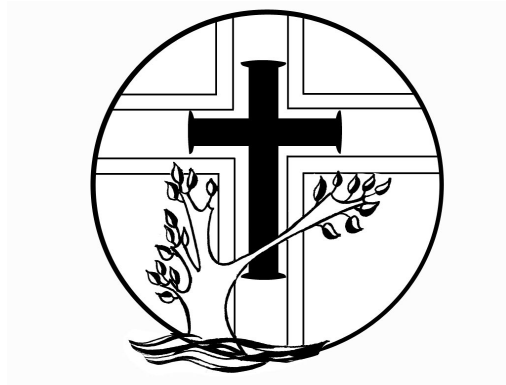




Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church
5840 Monroe Street
Sylvania, Ohio
www.olivetsylvania.org

Our Vision

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

Our Three-Fold Mission

Create a safer place for growing, learning, listening and loving
Address social issues by focused engagement in community partnerships
Make direct connections for learning, mutual support
and relief with people around the world

Agenda
112th Annual Congregational Meeting
Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sylvania, Ohio
January 25, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.

2023-2025 Mission Goals:

Congregational Mission Goals

1. Foster an intentional culture of inclusion, support and advocacy for under-represented persons.
2. Address societal fragmentation by creating safe spaces for people of all ages to connect and reconnect with each other.
3. Encourage and provide opportunities for children and youth participation in worship.

Community Mission Goals

1. Surround 15-20-year-olds in the Sylvania Community with practical and spiritual support to nurture wellbeing and provide safety.
2. Enhance our partnership with Urban Wholistics to foster meaningful youth engagement, racial equity and food security.
3. Address gun violence through advocacy in our communities, across Ohio, and at the federal level.

Global Mission Goals

1. Support existing ministries with more frequent direct communication with global partners, including the ELCA's Good Gifts program.
2. Strengthen relationships with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (now Global Refuge), Lutheran World Relief, and locally based refugee and asylum seeker efforts through US Together.
3. Promote learning, action, and advocacy related to global climate change.

Video

Call to Order - Ed Rupley

Opening Prayer

Secretary's Report - Minutes of 2025 Annual Meeting **Page 3**

Financial Secretary's Report - Mike Vince **F-1**

Treasurer's Report (2025) - Bill Cook **F-2 thru F-4**

Budget Proposal (2026) - Justin Black, Finance Team Chair **F-5 thru F-7**

Ballot Vote on Budget, Candidates/Trustees, & Constitution

Council Candidates 2026

Beginning Second Term: Janet Beilstein

First Term: Hunter Morrison, Curt Olsen, Phil Dress

Garden of Peace Trustee(s): Carol Leupp & Cathy Sanderson

Synod Assembly Delegates (May 30 at St. Mark's in Bowling Green, 9 AM - 6 PM)

Announcements - Pr. Melissa

Adjournment - Ed Rupley

MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL MEETING
OLIVET EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SYLVANIA, OHIO
January 26, 2025

Council President Ed Rupley called the meeting to order at 10:26 am. A quorum (55) was met with 152 voting members in attendance.

Opening Prayer offered by Pastor Robyn Provis along with a video sharing activities and outreach done by the congregation members during 2024.

Prior meeting minutes: No comments or corrections were raised. A motion to accept the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes as written was made by John Borton, second by Bill Hamilton. Voice vote unanimously accepted.

Financial Secretary Report (Mike Vince): Income for operations and expenses were presented. The result of income for the year was an increase of \$23,000 over 2023. Mike pointed out that through most of 2024 the income was below budget. December receipts were over \$110,000 to achieve final results of being over budget. Mike thanked Barry Shaner for his service as Treasurer for 18 years. A motion to approve the financial report as presented by Stan Machosky, second by Dave Hupp. Unanimously approved.

2024 Treasurer's Report (Barry Shaner): Barry walked through the financial statements. The operating results were slightly below or at budget. Question from Barb Myers on why pastor salaries are not broken out as historically presented. Fred Sandmann followed up with a question regarding differences between 2024 actual, 2024 budget and 2025 budget. Raiden Browning asked a question on the 2025 budget income and whether Olivet is expecting to receive the increase proposed. Steve Hodge asked to explain how best to donate to memorial funds. Mike Vince responded. Tina Johnson asked about 2025 budget for the makeup of expenses for pastors. Justin Black responded on how the finance committee budgeted for 2nd full time pastor plus 4 months for Pastor Robyn as transition pastor. Stefan Pomrenke asked another question regarding 2 full time pastor salaries. Barry responded that salaries were calculated using Synod guidelines which don't differentiate between male/female. Motion by Inger Benson & second by John Borton to accept Treasurers report as presented. Unanimously accepted by voice vote.

2025 Budget proposal (Justin Black): 4% increase in actual giving of 2024. Over the last 7 years, there have been approved budgets that were as high as \$760,000. Staffing needs in 2025 is uncertain, but is based on assumptions with Synod guidelines. Other expenses for building & missionary are consistent but has inflation that was experienced. Question by Mike Cook regarding the 2024 mortgage payoff. That was 10% of overall budget. Tina Johnson pointed out building property maintenance. Tina thanked Shannon for organizing the painting of the pillars. Tina shared concern around drainage around the building. Bob Mens provided some additional context and shared we aren't sure of the exact problem. Justin indicated budget is based on known, reoccurring costs. Shannon pointed the congregation to page 20 & 21 of the report to see 2024 property team reports. Justin thanked the finance team for their service & diligence and put out a call for joining the finance committee. Full budget as presented is on the ballot.

Other ballot items (Ed Rupley): Stephanie Banister & Mandy Tetreau were thanked for their 6 years on council. Manzetta Jackson was thanked for her 3 years on council. Presentation of individuals on ballot occurred.

Council second term: Ed Rupley

Council first term: Jennifer Quackenbush, Mike Linehan, Amber Espinosa

Garden of Pease first term: Deb Shock

Announcements – (Pastor Melissa & Pastor Robyn)

Barry Shaner has been the church Treasurer for 18 years. Ed & Pastor Melissa shared thoughts & congregation stood for recognition. A gift was presented. Bill Cook is introduced as new Treasurer. Melissa shared other announcements: changes coming to Olivet communications; February has accessibility team presentation on disability awareness (3 week course). There is an upcoming young adult budgeting class. Pastor Melissa requested updated contact information from congregation. This information will be put into an updated printed directory. Pastor Melissa offered prayer and Godspeed to Manzetta Jackson who is moving to Cleveland. The Synod has responded to California fires through Lutheran World Relief. Ed shared an update on the Call Committee. Judy Gonia leading with Raiden Browning as co-chair.

Results of the voting:

143 affirmative votes to approve the 2025 Budget as presented, 1 no vote – Budget accepted by the congregation. No vote expressed disappointment in lack of clarity in full pastor compensation in the budget.

All on ballot for council & garden of peace approved.

Adjournment (Ed Rupley) Mike Cook made a motion to adjourn, Dave Hupp second. The congregational meeting adjourned at 11:39 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Tetreau, *Church Council Secretary*

MINUTES OF THE 2025 SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

August 17, 2025

Purpose: To vote on the recommendation presented by Church Council to extend a Call to Pastor Melissa Micham to be the Lead Pastor – Congregational Life at Olivet Lutheran Church and a corresponding compensation package.

The meeting will follow Robert's Rules of Order.

Motion to open the meeting. Warren Wright motion, John Gonia second. Meeting began at 10:13 am.

Opening Prayer. Ed Rupley, President of Church Council, offered a prayer.

Motion to extend a call.

- Introduction of Tom Ritter from the NW Ohio Synod office.
- Call Committee came forward. Judy Gonia, Co-Lead of the Call Committee, spoke to the reasons for recommending Pastor Melissa for the position.
- Ed opened the floor for discussion & questions. None were raised.
- Motion to call Pastor Melissa Micham as Lead Pastor – Congregational Life of Olivet Lutheran Church.
 - Penny Moran motion, Susan Santoro second.
 - Voting members asked to place vote on ballots passed out. Barry Shaner & Chrisann Shaner collected votes.
 - Barry Shaner, John Gonia & Tom Ritter were vote-counters in a separate space outside the Sanctuary.

Announcements while votes were being counted.

- Ed relayed request from Sara Martin, Communications Specialist, for photos of "Olivet in Action" for upcoming communications, including a website update.
- Ed also shared that September 7th will be Olivet's fall homecoming (formerly known as Rally Day). Tapped 419 will be on-site for root beer floats in the bell courtyard. Bring outdoor chairs!
- Carol Miller shared the call for 3 or 4 additional handbell ringers to join Jubilee. She requests volunteers who can read music, but will teach you how to ring. Practices are Tuesdays, 7:30-9 pm. Barb Myers gave testament to being part of the bell choirs.
- Bob Mens shared Men's Bible Study Group will begin again Tuesday, September 9th at Panera Bread on Central Ave, 7 am.
- Tina Johnson spoke about the Welcome Center ministry, asking for sign-ups to bring treats Sunday mornings for both services.

