

# THE OLIVE PRESS

the quarterly newsletter of  
**Olivet Lutheran Church**

5840 Monroe Street • Sylvania, OH 43560 • [www.olivetsylvania.org](http://www.olivetsylvania.org)



A 3D rendering by Edge Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, & Planning shows what the completed US-23 overpass will look like.

## A Different Way to Worship

### Dear People of Olivet:

In the coming months, we will experience something (probably, *MANY* things) new. The Monroe Street bridge over US 23 will close **Sunday, March 8 at 8 p.m.**, until a new bridge is opened in August. For easily half of our congregation, this will require finding a new way to Olivet. (Thankfully, interchanges will remain open during *most* of construction.)

Updates on the project can be found on the Ohio Department of Transportation's website ([www.transportation.ohio.gov](http://www.transportation.ohio.gov)) using the project ID "105889". Pertinent updates will also be shared in Olivet's Weekly Word emails and/or social media pages.

Finding new pathways requires mental energy. Our brains are designed to learn patterns, so we can "operate" efficiently. However, the same capacity that allows us to get in and out of the grocery store (or online cart) with ease can also lead to hurtful biases, unhelpful patterns of behavior, or sticking out toxic relationships.

*Do you tend to welcome change or find it stressful?*

Most of us probably tolerate changes in some portions of our lives with ease. I am certain all of us have pockets of life in which change feels the most disruptive. *How might the disruption to our going to and from Olivet be an invitation to be awakened in our daily or weekly rhythms?*

[continued on next page]



## Our Vision

*Celebrating the power of the Holy Spirit by inviting all people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus.*

## MARCH - MAY 2026

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## 2026 Congregational Council

<b>President</b>	Jennifer Quackenbush
<b>Vice President</b>	Amber Espinosa
<b>Secretary</b>	Hunter Morrison
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bill Cook
<b>Financial Secretary</b>	Mike Vince

### Members

Janet Beilstein	Dave Bell
Phil Dress	Cindy Franklin
Kent Jackman	Mike Linehan
Curt Olsen	Ed Rupley
Steve Sanderson	

### Youth Member

Austin Billau

### Pastor

Rev. Melissa Micham, Lead Pastor

Might we be more attentive to what we notice in our community?  
 What businesses do you observe?  
 What schools, houses of worship, or care facilities are on your path?  
 What do you notice about any residential areas you pass on your commute?

Although I do not practice this every time I go about our community, I frequently find myself thinking of the people by whose homes I am driving (or riding my bike!). To me, this is spiritual praxis because I will speak or silently pray a blessing. I do not know where enough of our congregants live, but I bet you know the homes of your close friends. I welcome you to join me in this exercise – and even broaden it to include those households, community agencies, and businesses that you encounter on your new way to worship!

**Pastor Melissa Micham** | Lead Pastor

*P. S. If your path to Olivet remains unchanged, consider exploring a new route or two over the coming months!*

## OLIVET REWIND | DECEMBER - JANUARY



### ADVENT 2025

Olivet experienced a wonderful Advent season full of beautiful music, impactful giving to our community, and reflection on the message of Christmas. We extend gratitude to all who celebrated with us, and those who gave of their time, talents, and gifts to make this Advent a memorable one for all.

*Emily Hepner (Joseph), Addley Andrews (Mary), and Sophia Carter (baby Jesus) made a truly special Holy Family at the Family Christmas Eve service. Wyatt Dent, Waffles the service dog, and Abigail Hepner fulfilled supporting roles as visitors to the newborn King.*

## SHANNON WALKER'S RETIREMENT CELEBRATION JANUARY 11

The Christian Life Center was filled the afternoon of January 11 with numerous well-wishers gathering to celebrate the 22-year ministry of Shannon Walker, Olivet's Director of Operations. Olivet folks, members of Shannon's family, and even vendors with whom Shannon had built relationships with over the years were among those who came to see Shannon off into retirement. A note from Shannon is on page [5].



*(Left) Shannon and her husband, Skip, arrived to quite a surprise waiting in the Christian Life Center. (Right) Susan Santoro, Cynthia Fett, Janet Kish, Jan Kirk, Penny Moran, Karen Rosar, & Donna Mens posed for a tropical photo with Shannon.*



## MLK JR. CELEBRATION JANUARY 18

Glenwood Lutheran Church hosted a joyful and inspiring Martin Luther King Jr. celebration on Sunday, January 18, bringing the community together in worship, reflection, and fellowship. Janet Beilstein was on the event’s steering committee, and Olivet Lutheran Church was honored to serve as a presenting sponsor and provide desserts for the community meal that followed. Be sure to mark your calendars for next year’s celebration on January 17, 2027—this is truly an amazing experience not to be missed.

## ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 1

Although delayed a week due to winter weather, this year’s annual meeting was productive and well attended. During the meeting, we welcomed the following new members into Olivet’s community: Nan Plenzler, Amie McGee, Maggie Crockett, Cindy Buschor, Mike and Julie Navarre, Alana and John Tumbush, and Shannon and Skip Walker (associate members). Other items attended to on the agenda included discussion and voting on the 2026 annual operating budget, electing members of the council and trustees to the Garden of Peace, and voting on a revised church constitution.



*Council President Ed Rupley and Lead Pastor Melissa Micham received new members into the fold of Olivet during the annual meeting.*

## CHILIN’ ON A SUNDAE AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 1

It was a “chili” day on February 1, a “sundae” afternoon with over a dozen chili recipes to choose from and delight in. Over a hundred Olivet members gathered to enjoy heavenly sweet, zesty, meaty or vegan chili options for lunch. Rising to be best based on votes was Karen Rosar (pictured right) with her specialty blend of chili. Way to go Karen!! 2<sup>nd</sup> place was shared by Roy Glodowski and Bob Mens with their spicy chilis. Way to go gentlemen! To finish off this event, ice cream sundaes were appreciated by everyone in attendance.



