



Olive Leaves



April 2026

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From Our Pastor: A Mission Statement Takes Shape

Pastor Walt Harper

As mentioned last month, many people will ask, “Does the church really need a Mission Statement?” A partial answer to that is to notice that this year Easter falls in April. And the death and resurrection of Jesus gave the church her first Mission Statement: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing...and teaching.” (Matt. 28)

So now, our particular parish has wrestled with, thought about, and prayed over a Mission Statement. This month I thought it might be interesting to look at the road we’ve traveled.

For one thing, we looked at Mission Statements from many other churches, both LCMS and non-LCMS. Some of them were too long. Some of them were too short and vague. Some of them were short and clear and precise. At the very least it’s engaging to see what other brothers and sisters in Christ have put down on paper when they were asked to consider: “What are we up to around here, anyway?”

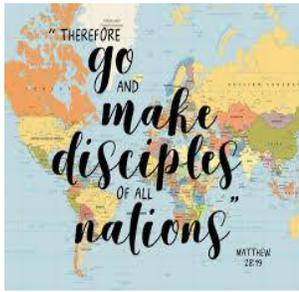
Having read all of those other Mission Statements, we then considered a list of possible Mission Statements for us. These are listed here:

- Biblical, Confessional, Liturgical
- Biblical, Confessional, Liturgical, Welcoming
- Making disciples and teaching the Word
- Fearlessly making known the mystery of the Gospel
- Love, Baptize, Teach
- Love, Witness, Baptize, Teach
- Where the Word is believed, confessed, and taught
- Teaching the unchangeable Word in changing times
- Upholding Christ as the hope of the world
- Unashamedly standing on the Word of God



All of these were discussed with these questions in mind: Is it clear? Is it memorable? Does it use “church words” that won’t be understood by the newcomer? Does it give shape to our ministry? Is it too combative? Is it so short as to be vague?

Having thought on all of those, we had a discussion about our present-day context. There was a broad feeling among us that we live in an era of rapid cultural change, much of it not God-



pleasing. There was also a very strong consensus around the idea that the Church should continue to preach and teach God’s unchanging truth. More than that, it was discussed that although many reject what the Church is teaching, there are also many others who come to our church looking for a church that stands on the truth of God’s Word.

Given all of that discussion there was a lot of sentiment for the Statement: “Teaching the unchangeable Word in changing times.” Most felt like this brought together the several things we had in mind about both our context and our purpose.

But then we continued to look at it, and some edits were proposed.

- What about adding the word “God’s” to the phrase “unchangeable Word”?
- What about switching that whole phrase to “the Word of Christ”?
- What about dropping the words “in changing times” and starting the Mission Statement with the single word “Still”?

Lengthy discussion was had on these and other suggestions. The result of which became:

“Still teaching the unchangeable Word of Christ.”

This now stands before the Voters...where we continue to discuss it. Think on this. Talk about it with loved ones. Pray on it: Where do we serve? What is our role? Even more particularly, what is our role as a parish of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod?

Pastoral Acts

	<p>Holy Baptism</p> <p>Evan Hill</p> <p>Adult Baptism</p> <p>March 14, 2026</p>	
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From Our President

James Sharpe

It’s time to celebrate the joy of Easter! It is the perfect time to reflect on the many ways our church has been blessed lately. The addition of so many new members and seeing the growing number of children in our midst brings a wonderful sense of energy and hope for our future.



This growth is made even more special by the dedicated leadership and artistry that guide our spiritual life. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our pastor and our worship team, including our choirs and organist, for their tireless work throughout the busy Lenten season. Their incredible gifts and the time they poured into our services created a beautiful space for reflection and renewal for all of us.

I am also looking forward to a very special event on April 12th as we hold our organ dedication service. This will be a wonderful opportunity to honor the music that helps define our worship and to celebrate the instrument that will serve our congregation for years to come.

With so much momentum in our church family, there is a great opportunity for others to share their own talents as well. We are still looking to fill several open board positions and would love for you to prayerfully consider joining. Many hands make light work. If you are interested in serving or want to hear more about what these roles involve, please reach out to John Meyerhoff. You don't need a fancy resume to help out. We'd just love to have you at the table as we figure out this next chapter together.