Vote Results. Total votes 171. 151 yes, 20 no. Affirmative votes represent 88% of the total vote, exceeding the required 67% (2/3rd) vote. Motion to extend Call to Pastor Melissa affirmed.

Motion to accept the compensation package presented by the Finance Committee.

- Ed shared there is a typo on the compensation handout. The housing allowance should be \$36,000, not \$35,000. There is no change to the total on the handout.
- Council Treasurer, Bill Cook, came forward
- Ed opened the floor for discussion & questions.
 - Tina Johnson asked how the package compared to other ELCA churches. Ed shared the Finance

Committee started with a recommendation from the NWOH Synod. The committee also reviewed Pastor Nate's compensation in 2022/2023 in determining the proposal. Several proposals/adjustments with the Synod occurred before agreeing on proposal presented here.

- Raiden Browning asked if an Associate Pastor would be a comparable package. Ed shared the Finance Committee will be meeting this coming Tuesday to discuss. Initial thought is that it would not be equivalent. They will be reviewing current annual budget & giving received YTD. A likely scenario may be that the Associate Pastor start at 2/3rds time.
- Sandy Husman asked about the 7 weeks of vacation time Melissa would have available. Ed responded that 'Supply Pastors' from the area & even within our own congregation would fill duties, including Sunday services. Ed also mentioned that Melissa hasn't taken that much time the last few years.
- Cindy Franklin spoke to the fairness of the package. She has experience working in various church offices.
- Karen Hamilton requested an explanation of the continuing education piece, including Melissa's recent sabbatical. Ed indicated it would cover expenses associated with continuing education classes/seminars. Her education expenses related to her degree, occurring during her recent sabbatical, were largely paid for by a source outside Olivet.
- Motion to accept the compensation package as presented.
 - Donna Mens motion, Karen Rosar second.
 - Voting members asked to place vote on ballots passed out. Barry Shaner & Chrisann Shaner collected votes.
 - Barry Shaner, John Gonia & Tom Ritter were vote-counters in a separate space outside the Sanctuary.

Additional Announcements while votes were being counted.

- Penny Moran asked for strong men volunteers for the Food Pantry to pick up food. There is also a need for additional volunteers to pack bags.
- Duane Abbott shared about the Men's Bridge Group. They would like additional players &/or subs. Typically, the group meets September thru March, Monday evenings, rotating houses of players. Host prepares a light dinner to share. If you don't currently know how to play bridge, they will teach you.
- Tina Johnson shared that the Coffee Bar in the Welcome Center is dedicated to her late husband, Mark. She wanted to recognize that today was his birthday.
- Ed shared the Installation Service for Pastor Melissa will be held on Tuesday, September 9th at 6:30pm {7pm announced/Monday 8/18 confirmed w/Synod for 6:30pm}. (He apologized to Carol Miller as this is during handbell practice).

Vote Results. Total votes 158. 143 Yes, 15 No. Package approved as presented.

Representative Tom Ritter came forward to explain next steps.

- Pastor Melissa has 30 days to accept the Call to be Lead Pastor at Olivet.
- Upon acceptance, an Installation Service has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 9th at 6:30pm {7pm announced/Monday 8/18 confirmed w/Synod for 6:30pm}. Bishop Daniel Beaudoin will preside. Area Pastors will be invited and cloaked for the service.
- The Call Committee will begin creating a site profile for the Associate Pastor position.
- Ed shared the current Call Committee has agreed to stay on and accepts the duties and responsibilities for calling an Associate Pastor.

Recognition of Council President – Mandy Tetreau acknowledged Ed for all the work he has done for the congregation, especially during this process. Ed received a standing ovation.

Motion to close the meeting. John Borton motion, Bob Mens second. Meeting adjourned at 10:52am.

Closing prayer by Ed.

Pastor Melissa Micham, Lead Pastor

Beloved of Olivet:

In a few weeks, the women of our congregation will be on retreat, exploring the theme: “Listen, Love, Repeat.” Three simple words create a profound invitation to be present, attentive to the Spirit and to one another. In pre-marital counseling sessions (*Did you know this is one of my favorite ministries, which engages young adults?*), our curriculum encourages us to listen to understand (rather than to react or even respond). How have we done this year in our listening to one another? Are we creating a community in which all voices and perspectives are heard and valued? Who listens best to our fears and anxieties? Who celebrates our achievements and rejoices with us in our triumphs? Who carries the heavy load of grief that we cannot bear alone?

Over generations, dear people of Olivet, you have cared for one another well, embodying the love of Christ for one another. ***This is a masterpiece, a wonder to behold!***

Now we lean into a future unknown to us—even as more pieces of the puzzle come into view! I return to our first reading from the narrative lectionary this fall. “God will see to it” is Abraham’s faith-filled response in the most challenging text of the Old Testament, the binding of Isaac. Abraham’s response does not indicate he has the answer or knows the solution. It does indicate ***reliance*** upon God alone.

As we conclude one year of ministry and enter another, may we reflect with gratitude on what God has made possible through the people and resources of this community. As we prayerfully consider our uses of energy and time in the year to come, may our words and actions reflect our reliance upon God alone.

With love & gratitude for you, dear ones,

Pastor Melissa, *Lead Pastor*

Ed Rupley, President of Olivet Council

Dear Members of Olivet,

What a year we have experienced here at Olivet. We want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support of Olivet and your commitment to our missions. Your generosity has helped us achieve so much during the past year.

In 2025, we were able to come together and accomplish so much, thanks to you. We installed a new Lead Minister in Pastor Melissa Micham. New visions and goals are being reviewed for the future of our church. Olivet is a church that cares, makes a difference and looks to our future for a variety of new ministries. As we navigate these challenging times, we are reminded of the strength and unity within our congregation. We do not *have* to do this; we *get* to do this.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are excited to continue our work and make an even greater impact in our community. We will continue to feed our neighbors through food pantry donations and Daily Bread on Wednesday nights. Speaking of community, we would like to add an Associate Pastor for Community Life and we cannot do this without your help, support, and participation. So please help make this a special year by supporting the Olivet Ministries.

Thank you again for your continued support of Olivet and its ministries. We wish you a Blessed New Year.

Edward Rupley, *Olivet Council President*

FAITH FORMATION

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Nursery - The nursery is staffed by two leaders & 4 teens who alternate Sundays. It is open each Sunday morning for children ages infant - three years old.

Sunday School – Becky Cress, Director

Spark (ages 3 yrs to 2nd grade) was taught by Deb Shock and Tom Reynolds; regular helpers were Christina Hammerling and Mandy Manor.

Club 345 (grades 3-5) was taught by Donna Mens and Karen Rosar
Carol Miller led **music** for all ages of children.

In the spring, all kids learned about **Gospel** and **New Testament** events with the *Spark: Classroom*, by Sparkhouse. This fall, Spark kids (ages 3-2nd grade) continued in the Old Testament with the *Spark: Classroom* curriculum, while our Club 345 kids (grades 3-5) had their lessons using *Mini Revolutions* by Illustrated Ministry, which follows the Revised Common Lectionary.

Families of all Sunday School-aged children were contacted by phone in late August, when they were personally **invited to participate** in Sunday School this year.

Body Shop (grades 6-8) - Pastor Melissa Micham & Amy Dixon, Instructors; & Becky Cress, Administrator
Mentors for the 2024-2025 school year were Steve Sanderson, Hunter Morrison, Cat Carlo, and Eden Pollard. For the 2025-2026 school year, mentors are Hunter Morrison, Mike Cook, Cat Carlo, and Gavin Owen.

Winter Retreat at YMCA Storer Camps: Body Shop's weekend retreat took place in February. Nineteen youth had lessons, played games, learned archery, and visited the Critter Cabin.

A **scrapbooking fundraiser** was held at the end of April to raise funds for the 2026 Winter Retreat. Body Shop students served food, assisted participants with their gear, and cleaned up afterward.

Families of all Body Shop-aged youth were contacted by phone in late August, when they were personally **invited to participate** in Body Shop this year.

An **orientation** was held for students and families at the end of August, at which time program expectations and dates were communicated.

Youth finished their study of **Lutheran Living** in the spring and are learning from the **Old & New Testaments** with the start of the new school year using the *Colaborate* curriculum through Sparkhouse. Starting in the fall, once a month during the Body Shop meeting time, Pastor Melissa invited parents of Body Shop students to meet with her over lunch to discuss what their kids were learning and doing in Body Shop.

In September students **assembled school kits** for Lutheran World Relief under the direction of Heidi Lohrmann and Cynthia Fett.

Acolyte trainings were held in November.

Many thanks to the teams, ministries, and individuals who **provided lunch** for our Body Shop students this year, including the Garden of Peace trustees, the Finance Team, Daily Bread, the McMackens, the Euchre group, the Equity Team, and Women's Bible Study!