# AROUND OLIVET

## FROM THE GLOBAL MISSION TEAM



### YOUNG ADULT IN GLOBAL MISSION

Reagan White, our "adopted" Young Adult in Global Mission, was very happy to receive the "care" package sent by Olivet in December. The package included many items from our Sunday School kids including handwritten cards, painted rocks, ornaments and

Reagan's favorite candies. We also included containers of mac and cheese, a prayer shawl, a knitted hat and scarf and a book written by Shannon Baker. Shannon was also a YAGM in Mexico and visited Olivet the Fall of 2024 after her year of service. Reagan sent a thank you video to Olivet, and she also wrote: "It was such a treat to open the lovely care package! Thank y'all so much for thinking of me during the holidays, and for all the goodies included in there! My host sister especially loves the mac and cheese, which we had for a midnight snack." Olivet's Body Shop class recently wrote notes to Shannon during their winter retreat that will be sent to Reagan.

Have a look at Reagan's recent newsletter for December/January by scanning the QR code below. Reagan discusses Christmas in Mexico, learning



Spanish, her Mexico host family, a "half-way" review, and her work at Casa Fuente—a migrant shelter for families. It also mentions how to donate to her ministry if you are inclined. Please keep Reagan and Shannon in your prayers.

### VOZNIUK FAMILY

*Viktor, Mariia, Ivan, & Tymofii Vozniuk arrived in the U.S. from Ukraine in July '23 to escape the Russian-Ukrainian war. Olivet continues to provide support to this family as they build a new life in America.*

Viktor Vozniuk recently received a promotion from driver to Fleet Manager at his Fedex site. Ivan won a school contest to redesign the logo for the Ottawa Hills school bands and orchestra. Besides being a good student and musician he evidently has artistic skills! Tymo received approval for a service dog from 4Paws for Ability. The service dog will be trained to assist Tymo with his unique needs (autism and cerebral palsy). This will require a large monetary outlay by the Vozniuks so they will first need to navigate that before final commitment.

### SUPPORTING OUR MISSION PARTNERS IN TANZANIA

The Global Mission Team was delighted to support two projects that directly impacted our mission partners in Lwihomelo, Tanzania and the Dodoma diocese. The congregation in Lwihomelo has outgrown their church building and is in the process of building a new structure. The walls are finished, and recently Olivet contributed \$625 for supplies to complete the roof. Pastor Emma Kinyunyu writes, "We wish you God's blessings in this New Year, and may our relationship between Lwihomelo and Olivet be one of blessings and great success from God. We are praying for our friends at Olivet."

During the summer months Olivet members and our Vacation Bible School attendees generously raised \$5,100 toward the purchase of piki piki motorbikes for evangelists in Tanzania. The Northwestern Ohio Synod was able to gift \$44,795.80 for the purchase of 40 piki pikis. These motorbikes enable our evangelists in Tanzania to travel much faster to remote villages throughout the diocese. On January 11, the bishop of the Dodoma diocese was able to bless the motorbikes at a worship service and special ceremony. Rodrick Lyimo, General Secretary of the Diocese, shared the joy of receiving this gift. He commented, "An event like this has not happened before. Sometimes we purchase two, three, or five motorbikes, but this dedication of forty piki pikis is exceptional. Because of this, the word of God will touch many people."

Please check out the photos on the next page and the Global Mission bulletin board across from the choir room for more pictures of these projects.

### DONATION TO SERBIA MISSION PARTNERS AIDS RECYCLING PROJECT

The Global Mission Team received a heartfelt thanks for a \$625 gift to the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia that is being used to implement a recycling project. Informing the congregations, the public, and especially children through ecological workshops, videos and camps has resulted in the collection of over 21 tons of plastic. This is a unique project as there is no other organized plastic collection system such as in stores, schools or public institutions as we have here in the US. Our goal of "promoting learning, action, and advocacy related to climate change" is being realized even as we support these efforts in Serbia.



*(Top) The bishop of the Dodoma diocese in Tanzania blessed 40 piki piki motorbikes. (Above) Pastor Emma Kinyunyu stands beside the new church being built for her congregation in Lwihomelo.*

## REJOICE & JUBILEE HANDBELL CHOIRS

We are looking forward to ringing outstanding numbers in the coming months, and it's such a thrill to rehearse and get our numbers to perfection.

We welcomed Nate Haase as a new member to Jubilee. He is also subbing in with Rejoice. Nate has experience in ringing and also has directed a handbell choir in the past. I would like to invite anyone who is interested in ringing to contact me. The only requirement is having some music background (some piano lessons, playing in a band, singing in a choir, etc. – so you know the basics of reading music). Jubilee has gone the entire season needing one position filled. Rejoice members have been gracious in subbing in when needed. I would be happy to meet with you and give you instruction in ringing handbells.

God bless you all with a meaningful and spiritual Lenten and Easter season. I pray our music inspires you on Sunday mornings. We are blessed at Olivet to have an abundance of musical talent and I'm VERY THANKFUL for all of you who are sharing your wonderful God given gifts with all of us.

Ring and Sing for Christ,  
**Carol Miller** Handbell Choirs Director  
 419-283-1895 | [carolamiller5@hotmail.com](mailto:carolamiller5@hotmail.com)

## A "THANK YOU" FROM SHANNON WALKER

*Olivet Director of Operations 2003-2026*

Hi friends,

A mere thank you seems so inadequate considering the vast love that I felt at the awesome retirement party attended by so many of you on Sunday January 11. I continued to be stunned by the surprise guests that kept appearing. To my sweet friends behind this all: you really pulled it off!! The fun food was amazing and Skip and I thoroughly enjoyed visiting with you all.

Our preliminary masking precautions really paid off because we remained completely healthy during our 23-day amazing trip to New Zealand and Australia. I thoroughly recommend putting that on your bucket list, especially New Zealand. It was one of the most amazing places we've ever been!

