



Olive Leaves



February 2026

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From Our Pastor

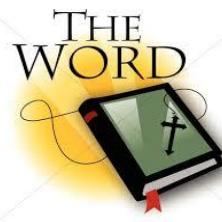
Pastor Walt Harper

I was just looking at my article for the December-January issue of the newsletter. It was a reprint of my sermon "A Theology of Work," and it was quite long! As I mentioned at the start of that article, I'd been asked for a copy of that sermon by several people, and so it seemed reasonable just to print it in these pages.

This month I want to say, "Thank You!" to the congregation.

Thank You!

- As has been consistently true, the congregation gathered a collection for a Christmas Bonus to Renée and me. It was generous and appreciated! Right after Christmas most pastors get out of town for a vacation. This year we went to Helen, GA, and had a great time; largely funded by your gift.
- I'm thankful that last year Mt. Olive "made budget." Of course, there's more to Church than just making budget (I'll have more to say about this in a bit.) But at the practical level we do have an electric bill, and we do want to send some support to the District and other mission projects, and there are many other things in there. Last year's budget was very ambitious, and we spent much of the year a little behind. But thanks to your open-hearted support of the parish in December, the year closed with a slight surplus. When you add in that we purchased a \$92,000 organ, over and above the budget, this is cause for great thanks!
- Oh yeah, we bought a new organ. Our Music Program is really blessing us as a congregation, and adding this instrument was a nice enhancement. Yes, it cost \$92,000—and yes, we wondered, "How long will it take us to raise that?" Answer: you raised the entire amount in four months. It is literally paid in full already!
- I'm very thankful for all the volunteerism that has been going on lately. I know I've said this in other places already, but it deserves to be repeated: Thanks! We had plenty of volunteers for VBS, plenty of volunteers for "A Journey to Bethlehem," plenty of volunteers for decorating the Church at Christmas time, and we have plenty of volunteers in our Sunday School Program. This needs to be noticed and praised.
- I'm thankful that this Church cares about the truth of God's Word! Attendance at Sunday Morning Bible Study is good. Attendance at Wednesday Bible Study is good. Attendance at



the Women's Book Club is good. Attendance at our one Small Group is good (although we'd love to see some more Small Groups form). Attendance at Men's Prayer Breakfast has started the year well. Of course, it's not just attendance; it's the conversation we have, in which it's constantly clear that our people want to know the Word, and think out how it applies to us as individuals and also to us as a parish of the LCMS.

- I'm thankful that this Church is welcoming to the visitor. We've had a nice number of visitors in the last year. Very often they tell me that they've been welcomed by you, the congregation. There's nothing better to hear as your pastor.

So, we're off to a new year, thankful for God's blessings in 2025. Naturally, there were many challenges. There always are. But we can be thankful for God's presence with us.

From Our President

James Sharpe

As we head into February, I want to start by saying thank you. Many of you have stepped up to share your time and talents through VBS, Journey to Bethlehem, worship support, Sunday school, board service, and so many other ways. Your willingness to serve has not gone unnoticed. It truly strengthens our church and reflects Christ's call to love one another.

There are still opportunities to get involved. If you have been wondering where you might fit, take a moment to check out the board descriptions in the narthex and reach out to any council member (pictured outside the office) if something catches your interest or if you have questions.

Volunteering isn't just about filling a role; it's about being part of the life of the church. There's a place for everyone and many hands make light work.

With winter in full swing, please travel safely whether by vehicle or by foot. Dress for the weather and keep an eye out for one another, especially those who may need extra help.

Thank you for all you do and for being such a caring church family.



Where Might I Best Serve at Mt. Olive?

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body."

1 Corinthians 12:12-13a

2025 proved to be a fantastic year for volunteers stepping up to serve in special projects and committees from VBS to the Finance Committee to *Journey to Bethlehem* to updating the lighting in the sanctuary! The Holy Spirit has gifted every Christian with at least one spiritual gift for the common good of the church so it will function as the body of Christ. As spring approaches, please prayerfully consider where you might serve.



The next three editions of the Olive Leaves will have descriptions for you to review to help you discern your best fit. You can read all of these descriptions on the display in the narthex. There is a QR code that you can scan if you would like the entire list on your phone.

