulars swirling around us.

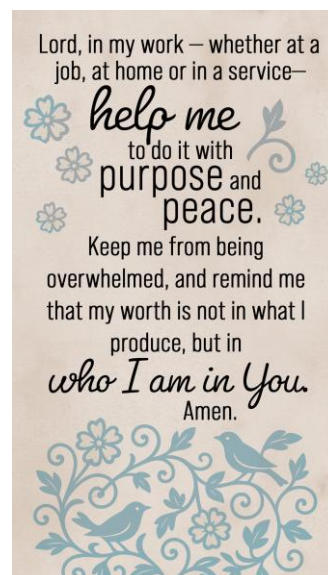
For example, the Bible wants us all to find a Christian spouse. It does not say whether you should marry Sally instead of Betty. The Bible wants you to be engaged in productive labor. It does not say whether you should get a college degree from Clemson vs. the University of South Carolina, or whether you need a college degree at all.

First Principle: Work precedes the Fall.

Many people mistakenly think that work is a punishment that followed the Fall into Sin. It is not. Genesis 2:15 says: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." The fall doesn't happen until the next chapter, so man in the Garden was given things to do.

Why? It's good to be productive. It's good to have purpose. It's even good to feel pride in a job well done. (This is a type of pride that isn't sinful.)

Having said that, the Fall did bring about a change. And that is that work often becomes unproductive and frustrating. Genesis 3:17-19, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you shall return."



Second Principle: Family also precedes the Fall.

A lot of foundational stuff gets covered in the early chapters of Genesis. Here's a very important concept: Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." This is, of course, followed by the creation of Eve.

So, there you have in Genesis 2 both work and family. Before the Fall things were untainted by sin (and, as we've seen, by futility), but since the Fall we've all wrestled with "Work-Life Balance." The challenge is that, being sinful ourselves, we will never quite get it right.

Third Principle: God hates laziness.

In the book of Proverbs, the word "sluggard" is used 14 times. This book of "practical wisdom" says stuff like this:

- "The sluggard craves and gets nothing..." (Proverbs 13:4)
- "A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing." (Prov. 20:4)
- "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets.'" (Prov. 26:13)

Fourth Principle: If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right.

I've always loved the passage, Exodus 31:1-6. This is the part of Exodus where they built the Tabernacle; a passage that most people start to skim. But here's a fun little detail: God says that when they make the items for the worship life of Israel they should use Bezalel and Oholiab because they're good at their jobs. Exodus 31:3, "And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts..." It might seem a small point, but I think it's actually important. Of course, a corollary would be: Find out what you're good at, and do that. (Romans 12:3-8)

Fifth Principle: Everyone should enjoy the fruits of their own labor.

The opposite of the sluggard: God urges us to work hard, and then generally blesses that hard work with results. It deserves to be noted that the Commandment "Thou shalt not steal" is a commandment that preserves the reward of work.

Sixth Principle: No immoral professions should be entered.

You could start with the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20); but of course there are many other places that the Bible addresses basic morality. God wants us to work; but that work shouldn't involve breaking his Holy Law.

Seventh Principle: God cares about integrity in the economic realm.

Proverbs 11:1, "The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are His delight." Of course way back then people measured things out with balances and weights. Some vendors cheated by shaving their weights to a slightly lower weight, thus cheating the customer. This shows that cheating one another is an ancient human practice. God clearly says, "No!" to that. I think of this when I see those little stickers on gas pumps saying that some government agency has been by and tested that paying for a gallon of gas gets you a gallon of gas.

Eighth Principle: Integrity is whether anyone is watching or not.

The Bible will often speak of "slaves" and "masters." It's not that the Bible is endorsing slavery; it's just that it was written at a time when many economic relationships were accurately described that way. When we read them today we should think of "workers" and "employers." Reading it that way, the Bible has a lot to say.

One of those things is Ephesians 6:5-6, "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart."