We also want to thank you for the very, very generous gift to a special restaurant. I'm told it's located in Vermilion, Ohio—a little coastal town on a waterway about an hour from Toledo called Chez François. We're told the best time to enjoy that is in the summer, so we will certainly do that thinking of you all.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon at Olivet events, occasional worship or serving in food ministries.

# UPCOMING EVENTS (www.olivetsylvania.org/calendar)

## MARCH

### SUNDAY, MARCH 1

Young Adults Connect  
12:30-2 PM | Sylvania Diner

### SATURDAY, MARCH 7 to SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Women's Retreat | Findlay, Ohio

### SUNDAY, MARCH 8 (daylight saving time)

Monroe Street bridge closes for 150 days

### THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Euchre | 7 PM | Teen Room

### SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Pi(e) Day & Play Night | time TBA  
Christian Life Center | page [7]

### THURSDAY, MARCH 19

Council meeting | 7 PM | Adult Ed Rm

### SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Easter EGGs-travaganza  
9-11 AM | Christian Life Center | page [8]

### \*SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Lenten Cantata | 10 AM | sanctuary  
page [7]

### SUNDAY, MARCH 29

**Palm Sunday** + 1<sup>st</sup> Communion Recognition

## APRIL

### THURSDAY, APRIL 2

**Maundy Thursday**  
7 PM service | sanctuary

### FRIDAY, APRIL 3

**Good Friday** | 7 PM service | sanctuary

### SUNDAY, APRIL 5

**Easter Sunday** services  
9 AM (sanctuary)  
11 AM (Christian Life Center)

### THURSDAY, APRIL 9

Euchre | 7 PM | Teen Room

### SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Earth Heroes Unite: Love Your Mother Earth  
10 AM - 2 PM | Christian Life Center  
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### SUNDAY, APRIL 12

Young Adults Connect  
12:30-2 PM | Sylvania Diner

### THURSDAY, APRIL 16

Council meeting | 7 PM | Adult Ed Rm

### SATURDAY, APRIL 25

Crafting & Scrapbooking Day  
8 AM-6 PM | Christian Life Center

## MAY

### SATURDAY, MAY 2

Quilt tying  
9-11 AM | Christian Life Center

### SUNDAY, MAY 3

Young Adults Connect  
12:30-2 PM | Sylvania Diner

### THURSDAY, MAY 14

Euchre | 7 PM | Teen Room

### SUNDAY, MAY 17

Teacher Recognition | page [8]

### THURSDAY, MAY 21

Council meeting | 7 PM | Adult Ed Rm

### SATURDAY, MAY 30

Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly  
9 AM - 6 PM | St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
Bowling Green, Ohio

### \*SUNDAY, MAY 31

Combined worship | Christian Life Center

## SAVE THE DATES

### GRADUATE RECOGNITION.

Sunday, June 7

### VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL.

Monday - Friday, June 15-19

\* denotes **one combined worship service** at 10 AM

## SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

### BEGIN MID-MAY

**Monday-Thursday** | 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

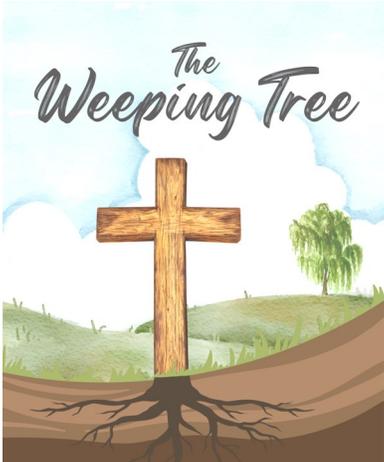
**Friday** | 8 AM - 1 PM

## PI(E) DAY & PLAY NIGHT

Saturday, March 14 | time TBA | Christian Life Center

**Pi(e) Day & Play Night** returns this year on Saturday, March 14! Bring your favorite games and grab a friend for this fun, intergenerational activity put on by the Youth & Family Support Ministry Team. Munch on pizza and dessert pie slices too as we celebrate Pi Day (3-14). A free-will offering will be taken to cover the costs of the event.

**Pi(e) Day  
& Play Night**



## THE WEEPING TREE

A CHAMBER CANTATA FOR LENT

Sunday, March 22 | 10 AM | sanctuary

**The Weeping Tree** is a poignant portrait of the cross, using beautiful hymns, thoughtful narration and sacred symbols to create a touching testament of grace for all believers. There in her crooked and twisted arms, The Weeping Tree cradled Jesus, the Hope of the world. She who was cut and fashioned by hatred and violence became a tree of life for the world. Under her graceful canopy there is comfort and beneath her towering presence there is shelter from the storm. Her arms are outstretched still. This performance is a free gift to the community.

## HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

(3/29) **PALM SUNDAY.** 9 AM (sanctuary) & 11 AM (Christian Life Center)

(4/2) **MAUNDY THURSDAY.** 7 PM | sanctuary

(4/3) **GOOD FRIDAY.** 7 PM | sanctuary

(4/5) **EASTER SUNDAY.** 9 AM (sanctuary) & 11 AM (Christian Life Center)

## EARTH HEROES UNITE: LOVE YOUR MOTHER EARTH

Saturday, April 11 | 10 AM - 2 PM  
(doors open at 9:30 AM)  
Christian Life Center

**Earth Heroes Unite** is an informative, free, interactive event for all ages. There will be a discussion panel for adults while children simultaneously enjoy activities like making a hero cape, clay seed pod and an earth friendly bird feeder. After a provided lunch, children and adults will attend 9-10 interactive stations to learn



more about "Loving our Mother Earth!" Come enjoy interacting and learning from many environmental groups from across Northwest Ohio. Register by scanning the QR code, visiting [www.olivetsylvania.org/earth-heroes](http://www.olivetsylvania.org/earth-heroes), or contacting the church office.