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.



This edition of the Olive Leaves has the last five descriptions for you to review to help you discern your best fit. You can read all of these descriptions on the display in the fellowship hall or scan the QR code to view the list on your phone.

Mt. Olive Board Descriptions

BOARD OF PARISH FELLOWSHIP – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS



The Board of Parish Fellowship is responsible for strengthening Christian fellowship within the congregation, both spiritually and socially. It plans, supervises, and implements larger gatherings of the congregation throughout the year including Advent and Lenten lunches, Easter breakfast, 5th Sunday potlucks, and other meals and receptions. Together with the Parish Administrator, it approves requests for the use of the church's facilities based on the policies and procedures outlined in the constitution.

BOARD OF SOCIAL MINISTRY – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS

The Board of Social Ministry is responsible for promoting and reaching out to help those in need within the congregation and in the community at large. It collects monthly donations for the local ministry, Sharing God's Love, and presents opportunities for the congregation to donate items for several area ministries throughout the year. The Christmas Giving Tree is coordinated by the Board of Social Ministry.



BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS

The Board of Stewardship is responsible for the fostering of total stewardship in the congregation including time, talents, and treasures. This includes the development of good stewardship attitudes in the congregation to ensure the financial stability of the church and its work through a developed program of dedicated, proportionate, and first fruits giving. The board has developed a Time and Talents survey to point the congregation members toward areas where they might be best suited to serve.

BOARD OF WORSHIP – AT LEAST 3 MEMBERS



The Board of Worship, with the pastor, oversees all matters pertaining to worship services. With approval of Council, it shall be responsible for contracting for services of choir director, organist, and nursery attendant. Together with the Parish Administrator, it appoints ushers and coordinates the work of the ushers, choirs, musicians, acolytes, and altar guild. At the beginning of Advent, the board coordinates the decorating, and undecorating in January, of the church sanctuary, fellowship hall, and narthex.

PRESCHOOL BOARD – 7 MEMBERS

The Preschool Board oversees all phases of the Mt. Olive Lutheran Preschool keeping the mission and philosophy in accordance with the congregation's mission and to ensure that the program is Christ-centered. The board develops policies to guide the director to ensure that the program exceeds state requirements and fulfills its purpose and goals. It works with the Board of Christian Education to coordinate activities. It conducts an annual examination of their facilities and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees for upkeep and repairs, and arranges for the cleaning of the facilities. It is responsible for the hiring of the Preschool Director and approves the hiring of teachers and assistants recommended by the Director.

Choir Director: Do you Have Musical Talent?

Renee Harper, Director

*“Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre.”
Psalm 150:3*

As the end of our season approaches, I am looking for soloists (vocal or instrumental) to help with special music throughout the summer. Contact Renee Harper, 203-885-6733 waltandree@att.net

The handbells can use one more full-time player. We will also be having a small ensemble of bell players that will be accompanied by the piano during the summer months if you would like to learn how to play bells.



Board of Worship

Liz Rosinski, Chair

“Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.” Psalm 33:3

The Worship Committee invites members and friends of Mt Olive to the Organ Dedication Service and Concert on Sunday, April 12, 2026, at 3:00 pm. In addition to the dedication, there will be music from Handel, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Price and more, plus congregational hymn singing.

Following the program, please join us in the Fellowship Hall to enjoy light refreshments and greet the musicians, guest organist Oyeniran Oyedeji and our very own Catherine Black.

Come and celebrate with us!



Board of Evangelism

Aresa Boykin, Chairperson

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home.” Luke 15:4-6a

Today, we are looking at the parable of the lost sheep from Luke 15; however, our focus is on the other sheep mentioned in the parable. The ninety-nines represent those who are already safely in the fold: secure, known, and cared for. They matter deeply to the Shepherd. They are not forgotten while He goes out and searches for the lost one. In fact, their safety allows the mission to continue. As members of the Church, many of us fall into the *ninety-nines category*. We have come to know Christ, we belong to His body, and we gather regularly with other believers. But being part of the ninety-nine is not a passive position. Jesus never intended for the flock to simply remain comfortable while the lost are left unreached and unsaved. In the Great Commission in Matthew 28, Jesus calls us to be active participants in God’s mission.

