



# Olive Leaves



March 2026

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## From Our Pastor

*Pastor Walt Harper*

For the months of December through February the Adult Sunday Morning Bible Class was about Mission Statements. We can't cover all of that ground in a couple articles, but I want to talk about this important topic in this space for a couple of months.

So, the first question that will always come up is: "Why do we need a Mission Statement at all?" That's a fair question to ask. The thing that needs to be said is that all of us need a way to focus our thoughts and efforts.

Life is busy. More than busy. It is multi-faceted and hectic. We have tons of things to get done, and pretty soon we're running from one emergency to the next. Very often we feel like, "I know I was busy, but I'm not sure what I got done." This is not to say that we don't need to get those things done. It's just that it can be very easy to forget: What's the Main Thing?

Many years ago, the Ford Motor Company adopted the slogan "Quality is Job One." Why did they select that? Because studies showed that the car-buying public thought of Ford as having a reliability problem. "Quality is Job One" was a message intended for the customers: "We're focusing on building a better car for you." It was also focused on their workforce: "We need to build better cars."



Of course, that Mission Statement had to be lived out. It's never enough "just to say the words." They really had to invest time and effort at improving build-quality. To get there, they had to say the slogan, and say it again, and say it some more. And they also had to let it shape the way they made decisions and the way they went about their workday.

So, Dodge trucks are "Ram Tough." Chevy is "The Heartbeat of America." And BMW is "The Ultimate Driving Machine."

Yes, but Pastor Walt, those are all corporate examples. The church isn't a corporation. True enough, the church is not a corporation. But it is a group of people (hopefully) united in purpose. Funny enough, it turns out that the church itself has often found slogans to be helpful. In our own Lutheran Tradition, they are numerous:

- Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone
- Word and Sacrament
- Here I Stand

So, the questions for any church and for our church, are: What is God up to in the world right now? What are the things we value? What is our role in the work of God? And what is it about our particular era that is distinct from the generations preceding us?

Here is the really tough work of finding a Mission Statement: How would you say that in 10 words or less?

### From Our President

*James Sharpe*

March is finally here! I am looking forward to the warmer weather and the beauty of new growth, even if my allergies don't quite agree. It is a season of preparation for both our personal lives and our church home.

On the personal side, please remain vigilant against tax scams. Remember that the IRS communicates by mail, not by phone, text, or email. If someone mentions a time pressure or an urgency, or if they ask for payment via gift cards or wire transfers, let that be a red flag. When in doubt, hang up and confirm the information through reliable sources.

On the church side, our nominating committee will be calling to fill open positions on our church boards over the next few months. Serving on a board is a great way to support the church. You don't need to be an expert to make a difference, just a willing heart. When the phone rings, please prayerfully consider saying "yes" to this opportunity to serve.



### 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 February, March, and April editions of the Olive Leaves 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 also a QR code that you can scan if you would like the entire list on your phone.

### Mt. Olive Board Descriptions

#### BOARD OF ELDERS - 9 MEN

The Elders are lay spiritual advisors of the congregation who encourage the Pastor and ensure that Lutheran doctrine and Christian discipline are preserved. They will assist the Pastor in matters pertaining to spiritual welfare of the congregation and will use their good office to adjust differences and dissensions in the congregation and restore peace. They will make every effort to encourage members who have been absent from worship to return to church. They will, together with the Pastor, investigate financial needs making recommendations for use of the love fund. They will assist with the weekly worship services.



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS**

Trustees will make provisions for maintaining the congregation’s buildings, grounds, and equipment, securing contracts for maintenance and service, recommending alterations, improvements, and additions as it deems wise and/or necessary in accordance with the authorized annual budget. The Trustees are responsible for contracting for custodial and grounds care, defining the duties, and supervising the work. They will supervise any

repairing, painting, and cleaning of the congregation’s buildings, and planning for maintenance of the church grounds.

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS**

The Board of Christian Education, in conjunction with the pastor, will supervise all Christian education of the church including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Classes, Bible Classes, Youth Groups, and all other educational opportunities. Every three years, the board will coordinate the planning and fundraising for the teens attending the National Youth Gathering. The board will recommend to Church council and the voters the educational policies and procedures.