## YOUTH & FAMILIES

### NURSERY.

Available for children ages infant through 3 years during worship services.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL. 10:10-10:55 AM

**Spark.** Ages 3 - 2nd grade; Spark Room  
**Club 345.** Grades 3-5; Clubhouse

### TEEN BIBLE STUDY.

High schoolers in grades 8-12 are invited to join Becky for Bible study on **Sundays, March 22 & April 26**, from **12:30 to 2 PM** at the **Sylvania Diner**. Friends are welcome! Walk to the diner together with Becky at 12:15 PM or meet us there. An RSVP to Becky is helpful but not required.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### Easter EGGS-travaganza

Saturday, March 21 | 9-11 AM

Christian Life Center

*Families are invited to attend the Easter EGGS-travaganza! A light breakfast will be served, and parents can enjoy coffee while their little ones make crafts, have their faces painted, play games (and win prizes!), visit the Easter Bunny, go on an egg hunt, and hear the story of Easter. HOP to see you there!*

#### Nature Walk

Saturday, April 18 | 2-4 PM

*High schoolers in grades 8-12 are invited to celebrate Earth Day early with Becky as she guides you on a nature walk at Secor Metropark. Gaze at the towering oak forest, walk on ancient sand dunes, and spot critters. Please RSVP as transportation may be limited.*

#### Teacher Recognition

Sunday, May 17 | both worship services  
*There will be a Teacher Recognition to thank Sunday School teachers, Body Shop mentors and other instructors who have worked hard to grow the faith of our children and youth this year. If this is you, we hope you can make it so that we may recognize you! Thank you!*

#### Vacation Bible School

Monday, June 15 - Friday, June 19  
*New volunteers are welcome! Please let Becky know if you are interested.*

### BODY SHOP. 12-2 PM | Teen Room

#### Upcoming Dates:

**March 1 & 15 | April 12 & 19\***

\*Breakfast Church at Salem Lutheran  
(more details to come!)

**May 3 & 17**

### Body Shop Parents' Group

Meets monthly for lunch & conversation during Body Shop classes (12:30-2 PM)

**March 1 & April 12 at El Salto on Monroe Street**

### Scrapbooking Fundraiser

Saturday, April 25 | 8 AM - 6 PM

Funds raised will go toward next year's winter retreat. Watch your email for details.



### WINTER RETREAT RECAP

Sixteen youth delighted in a full weekend at YMCA Storer Camps in Jackson, Michigan February 6-8. Alongside adult leaders, youth practiced new forms of prayer and Bible study. We explored Confession and Forgiveness and the Lord's Supper (AKA, Holy Communion), for which Amy Dixon baked homemade bread.

Becky and Pastor Melissa are grateful for the adults who came to camp this year: Hunter Morrison, Sasha Franklin, and Amy Dixon, along with a visit from Steve Sanderson, to share about the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission. We appreciate our additional drivers: Bob & Donna Mens, Ben Hobbs, and Katie Fields.

Becky Cress and Pastor Melissa are actively seeking adult male mentors to support our Body Shop (confirmation) youth in their faith formation both during the school year and for our yearly jaunt up north (typically, early FEB).

If you'd like to learn more about one or both of these opportunities to walk alongside our young people and be inspired in your own faith journey, talk to Becky or Pastor Melissa today!

## MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT

### Property Team



Have you ever been at Olivet and wondered how the gardens stay weeded, or the walls become freshened with a new coat of paint? These tasks, and many more, are taken on by a dedicated group of volunteers on Olivet's Property Team.

The **Property Team** helps to maintain a beautiful, welcoming, and well-directed facility where people can feel at home in worship. Handyman, mechanical, and landscaping work are all areas the Property Team assist with. Repairing, painting, weeding, planting, installing, trimming—there is no shortage of tasks the Property Team takes on.

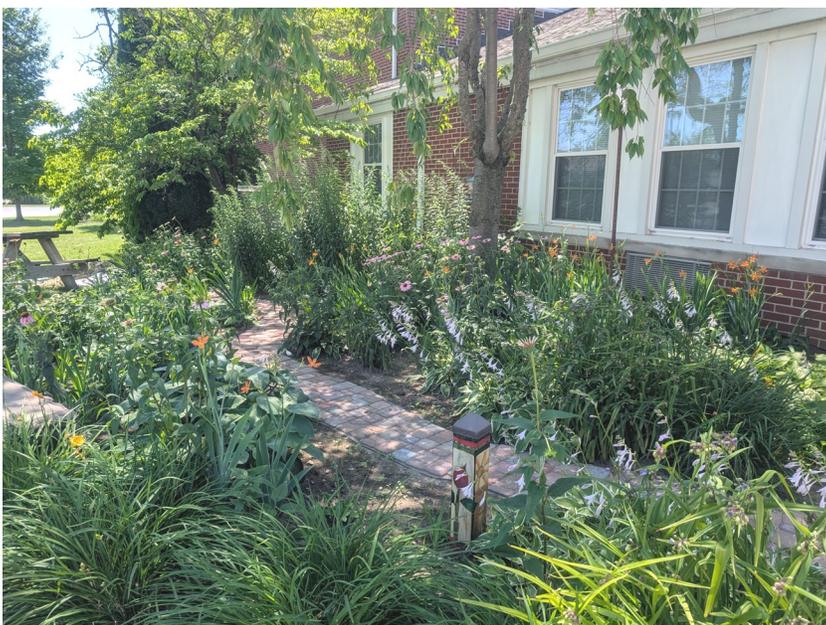
In the last seven years, the team has painted all of the woodwork in the common areas, Teen Room, Adult Ed Room, the hallway between these rooms, all of the 20 or so exterior doors, the door from the Welcome Center to the sanctuary, the doors and windows in the atrium, and repaired chipped paint in the sanctuary and elsewhere. The team painted the staff bathroom and assisted John Casper, Olivet's former custodian, with the painting of the two bathrooms by the food pantry. All of the gardens have been refreshed, eliminating some minor ones which were irretrievably overgrown while refreshing plantings in the major gardens. Netting has been installed on the railing by the bell garden to deter debris from settling at the bottom of the steps. A step was built for the sanctuary door that faces the laundromat. A full list of accomplishments by the Property Team is available each year in

*Beautifying the grounds is one of many areas the Property Team assists with. (Pictured: Lana Heintz, Bob Mens, Shannon Walker, Mike Linehan, Mike Cook, & Deb Shock.)*

Olivet's annual report.