Ninth Principle: Both employers and workers have responsibility to each other.

The Bible often addresses one side of a relationship, and then immediately addresses the other side.

- Ephesians 6:5 (just mentioned above): "Slaves obey your earthly masters..."
- Ephesians 6:9, "And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him."

i.e., Bosses, be good to the people that work for you. You'll stand before God some day!

Tenth Principle: Employees should receive a reasonable wage.

Leviticus 19:13, "Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight."

These days we generally don't pay everybody at the end of every work day. The point isn't the frequency; it's just that whatever arrangement exists, then pay the workers adequately and promptly. The worker has worked for his wages; pay him or her.

Eleventh Principle: You need a day off.

Exodus 20:8-11 is the Commandment concerning the Sabbath Day. The day is primarily set aside as a day of worship. But these verses quickly go to the point of not doing "any work" one day a week. The Commandment also was meant for you, your kids, your servants, your animals, and even "the alien within your gates."

God rested on the Seventh Day. You, too, need a day off.

Twelfth Principle: You have success at work in order to be generous with others.

Here's a funny comment from Paul: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need." (Ephesians 4:28)

That puts several points all together in one tightly compacted verse. No immoral gain. Work is good. Do something useful. Help others.

Thirteenth Principle: There's more to life than making money.

Yes, I know, that's not how many see it. But there it is:

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

Typical of Paul, just a few words, but much is said. Making a good living is nice, and is a blessing from the Lord. But we've all seen those people who are frantic about it; who are always looking for the next "get rich quick" scheme; who think that there's nothing to life but making more. Sure enough, they do wind up with a lot of grief.

Fourteenth Principle: It's enough to have enough.

This is really the corollary to the previous point. It's nice to have some economic success in life. But how much do you need? Is there a time to be satisfied with what you have?

Ecclesiastes 4:6, "Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind."

Fifteenth Principle: A believer serves faithfully whatever their circumstances.

There are numerous examples in Scripture, but Daniel is about as clear as any. This man was a citizen of a conquered Israel. Taken captive, he was trained for government service in the Babylonian Empire. He worked hard at his preparations, and served faithfully in the jobs he was given. He became a man of influence, even far away from Israel, and in the territory of the enemy of his people. He was no traitor; he was just "blooming where he was planted," as the old cliché goes. As a result, he was used powerfully by God. Take a peek at Daniel 1:18-21. Oh, and let's quickly add in: He never compromised his principles. This man's life is really worthy of some serious study.

Sixteenth Principle: It's good to be happy with your work.

Ecclesiastes 2:24, "A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This, too, is from the hand of God."

Obviously not everyone winds up in that situation. If you find yourself there, then thank God for it. If it's not true for you, then you have to ask questions such as: Am I where God wants me to be? Is this a time of "wandering in the desert" that I just have to endure? Is God teaching me some lesson that I don't see yet? And of course: Have I prayed that the Lord would lead me to where I'm to be (even if that's to remain here)?

Seventeenth Principle: A worker has responsibilities at work, AND at home.

This is not this far down on the list as a matter of priority. It's just that some of the topics above flow from one to the next. This is actually a big deal, and must be known.

We've looked at the book of Ephesians several times already. It's a book full of "Here's how you live this stuff out." Here's some more from Ephesians 6:

- 6:1, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."
- 6:4, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

Every believer ought to be known as a hard-worker at their office or job-site. And they ought also to be known as someone who's present to their spouse and children. Notice how parallel these verses are to the Ninth Principle, where it's said that both workers and employers have responsibilities to the other. Same at home: children and parents have responsibilities to each other. This means that through one's employment an income is made that supports the family. But also that there's something left in the tank for the loving, nurturing relationship the family needs.

As said above, there's a "Work-Life Balance," and we sinners aren't too good at it. But we'll work at it...

Eighteenth Principle: Your spiritual well-being is far more important than your economic success.