High School – Becky Cress, Youth Leader

A **High School Bible Study** began in January, led by Becky Cress. It was held on the first and third Sundays of the month. The group used youth adaptations of *Mini Revolutions*, by Illustrated Ministry, which follows the Revised Common Lectionary.

Becky Cress and high school student Gavin Owen attended the **Ohio Summer Youth Retreat** at Hopewood Pines at the end of June. There they joined Bishop Beaudoin, other youth leaders and pastors, and about 75 youth from across the state in community, learning, spiritual growth.

Fun was had by about 20 youth, young adults and Pastor Melissa at **Cedar Point** at the end of July.

In September, youth and young adults were invited to participate with Pastor Melissa in **Clean Your Streams**, an initiative to remove refuse from the ditches, streams and rivers of Northwest Ohio.

Eleven students and youth leaders had a day of fall fun at **BJ Farm**, where they took a hayride to the pumpkin patch, chose their own pumpkins and then carved them while enjoying cider and doughnuts.

About fifteen youth met Becky Cress at **Funagin's** in November for a night of roller skating and laser tag.

A **Christmas party** for high school youth was held in December. Youth played games, shared a meal, and traded gifts in a White Elephant exchange while enjoying each other's company.

Teacher Recognition – In May, teacher "survival kits" were given to children's Sunday School teachers, Body Shop mentors, and others involved in children and youth ministries in the last school year. Handmade Christmas ornaments were given to this year's children and youth leaders in late December.

The 2027 ELCA Youth & Young Adult Gatherings in Minneapolis – Becky Cress, Organizer
Fundraisers

A **scrapbooking event**, organized by Karen Keefer, was held on January 11 to gather funds to cover registration, travel, boarding, and meals. High School youth served food and helped to

unload and load guests' vehicles, while parents donated food and themed baskets for a silent auction.

A **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner** was cooked and distributed by youth. Proceeds went to the Youth Gathering fund.

Vacation Bible School – Becky Cress, Director

Road Trip: On the Go With God was held from June 16-21 with about 65 children attending. Those who made VBS possible include individuals who donated items and funds, volunteers who prepared station materials, the decorations team, the choreography team, the skit & tech crew, setup and teardown crews, station leaders & helpers, youth leaders, and Holly Lewandowski, who feeds them all! Thank you!

Milestones - Pastor Melissa and Becky Cress, Leaders

Communion Instruction, led by Pr. Melissa for grades 3-5, was held during regular Sunday School hours in March. Eight children received their **first communion** on Palm Sunday, April 13.

Graduate Recognition was celebrated on Sunday, June 8. Graduates were recognized at each worship service and a reception was held in the courtyard between services.

Olivet held a **Blessing of Backpacks & Bags** on August 17. Kids and adults were welcomed to bring their school and work bags for this yearly dedication. Everyone participating received a tag or bookmark that encourages its recipient to "Be curious."

Bible Presentations: Children were presented with Bibles on Homecoming Sunday – Preschoolers received a *Spark Story Bible*, third graders received a *Spark Bible NRSV*, and new Body Shop students received either *Colaborate: Lutheran Student Bible NRSV* or *The CEB Student Bible* (Common English Bible).

Confirmation: Four youth were confirmed on Reformation Sunday, October 26. In the weeks preceding, three **preparation sessions** were held for students to create their banners and compose and rehearse their faith statements. A small **reception** was held afterward in the atrium for family, friends and congregants.

A **Bible Workshop** was held in November by Pastor Melissa for kids in third grade through fifth grade who had received an NRSV Bible. Becky Cress concurrently met with parents, where they had the opportunity to learn more about their kids' Bibles and they were given several resources.

ADULTS

Adult Bible Study meets most Sundays between services in the Teen Room using the devotional *The Upper Room* with Mike Moore leading.

Adulting 101 is a quarterly gathering for young adults to connect and build life skills. Launched in fall 2024, three gatherings were held this year, each featuring an Olivet elder, to focus on personal finance (Barry Shaner), meal prep on a budget (Penny Moran), and household maintenance and repairs (Gary Crane). About 6-7 young adults attended each Sunday evening session.

Body Shop Parents gathered monthly this fall (September, October, & November) during Body Shop to get to know one another, share a meal, and enjoy comfortable fellowship. Highlights were sharing how we met our partners and Te'kela on a snowy day.

Guys n' Gospel meets Tuesdays mornings at a local breakfast restaurant. Each week, a constantly evolving group of guys takes a closer look at Sunday's gospel over pastries and coffee.

Holy Pepperoni was a new venture in fall 2025. With an invitation to working adults, this Bible study explored the narrative lectionary each week over pizza at Jo-Jo's. Twenty-five folks across several generations checked out this new offering, with about seven weekly participants (average age = late forties).

Tuesday Table Talks: Faith Seeking Understanding was launched in 2024. This ministry convenes on the second Tuesday of each month at various locations. Participants gather for a shared meal while exploring topics that bridge faith and daily life. Childcare is provided to allow young families to attend.

Women's Bible Study meets weekly on Mondays at 9:30 a.m. in the Teen Room. In the past year we have

learned about the life of the apostle Paul and how the message of the Gospel spread throughout the world. We studied the books of Ephesians and Galatians. We also used the Bible study resource that the Northwestern Ohio Synod produced for the Year of Listening to help us develop our ability to really listen to each other and to the words of Jesus. All women of the congregation, friends, and relatives are invited to this time of study and fellowship. An option to join in on Zoom is also available! - Heidi Lohrmann

CONGREGATION MISSION EMPHASIS

Create a safer place for growing, learning, listening and loving.

Becky Cress, convener

2023-2025 Mission Emphasis Goals:

1. Foster an intentional culture of inclusion, support, and advocacy for underrepresented persons.
2. Address societal fragmentation by creating safe spaces for people of all ages to connect and reconnect with each other.
3. Encourage and provide opportunities for children and youth participation in worship.

Youth & Family Ministry Team – Ed Rupley and Becky Cress, Conveners

An intergenerational chili cookoff, **Chili'n on a Sundae Afternoon**, was held in January, to great acclaim. Roy Glodowski proudly took home the prize for best chili.

Pi(e) Day & Play Night, a game night for all ages with pizza and dessert pies, was held in March. Kids and adults from 3-95 yrs. attended the popular event.

About 100 people attended the **Easter Egg-stravaganza** on April 12. Young families did crafts, played games, heard the Easter story, and participated in an Easter egg hunt.

The team planned for participation in the **Sylvania Fall Festival's parade**; unfortunately, the event was cancelled due to inclement weather.

At the end of October, the team decorated and operated a station at the annual **Halloween Hike** at Olander Park, in which more than 300 children and family members from the community participated. Thanks to all congregation members who donated candy for the event!

A **Parents' Night Out** was hosted by the team on December 6, where a small group of children were dropped off so their parents could have some "me-time." Kids did crafts, decorated cookies, made reindeer food, and watched a movie while enjoying the company of teens and adults. A good time was had by all!

At the end of the year, Amber Espinosa is graciously taking on a leadership role for the group from Ed and Becky. Thanks Amber!

Bible Study & Small Group Team - Heidi Lohrmann, Bob Mens & Mike Moore

A monthly discussion group named **Tuesday Table Talks** meets the second Tuesday of each month. Childcare is provided upon request.

A **kids' book club** led by Donna Mens meets Thursday afternoons in the Teen Room.

Equity Team, congregational emphasis – Mike Linehan, team leader

The **Accessibility Team** – Becky Cress, Team Leader

A Disability 101 series, **A Church for All: Disability Awareness & Action**, was led by Dr. Kim Nielsen and held on Mondays in February. 25-30 people attended each session.

The church's hearing assistance devices in the sanctuary were upgraded and new devices were purchased to add to the CLC. Signage was placed to aid in finding them when needed.

A weekly book study of **My Body Is Not a Prayer Request** by Dr. Amy Kenny was held for a small group in October.

Q & A (Queer & Allies) – Becky Cress, Facilitator

Better Together: On August 16 about thirty adults and youth from Olivet marched in the **Toledo Pride Parade** with other churches in an ecumenical demonstration of Jesus' love for all people. The group has been put on hold due to low attendance and considerable participant overlap with high school events.

JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) Library – Cynthia Fett & Becky Cress, Curators

A small **equity library** for adults can be found in the atrium. New books are added periodically.

Children's books with themes about equity are being circulated in the sanctuary and CLC bookshelves.

Equitable Art Team – Nancy Hamilton, Team Leader

A small team continues to update the **artwork** around the church building to better represent and welcome those in our community. This year the team's budget was spent on frames for art purchased in 2024, while planning focused on the Adult Ed Room.