Every project, big and small, plays a part in creating an environment at Olivet that is warm and welcoming. Tina Johnson, Property Team lead, shared, "Our building and grounds are old. Attention to our property extends its useful life and enhances our space." Attention to detail in our gardens, worship spaces, education rooms, and common areas contribute to an overall message that lets visitors know Olivet is a place that's cared for—and worth caring about.

Ready to put your hands to work? Look for forthcoming details on a spring garden cleanup day. New volunteers are always welcome. If you can hold a paintbrush or a garden tool, you are the ideal person for the Property Team! Contact Tina Johnson ([marktinajohn@gmail.com](mailto:marktinajohn@gmail.com)) to get involved.



*The perennial garden, in memory of Luann Canham Kornowa, is just outside the church office and features a beautiful new stone path thanks to the dedication of wonderful volunteers.*



*Duane Abbott, Cherie Bischoff, & Joyce Rupley served on the painting crew that helped spruce up the associate pastor's office in 2024.*

## MINISTER SPOTLIGHT

*Ministers are everyone who responds to God's call to care for God's people and creation.*

### Get to Know Olivet's Property Team

Below is an opportunity to get to know some of the "ministers" on Olivet's Property Team, hear about why the work they do matters, and how maintaining our building and grounds has had a personal impact on them.

**Tina Johnson.** I started with the Property Team in 2019. The white cabinets at the Coffee Bar in the Welcome Center highlighted the dinginess of the baseboards immediately adjacent, which I then felt called to paint. Shortly thereafter, the pandemic struck, giving me lots of time to paint both alone and with friends that I recruited. The most meaningful project was the rehabbing of the office formerly occupied by Pastor Nate [see page 9]. After he moved out, I got a good look at the office and was shocked that we let him work in those conditions. We hope the results of our labors will be appreciated by the next associate pastor. The best part about volunteering for the Property Team is the sense of camaraderie and fun that permeates our work days. I am continually impressed by my fellow workers—their character, personalities, and work ethic.



*Volunteers Bob Mens, Max Hoetzi, Deb Shock, Gary Crane, Tina Johnson, Bobbie Crane, Cathy Sanderson, and Jerry Dunaway helped spruce up the grounds during last year's spring work day.*

**Bob Mens.** I've been involved with the Property Team on and off since the 90's. Whenever asked, I'm happy that I'm involved. The projects are all enjoyable: painting, whether in and/or out, cleaning, yard work, or carpentry in the attic. Our sacred space of Olivet continues to be welcoming to all just as it always has. The building and grounds are only one component of many that say you're welcome here, come in and see. Our work blesses the others.

**Duane Abbott.** The COVID-19 pandemic, accompanied with retirement, started me on my involvement with the Property Team. We took advantage of an empty building and were able to spruce things up a bit. I like to fix things which include painting and plaster repair. Two memorable projects include repairing the plaster and then painting the walls in the sanctuary and the ceilings in the boys' and girls' bathrooms. Volunteering helps me feel I'm part of the Olivet community.

**Mike Cook.** I have been volunteering at Olivet with the Property Team since before COVID. Painting, groundskeeping, and special projects all have been important to me. Mounting the TV monitors around the building to help inform the congregation and keeping the place looking sharp has been a team effort. Volunteer work helps to meet people, interaction brings familiarity, and that builds relations.

**Gary Crane.** My wife, Bobbie, and I moved back to the Toledo area in 2020 after living in northern Michigan for 26 years. We were getting older and didn't want to get involved with church activities as we had been up north. We joined Olivet thinking we could just go to church on Sunday and not do much more. Well, then I complained about the looks of the bell [outside the church office entrance] which started a big conversation about color and I volunteered to scrub, prime and paint it red. From there we took over care of the rose garden. Then came a series of small repair projects. One of the projects was painting the doors next to the rear entrance and as I was painting, 20-30 people came in or out of the church next to where I was working and they all stopped and thanked me. I was quite taken with this. Volunteering has given us the feeling of belonging to a family of very nice people.



*Olivet's bell before & after restoration. It was salvaged from Olivet's original building, formerly located at the corner of Whiteford & Alexis Roads from 1916 to 1956.*

**Deb Shock.** Though I am not on the committee proper, I have been tending to a few of the gardens on the church property for several years. Then I started helping with painting and working on yard clean up days, and have been involved in those ways for 3-4 years now. My most memorable project is helping lay the path through the perennial garden behind the office [see page 9]. I enjoy volunteering at church in several ways because of the people I get to work with in a fun atmosphere. I am a strong believer that many hands make light work. I like seeing a project through and appreciating the end result.



### **OLIVET'S GARDEN OF PEACE IN WINTER** | article & photo by John Holshoe

Olivet's lovely Garden of Peace is open year-round, offering a serene location for remembering our loved ones, as well as providing a quiet place for prayer, meditation or restful contemplation. Winter finds the garden dressed in seasonal white, slumbering while awaiting the flowers of spring and the vibrant, green foliage of summer.