Mt. Olive Board Descriptions

THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGREGATION

The President of the Congregation presides at the quarterly Voters' Assemblies, the monthly Church Council, and other called meetings of the church membership. All boards, committees, and groups in the congregation shall be responsible to the President, and he/she is welcome to attend any board meeting as an ex officio member. The President will endeavor to coordinate the functions, plans, and activities of the congregation for the total furtherance of the work of Christ's Kingdom. In an emergency, when the Treasurer is unable to act, the President has the authority to sign checks.



THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGREGATION

The Vice President shall, in the absence of the President, act for and in the stead of the President. He/she will serve as the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, February to May, and will be a member of the Finance Committee, helping to prepare the budget for the coming year. The Vice President is welcome to attend any board meeting as an ex officio member.



THE COUNCIL SECRETARY

The Council Secretary shall record accurate minutes of the meetings of the Church Council, Voters' Assembly, and other meetings of the church membership. The Secretary is responsible for recording attendance at these meetings as well. (Note: There are sign-in sheets at the congregational meetings.) The secretary will maintain the minutes and provide written copies for the congregation in accordance with the By-Laws.

THE TREASURER

The Church Treasurer is responsible for accurate recording of congregational receipts and disbursements, both budgeted and actual, according to proper accounting procedures. The Treasurer will coordinate with the Financial Secretary and Parish Administrator to ensure the accuracy and detail of the income and expenditures. The Treasurer will present monthly, written financial reports at meetings of Church Council and Voters' Assembly. He/she will be responsible for the prompt payment of bills and salaries in accordance with the yearly budget. He/she will coordinate the allocation and expenditures of monies to the various Boards. The Treasurer will be responsible for signing all checks. The Treasurer is the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.



THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for the prompt and accurate counting, recording, and depositing of all receipts for the congregation in a local financial institution and providing the Treasurer with a duplicate deposit slip for each deposit. The Financial Secretary will act with strict confidentiality in every duty. He/she will be responsible for issuing the semi-annual giving statements to members. The Financial Secretary will be responsible for providing members with offering envelopes. He/she will be responsible for the selection and training of weekly offering counters. He will be a member of the Finance Committee and an ex officio member of the Board of Stewardship.

The Board of Evangelism

Aresa Boykin, Chairperson

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20a

Do we as Christians sometimes behave as if we live in bubbles inside our Christian communities with our collection of Christian friends – and stay there? Perhaps, we even hide out in a Christian subculture of our own making. We design what we think is heaven on earth, and we hunker down in hopes all will go well until we get to leave this planet. When all the while, Jesus has seen us, chosen us, and sent us out into the world to make disciples. We can't make His greatest commandment our first priority if we won't break out of our bubble.

Jesus didn't save us to build a Christian subculture to avoid meeting people who do not look, act, think, or believe like us. He didn't save us to hide from, avoid, ignore, fear, hate, condemn, or judge the world. He sent us into the world "to make disciples"—for us to love the world that He created and loves so dearly; so much that He would lay down His life.

The most important word in the above verses? **GO**. Go into all the world. Go and make disciples.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you that You have seen me, chosen me, and sent me. Help me to have the strength and courage to go where you tell me to go and do what you've called me to do. Amen. (Adapted from a YouVersion Devotion: 20/20: Seen.Chosen.Sent, by Christine Caine, 2019).

Choir Director: Do you Have Musical Talent?

Renee Harper, Director

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music." Psalm 98:4



Our new spring season has just started! Now is a perfect time to start choir if you have been considering it. We are just starting to look at Lenten music. Choir practice is upstairs in the balcony starting at 5:00pm Sunday evenings. We are finished by 6:00pm.

The handbells can use one more full-time player. We meet Sunday's at 4:00pm in the front of the church.

If you can play an instrument, please prayerfully consider lending your talents to the Glory of God in our worship services. Contact Renee Harper at 203-885-6733 or waltandrenee@att.net.

Board of Public Relations

Shanna Stuck, Chairperson

Does your family's church directory photo need to be updated? February will be the month to get a new photo taken. You may stop by the room across from Pr. Walt's office on Saturdays, before or after worship service or on Sundays between the two services. If you have a great photo that you would like to submit, please send it to aresaboykin@gmail.com. Professionally made photos work best or personal photos with quiet backgrounds. If you like your current photo, you do not need to get a new one.