I suppose this is one of the most well-known verses in the Bible, but let's say it anyway, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?" (Matthew 16:26 or Mark 8:36) No matter how much you earn, it's not worth a thing if you miss heaven.

So those are the eighteen principles I came up with. Further discussion could certainly yield even more. But why was this a sermon in church? Because our Epistle Lesson for Proper 28 was II Thessalonians 3:6-13.

Both First and Second Thessalonians are about the Second Coming of Christ, with Paul especially wanting to correct some misunderstandings that had crept into that church. The two letters talk about the return of Christ, the hope of the resurrection, and more. But the almost amusing part of II Thessalonians 3 is that Paul has a very practical word for those who wait for the coming of the Lord. And that word is: "Work!"

Yes, we're waiting for the Lord. But that does not mean that we are to sit around and do nothing because "He's coming soon." He is not on our timetable. So for now, we do the things in front of us that we're supposed to be doing. As Paul says, those who won't work often then wander around town talking about things (and about people) that they shouldn't. He says it this way: "They're not busy; they're busybodies."

One final concept we need to hold together with all of the above. God has given us "work to do," but this does not mean that we're "saved by works." Those are two very different things. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus, the crucified. We do not and cannot earn our salvation by anything we do.

But having been saved by grace, God has given us work to do in this life. And if He has, what then are we to do? Work.



From Our President

James Sharpe

As we begin a new Church Year and enter the seasons of Advent and Christmas, this time can feel both wonderfully joyful and overwhelmingly busy. In all the activity, may we pause to remember the hope and peace Christ brings as we look toward Christmas and the start of 2026.

Please be safe in your travels, enjoy time with family, and look for opportunities to shine the light of Jesus to those around you.

I'm grateful for all who serve in our congregation. As we move into the new year, we are especially in need of volunteers for Altar Guild and Counters for tithes and offerings. If you're able to help or would like more information, please reach out.

May the peace of Christ fill your hearts and homes this season.

Board of Worship

Liz Rosinski, Chairperson

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Do You Like to Decorate for Christmas?



If so, consider joining us Sunday, December 7, following the late service. We're looking for volunteers with joyful hearts and helping hands to decorate Mt. Olive's sanctuary as we prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord's birth. Whether it is setting up the Christmas trees, hanging ribbons, wreaths and ornaments, we'd love to have you be a part of the festivities!

There might even be opportunities to climb ladders and lift heavy objects too.

Help us create a warm, welcoming sanctuary as we anticipate the wondrous Christmas season. Food, beverages and Christmas music will be provided for volunteers! In order for us to be fully prepared and organized, please indicate your willingness to assist by contacting Liz Rosinski (Worship Committee) at 803.413.3364 (text or voice) or lizrosinski@me.com.

The Board of Evangelism: *End of Year Prayer:*

Aresa Boykin, Chairperson

Dear Lord, Thank You for the year 2025. We come before You with hearts full of thanksgiving over the ways that You have worked in our lives and the blessings you have provided.

Father we also thank You for being with us in the hardships. Thank You that You never waste a situation or a circumstance for those who love You (Romans 8:28). We pray that even if it may be hard to be thankful amid our circumstances, we are thankful for Who is getting us through. Thank You for being the God of all comfort who comforts us so that we can comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:4). Thank you for working everything to your purpose.

We are grateful for the spiritual growth that we have encountered through Your Word, in prayer, and with the church. We are grateful for the ways that Your Spirit has strengthened us, taught us more of who You are, and revealed great wisdom in challenging decisions. Thank You for walking with us each day and helping us to overcome the enemy. We praise You for the many times that we were able to choose the Spirit over the flesh by Your power.



Forgive us for the times when we sinned, and thank You for Your grace upon grace. Your mercies have been new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23).