2026 starts with two new trustees on the board that oversees the garden: Carol Leupp and Cathy Sanderson. Along with Donna Mens, Mike Linehan, Deb Shock and John Holshoe, they now share the privilege of managing this important ministry for our Olivet family. If you have any questions about the garden, including interment there—or would like to volunteer during the summer months as a “Garden Angel” (helping with the care of this special place), please contact any of the board trustees or the church office.

### **MULTIFAITH COALITION TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE**

Olivet is one of two organizing churches for the Multifaith Coalition to Reduce Gun Violence, a partnership of more than 30 congregations across Northwest Ohio.

Over the past year, the Coalition has been studying how to host a “Guns to Gardens” or similar event in the Toledo area. As a result of that work, plans are now underway for an Unwanted Firearms Disposal Event to be held in June during Gun Violence Awareness Month.

The event will take place on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at Monroe Street United Methodist Church. Volunteers and financial contributions will be needed to help ensure the success of this important community effort.

An informational session about the event will be held in the atrium between services on April 19. Please watch for additional details and reminders in future Olivet publications.



### **URBAN WHOLISTICS FARMS**

Plans are underway to expand Olivet's partnership with Urban Wholistics Farms in 2026, building on a shared commitment to community, sustainability, and opportunity. Olivet will continue to provide meaningful financial support for Sonia's summer youth program and is planning two to three volunteer workdays this summer to tackle major farm projects, including wheelchair ramp construction and hoop house expansion. Looking ahead, Olivet will also host the Urban Wholistics Farms Golden Hour Gala in the Christian Life Center on October 17, 2026.

### **ACCESSIBILITY TEAM**

Join the Accessibility Team to help to make Olivet a welcome place for all! Upcoming meetings are Mondays, March 2 and April 20 at 7 PM in the Teen Room. See you there!

# FAITH FORMATION

## YOUTH

See **Youth & Families** on **page 8** for youth faith formation opportunities.

## ADULTS

**SUNDAY SCHOOL.** 10:10 AM in the Teen Room. Led by Mike Moore using the Upper Room devotional (available freely at each entrance).

**FAMILIES. TUESDAY TABLE TALKS: FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING**

second Tuesday of the month | 6-8 PM | light meal provided

Registration required. Childcare available. Call the church office or visit [www.olivetsylvania.org/ttt](http://www.olivetsylvania.org/ttt) to sign up.

**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY.** Mondays at 9:30 AM | Teen Room

**MEN. GUYS 'N GOSPEL.** Tuesdays 7-8 AM | Panera on Central Ave.

**ADULTS. WORD & WONDER.** Wednesdays 6-7 PM | Weber Chapel

### 2026 MEN'S RETREAT

Plans are underway for a one-day summer retreat for the men of Olivet.

**When:** Wednesday, June 24, 2026

**Where:** Linehan cottage, Pine Hill Lake, Horton, Michigan (~75 minutes from Olivet)

**Theme:** *Passing It On – God's Work in the Second Half of Life* invites men to reflect on how God continues to call, shape, and use them in this season. Through conversation, we'll explore legacy, faithfulness, and the quiet ways God's work continues through us and beyond us.

**Agenda:** Morning – 18 holes of golf at the nearby course (non-golfers join for lunch at club house)

Afternoon – *Passing It On: God's Work in the Second Half of Life* discussion on the lake

Evening – Group cookout

Look for more details in upcoming publications or contact Mike Linehan at 614-595-6666 or [mline926@gmail.com](mailto:mline926@gmail.com).



### NEW IN THE JEDI LIBRARY [located in the atrium] | by Cynthia Fett

**The Positive Dog.** There's a new little book in the JEDI library that packs a mighty punch for anyone who could use a dose of positivity in their life. **The Positive Dog** by **Jon Gordon** reads almost like a children's book, a simple story that could result in a major attitude adjustment in your outlook on life. It was recommended to me by a psychologist friend of mine (she keeps a copy by her bed for those nights when she wakes up stressing about the pressures of life in these troubling times). If you or someone you love could use a little help to see the bright side of life, check it out today! It's great for both youth and adults.

Books may be signed out from the JEDI Library for up to one month, but please return as soon as you are finished reading them so others may enjoy them.

# HISTORY OF OLIVET PART 5

by **Tyler Martin** in collaboration with the research of Bob Mens

*In Part 4, we explored some recent history before the new millennium. Now, in the fifth and last installment of this series, we will explore the most recent history at the turn of the millennium until the present.*

In 2002, Olivet formed a new committee called the “Master Planning Committee.” The plan was to expand the church once again, to have a space for community meals and a new worship service that the congregation felt was very needed. This is where “The Vine” was born. However, by the end of 2002, the service was unable to come to fruition due to lack of band members and lack of funding. The original plan was to rebuild the sanctuary to be a multi-worship space, and allow the purchase of a pipe organ. With estimates of \$4.5M, this option failed to gain traction.

Also in 2002, a new position was created for a Director of Operations. Running a church the size of Olivet is no easy feat. Two different people attempted this position before Shannon Walker was officially hired in the fall of 2003. Shannon would serve in this position for over 22 years before retiring in early 2026. Amie McGee was then hired in late 2025 to take over this position and trained for 6 weeks side-by-side with Shannon.

On September 14, 2003, a brand new worship service called “The Vine at 9:49” started at Olivet in Fellowship Hall with around 50 people attending. This was in addition to traditional services at 9 AM and 11 AM each morning in the sanctuary, and a Wednesday evening service. By January 2004, attendance had grown to around 100; the space was reaching max capacity, and the Vine service needed a new place to call home.

In March of 2004, the new Master Building Plan was approved by the congregation. The idea was to build the Christian Life Center (CLC) and redesign Fellowship Hall. This plan came with a price tag of \$2.1M, and on June 27, 2004, a vote by the congregation approved the plan and had over \$1M pledged by members. A groundbreaking ceremony occurred April 10, 2005, and construction was completed in November that same year. The Vine service had a new home, and a new ministry called Daily Bread was started on September 9, 2009 to provide the community with a free weekly meal.