So when we pray, we pray not only for those who are far from God, but also for those who are already His. We pray for the protection of the flock from discouragement, division, false teaching, and spiritual complacency. We pray that we would stay in tune with the Lord’s will and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading. A healthy, unified, and obedient church is one that God uses powerfully to bring others into His family.

Today, focus your prayers on the ninety-nines within the Church. Pray that we would remain grounded in truth, growing in maturity, and united in love. Ask God to guard our hearts and minds and to keep us aligned with His purposes. Pray that we would not lose sight of the mission or become inward-focused, but instead embrace our role in reaching the lost. Pray that we may have the courage to live out the Great Commission.

(From *YouVersion* 2026)

Thoughts, Prayers, Calls, & Cards

“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.” 1 Thessalonians 3:12



Easter, spring, and daylight savings time are here, but for many of our homebound members who are confined to home or at a facility, there is little difference between these brighter days than any other time of year. What better way to give our spirits, as well as theirs, a boost than to pray for, send cards to, or phone these precious people. A card with a handwritten note is a thoughtful way to brighten someone’s day. Cards are so very meaningful because they can be saved and read over and over.



Remember: 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



Easter is finally here! Be sure to gather around for an Easter story and then an Easter Egg hunt at the back of the church. We hope that all the children will come out and join in on the fun.

In March, our MOVIE SUNDAY event featuring "DAVID" had 14 children in attendance. The children must've loved it because they remained quiet and attentive throughout the film. The parents enjoyed themselves, as well, and showed interest in doing this event again. Hopefully, the BOE will be able to host another MOVIE SUNDAY this year.

Planning for VBS has begun. This year's theme is from Ephesians 6:10-18 - Putting on the full armor of God. It will be on July 13-17 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Please be on the lookout for registration details and volunteer opportunities.



The Youth Group has a few events on the horizon. As a service event, we would love to have the Youth Group participate in Relay for Life on May 1. If interested, please sign up! The annual trip to Carowinds and an Escape Room are in the works. For fellowship, we hope the entire group can make these trips. Dates and details will be shared soon.

Mount Olive Preschool

Jamie Burns, Preschool Director

803-781-7180 - preschool@mtolivesc.org

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



We are so excited that spring is officially here! We enjoy learning all about spring weather, new life and growth, etc. Also, all classes have learned about Easter and are preparing for the special day of celebration! It is such an incredible blessing to be a part of teaching these precious little ones about His resurrection!

As you walk around the church, we'd love for you to walk around and take a peek at the preschool area. The students' artwork is always on display, and you can see names and work that represent over 30 families that come in and out of the church doors each week.

We still have a few spots available in our 2-year-old class and three-year-old class for the 2026-2027 school year. 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 might be interested, please have them contact me:

As always, thank you for your continued support and prayers!

Join a Bible Class

Spring 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	Barry Bost	FAQ’s from the LCMS Website

Downstairs Classrooms are accessible by stairs and elevator.

Read the Bible in Three Years – April 2026

April 2026							
Apr 1	Genesis 7	Apr 8	Genesis 14	Apr 16	Genesis 22	Apr 24	Genesis 30
Apr 2	Genesis 8	Apr 9	Genesis 15	Apr 17	Genesis 23	Apr 25	Genesis 31
Apr 3	Genesis 9	Apr 10	Genesis 16	Apr 18	Genesis 24	Apr 26	Genesis 32
Apr 4	Genesis 10	Apr 11	Genesis 17	Apr 19	Genesis 25	Apr 27	Genesis 33
Apr 5	Genesis 11	Apr 12	Genesis 18	Apr 20	Genesis 26	Apr 28	Genesis 34
Apr 6	Genesis 12	Apr 13	Genesis 19	Apr 21	Genesis 27	Apr 29	Genesis 35
Apr 7	Genesis 13	Apr 14	Genesis 20	Apr 22	Genesis 28	Apr 30	Genesis 36
		Apr 15	Genesis 21	Apr 23	Genesis 29		

During the month of April, and into May, we will continue to read through the book of Genesis.