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. We can be hopeful in February because each day arrives with an extra minute or two of sunshine!

God uses His family to be a light 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/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	David Buck	Anita Meetze	Margaret Meetze	Mandy Schultz
Chuck & Marilyn Bauer	Cleta Dunaway	Laura Meetze	Cyndi Nelson	Linda Schmidt
	Harold/Sarah Jones	Thelma Miller	Polly Roland	

Board of Education

Liezl Baden, Chairperson

This year started with the Youth Group gathering at Stars and Strikes where they went bowling, and played laser tag, and arcade games. These fellowship events will be scheduled throughout the year. The goal is to have this group spend time together and stay connected. All teenagers grade 7 and above are welcome.



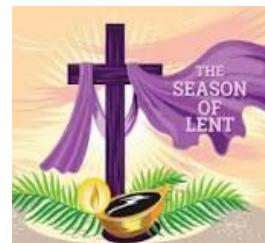
With fellowship, there is also service, and it is time for the Youth Group's annual "Souper Bowl of Caring" fundraiser. This event will kick off on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 8th, with a soup competition. The competition will be after the late service on Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. The youth will be serving soups, and the congregation will be able to vote on their favorite one! We will be collecting \$1 per bowl. Throughout February, they will collect donations as well as spaghetti sauce, canned soup, and crackers.

Board of Fellowship

Kelly Thrun, Chairperson

The Fellowship Board would like to thank everyone who provided food for the Advent lunches, as well as the wonderful contributions donated by the congregation for our homebound members.

While it feels as though the Christmas season has just concluded, we are already preparing for Easter. Lenten lunches will be held following the Wednesday Lent services, beginning Wednesday, February 25th, and continuing through Wednesday, March 25th.



Please look for the sign-up sheet in the Narthex to volunteer to bring food. These lunches are always a wonderful time for food and fellowship, and we hope you will join us.



Board of Social Ministry

Mary Keller, Chairperson

Lighthouse for Life Thank You!

Dear Members of Mt. Olive Lutheran,

As we reflect on 2025, we want to pause and say a heartfelt **thank you!** Because of your generosity, lives were impacted, hope was restored, and light was brought into places where it was desperately needed. Your support of Lighthouse for Life this past year played a real role in helping individuals find safety, healing, and a path toward freedom. Please know that behind every dollar represented on that receipt is a story of compassion, dignity, and care made possible because you chose to give.

Your partnership reminds us that this mission is not something we do alone. It is carried forward by people like you—people who believe every life has value and that restoration is possible. The need remains great, and the work continues—but so does the impact when faithful partners stand with us. Thank you again for the generosity you showed. We are deeply grateful for your trust, your compassion, and your belief in this mission. With sincere appreciation, Lisa Kejr CEO Lighthouse for Life

Relay for Life – May 1, 2026 @ Lexington High School (6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.).

For 40 years, passionate supporters have come together to advance the American Cancer Society's vision of ending cancer. Relay for Life celebrates survivors, honors caregivers, remembers loved ones lost, and raises funds to ensure that everyone has the chance to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. Joining the Midlands Relay for Life has been on the hearts of our board for some time. This year we are forming a team named the 'Marching Saints,' who will be participating in this annual event. More details will be shared in the upcoming weeks with links on how you can join in the walk and support the team.

Mount Olive Preschool

Jamie Burns, Preschool Director

803-781-7180 - preschool@mtolivesc.org

Web: mtolivesc.org/preschool - 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 2026-2027 school year! Encourage parents of 2- through 4-year-olds to call, email, or check out the website. Jamie is always happy to talk with families and provide tours of the preschool.

Registration for congregation members and current students begins on February 1st and for new students and families on February 14th. Registration for 2026-2027 is done **ONLINE ONLY**. Use the QR codes below to access the registration form and pay the registration fee online.



[Registration](#)



[Online Payment Option](#)

Join a Bible Class

February 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 two-year study of Luther's Small Catechism and the Bible
Middle & High School Youth	Wagner House	April Fancey, Jenn Weed, Jaime Stuck, & Eric Weed	Bible Study
Adults	Fellowship Hall	Pr. Walt Harper	The Theology of Mission Statements
Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator.			