A newly formed committee, the Garden of Peace Committee, met for over 3 years to design and plan out what is now known as the William and Martha Cox Garden of Peace. This quiet place for prayer and reflection also has become the final resting place for multiple members of Olivet. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 8, 2007, and the garden was dedicated in November that same year. Two mosaics were created for the Garden and were designed by former Olivet member Svetlana Ottney.

In late 2008, Pastor Darrell Cousino submitted his resignation and Pastor Ed Strietelmeier was called in the fall of 2009 as associate pastor. Fast forward to Spring of 2013, Pastor Ed resigned as associate pastor to take a new call. Jennifer Vasquez (Director of Faith Formation) also resigned around this time. Donna Mens was hired as a “temporary” replacement, but ended up serving in this position until November 30, 2021. Rebecca Cress was then hired in early 2022 and serves to this day.

On April 27, 2014, Olivet celebrated its 100-year anniversary. A time capsule was supposed to be opened, but to everyone’s shock, it turned out to be empty! A new song called “An Olivet Century,” written by Olivet member John Holshoe, was performed to commemorate the occasion.

Pastor Nathan Tuff was called as associate pastor on June 1, 2014. Pastor Timm resigned in the summer of 2015, being Olivet’s longest serving pastor with a tenure of over 20 years! Pastor Nate would serve as interim pastor until officially being called as lead pastor on March 13, 2016, and was installed the following month on April 17. Pastor Melissa Micham was called and installed as associate pastor on November 20, 2016. This dynamic duo would serve together until Pastor Nate retired in early 2024. As one of his last acts as pastor, Pastor Nate was able to “burn the mortgage” of the CLC thanks to an extremely generous donation by Harold and Carol Leupp at the end of 2023.

Pastor Robyn Provis was brought on to serve as interim lead pastor in May 2024. Together, Pastor Robyn and Pastor Melissa, along with a newly formed Transition Team, began the work of navigating Olivet through this period of transition and reflection on Olivet’s identity as a congregation. After the Transition Team completed its work, a Call Committee was formed to find Olivet’s next lead pastor. Pastor Melissa submitted her name for consideration, and was installed as lead pastor on September 9, 2025.

To paraphrase Henry Ford, “the only history that is worth anything is the history that we make today.” It is easy to forget that the decisions and changes that we make today will go down in Olivet’s history, and may end up in an article like this. Olivet is an incredible place that many of us call home. With help from you, we can continue doing God’s work for many years to come.



*The Christian Life Center at various stages of construction.*



# PRAYERS & PASTORAL ACTS

## WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

**For those hospitalized or anticipating tests/procedures:**

**For those grieving:** Amie McGee at the passing of her brother, Andrew Matthews (2/20); Gary Blakeman and family at the passing of his wife, Beverly Blakeman (2/19); Jane Willis at the passing of her husband, Bill (1/29); Barb Myers at the passing of her husband, Dean (1/24).

**For members who have requested prayers because of illness or recovery from injury or surgery:** Wesley Frazier, Janelle Reynolds, Chuck Cook, Larry Sass, Bill Hamilton, Kaye Weiner, Tina Yoppolo, Dave Bell, Ida Christiansen, Janet Overmyer, Bruce Quatman, Bob Sheets, Martha Kupsky, Kelly Cipiti, Steve Hodge, Mary Glover, Brian Hart, David Tucker, Jim Rentner, Eric Adams, Pastor Nate Tuff & Kim Nielsen.

**For those in assisted living, extended care, or rehabilitation:** Naomi Loose and Patty Cross at Otterbein Sunset Village; Doris Fry and Arlene Holtfreter at Oakleaf Village; Fred Heintz at The Waterford at Levis Commons; Billie Iles at Mill Manor, Vermillion, OH; Mae Kyser at Genacross, Wolf Creek Campus; Marjorie Lay at The Lakes of Sylvania; Matthew Wesley at Northwest Ohio Developmental Center.

**For members at home in our care:** Marge Warnock, Bonnie Ahrendt, Joyce Barger, Mary Carl, Hilda Hawk, Betty Moore, Marcia Morrison, Marv Stephenson.

**Family and friends for whom prayers have been requested:** Sherry Doepker, Andrew Sommers, Lenny Rosinski, Donnie Reck, Tom Evans, Tina, John Plenzler, Dave Burkhardt, Barb & Bob W., Sara & Chris, Jan Kistner, Spencer, Mason DiLorenzo, Erna Pomrenke, Ukrainian people & leaders, Rita & Larry Kerstiens, Scott Reynolds, Heather Taberner, Garrett.

**For those in the military:** Christopher Adams, Kurt Budde, Tanner Eggers, Jarrod Konz, Jeremy Reynolds, Sarah Reynolds, Michaela Reynolds.

**For our bishops:** Northwestern Ohio Synod Bishop Daniel Beaudoin, ELCA Bishop Yehiel Curry, ELCA Secretary Lucille "CeCee" Mills.

**For Olive's local mission partners and international missionaries:** Redeemer Lutheran Church; Salem Lutheran Church; Rev. Dr. David (and Alicia) Brondos of Augsburg Theological Seminary in Mexico City.

**For Olive's companion churches:** Dodoma Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania & our companion congregation, Lwihomelo; Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Vojvodina, Serbia; Iglesia Luterana Mexicana (Mexican Lutheran Church).

### PASTORAL ACTS | DECEMBER - FEBRUARY

#### Funerals:

Jaime Wernet (12/13)  
Ed Betz (12/19)  
Brad Kupsky (12/29)  
Bill Willis (2/7)  
Dean Myers (2/21)  
Beverly Blakeman (2/26)

#### Baptisms:

Dean & John Tumbush (2/15)

### PASTORAL CARE REQUESTS

For **pastoral care requests**, please contact the church office at 419-882-2077. For **pastoral emergencies**, please refer to the voicemail message. We love and care for all our members, so call and let us know your needs.