“On its own, Genesis reads like a string of epic stories: a semi-tragic saga of a world that just keeps going wrong, despite its Creator’s intentions. But Genesis isn’t a stand-alone book. It is the first installment in the five-part *Torah*, the foundational first five books of the Old Testament. The Torah is Israel’s origin story: it is the history of how the nation of Israel got its population, its land, and its religion.” (from *Bible: The Beginner’s Guide* by Jeffrey Krantz, 2018.)

Signs at the Church Entrance: Holy Week and Easter

It’s the time of year when the church entrance signs are ever-changing for one of the most significant times of the church year: Holy Week and Easter! As you come to worship, pause and look at each sign to help you prepare for Jesus’s journey for our salvation.



Board of Social Ministry

Mary Keller, Chairperson



On Friday, May 1, at Lexington High School (6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.) Mt. Olive Lutheran will have its team, *The Marching Saints*, participate in the Relay for Life Event as we join in the Fight Against Cancer.

Cancer touches nearly every family, and as you know, the effects are felt far beyond physical illness. By coming together at events like this, we show support not only for those battling cancer but also for survivors and caregivers who inspire us with their resilience and strength. Our team leaders, Tina Dixon and Mary Keller, have participated in several leadership meetings, and are excited to have you join **Relay for Life** and walk with us, and, if you wish, contribute to support ***The Marching Saints*** team in this this worthy cause. We will be publishing more details in the weekly bulletin in the upcoming weeks!

Here is a bit more information of what the Relay for Life Movement is all about.

Core Mission & Impact: Celebrate: Honoring cancer survivors (anyone who has ever been diagnosed) and their caregivers. **Remember:** Paying tribute to loved ones lost to the disease. **Fight Back:** Raising funds for life-saving research, 24/7 patient support lines, and providing free lodging (like Hope Lodge) for those traveling for treatment.

Some of the key aspects of signature traditions during the walk are:

A Survivor Lap: The event opens with cancer survivors taking the first lap to celebrate their victory. **Caregiver Lap:** A special lap to honor those who have cared for patients. **Luminaria Ceremony:** An inspirational, nighttime ceremony where decorated bags with candles are lit to honor, remember, or support those affected by cancer. **Participant Involvement,** there will be music, games, and activities surrounding the high school track throughout the evening! There are no age barriers – ALL are welcome!

Marching Saints’ Link to Sign up to Participate or Contribute.



April 2026 Anniversaries

4/5	Chris & Denise McKinney	4/22	Scott & Hallie Randall
4/11	Robert & Debra Tesch	4/29	Joseph and Brandy Maye
4/16	Randy & Beverly McCoy		

April 2026 Birthdays

4/1	Margaret Meetze	4/9	James Lewis, Jr.	4/17	Brianna Soto
4/2	Randy Gifford	4/11	Lincoln Weed	4/20	April Fancey
4/3	Brian Laprise	4/13	Melissa Marberry	4/21	Adeline Fletcher-Carlson
4/4	Jean Carter	4/14	Katie Greer	4/25	Mike Strouse
4/5	Ann Dosen	4/15	Berney Eargle	4/27	Barbara Chesley
4/8	Emily Kearse	4/15	Tyler Laprise	4/28	Louise Meetze
4/8	Derrick Robinson	4/17	Bonnie Fancey	4/29	Travis Dalton
4/8	Mariah Robinson	4/17	Melanie Weinberger		

April 2026 Lectionary

Date	Festival	First Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
April 2	Maundy Thursday	Exodus 24:3-11	Psalm 116:12-19	Heb. 9:11-22	Matt. 26:17- 30
April 4	Holy Saturday	1 st Lesson Genesis 1:1-2:3	N/A	2 nd Lesson: Gen. 7:1-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13 3 rd Lesson: Gen.22:1-18 4 th Lesson: Isaiah 55:1-11	John 20:1-18
April 5	Easter Sunday	Acts 10:34-43	Psalm 16	Col. 3:1-4	Matt. 28:1-10
April 12	Easter 2	Acts 5:29-42	Psalm 148	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-31
April 19	Easter 3	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	Psalm 116:1- 14	1 Peter 1:17-25	Luke 24:13-35
April 26	Easter 4	Acts 2:42-47	Psalm 23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10