Ministries in Support of Our Congregation

Advent by Candlelight, our 13th annual, was held on Thursday, December 4, 2025. Our theme was based on the Advent devotional written by Julia White, "The Bells of Advent." Through our devotional readings, shared scripture, and beautiful music, we prepared our hearts for the birth of the promised Messiah, Jesus. Our devotions reflected on the writer's personal family traditions and God's abundant love for us. Thank you to all who participated in this much-loved Olivet tradition. We were blessed by the musical talents of Sarah Lewis, Carol Miller and the Bells Ensemble, and Carol's beautiful rendition of "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace." Thank you to the hostesses who created beautiful table settings and desserts to share. Thank you to the gents of Olivet, for their attentive beverage service and assistance with clean-up. There were approximately 140 ladies in attendance with 17 decorated tables. - JoAnn Bell and Jan Kirk

Archivist: Deb Shock continued to preserve Olivet's legacy by reviewing and categorizing Olivet's history in documents, photos and records of important events.

Bookworms, Olivet's women's book club, was convened by Cynthia Fett in 2006 and has been meeting monthly (summers off) ever since. Books are chosen from any genre, and the chooser leads the lively discussion. Groceries for the food pantry are collected each month.

Bridge Group: The group has met for 40 years and plays bridge from mid-September to late April. We meet at 6:30 p.m. at a home of a player who hosts and provides a light dinner on a scheduled basis each Monday. Our champion for the 24-25 season was Tina Johnson. We have a rotating trophy which some might call risqué and a list of past champs hanging in the Christian Life Center hallway across from our pastors' portraits. Currently we have seven knuckleheads (men) and one woman who play on a regular basis, plus we have a few subs when needed. Bridge is the vehicle that gets us out of the home on those dark winter evenings for food, conversation and competition, with the emphasis on food. We would love more players to join us (permanent or sub), so if you're a bridge player or have never played but wish to step out of your comfort zone, we can teach you the basics, and you are invited to join us. Bridge is easy peasy: similar to Euchre but on steroids. Hope to see you at the table. Questions: Contact Bob Mens at 419-410-0519 or email bobmens49@gmail.com.

C.A.R.E. Group - Connecting And Reaching (Olivet's) Elders: Our goal is to Connect And Reach (Olivet's) Elders who are unable to attend worship services and/or church activities residing at home, in nursing facilities or memory care units. We send cards to help them stay connected and reassure them that they are included in our prayers. We also support family (unpaid) caregivers for senior members with bi-monthly specialized daily devotionals to help with this very difficult and sometimes stressful 24/7 family assistance work. The subscriptions and postage are provided by the **Mary Lou Gabel Memorial** fund. Our sincere thanks to Pastor Melissa and Jill Hepner who are directly involved by providing prayer list names and any other helpful information of those senior members who meet the criteria. Thanks, too, for our group members who go out of their way to help these senior members with love and support! - Cindy Riedel, director

Can Recycling: A *shout out* to all those who brought in aluminum cans! They are recycled with the help of Deb Shock and Mike Linehan—both truckers ;). Keep 'em coming and we turn them into CASH at the local recycle station. Cash earned goes to Youth Gathering 2027. Reminder: **WE ONLY WANT POP CANS AND NOW PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES USED ONSITE ARE FINE.** Drop them in the blue containers at the Welcome Center and Christian Life Center entrance. THANKS!

College Student Outreach led by Michelle Lane. The College Student Support Ministry began in 2001 and is intended to support any undergraduate or graduate college student, home or away, who has their name

submitted to the church office. Notices of this ministry are placed in our publications as well as postcards sent to any family with a known qualifying student. Olivet sent care packages to 14 students prior to finals in both the spring and fall.

Communion Visitation: With a well-attended training in August 2025, fifteen individuals or couples currently bring communion to about the same number of congregational members who are unable to attend worship regularly due to age, infirmity, or transportation.

Cooking (Funeral) Ministry, supported by a caring and reliable crew of Olivet ladies (Judy Gonia, Chrisann Shaner, and Jan Kirk) attempts to offer funeral support with a wonderful luncheon for grieving Olivet families. We have been abundantly blessed this year with great response to requests to make funeral dinners available. Thank you also to the many who responded with salads and desserts to enhance these meals. Thank you to the set-up and clean-up crews who volunteer their time to make this ministry happen.

Euchre: Joyce Rupley (419-509-9519) and Karen Rosar (419-377-1395) led the group, which met on the second Thursday of every month in 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Teen Room. All skill levels are welcome to the group for fellowship and fun! Each player draws a number to determine the table they start playing at. Partners are matched at the table.

Leisure League: What a blessing to continue 47 years of this wonderful senior organization! Our members are very cooperative and enjoy being with others in monthly day getaway adventures that are unique and fun to explore. Each year, as a requirement for membership, each person is expected to help with our September Harvest Sale. The proceeds are used to purchase personal care items for 125 men and 16 women clients at Toledo's Cherry Street Mission. Then in December assembling of all of the gift bags is made for the clients' Christmas gifts. (This year we had a tremendous number of donated products and monetary gifts to provide additional assistance.) We are so thankful to some Olivet's women who handmade hats and scarves for each gift bag. This annual service project has been done with Cherry Street Mission for 42 years. Unfortunately, we lost one of our special members this year, Gilbert Olrich. Our members try to stay as active as possible. When any of them struggle or have other difficulties, we make prayer our top priority and then reach out with cards and other contact to help. Truly, we thank God for His support for our monthly trips/activities and our help for those in the community in unfortunate situations.
- *Cindy Riedel*, volunteer director

Men's Golf League, led by Barry Shaner and Ric Shock, played on Monday nights in spring and summer this season.

Mutual Ministry Team: This team, comprising of four congregational members and pastors, meets quarterly or as needed to discuss sensitive matters of life and ministry. The team offers support, guidance, prayer, and confidentiality to our rostered ministers.

Pastoral Care is a term that describes an approach to care, not necessarily who provides it. However, in 2025, a few clergy deserve special mention. Pastor Bruce Quatman cared for an exceptional number of families from whom Olivet received funeral/memorial service requests this spring. Pastor Beth Ferne Johnson, in cooperation with St. Stephen Lutheran Church, has met nearly all of our homebound members and is providing both routine and emergent visitation ministry.

Preaching and Worship Leadership: Rev. Dr. Robyn Provis concluded her public ministry with Olivet on June 30, 2025. An astute leader, she provided crucial support to both the people of Olivet and Pastor Melissa during her 14-month interim. In addition to dependable pulpit supply from Pastor Merlin Jacobs and Chaplain Greg Olsen, Olivet has been privileged to have Rev. Lee Ann Pomrenke as preacher and Sunday school teacher this fall (and spring 2026). Pastor Lee Ann, who celebrated her 20th anniversary of ordination in 2025, has been leading a sermon and teaching series to explore "Why My Adult Children Don't Go to Church—and How We Can Respond!" Focusing on faith practices, Lee Ann is equipping those who want to imagine and participate in the future church.

The congregation returned to the Narrative Lectionary this fall to support Body Shop students and their families as they explore Old & New Testaments during the 2025-26 academic year.

Rummage Sale: We happily report that the very popular Olivet Rummage Sale had a successful result netting \$8753.23 (against \$6,911 in 2024). A generous donor added \$1250 making our 2025 total \$10,003.23. This amount is applied toward our Operating Budget, as Miscellaneous Income. Chalise Underwood again volunteered to lead the team and Deb Shock and Shannon Walker rounded out the trio. Thanks to the sub committee leaders such as Nancy Hamilton, who was our signage guru. Returning in various capacities: Bob Mens for table set up, Joyce & Ed Rupley as clean up/relocate and repurpose remaining goods. Sandy & John Husmann as Book Dept. organizers, Holly Lewandowski as organizer/supplier of food for our workers, Bill & Carol Cook as security/couriers, office staff as support however needed, plus so many others. This undertaking is successful because of the commitment of so many Olivet members. First and foremost after needing “people” is the need for the nice flow of goods that are donated. Anyone volunteering their time agrees that it is a fun, interactive event and once involved, they return for multiple shifts, whether it’s set up of tables, organizing tables of merchandise, support with food for volunteers, advertising, sign-making, packing up the left overs and driving them to local shelters or Good Will drop off locations. There’s something for any capacity of time you may be willing to offer. It “takes a village” and the village of Olivet definitely stepped up again. We invite anyone thinking of assisting—in a co-chair capacity, to share your ideas and/or availability with any of your church leaders. Amie and the office staff will happily take your call and support/organize as we always have. Let’s keep this tradition and look forward to the 2026 Rummage Sale - date to be announced by March.