February 2026 Lectionary

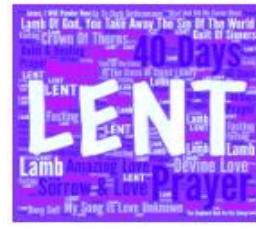
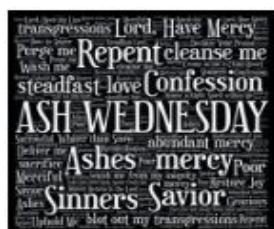
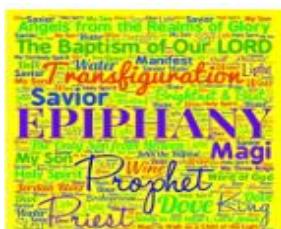
Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
February 1	Epiphany 4	Micah 6:1–8	Psalm 15	1 Corinthians 1:18–31	Matthew 5:1–12
February 8	Epiphany 5	Isaiah 58:3–9a	Psalm 112:1–9	1 Corinthians 2:1–12	Matthew 5:13–20
February 15	Transfiguration	Exodus 24:8–18	Psalm 2:6–12	2 Peter 1:16–21	Matthew 17:1–9
February 18	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12–19	Psalm 51:1–13	2 Cor. 5:20b–6:10	Matt. 6:1–6, 16–21
February 22	Lent 1	Genesis 3:1–21	Psalm 32:1–7	Romans 5:12–19	Matthew 4:1–11
March 1	Lent 2	Genesis 12:1–9	Psalm 121	Romans 4:1–8, 13–17	John 3:1–17

Signs at the Church Entrance: The Seasons of Epiphany & Lent

As February begins, the church is midway into the Season of Epiphany. You will see our bright yellow sign that recounts how Jesus revealed Himself as both fully God and fully man, and as the Savior of the world including the gentiles. The last Sunday of the Epiphany Season, this year on February 15th, always recounts Jesus' Transfiguration.

This year the Season of Lent comes early with Ash Wednesday on February 18th. Don't miss this sign, because it is only out for a few days leading up to the day of reflection and repentance. Read the encouraging words from Jesus as He prepares for his journey to take on our sins.

The theme of reflection and repentance continues throughout the season of Lent as you will see on the purple sign. Throughout the 40 days of Lent, remember Jesus' steadfast love for His children and how He willingly prepared to go to the cross for each one who believes.



Read the Bible in Three Years – February 2026

During January, we began reading I Samuel and in February, we will continue through the book and move into II Samuel. The books follow the life of God's Prophet Samuel and Israel's first kings. They compare and contrast the rise and fall of King Saul, a man-pleaser, and King David, a God-pleaser. They demonstrate the futility and foolishness of disobedience to God as well as the humility, faith, and reward that characterizes a life lived to honor God.

February 2026							
Feb 1	I Samuel 11	Feb 8	I Samuel 18	Feb 15	I Samuel 25	Feb 22	II Samuel 1
Feb 2	I Samuel 12	Feb 9	I Samuel 19	Feb 16	I Samuel 26	Feb 23	II Samuel 2
Feb 3	I Samuel 13	Feb 10	I Samuel 20	Feb 17	I Samuel 27	Feb 24	II Samuel 3
Feb 4	I Samuel 14	Feb 11	I Samuel 21	Feb 18	I Samuel 28	Feb 25	II Samuel 4
Feb 5	I Samuel 15	Feb 12	I Samuel 22	Feb 19	I Samuel 29	Feb 26	II Samuel 5
Feb 6	I Samuel 16	Feb 13	I Samuel 23	Feb 20	I Samuel 30	Feb 27	II Samuel 6
Feb 7	I Samuel 17	Feb 14	I Samuel 24	Feb 21	I Samuel 31	Feb 28	II Samuel 7