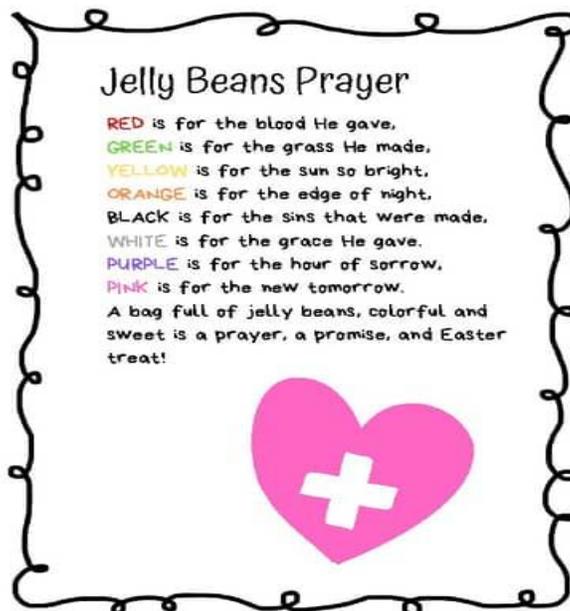
Board of Fellowship

Kelly Thrun, Co-Chairperson; Rebecca Selle, Co-Chairperson

The Fellowship Board would like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who has shared food and helped with our Lenten Lunches this year; your generosity has made these gatherings truly special. As we look forward to the joy of the Resurrection, we invite you to join us on Easter Sunday at 9:00 am for a heavy continental breakfast! We'll be enjoying a delicious spread of breakfast casseroles, pastries, fruits, and meats, along with coffee and juice.

To help make this feast a success, we invite the congregation to bring their favorite breakfast casseroles (pre-cooked) or assorted baked goods like muffins and breads. To simplify clean-up, please use a disposable tin for your casserole; you can find these in the Narthex under the Easter Breakfast sign-up sheet. We look forward to celebrating this glorious morning with you!

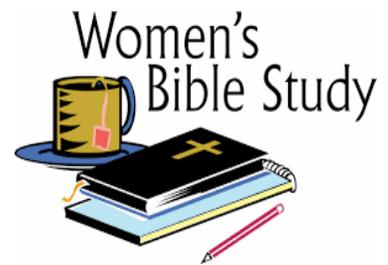
Kids Korner



Announcements

Women's Book Club

The ladies meet the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 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

The Young Adults had a potluck luncheon on March 15 and enjoyed good food and fellowship. They also went to the Riverbanks Zoo on March 21 and had a great time. To get connected to this group, contact Joe Harper at cell: 203-885-8346 or email: joseph.m.harper@outlook.com

Upcoming Events:

April 10th, Fireflies Baseball, 7:00 pm. Kid-friendly. Contact Stacy Kolb, vetkolb@hotmail.com for tickets

April 12th, Organ Dedication concert and reception, 3:00 pm church. Note: This event may not be *kid-friendly* unless they really appreciate loud music.

April 25th, Saluda Riverwalk, 650 Candi Lane, Columbia, SC. 10:00 am. All are invited. Kid-friendly.

May 31st, Pool Party, 2:00 pm Megan Weed's house, 590 Sugar Berry Road, Chapin, SC. All are invited. Kid-friendly.

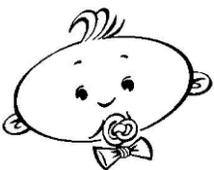
Secure E Giving

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.

Holy Week Worship and Easter Festivities

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 5 th 	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.	Heavy Continental Breakfast Precooked Breakfast Casseroles Pastries, Bread, Muffins & Various Home Baked Goods. Coffee, Tea & 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	

Christ Is Risen!
 CHRIST
 IS RISEN
 INDEED *Alleluia*