Scrapbooking/Crafting Days are typically held three times per year at Olivet and 2025 was no exception. Our own Karen Keefer, supported by 3-4 helpers plus either Becky Cress or Pr. Melissa, continues to lead and organize this effort which supplements specific youth activities or other ministries. For 2025, the January event raised \$2440, which will support the next tri-annual ELCA Gathering in summer of 2027. High school youth served food and helped to unload and load guests’ vehicles, while parents donated food and themed baskets for a silent auction. The April event raised \$2926 and that supports the teens going to Camp Storer annually. For this event, the parents and kids slated to attend camp are the helpers and donors of time and effort. The fall event was sponsored by the choir who then netted \$3000.25 for their Choir Music Fund. The event is very popular with women attending to spend a day in our Christian Life Center doing their craft in addition to being served a fabulous breakfast, lunch and snacks from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Our scrapbooking event is known as the best in the area—all because of the fine effort of Karen. She is tireless in her attention to the food, as well as obtaining and offering raffle prizes and a massage. Thanks, Karen, and all who raised a total of \$8366.25 in 2025

Welcome Team: This past year, a more formal Welcome team formed and undertook several initiatives:

- Worked with Sara Martin to obtain a QR code and location on the Olivet website for members to sign up to bring a Sunday treat.
- Took responsibility for the glass display case closest to the Welcome center. The recent display is of Temari Balls, the collection of Sue Hamen. Watch for the display in January highlighting our Olivet Christian Nursery School!
- Refreshed the furniture in the Atrium, finding some good deals on new furniture, all funded by private donations designated for this purpose.
- With the approval of Becky Cress, moved three high top tables and stools into the Welcome center area to give parishioners a place to park belongings or themselves temporarily while enjoying the camaraderie after services.
- Celebrated Warren Wright's faithful devotion as our coffee barista.
- Accepted a donation of a quilt made by Shirley Breitzman for display in the Atrium.

We look forward to continuing to enhance Olivet's welcome.

- Tina Johnson, *chair*; Lana Heintz, Sue Hamen, Linda Burnett, Terry Lovett, Barb Myers, Cherie Bischoff, Sandy Browning, Cathy Sanderson.

Women’s Retreat 2025 was held on Saturday, March 1st and Sunday, March 2nd in Findlay, OH. Twenty-five ladies had a wonderful weekend of fellowship, crafts, and music focused on the Bible study “Finding Jesus in the Psalms” written by Barb Roose. After our daily study time we gathered for dinner completed by a

movie or game night back at our hotel, The Country Inn and Suites. Thank you to our dedicated committee, along with Pastor Robyn who completed our time together with a heartfelt Sunday morning service.

Please save the dates: Saturday March 7th and Sunday March 8th, 2026. The annual Olivet Women's Retreat will be held in Findlay, OH at The Country Inn and Suites. Our DVD Bible study will be led by Karen Ehman, "Listen, Love, Repeat - Centered Living in a Self-Centered World." We will learn practical, creative ways to scatter kindness, reaching out to others and to make a safe space to share the gospel. Please make your reservation and invite a family member, a friend or co-worker. All are welcome!

- Jan Kirk and the Women's Retreat Committee

Youth & Family Special Events

An **Intergenerational Youth Summit** was held after the 10am service on April 27. Conclusions from the MAP (Missional Assessment Profile), administered in the fall of 2024 by the Transition Team, were shared, and Becky Cress presented some best practices in youth ministry.

Homecoming Sunday was held September 7. All ages were welcome to reconnect, play yard games, and enjoy root beer floats from Tapped 419's Firetruck.

An **Advent Festival** had been planned for the entire congregation on November 30, but due to inclement weather, worship was cancelled that day. Instead, Pastor Melissa and Becky gathered together a group who put on an **online mini-devotion**, which was sent to all congregants. In it, the first Advent candle was lit, prayers and practices were read from *Humble and Holy: Devotions for Advent & Christmas*, the scripture was performed in skit form, a song sung, and communion was distributed.

Olivet's **Family Christmas Eve Service** was led by Pastor Melissa and Becky Cress. About 100 people attended, sang carols, and participated in a "cookies & milk" communion. A group of youth and parents enacted the story of Jesus' birth during the service.

WORSHIP

9:00 a.m. Sunday — Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. Sunday — Contemporary Worship, The Vine, in the Christian Life Center

Our Sunday gatherings answer God's call for us to worship. The following groups enable and enhance our corporate worship.

Altar Guild is a group of dedicated women (and a few male helpers) who devote time and energy to prepare both of our sacred worship spaces—sanctuary and Christian Life Center. Cynthia Fett, Chrisann Shaner and Linda Hoetzel have led the group admirably this past year with scheduling, ordering supplies, cleaning, polishing and meeting. Altar Guild's duties include attending to the weekly pick up and placement of altar flowers, setting up communion, changing of candles and paraments as well as set up and removal of our treasured seasonal decorations used in Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Advent and Christmas. We thank our teenage helpers this year with the cleaning of the chandelier globes! Their assistance is most appreciated! Baptisms, funerals and weddings, of course, require special care. The team who assists at the Vine service at 11:00 a.m. is also involved in duties such as ushering and communion assisting. Thank you, each of you, for the spirit with which you serve God and Olivet. If you would consider service in the Guild, please talk with Linda, Chrisann or Cynthia, or mention something to the office staff. Balance Dedicated Acct: \$2680

Tech Team: The Tech Team, led by Tyler Martin, ensures that the audio and visual components of all services run smoothly. Worship services and a number of other special church events are live-streamed and are also available at any time on Olivet's YouTube channel. The link is included in the weekly Constant Contact email and on the Olivet website. All technology improvements with microphones, lighting, and livestream are skillfully handled by the extremely dedicated and hard-working team of Tyler and Michael Schuster. The Tech Team needs and welcomes new members for the positions listed below. All training is provided.

9 a.m. Sanctuary Team / Sound & Stream Volunteer: Start and stop live stream of service; turn microphones on and off and adjust audio levels throughout the service. Current members are: Duane Abbott, Shelley McMacken, Matt Olrich, Judy Gonia, Jen Darm, and Susan Santoro (Coordinator).
Christian Life Center Team / Media/PowerPoint Volunteer: Create a presentation from a template for the Vine service. Run presentation during the service; start and stop live stream. Current members are: Carol Borton (Coordinator), Margie Burns, Erin Dress, Susan Santoro, and Beth White. Sara Martin, Communications Specialist, prepares pre-service PowerPoint announcements.
Christian Life Center Team / Sound Volunteer: Turn microphones on and off and adjust audio levels. This is currently done by Tyler Martin.

Welcome Ministry this year was facilitated by Pastor Melissa and Jill Hepner. **Six** new members joined our community of faith. There was **one baptism** and a confirmation class of four. What a way to grow!

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Rejoice & Jubilee Handbell Choirs: We have had a wonderful year of ringing. It is such a pleasure to be the director of both choirs. The friendships, love, and support of each other through happy and sad times is amazing. I'm very blessed to be a part of it!

I want to thank Barb Myers for 35 years of ringing with Jubilee and Rejoice. She retired from ringing this year and is missed by all of us. Thanks, Barb, for thirty-five wonderful years!!!

We welcomed two new members this year to Jubilee – Kristen Ressler and Pam Heaton. They have added so much and we are thrilled to have them ringing with Jubilee. The other awesome news was having Ross Sendi moving back to Sylvania and re-joining Jubilee AND Rejoice. Ross has been ringing since he was in the eighth grade and was ringing with Rejoice & Jubilee prior to moving to Dayton. We are all so happy to have him back!

May 4, 2025, we celebrated 40 years of Rejoice (and thirty-five of Jubilee) at our 9:00 a.m. service. We combined both groups on several numbers during the service, and it was a tremendous celebration. Thanks to Mark Frye, our Mayor of Sylvania, for a wonderful presentation of making Sunday, May 4, 2025, 'Carol Miller' day. It was a total surprise to me (and not a surprise to everyone else in the handbell choirs and congregation). It was wonderful to have past members come back and celebrate with us. It was a beautiful day!

Our Christmas concert December 14, 2025, was outstanding. We had 257 people in attendance. I would like to thank our Olivet Choir for singing "When the Bells Ring" with both combined handbell choirs. I was amazed with almost 100 percent of the choir in attendance. It was thrilling. Also, Lindsay Andrew's solo with Rejoice "Breath of Heaven" was very moving. Thanks to Sam Olrich who played the synthesizer, Aaron Banister for his expertise with percussion on several numbers and Sarah Lewis for her pre-concert music and other piano accompaniment with the handbell choirs (as well as ringing with Rejoice). I would also like to thank Dee Dress for coming back to ring with us from Fort Wayne. We miss Dee since she moved, however, what a thrill to have her come back and fill in. Most of all, I would like to thank all the members of Rejoice & Jubilee for their tremendous dedication – Rejoice rehearses 2 hours every week and Jubilee rehearses 1-1/2 hours, plus the Sunday mornings and coming at 8:00 a.m. to rehearse prior to the service. It's a big commitment. In order to ring on a Sunday morning, we need EVERY POSITION FILLED. If someone is sick, I need to get a sub. It's not like any other musical group. I'm SO PROUD of each of the members of Rejoice and Jubilee and treasure their friendship, love, and support. We are all so very blessed!