February 2026 Anniversaries

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

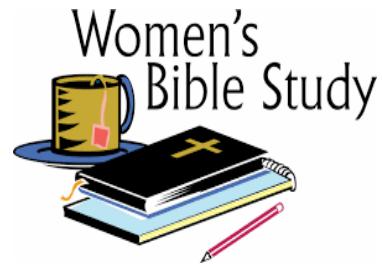
February 2026 Birthdays

2/2	Chuck Bauer	2/12	Rosemary Sharpe	2/18	Natalie Crosland
2/3	Matthew Barnett	2/12	Daniel Zahn	2/19	William Baden
2/3	Susie Hoffman	2/13	Kathie Bost	2/19	Carole Mueller
2/6	Emily Randall	2/13	Wayne Cheney	2/19	Sue Strouse
2/10	Joshua Thrun	2/14	Paula Helming	2/20	Kathy Eargle
2/11	Bailey Barnett	2/14	Eric Matzko	2/21	Chris McKinney
2/11	Seth Duncan	2/15	Hannah Hennigan	2/22	David Buck
2/11	Carly Stuck	2/15	Jeff Thrun	2/24	Audrey Harper
2/12	Noah Laney	2/16	James Crosland	2/25	Kelsey Whitaker
2/12	Herb Loebs	2/16	Raegan Dalton	2/27	Hunter Robinson
		2/17	Rachel Lewis		

Announcements

Women's Book Club

The ladies meet the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7 PM in the fellowship hall. You do not have to read the book to join us. All ladies are welcome to join! We are currently reading *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.



Young Adults

There is a GroupMe chat set up for the Young Adults. Please contact Joe Harper by cell 203-885-8346 or email joseph.m.harper@outlook.com to be added to the group.

There will be another potluck planning luncheon in late February or early March to brain-storm some future events for the Young Adults. Details will be in the bulletin and the GroupMe chat.

February 2nd and 16th: Swing Dancing, 1 hour lesson and dance, 7:00pm-10:30pm. \$7.00 for non-members. 2501 Heyward Street, Columbia SC. For more information visit www.palmettoswingdance.com.

February 21st Ice Skating, 1:30pm Flight Adventure \$13 for admission \$4 Skate Rental (does not include tax). 1019 Broad Stone Road, Irmo SC. Kid Friendly!

March 21st Riverbanks Zoo, 10:00am \$30.95 adults, \$27.95 children 500 Wildlife Parkway, Columbia SC. Kid Friendly!



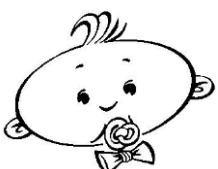
Secure E Giving

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, or scan the QR code. 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 that we must adhere to. Even though the e-giving page looks like our website, Mt. Olive will have no record of 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's nursery 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.

Puzz[e]!

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	20

Male adult

21	22	23

— 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

Answers: house, light, friend, wave, man; God is love. Whoever loves in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 John 4:16, NIV

**2026 LENT, HOLY WEEK, and EASTER
SCHEDULE of WORSHIP and EVENTS**

Ash Wednesday February 18	12:00 Noon 7:00 PM	Holy Communion with Optional Imposition of Ashes
Wednesdays in Lent February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25	12:00 Noon	Midweek Lenten Worship Light Lunch after the Noon Service
	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Worship
Saturday March 28	5:00 PM	Celebrating Palm Sunday: The Sunday of the Passion Worship & The Lord's Supper
Sunday March 29 	8:00 AM & 10:30 AM	Palm Sunday: The Sunday of the Passion Worship & The Lord's Supper
	9:15 AM	Sunday School & Bible Classes
Thursday April 2	7:00 PM	 Maundy Thursday Worship Service and The Lord's Supper
Friday April 3	Noon & 7:00 PM	 Good Friday Tenebrae
Holy Saturday April 4	5:00 PM	 The Easter Vigil with The Lord's Supper
 Sunday April 5th 	8:00 AM	The Resurrection of Our Lord Easter Sunday
	9:00 AM Note: Families with children may come at 8:45 so they will have time to eat before the Activities.	Breakfast (No Sunday School) Traditional fare served by the Church Council: scrambled eggs, meat, grits, & assorted breads Continental breakfast: a variety of home prepared breads & sweets Coffee & juices are provided.
	9:30 AM	 Resurrection Celebration, Activities, & Easter Egg Hunt Families will begin in the downstairs "Big Room." The egg hunt will continue outside for children through 4 th grade.
	10:30 AM	The Resurrection of Our Lord Easter Sunday