We celebrate the ending of this year and ask that You would help us remember the unique ways in which You worked in 2025. We thank You for being our Savior and for calling us Your children. We ask that, just as You have been faithful this past year, You will reveal Your faithfulness again in 2026.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Youth Group

Renee Harper

We had a wonderful planning luncheon in November, thanks to all who came. We have a few events planned:

- **Fireflies Holiday Lights** - December 12, 6:00-9:00 pm - Kid Friendly! - Purchase tickets at www.firefliesholidaylights.com.
- **Swing Dance** - January 19, 7:00-10:30 pm - 1-hour lesson and dance. \$7.00 for non-members. 2501 Heyward Street, Columbia SC. For more information visit www.palmettoswingdance.com.

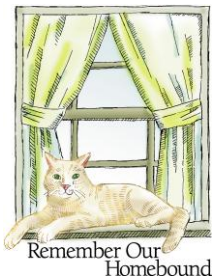
- **Ice Skating** - February 21, 1:30 pm Flight Adventure. \$13 for admission. \$4 Skate Rental (doesn't include tax). 1019 Broad Stone Road, Irmo, SC. Kid Friendly!
- **Riverbanks Zoo** - March 21, 10:00 am - \$30.95 adults, \$27.95 children. 500 Wildlife Parkway, Columbia, SC. Kid Friendly!



If you have not signed up to be on the group text, please contact Renee Harper 203.885.6733 to be added.

Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, & Cards

"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.

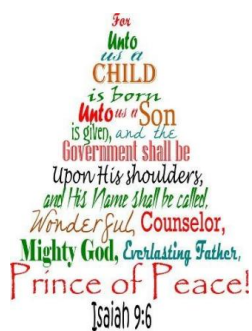
You may include others who are on the weekly prayer page in the bulletin. Remember the family members and care givers, too. Contact information is in the church directory. Let's make a special effort to connect with one another!

Don Angen	David Buck	Anita Meetze	Margaret Meetze	Mandy Schultz
Chuck & Marilyn Bauer	Cleta Dunaway	Laura Meetze	Cyndi Nelson	Linda Schmidt
Nadia R. BouFawaz	Harold/Sarah Jones	Thelma Miller	Polly Roland	

Board of Social Ministry: Christmas Giving Tree

Mary Keller, Chairperson

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



It is a long-standing tradition at Mt. Olive that we partner with various local agencies in our area and purchase Christmas gifts for those in need. This year we've added **Lighthouse for Life**, a faith-based 501c3 organization whose mission is to fight and eradicate human trafficking by educating the community and empowering survivors. Their biblical core values are Faith, Integrity, Gratefulness, Humility, and Togetherness. They are requesting NIV LARGE Print Study Bibles to distribute to survivors. **Lutheran Family Services** helps refugees who have moved into the Columbia area and arrive with only the clothes on their backs. The refugees' personal wish requests are items we often take for granted. **Sister Care** helps people identify and leave abusive relationships and offers long-term support and services for those who have left those relationships. You can purchase one or

multiple items from their list. **Sharing God's Love's** ministry is a direct connection that supports the diverse needs of people in our community, and they distribute the items collected to families in the Midlands. We are collecting gift cards for teens since they are often a challenge when purchasing a gift. **Gifts for Grands**, a local agency founded by Melissa Little, distributes gifts to local nursing home residents who do not have family. Please consider sponsoring a person in need by stopping by the Giving Tree display! So many opportunities to share our Love of Jesus this Christmas season!

Please attach the tag to your gift and place it around the Christmas Tree. Gift bags only please! The collection will conclude on Wednesday, December 10th.

Mount Olive Preschool

Jamie Burns, Preschool Director

803-781-7180 - preschool@mtolivesc.org

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

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the preschool! Our halls are busy with Christmas crafts, learning about the reason for the season and practicing for our Christmas program! We are so looking forward to sharing the joy of the season with our preschool families and the congregation!