We will be ringing some beautiful, uplifting, and powerful numbers in 2026. If you would like to be a part of this awesome ministry of music, please call me or email me. We always welcome new members.

God bless our congregation for the wonderful support of our handbell program. With the free will offering at our Christmas Handbell Concert, we are able to purchase all new music, plus new books (when they break), new gloves to replace "holey" gloves, repair bells (the last repair of one of the big bells was \$400). We have been able to use the money from our concert to cover all expenses. God bless you all with a healthy and happy 2026!!!
- Carol Miller, director

Spark and Club 345 Children: I want all the beautiful children of Olivet to know what a treat it is to sing with them on Sunday mornings. It brings TRUE JOY to me, as well as the teachers. It's the highlight of our week. The children will be learning a new song to combine with the Olivet Choir on Palm Sunday,

March 29, 2026 (“He is Mine” by Hal Hopson). You can google it and sing it at home. Thanks to all the parents, grandparents, and others for bringing their children to Sunday school on Sunday mornings. Nothing warms our hearts more than hearing children sing about Jesus! God bless you all!
Ringing and Singing for Christ,
- Carol Miller, director Cell: 419-283-1895 Email: carolamiller5@hotmail.com

The Olivet Choir most recently presented a Christmas cantata of great quality. I am so proud of our thirty members.

The rest of the year the choir delivered telling anthems always in sync with our lessons. Noteworthy would be our annual Lenten cantata.

We continue to produce a quality product. Excellence is my goal, for only when we present our musical offerings in such a manner do we make the fullest statement which a composer intends for the listener.

I am happy to always have the assistance of the many in the ranks who step up to the plate when special effort is needed.

- Steve Hodge, *Olivet Choir Director, 35 years service*

The Vine Praise Band was led by Ash Lovegood through 2025. Ash decided to step down as the band’s worship leader after 5 years at Olivet and 22 years leading worship. Our very own Sarah Lewis stepped up to lead the band in the interim. A job posting to find a new leader will be posted in early 2026. In 2025, The Vine service saw multiple changes. A few different orders of service were tested to find a better flow for the service. There were also multiple technological updates such as some color changing lights for the stage and speakers being mounted above the stage to provide the CLC with a better sound. We are excited to continue growing and improving in 2026, and welcome any ideas of how we can improve the service!

COMMUNITY MISSION EMPHASIS

Mike Linehan, convener

Address social issues by focused engagement in community partnerships.

The Community Mission Emphasis Team exists to address social issues through focused engagement with community partners. Our work in 2025 continued to advance our three-year goals (2023–2025):

1. Supporting the wellbeing and safety of 15–20-year-olds in the Sylvania community.
2. Strengthening our partnership with Urban Wholistics to promote youth engagement, racial equity, and food security.
3. Addressing gun violence through local, statewide, and national advocacy.

Progress Toward Goal #1: Supporting Youth in Our Community

- New gender-neutral restroom directional signage was installed to increase accessibility and welcome.
- In August, Olivet joined more than 30 faith communities in *Better Together: Faith Communities United in Pride*. Over 20 members marched in the Toledo Pride Parade, and task force members staffed informational tables between services to engage the congregation and answer questions.

Progress Toward Goal #2: Partnership with Urban Wholistics

- More than twenty Olivet volunteers—including several youth and young adults—participated in three “Olivet Saturdays at UWF,” helping in the gardens, planting new beds, and assisting with the garden stand.
- Olivet expanded its partnership with Urban Wholistics Farms to provide fresh produce for Pastor Mike’s Tuesday Community Meals at Salem Lutheran Church. These ingredients help address local food insecurity, with additional produce available for guests to take home.
- In October, Olivet hosted the Urban Wholistics *Golden Hour Gala* in the CLC. More than 25 volunteers supported set-up, meal service, and teardown. The event raised over \$10,000 for UWF’s summer youth programming. Sonia Flunder-McNair expressed deep gratitude for Olivet’s generosity and partnership. The gala will return to Olivet on October 17, 2026.
- Sonia presented to the Body Shop youth in March on the benefits of urban farming and organic foods. In April, Olivet staffed the Health and Hydration Tent at the UWF Community Health Fair, providing blood pressure screenings and offering heart-healthy nutrition resources.

Progress Toward Goal #3: Addressing Gun Violence

- In October, team members attended a Disarmory Ministries “Gun Chop” event at St. Aidan’s Church in Ann Arbor and began exploring a similar Toledo-based event for 2026.
- In November, team representatives met with the City of Toledo’s Office on Neighborhood Safety and Engagement to secure support for a 2026 Guns to Gardens/Safe Surrender event.
- In August, Olivet took part in the third annual Sisters4Unity Communities Against Gun Violence March, assisting with registration and set-up for the Unity Day event.
- In March, Mike Linehan presented to a developing gun-violence-reduction workgroup at Solomon Lutheran in Woodville, Ohio.

Other Community Mission Initiatives

- Olivet co-sponsored the 2025 MLK celebration at Glenwood Lutheran, providing organizational support, desserts, and financial contributions.

Support for Salem Lutheran continued to grow:

- Monthly, 4–5 Olivet volunteers prepared food for Salem’s Breakfast Church, where Pastor Mike leads worship over a shared meal.
- Fresh produce from Urban Wholistics continued to support Tuesday Community Meals, along with blood pressure screenings provided by Olivet volunteers.
- In response to a new need, Olivet coordinated hygiene-kit assembly for meal guests.
- The Olivet Women’s Bible Study Group hosted a baby shower for four new mothers in the Salem community.
- In June, Olivet assisted with Pastor Mike’s annual Block Party, attended by nearly 100 Vistula neighbors for food, music, and games.

Food (In)Security Team Recap

- Using congregational donations, the team purchased \$670 in Meijer Simply Give cards—tripled by Meijer—resulting in:
 - \$900 to Sylvania Area Family Services Food Pantry
 - \$1,110 to the Jewish Community Center Food Pantry
- A Thrivent Grant funded \$250 in supplies for Hope Bags—backpacks with food and hygiene items that can be distributed to Olivet food ministry visitors who are experiencing homelessness.
- The toilet paper drive for Redeemer Lutheran resumed, with members donating and delivering over 2600 rolls in 2025.

Looking Ahead to 2026

In 2026, the Community Mission Emphasis Team will continue deepening its partnership with Urban Wholistics, supporting food-insecurity efforts, and collaborating with church leadership and the incoming Pastor of Community Life. Together, we will discern emerging mission needs and strengthen Olivet’s presence and service in our community.

Olivet’s 2025 **quarterly benevolence** supported partnerships with these area ministries: **Northwestern Ohio Synod, Lutheran Social Services, Genacross Lutheran Services, Luther Home of Mercy, Lutheran Inter-Synodical Deaf Ministries, Sylvania Area Family Services and Redeemer Lutheran Church**

Ministries in Support of Our Community

Giving Trees: What a generous response for the families of Sylvania Area Family Services and children of Redeemer Lutheran Church. We were able through Sylvania Area Family Services to help supply Christmas gifts for 6 families (a total of 30 people). Pastor Lori from Redeemer Lutheran Church gave us 17 children that we also provided gifts for, including two new bikes. A special thanks to the women’s Bible study that had a diaper shower for three of the Redeemer children (one due in March). Be sure to thank those that were able to provide gifts and those that helped with the sorting and tagging and delivery!
- Deb Shock

The Prayer Shawl Ministry Team was started by two avid knitters, Charlotte Shaffer and Joyce Barger, in the Spring of 2005. Over the years, by knitting or crocheting, we have freely given approximately 1,485 hand-made prayer shawls. At the end of the year, approximately 45 shawls were given in 2025. Our shawls

are meant to be tangible evidence of our prayers for God's peace and comfort to the recipients. They are freely given to ANYONE in need of comfort or support during an illness or the loss of a loved one. Many of you have gifted these shawls to your family and friends through the years. Our shawls are available by contacting the church office. We also donated 4 shawls to support Wolf Creek and Salem this year. We meet once a month and provide the yarn needed to knit or crochet a shawl along with patterns and guidelines to follow. As we close these meetings, we pray over each shawl brought in. We depend on cash donations to keep this ministry going, and we need knitters and crocheters who would like to create these beautiful shawls. There are no deadlines or any materials to purchase; just using your hands and talent for God's work. We had a few of our members donate over 150 hats to Cherry Street Mission, and other donations were given to help keep those in need warm during the winter months. Thank you to all who support this wonderful ministry.

- Jan Kirk and the Prayer Shawl Ministry Team

Current balance in this fund: \$1475

FOOD MINISTRIES

Daily Bread, Olivet's Wednesday Free Community Meal: Daily Bread, Olivet's weekly meal, continues to grow and serve the community. With the increasing food insecurity we have recently experienced, our numbers have grown steadily. We suspend meals during Vacation Bible School, the rummage sale, one week at Thanksgiving, and two weeks at Christmas. As of this writing, from January to November, we have served 5734 meals, including 400 at Thanksgiving. By the end of the year, we expect that number to rise to nearly 6200. It is clear that this valuable ministry is still very much needed.