**BOARD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS**

The board is responsible for publicizing the work of and activities of the congregation through various media. The publicity shall reflect favorably on the congregation and its commitment to the Gospel of Christ. It produces a monthly newsletter, maintains the website, Facebook page, and other social media. It makes use of photographs of the congregation in the media and the pictorial directory. It assists with maintaining the church bulletin boards to display current events.



**BOARD OF EVANGELISM – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS**

The Board of Evangelism works in the fields of evangelism and missions. Included in its scope are the congregational mission efforts, including personal witnessing, canvassing, visiting guests, and the integration of new members. It will foster a climate of evangelism that encourages congregational members informally and spontaneously to share Christ with one another and in the community. The board will greet guests before or after worship services to assist in their acclimation to worship, opportunities for Christian education, and offering them the current newsletter and guest brochure.

**Choir Director: Do you Have Musical Talent?**

*Renee Harper, Director*

*“Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, His praise in the assembly of His faithful people.” Psalm 149: 1*

Lent has started and we are hard at work learning music – new and familiar. It is still a great time to join us. The choir is a great group of fun people to connect with! Choir practice is upstairs in the balcony starting at 5:00pm Sunday evenings. We are finished by 6:00pm.



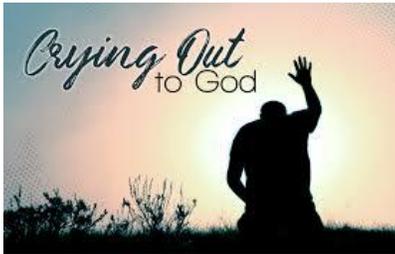
The handbells can use one more full-time player. We meet Sunday’s at 4:00pm in the front of the church. If you can play an instrument, please prayerfully consider lending your talents to the Glory of God in our worship services. Contact Renee Harper, 203-885-6733 [waltandrenee@att.net](mailto:waltandrenee@att.net).

**Board of Evangelism**  
*Aresa Boykin, Chairperson*

*“Out of the depths I cry to You, Lord; Lord, hear my voice.  
Let Your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.” Psalm 130:1-2*

If your life was a graph, we'd see that you will probably spend a third of it asleep. You will probably spend about three years eating or drinking, and anywhere between six and fourteen thousand hours cleaning (and you know which end of the spectrum you're on!)

When it comes to the percentage of your life you will spend working, that works out to a massive piece of the pie. When you consider the thousands of hours you will work, one thing is clear. Your work's impact goes far beyond your teaching, coding, lifting, directing, and whatever else your job requires.



In the above psalm, we see a cycle that you will probably experience thousands, if not tens of thousands, of times in your life. A situation in your life makes you cry out to God. God rescues you or reminds you of his presence. You are filled with gratitude and thank Him for who He is and what He has done. People around you see His work in your life and your gratitude, and they are curious about who God is and may even want to know Him better. Your work can completely transform the lives of the people around you. Not just by the details of your work

but because you are the one doing it.

For years, the people who were cut off from hearing about Jesus by their culture or geography were called "hidden people groups." Organizations strategized how to equip people to understand their languages and customs. Today, there aren't nearly as many places or people who are outside the reach of travel or the power of the internet. But today's hidden people groups are more likely to be right in our midst: game streamers, traveling workers, neighbors, or even top corporate executives.

Will you be the one who speaks their language and understands their customs? Is God speaking to your heart so that your classmates, co-workers, or audience can see Him answer your cry, hear your praise, and then want to know more about God? (From YouVersion, 2024)

**Board of Worship**  
*Liz Rosinski, Chair*

*“...addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.” Ephesians 5:19*



**Save the Date!** With the installation of the organ completed in December, the Worship Committee is joyfully preparing for a dedication service on Sunday, April 12th at 3 pm. This special concert will highlight Mt. Olive's remarkable instrument with music offered by guest organist Oyeniran Oyedeji of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Danbury, CT. We hope you will make plans to join us. Refreshments will be served in the Fellowship Hall following the program. More details will be shared as the date approaches.

Additionally, the Worship Committee is prayerfully seeking one new member to begin serving in September 2026. If you feel called to support this important ministry, please reach out to Liz Rosinski at [lizrosinski@me.com](mailto:lizrosinski@me.com) or 803-413-3364.

## Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, & Cards

*“Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before Him and make His footsteps a way.” Psalm 85:11-13*

It’s March! The weather is a little warmer and hopefully sunnier. Each day grows a few minutes longer until Daylight Savings Time returns on the 8th! We pray that those who have endured the darkness of winter will anticipate the sprouting daffodils, flowering trees, and other signs of God’s renewed creation!

God uses His family to bring His light and renewal to those who need it most. Let us 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	Cleta Dunaway	Robert Fong	Laura Meetze	Mandy Schultz
Chuck & Marilyn Bauer	Geri Harper	Anita Meetze	Margaret Meetze	Linda Schmidt
Kim BouFawaz	Al Jabs	Laura Meetze	Cyndi Nelson	
David Buck	Harold/Sarah Jones	Harold Meetze	Polly Roland	

## Board of Education

*Liezl Baden, Chairperson*

The Youth Group’s annual “Souper Bowl of Caring” fundraiser had another successful year! The event kicked off on Super Bowl Sunday with a soup potluck that raised \$563. Soup, crackers and spaghetti sauce were also collected. We thank the congregation for their very generous donations.

Bring your pillows, blankets, air mattresses, bean bags, and anything cozy to the Fellowship Hall! On March 22, after the late service, we are hosting MOVIE SUNDAY featuring “DAVID.” David is a 2025 animated biblical musical film based on the Book of Samuel. Pursued by power and driven by purpose, David’s journey tests the limits of loyalty, love, and courage, culminating in a battle not just for a crown, but for the soul of a kingdom. Everyone is invited!!! Popcorn, pizza, and drinks will be provided! Please feel free to bring other snacks to enjoy during the film.



## Signs at the Church Entrance: The Season of Lent



As March begins, the church is already fully into Lent, as Ash Wednesday was on February 18th. The theme of reflection and repentance marks the season of Lent. Throughout the 40 days of Lent, remember Jesus’ steadfast love for His children and how He willingly prepared to go to the cross to redeem each one who believes. The last Sunday in March will be Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week. When



you enter or exit the church, pause by these meaningful signs and take with you a special word or hymn title to ponder throughout the coming week.

**Board of Fellowship**  
*Kelly Thrun, Chairperson*

Our first Lenten Lunch has been a wonderful highlight of the season so far, and we owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who has provided such delicious food and warm hospitality! As we continue our journey toward Easter, we invite you to join us for a light lunch and a time of fellowship following the noon service on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>. It is a beautiful opportunity to reflect together and enjoy the company of our church family.

The celebrations will culminate on Easter Sunday with a heavy continental breakfast beginning at 9:00am. While the Church Council and the Fellowship Board will be providing several items along with coffee, tea, orange juice, and water, we invite the congregation to share a breakfast casserole (pre-cooked, please – we can warm them in the oven!), specialty breads, or muffins. A sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex. We look forward to seeing you there as we celebrate this joyous morning together!



**Mount Olive Preschool**

*Jamie Burns, 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)*

February was spent learning about God’s love for us and how we are fearfully and wonderfully made! We are hopeful for spring weather to be here soon! We are looking forward to all things “spring” and will begin learning about spring growth/changes and continue working our way through the alphabet with the help of our Zoophonics animal friends.



Registration is under way and still ongoing for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year. We currently have a few openings in the 2-year-old and 3-year-old classrooms, but they’re going fast! We are excited to begin planning for another school year and look forward to seeing how the Lord is going to work in and through the preschool during the upcoming year! So, if you know anyone who has a preschool age child and is looking for a Christian preschool, please have them contact me at [preschool@mtolivesc.org](mailto:preschool@mtolivesc.org) or (803)781-7180.