We were blessed to celebrate at our Thanksgiving Feast with our preschool "family." We ate and fellowshiped alongside our preschool students and their families and hosted over 100 children and adults. What a testament to God's faithfulness and his hand in knitting together preschool relationships.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! We will have a special performance of our Christmas Program for church members on Wednesday, December 17th 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 during evening hours.

The hallways will be quiet during the Christmas break from school, but we will return on January 5th, ready to see what the Lord has in store for us in 2026.

The preschool staff and I pray you have the best time celebrating Jesus' birth and the New Year!

Fellowship Board

Kelly Thrun, Chairperson

Now through Monday, December 8th, the Fellowship Board is accepting non-perishable individually wrapped food items for our Christmas baskets. Individually wrapped suggestions include raisins, peanut butter crackers, instant oatmeal packets, hot chocolate packets, Little Debbie cakes, fruit cups, sugar-free and regular candies (no chocolate, please). Please do not send anything that must be refrigerated. All non-perishable donations can be left on the kitchen counter. Thank you for helping to brighten the holidays of those experiencing special circumstances! If you would like to contribute but cannot bring items in person, monetary donations are also welcome.



Join a Bible Class

December 2025 – January 2026 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	Dana Magic, Brandy Maye, Amanda Dalton, Connie Cook	The Life of Jesus
Confirmation Class	Preschool Area	Sandy Osborne & Sue Strouse	A 2-year study of Luther's Small Catechism
Middle & High School Youth	Wagner House	April Fancey, Jenn Weed, & Parents	Bible Study
Adults	Fellowship Hall	Pr. Walt Harper	TBA
Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator			

December 2025 Lectionary

Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
December 7	Advent 2	Isaiah 11:1-10	Psalm 72:1-7	Romans 15:4-13	Matthew 3:1-12
December 14	Advent 3	Isaiah 35:1-10	Psalm 146	James 5:7-11	Matthew 11:2-15
December 21	Advent 4	Isaiah 7:10-17	Psalm 24	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 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 52:7-10	Psalm 2	Hebrews 1:1-6	John 1:1-14
December 28	Christmas 1	Isaiah 63:7-14	Psalm 111	Galatians 4:4-7	Matthew 2:13-23

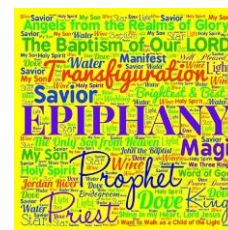
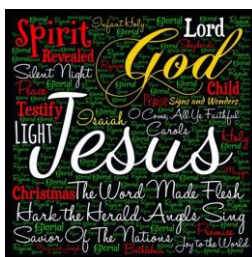
January 2026 Lectionary

Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
January 4	Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-11	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
January 11	Baptism of Our Lord	Isaiah 42:1-9	Psalm 29	Romans 6:1-11	Matthew 3:13-17
January 18	Epiphany 2	Isaiah 49:1-7	Psalm 40:1-11	1 Cor. 1:1-9	John 1:29-42a
January 25	Epiphany 3	Isaiah 9:1-4	Psalm 27:1-9	1 Cor. 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-25



Signs at the Church Entrance: Advent – Christmas - Epiphany

During December and January there will be three signs at the entrance. December begins with our Advent sign to remind us to prepare for the birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Next, the church moves to the season of Christmas. Look for the prophecies of the Messiah and the titles of many Christmas carols. The Epiphany sign will be displayed through January until Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026. During Epiphany, our bright yellow sign will recount how Jesus revealed himself as the Savior of the world.