Our ability to continue is due to the ongoing support of our Olivet family, and for that we are so very thankful. We are also blessed to have our faithful volunteers who give generously of their time and talents. A special thanks goes to Main Street Sweets in Sylvania, who continue to graciously donate their unsold pastries that are such a treat to our guests.

We apologize again to the environment for the use of Styrofoam trays for our take-out dinners, but it is financially unrealistic to use any other form. Our recycling efforts have increased, and we now collect our compostable waste. Any food that is unused is donated to the weekly food distribution.

2026 will be another year of great need. We invite you to participate in this community outreach in any way that you are able and ask for your continued prayers for us and those we serve.

- Holly Lewandowski

Current balance in the Daily Bread account: \$15,309

Weekly Wednesday Food Distribution of fresh produce and bread is delivered each week by the Northwest Ohio Food Bank. We also have a couple of angels who pick up bread and desserts from area stores. The food bank is unable to deliver enough produce for us to distribute, so we purchase lettuce, carrots, onions, and sometimes apples, oranges or cuties from Costco. That comes from the money you donate to the food pantry. We greatly appreciate your generosity. We also have angels who donate eggs and butter to be given out. We have a farmer who donates potatoes when he has extra. In November of this year we tried something new, with you bringing in designated items which we listed each week that are the most needed. This has been well received so we will continue it in the new year. We truly do believe in the fishes and loaves miracles. Each week, nine people carry in from the curb 3-5 pallets of produce and bread which is separated and sorted into individual boxes. Then we stand out in the heat, rain and freezing weather giving food to the most appreciative people. We also appreciate the help we get from kids who help out when on break from school.

This past year, we gave food to 5,844 households and fed 13,615 individuals. That is over 140 cars going through our parking lot on any given Wednesday afternoon. That is an increase of 1,091 households that we served this past year. We also give out our left-over food from Daily Bread to these guests. Between the Food Pantry and Food Distribution, we gave out enough food to provide 220,132 meals. Any food which is not given out on Wednesday is then taken down to Cherry Street Mission. We do not limit zip codes as some pantries do; however, the majority of our guest are from the Sylvania area. Again, we thank you for your monetary donations which help feed this ministry.

- Penny Moran

Olivet's Food Pantry: Our cost is kept low because the Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank charges 19 cents per pound of food. Plus, we look for sales on the other needed items we cannot get from the food bank. Thanks to your generous donations of food and money, we are able to keep the pantry well supplied. We served 3,157 households with bags of groceries in 2025. That is 8,133 individuals. That is an increase of 1,091 households over last year.

In the 4th quarter, we developed another opportunity to keep our shelves stocked: the ability to order direct from Dollar Tree where the order is delivered to the nearby Monroe Street location for our easy pick up. With the large balance in this Dedicated Fund, this enhances our food capacity with 8-10 specific basic items ranging only \$1.25-\$1.50 each.

The pantry is kept stocked by both congregation donations and the members who go to the food bank, pick up and deliver food back to the church. I would like to thank the 9 men who graciously give of their time and muscle to help do this twice a month. I also want to thank the 12 individuals who stock the shelves and pack the 80 plus bags of groceries each week. Your kind service is greatly appreciated. If any of these jobs sound like something you feel called to do, please give me a call. - Penny Moran

Current balance: \$13,474

Olivet Christian Nursery School: Founded in 1967, OCNS offers an enriched curriculum which follows the Ohio Early Content Standards and prepares children for kindergarten in a play-based, parent cooperative setting. OCNS is open to all children ages 3-5 who are potty-trained. Morning sessions are offered 9:00-11:30 a.m. (M-F); Lunch Bunch option is available for an additional fee, 11:30-12:30 p.m. (M, W & Th). Current enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year is **92 students** with **seven employees**. Registration for the 2026-2027 school year is now open. Please contact **Director, Jennifer Crooks**, to schedule a tour: 419 -882-4616 or email: ocns@bex.net. For more information, visit our website: www.olivetpreschool.org.

GLOBAL MISSION EMPHASIS

Steve Sanderson, convener

Make direct connections for learning, mutual support and relief with people around the world.

In October, we determined we should continue the three areas of emphasis originally developed in 2022 with slight updates to our goals:

- Support existing ministries with more frequent direct communication with global partners
- Strengthen relationships with Global Refuge, Lutheran World Relief, ELCA Good Gifts, and asylum seekers
- Promote learning, action, and advocacy related to global climate change

Current team members include Becky Moore, Cynthia Fett, Barb Stough, Amy Dixon, Heidi Lohrmann, Susan Santoro, Calla Gilson Burns (NWO synod staff), Pastor Melissa and Steve Sanderson. We welcome anyone that has interest in Caring for Creation, our global partners or domestic and global humanitarian efforts.

In 2025, we increased our Caring for Creation efforts while continuing to bolster relationships with our partner congregations in Tanzania, Mexico and Serbia. We also continued efforts to help immigrants, asylum seekers and others with humanitarian need both directly and with partners such as Global Refuge, ELCA Good Gifts and Border Servant Corps.

It has been 2 ½ years since the Vozniuk family arrived in the United States from Ukraine to escape the Russian invasion of their country and the devastating war that continues. The Vozniuks have been financially independent for quite some time as a result of the initial financial support, guidance and help from our congregation. Many at Olivet continue to help whenever needed. 2025 was a good year for Viktor, Mariia, Ivan and Tymofii – their work ethic led to the purchase of a house in the Toledo area. Ivan continues to do very well in school and Tymo progresses at Capable Kids' program for autistic kids. Tymo had successful surgery on both legs and now walks much better.

During the March Lent season we held Caring for Creation events between worship services three Sundays to raise awareness and were pleased with the level of participation. The three events each focused on a specific

theme: Where We Live, What We Eat and What We Waste. The discussions were structured to educate, discuss and offer practical action items that any of us can adopt. The “What We Eat” session showed us how eating plant-rich diets and buying local products can reduce food waste and keep us healthier at the same time. “Where We Live” urged us to plant more native, pollinator-friendly garden plants and reduce some of our chemically dependent green lawn space. “What We Waste” showed us how much of what we throw away can now be recycled.

Also in March we welcomed Soliette Lopez. Soliette is a Lutheran pastor, a medical doctor and her current position is Coordinator of the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) in Mexico. Soliette diverted to visit us on her way to Chicago for meetings. During her one full day in our area, she had lunch with Bishop Beaudoin and Calla Gilson Burns of the Northwestern Ohio Synod. That evening, we hosted a dinner for Soliette, Olivet members, several area pastors and synod staff in our Teen Room. Soliette fielded a lot of questions having to do with her current and future YAGMs, the migrant situation and other topics. Soliette presented Olivet with the hand painted cross that is displayed in the sitting area outside the choir room, and Olivet presented a prayer shawl to Soliette.

Through summer months Heidi led an effort to raise funds for the purchase of pikipiki motorbikes for our partner Tanzania diocese. Olivet members and our Vacation Bible School attendees were very generous with over \$5,100 raised, which was matched dollar for dollar by our ELCA Northwestern Ohio Synod. These motorbikes enable our evangelists in Tanzania to travel much faster to various villages, many of which are remote. Without the motorbikes walking is the only option. Tanzania is the home of approximately 8.5 million Lutherans, compared to approximately 2.7 million ELCA members in the United States.

On August 31st we welcomed Amer Hannunah, his wife Laila and young daughter Lia to our worship service. The family is with the Beit Sahour Lutheran congregation in Bethlehem, Palestine. They explained the situation in Biet Sahour and brought with them hand-carved olivewood items for purchase, to support the Christians of his village who have lost their major source of income due to lack of tourism as a result of the war. Olivet’s free will offering donated \$1,995! \$1,000 went to the Lutheran Church in Beit Sahour and \$1,000 was given to five families in the region who have been gravely impacted. Sales of the olivewood carvings were nearly \$3,900. Olivet’s Global Mission Team purchased the nativity set that is displayed in the glass case in the atrium. Two members purchased a cross which has been hung in the CLC.

On September 27th Barb Stough led a group from Olivet to participate in Clean Your Streams Day. Every September since 1997, volunteers have undertaken a Northwest Ohio environmental tradition of removing trash from their local streams, rivers, and ditches. To date, more than 407,000 pounds of trash have been removed from area waterways by over 16,000 volunteers! This year the focus was on the Maumee River, and our group helped in the Maumee Side Cut Park area. This was the first time this event has been promoted at Olivet, and we look forward to a bigger turnout in 2026.