**March 2026 Lectionary**

Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalms	Epistle	Gospel
<b>March 1</b>	<b>Lent 2</b>	Genesis 12:1-9	Psalms 121	Rom. 4:1-8, 13-17	John 3:1-17
<b>March 8</b>	<b>Lent 3</b>	Exodus 17:1-7	Psalms 95:1-9	Romans 5:1-8	John 4:5-26
<b>March 15</b>	<b>Lent 4</b>	Isaiah 42:14-21	Psalms 142	Ephesians 5:8-14	John 9:1-41
<b>March 22</b>	<b>Lent 5</b>	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Psalms 130	Romans 8:1-11	John 11:1-45
<b>March 29</b>	<b>Palm Sunday</b>	Zechariah 9:9-12	Psalms 22	Philippians 2:5-11	Matthew 21:1-11

## Join a Bible Class

March 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	Pr. Walt Harper	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	Eddie Magic	
Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator.			

## Read the Bible in Three Years

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

At the end of February, we began reading II Samuel and in March, we will finish the book and move on to the two books penned by the Apostle Peter. Then lastly, we will end the month at “the beginning” in Genesis.

In II Samuel, we will study King David and his great reign. Here’s an interesting fact: There is more written in the Scriptures about David than about any other Bible person except Jesus Christ. In his books, Peter encourages the early Christians who are suffering through persecution to remain steadfast in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in living godly lives. This is the eternal hope for the people as they endure unbearable times.

During the last week of March, we read the first 6 chapters of Genesis, recounting God’s creation, the fall of mankind, and the beginning of God’s redemption through the family of Noah, the only righteous man on the earth.

### Board of Public Relations

*Shanna Stuck, Chairperson*

Thank you to those who had their directory photos taken or sent in a family picture. If you still want a new photo added, please send one to Aresa Boykin at [aresaboykin@gmail.com](mailto:aresaboykin@gmail.com) or text to 803-260-7198.



## Board of Social Ministry

*Mary Keller, Chairperson*



**The Social Ministry Board is sponsoring a Baby Shower to support Birthright of Columbia.** The agency collaborates with USC Nursing Students who opted to volunteer at the center as a part of their required first semester curriculum. The students organize, prepare, and host this massive baby shower benefiting expectant moms who need support. **The collection receptacle will be in the narthex beginning Sunday, March 15th - through Sunday, April 12th.** A comprehensive list of needs will be available on the table between the offices soon.

**Love & Support** - Services are always free and available to any woman regardless of age, race, circumstances, religion, marital status, or financial situation. When expectant moms are ready to talk, trained Birthright staff and volunteers are ready to listen. Their services are non-judgmental and **completely confidential.** **The center provides referrals for medical support, financial, legal and employment resources, housing, counselling, and more.** They also provide information about pregnancy, parenting, adoption, child safety programs, and personal development. **If you know of anyone who is desperate and confused, their National 24/7 Hotline Number is: 800-550-4900.**

**Relay for Life** – In 1985, Dr. Gordy Klatt chose to walk and run around a local track for 24 hours to raise funds for those facing cancer. From that single act of commitment, Relay for Life has grown into a global movement, bringing together passionate supporters dedicated to ending cancer, as we know it, for everyone. The key aspects of Relay for Life Event include: **Celebrating Survivors** - highlighting those who have battled cancer to inspire hope; **Remembering Loved Ones** - a Luminaria Ceremony takes place after dark to honor those lost to cancer; **Fighting Back** - raising money to fund the American Cancer Society research, patient transportation, and free lodging at Hope Lodge Facilities; and, of course, **Community Involvement.** There will be music, games, and activities surrounding the high school track. Our team, the 'Marching Saints,' has participated in several leadership meetings and is preparing for the walk scheduled for **May 1, 2026, at Lexington High School (6:00 pm-10:00pm).** There will be a display board with more details on how you can join the walk and support the 'Marching Saints' team in the weeks to come.

### March 2026 Anniversaries

3/7	James & Abigail Sharpe		3/18	Todd & Shari Selke
3/16	Al & Annette Holladay, Jr.		3/20	Laura & Brian Laprise
3/17	David & Paula Meetze			