*Help us keep our prayer list up to date by contacting the church office with names to add and remove as appropriate. Updates may be sent to [membership@olivetsylvania.org](mailto:membership@olivetsylvania.org).*

# GIVING

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

### AMY JO MCKMACKEN O'BRIEN

*Darla Culberson*

### BRAD KUPSKY

*Judy Helm  
Charles Kaiser, Jr.  
Gail Anderson  
Dr. Robert Hartwig  
Douglas & Karen Stone  
Masu & William Sweeney  
Carol Leupp  
Susan Santoro  
John & Sandy Husman  
Gene & Mary Jo Hardy  
Mike & Laura Dzyak  
Casey & Sarah Nowicki  
Glenna Flick  
Dennis & Linda Pawlecki  
John & Judith Maxey  
Darla Culberson  
Warren & Noreen Wright  
Hilda Hawk  
Doug & Helene Lyon  
John & Gwynne Beneke  
David & Carolyn Yenrick*

### WILLIAM "BILL" WILLIS

*James & Mary Valiton  
David Hoover  
John & Sandy Husman  
Dave & JoAnn Bell  
Constance Bostleman  
John & Mary Ellen Wines  
Carol Leupp  
Warren & Noreen Wright  
Doug & Helene Lyons  
Darla Culberson*

### DEAN MYERS

*Hilda Hawk  
Glenna Flick  
Joan Williams  
Doug & Helene Lyons*

## NUMBERS TELL STORIES

by Pastor Melissa Micham

At Olivet, the most common annual giving range—for at least the past twenty years—has been \$1,000 - \$2,999. In 2025, the average annual gift of contributing member households was \$2,741.

An educated guess (based on household income data for Sylvania and Lucas County, not adjusted for age) suggests these contributions account for 2-3% of annual household income.

To me, this demonstrates two realities:

1. folks who give at this level are making a deliberate effort to include Olivet in their charitable giving.
2. these households may represent those among whom we have the greatest capacity to support a second, full-time minister and our ongoing ministries at Olivet.

If each household in this giving range raised their annual contribution to Olivet by 1% of their annual income (approximately \$500), we could secure \$50,000 to offset roughly half the salary and benefits of a newly called pastor.

If your household contributes \$1,000-\$2,999 annually, thank you!! Please consider this as an invitation to prayerfully and courageously step more fully into God's future for Olivet.

In 2025, our cohorts of 18-29-year-old and 30-39-year-old members were the only age groups to increase their collective giving over 2024. Way to go, young adults!!

Contributors at every level matter. We've got this, Olivet!!

*But where are you, Pastor Melissa, you might ask?* Marvin and I fit into two peculiar categories: I am in a profession in which I contribute to my own salary (the plain fact of the matter), and Marvin and I have a dual-income household that is not caregiving another generation.

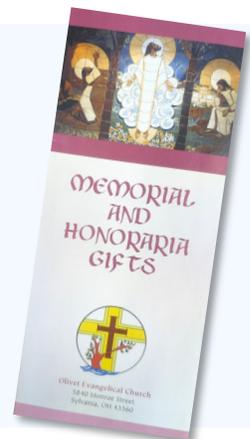
In 2025, Marvin and I were privileged to be among a dozen households who contributed to Olivet at the highest level (over \$10,000). May God grant us the continued diligence and faith to do so.

## LEARN ABOUT MEMORIAL & HONORARIA GIFTS

A gift to Olivet's Memorial and Honoraria Fund is a way to perpetuate the memory of a loved one or honor someone in your life through a contribution that supports the ministries of Olivet Lutheran Church.

Informational brochures about memorial and honoraria gifts to Olivet can be found in the lobbies outside both worship spaces. For further information, call

**Amie McGee, Director of Operations**, at 419-882-2077 or email [operations@olivetsylvania.org](mailto:operations@olivetsylvania.org).





## Olivet Lutheran Church

5840 Monroe Street  
Sylvania, OH 43560

### Church Office Hours

419-882-2077

Mon-Thu | 8 AM - 4:30 PM  
Fri | 8 AM - 1 PM

### Email

churchoffice@olivetsylvania.org

### Website

www.olivetsylvania.org

### Lead Pastor

Melissa Micham

pastormelissa@olivetsylvania.org

### Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries

Becky Cress

rcress@olivetsylvania.org

### Director of Operations

Amie McGee

operations@olivetsylvania.org

### Membership + Ministry

#### Coordinator

Jill Hepner

membership@olivetsylvania.org

### Communications Specialist

Sara Martin

communications@olivetsylvania.org

### Sunday Worship

#### 9:00 AM—Traditional

Liturgy, hymns and music by a select group of gifted musicians. Meets in the sanctuary.

#### 11:00 AM—Contemporary

The Vine casual service with music by The Vine Praise Band. Meets in the Christian Life Center.

Both services live streamed:  
www.olivetsylvania.org

#### Sunday School—10:10 AM

Adults | Children (ages 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade)

# Holy Week Services

**PALM SUNDAY** | March 29

**9 AM** sanctuary

**11 AM** Christian Life Center

**MAUNDY THURSDAY** | April 2

**7 PM** sanctuary

**GOOD FRIDAY** | April 3

**7 PM** sanctuary

**EASTER SUNDAY** | April 5

**9 AM** sanctuary

**11 AM** Christian Life Center

## UPCOMING COMBINED WORSHIP AT 10 AM

**March 22** | sanctuary

**May 31** | Christian Life Center

[see **page 6** for full spring worship schedule]

## DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

**March 8** | spring forward 1 hour!



### Stay connected!

Sign up to receive weekly devotional + announcement emails right to your inbox. Scan the QR code or call the church office to get started!