Special Mid-Week Advent-Christmas-Epiphany Services

Date	Service	Service Times
December 3	Mid-Week Advent 1	12 Noon Service & 7:00 pm Evening Service
December 10	Mid-Week Advent 2	12 Noon Service & 7:00 pm Evening Service
December 17	Mid-Week Advent 3	12 Noon Service & 7:00 pm Evening Service
December 21	Advent 4	Sat. 5:00 pm & Sunday: 8:00 am/10:30 am
December 24 (Wednesday)	Christmas Eve	4:00 pm & 7:00 pm – Candlelight Services without Holy Communion
December 25 (Thursday)	Christmas Day	10:30 am Service with Holy Communion
December 27/28	Christmas 1	Sat. 5:00 pm & Sunday: 8:00 am/10:30 am
January 4	Epiphany	Sat. 5:00 pm & Sunday: 8:00 am/10:30 am

Lunch will be served immediately following the mid-week noon services.

Read the Bible in Three Years

December 2025							
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		

January 2026							
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 season of Advent not only begins the church year, but it begins our next year of Pr. Walt's 3-year Bible reading plan. We begin the church year with several books from the New Testament.

First, is Romans where we are reminded that all people have free access to the riches of God's grace in Christ as they respond in faith to the Gospel. In his own Son, God has made a way for lost people to be restored to Him.

Next is Philippians. This short book conveys a powerful message about the secret of contentment. Although Paul had faced severe hardships and even his current imprisonment, in every circumstance he had learned to be content.

Just before we celebrate Jesus's birth, we read through Ruth and learn a bit of King David's, and Jesus', heritage. On Christmas morning, we begin the Gospel of Matthew coinciding with year A of our lectionary. We will read through mid-January of Jesus' lineage, ministry, death, and resurrection. Finally, we begin I Samuel where we recount the birth of Samuel, God's last priest of Israel's theocracy, and the reign of their first king, Saul.

December 2025 - January 2026 Birthdays

12/1	Connor Weed	12/17	Abigail Sharpe	1/13	Dimitri Harper
12/3	Catherine Black	12/18	Todd Barrett	1/14	Hal Hoffman
12/4	Greg Ervin	12/22	Austin Perkins	1/14	Debra Tesch
12/4	Richard Weed	12/23	Becky Elam	1/16	Laura Shealy
12/8	Noelle Nettles	12/23	John Meyerhoff	1/17	Stephanie Lewis
12/8	Jennifer Weed	12/23	Shari Selke	1/19	Mitch Greer
12/9	Kari Mundschenk	12/26	Natalie Smith	1/19	Louie Selle
12/10	Laura Laprise	12/28	David Fletcher	1/21	Carol Fong
12/11	Samuel Fancey	12/30	Don Angen	1/21	Kim Perkins
12/11	Wanda Witt	12/30	Sherry Ervin	1/22	Kas Hessary
12/12	Janet Jabs	12/31	Robert Tesch	1/25	Andrew Rosinski
12/12	Rich Keller	1/3	Page Fletcher	1/25	Richard Shealy
12/12	Christopher Meetze	1/4	Arabella Prag	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	1/28	Neide Nieto
12/15	Pastor Walt Harper	1/9	Shanna Stuck	1/30	Geri Harper
12/15	Olivia Houck	1/9	Peggy Weed	1/30	Rachelle Kapalka
12/16	Liezl Baden	1/10	Dianne BouFawaz	1/31	Cindy Soto

December 2025 - January 2026 Anniversaries

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



Announcements

Women's Book Club

The ladies meet the first Tuesday of December and both the first and third Tuesdays of January at 7 PM in the fellowship hall. You do not have to read the book to join us. All ladies are welcome to join! This fall, we began the book, *God's Provision in a Wilderness World*, by Lindsay Hausch. You can order the book from CPH.org, Amazon, or Christianbook.com. Please contact Renee Harper for more information at 203.885.6733.



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.



Welcome New Members

In November, Mt. Olive welcomed 15 new members! Please seek them out and give them a warm welcome: Tyler Grubbs, Allison Crandall, Brandon & Molly Mason, James & Gwen Draffin, Audrey Harper, Wayne & Kathryn Cheney, Becky Elam, Peter & Kari Mundschenk, Randy & Beverly McCoy, and Denise Askin. Thanks be to God for these wonderful folks!