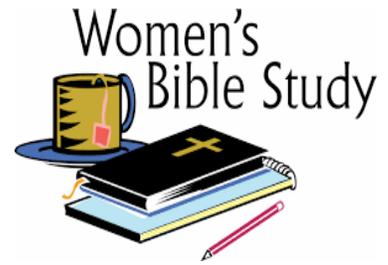
### March 2026 Birthdays

3/3	Shellie Waldrop	3/13	Pam Stuck	3/21	Norma Hessary
3/4	Angela Eustice	3/14	Charles Stuck, II	3/21	Liz Rosinski
3/6	Gerry Fletcher	3/14	John Tedder	3/21	Ryan Voyles
3/6	Stacey Robinson	3/15	Rebecca Curry	3/22	Jimmy Crosland
3/6	Myrna Rush	3/17	Amanda Dalton	3/24	Karen Meetze
3/6	Mandy Schultz	3/17	Caitlin Voyles	3/24	Nelson Thompson
3/7	Sandy Stepanovic	3/19	Sara Jones	3/27	Matthew Polkowski
3/8	Sandra Stocker			3/29	Eddie Magic

## Announcements

### **Women's Book Club**

The book club is really a Bible study. The group meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00pm in the fellowship hall. All ladies are welcome to join! The group is currently reading *God's Provision in a Wilderness World*, by Lindsay Hausch. There are 2 extra copies at church, or you can order the book from CPH.org, Amazon, or Christianbook.com. You do not need to have read the current chapter to join in. Please contact Renee Harper for more information at 203-885-6733.



### **Young Adults**

The Young Adults went ice skating on February 21st. The singles had a great time February 22nd dining at a Japanese restaurant downtown! To get connected to this group, contact Joe Harper at 203-885-8346 or by email [joseph.m.harper@outlook.com](mailto:joseph.m.harper@outlook.com).

There will be a potluck luncheon, fellowship, and planning meeting on March 15th after the second service in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a dish, dessert, or beverage to share and some ideas of fun activities to do in the next few months.

Upcoming Events:

March 15<sup>th</sup>: 12:00 Fellowship Hall - Potluck and planning meeting

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

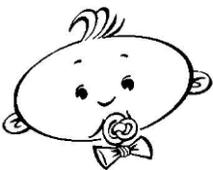
### **Secure E Giving**

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](http://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.

# Kids Korner

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ON THE ROAD TO EASTER WORD SEARCH



- |            |               |              |
|------------|---------------|--------------|
| Ash        | Holy Week     | Palm Branch  |
| Wednesday  | Holy Thursday | Forty Days   |
| Sacrifice  | Good Friday   | Jesus        |
| Almsgiving | Holy Saturday | Passover     |
| Prayer     | Easter        | Foot Washing |
| Fasting    | Palm Sunday   | Resurrection |
| Lent       | Purple        | Love         |



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

<b>Wednesdays in Lent</b> March 4, 11, 18, 25	12:00 Noon	<b>Midweek Lenten Worship</b> Light Lunch after the Noon Service	
	7:00 PM	<b>Midweek Lenten Worship</b>	
<b>Saturday</b> March 28	5:00 PM	<b>Celebrating Palm Sunday: The Sunday of the Passion Worship &amp; The Lord's Supper</b>	
<b>Sunday</b> March 29 	8:00 AM & 10:30 AM	<b>Palm Sunday: The Sunday of the Passion Worship &amp; The Lord's Supper</b>	
	9:15 AM	<b>Sunday School &amp; Bible Classes</b>	
<b>Thursday</b> Arril 2	7:00 PM		<b>Maundy Thursday Worship Service and The Lord's Supper</b>
<b>Friday</b> April 3	Noon & 7:00 PM	<b>Good Friday Tenebrae</b>	
<b>Holy Saturday</b> April 4	5:00 PM		<b>The Easter Vigil with The Lord's Supper</b>
  <b>Sunday</b> April 5t  	8:00 AM	<b>The Resurrection of Our Lord Easter Sunday</b>	
	9:00 AM Note: Families with children may come at 8:45 so they will have time to eat before the Activities.	<b>Heavy Continental Breakfast</b> Precooked Breakfast Casseroles Pastries, Bread, Muffins & Various Home Baked Goods.  Coffee, Tea & Juices Are Provided.	
	9:30 AM	<b>Resurrection Celebration, Activities, &amp; Easter Egg Hunt</b> Families will begin in the downstairs "Big Room." The egg hunt will continue outside for children through 4 <sup>th</sup> grade.	
	10:30 AM	<b>The Resurrection of Our Lord Easter Sunday</b>	