Heidi led the annual project to deliver school kits to Lutheran World Relief for school kids in other parts of the world. It is not uncommon that in some countries kids do not attend school due to lack of supplies. Our Body Shop young people, guided by Heidi and Cynthia, helped put the school bags together and box them for shipment. Olivet supplied 100 kits!

The new Young Adults in Global Mission in Mexico and other areas of the world started their adventures in September and, with Soliette Lopez’s guidance, we “adopted” Reagan White! Reagan is in Mexico City and will be serving at Casa Fuente, a family migrant shelter. Reagan is 22 years old and originally from South Carolina. She graduated from the College of Charleston this past spring. In December we sent a Christmas care package to Reagan consisting of Christmas cards, letters, painted rocks and ornaments from our Sunday School kids, a beautiful prayer shawl, a knitted hat and scarf, a journal, Reese’s Peanut Butter Christmas Trees (she said she loves Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups), and – at the suggestion of former YAGM Calla Gilson Burns – Mac and Cheese and Ramen Noodle packs. Olivet will be “walking” with Reagan to spiritually support her from afar in 2026 and also learn from her experiences.

Olivet members Jordan and Raiden Browning traveled to Las Cruces, New Mexico, in partnership with Border Servant Corps November 5th through 9th to understand the current reality of immigration. They were part of a

group that included Bishop Beaudoin, several area pastors, and Pastor Sarah Schaaf and Calla Gilson Burns (NWOS Synod Staff). The itinerary was designed to explore the infrastructure, legal systems and on-the-ground work that impact immigration at the US southern border and included an opportunity to visit BSC partner shelters on the Mexico side of the border who are responding to the current immigration situation in faithful ways. Their group is meeting in January to digest their experience among themselves and then communicate what they learned to us at some point in 2026.

Heidi Lorchmann led a Hope for the Holidays initiative, which sends Christmas cards to immigrants being held in detention centers. The women's Bible study along with others gathered and wrote messages in approximately 325 cards to be sent to detained people and families.

We continued to build awareness and encourage participation in ELCA's Good Gifts program for those that want to contribute to global needs in ways that provide practical impact.

Planning for an April 11, 2026 Caring for Creation event, led by Amy Dixon, began in October and carried on through the end of 2025. The event title is "Earth Heroes Unite: Loving Our Mother Earth". The event will consist of a panel discussion featuring four area experts in various areas. This will also be a family event with kids separately participating in crafts and after the discussion all will be able to visit eight stations with interactive displays.
- Steve Sanderson

Ministries in Support of Olivet's Global Outreach

Common Thread Quilters: The year 2026 finds Olivet's Common Thread Quilters beginning its 10th year of making quilts for people in need both at home and abroad. Six to nine ladies meet every Tuesday morning to assemble quilt layers, then sew the binding of quilts at home. Finally, the tying of quilts is done by Marilyn Machosky and Bobbie Crane plus about 25 members who meet on a Saturday morning in the spring. Members also donate sheets and help deliver quilts to our mission churches. Approximately 160-200 quilts are completed each year. Quilts for Lutheran World Relief are delivered to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Pemberville, then taken to a Baltimore warehouse for shipment overseas. The 2025 selective quilt raffle winners were Olivet members Helene Lyon and Rebecca Cress. - Carol Leupp

Operation Christmas Child: Thank you, Olivet members, for the 46 shoeboxes sent out through the church.
- Deb Shock

SUPPORT MINISTRIES

Shannon Walker, Director of Operations

To the wonderful Olivet Community...

This is a special Annual Report from my wonderful place among you all, being my 23rd time to summarize the past year - 2025. It's with joy and a backward look that I say that God has again inspired the decision to pass the torch to an exciting new generation of talent. Okay, so it's no secret that Pr. Chrysanne and Craig led me to you all in the fall of 2003. The creation of the position of Director of Operations had just been created in 2002 and I understand 2 people had a quick try at it preceding my hiring. To the subject of new talent, let's begin with the privilege I've been afforded to be a leader in the search of my own replacement. That began with Susan Santoro responding first with a little tear then a resounding YES to co-lead when I asked her to repeat this service to Olivet again! (she was on the search team in 2003 when I was hired). Of course, Stan Machosky has served as leader of the HR/Personnel Team and then Joyce Rupley joined the three of us as she brought much experience using ZipRecruiter. By the beginning of October, we had interviewed 20-ish candidates, either by phone or in-person.

Then on an ordinary Sunday in October, all those interviews would be history because the soon-to-be Director of Operations decided it was time to find a new church home, attended our New Member class and voila – that Sunday read in the Olive Branch of our search in progress. She applied the next day with an impressive resume and the committee said "Whoa—skip the phone interview," and after 3 in-person interviews, Amie McGee accepted our offer of the position on Nov. 7, with an agreeable start date of December 1. This afforded us 6+ weeks of training together before my last day of Jan 15. This extra expense was seen as a "no brainer" by our Finance Team. Skip and my departure on a 3-week trip to New Zealand and Australia regretfully prevents our attendance at the January 25 Annual Meeting. You will be in great hands with your new Dir. of Ops – Amie

McGee. WHY – because of her background of 20 years with a company where her resources are likened to Olivet’s needs from facility management, troubleshooting, managing people, being on-call, outreach work in the Toledo area, etc etc. I’ve witnessed her interaction with our folks already as she’s been part of every workday since Dec. 1. Kindness, empathy, confidentiality and decisiveness are in her DNA. Her statement at her interview is coming alive – she “wants a career where she can make a difference and give back, not just a job.”

To support and to totally complement Amie is our office staff: Jill Hepner (Membership + Ministry Coordinator), who joined our staff in mid-2024 and has quickly mastered so many office duties and continues to take on additional work delegated to her, such as supporting the efforts that the ELCA-mandated constitutional changes have meant. Yep, working on the changes with Bishop Daniel/Synod staff, Olivet Council since last March.

Next, there is no need to re-introduce Sara Martin, our Communication Specialist extraordinaire. Just read the past 4 issues of the Olive Press, our 16-pg. quarterly newsletter. Each issue contains a very special focus on a different member or staff person. She does an in-depth interview and then captures the essence in her original written presentation to the readers. Her graphics changes to our electronic yard sign are beautiful as is the new look of Constant Contact. I can’t stop singing her praises – so check out the new website that she created – just launched in October.

This office staff and our office volunteers continue their efforts to support our Faith Formation leader, Becky and her team, taking care of the behind-the-scenes details in our facility to help programs appear seamless. Tyler Martin, who quietly stepped into our congregation 12 years ago as a member, has established a reputation that I continue to rave about. He is responsible for so many amazing systems that we have today, computer/IT infrastructure, new staff computers/laptops, gifted by him and Sara, and the ability to retrofit the entire facility with LED lighting. He saved us \$2-3,000 in December by taking vacation days from his job and running cable laced through the CLC ceiling from sound room to stage ceiling himself. Think about it ! Yes, safely, as he knows I insist upon. We’ve been wanting to hang the speakers above the stage for 3 years but knew it would be costly. That volunteer work then enabled a paid electrician to connect all. Working with me and within our budget, adding a new phone system, managing all of our IT needs, helping to monitor our \$12,000 Leak Prevention Device, fixing the electronic sign himself, also linking OCNS to our phone network to save them \$\$\$. Much more to know, so read his report please and just THANK HIM, found in the CLC Tech Booth each Sunday, 10-noon.

Mike Vince, my partner in Finance, meaning check writing and operating budget work, continues his 25+ years of dedication to Olivet and will find a great partner in Amie.

I know that God has another surprise for us; and for this, our Call Committee has been at work orchestrating our part in all that’s been needed to find Olivet a partner to assist Pr. Melissa in her thoughtful and inspired plan for our church’s future. Patience people... 2026 will surely be the year. Please support Pr. Melissa with your prayers and kindness.

Our church office is often a place of frivolity in a day’s work.... It’s the best atmosphere in which to work, right! Very occasionally when we have been met with a challenge of equipment failing, or a service person struggling to repair something on site, I would say – stand back....let me give it the Catholic blessing. Or if something was lost, “hey St. Anthony.” Believe it or not – God answered (mostly) LOL. Well, now I say to you all.....YOU HAVE GIVEN ME YOUR LUTHERAN BLESSING FOR ALL THESE YEARS. So, what do you say... how about you accept Skip and I as Associate Members of Olivet ?? Yes, this is an actual designation. You know... like Ron and the late Patsy Pritts, (just one example) have with Olivet.

In conclusion, when most retirees are asked “don’t you miss your job” and they say “No, I sure do miss the people though.” I’ll say.... I don’t have to miss the people, because I’ll still see them as I continue to drop into worship occasionally, serve with our food ministries, handing out meals at the curb, filling food bags, helping at the rummage sale, Bookworms Club... and traveling with some of the best Olivet friends that Skip and I now have in our lives.

As we meet again...Lovingly, Shannon

You’ll find more details on our fantastic office volunteers and some reinvigorated ministry teams as you READ ON.

The following subjects, ministries *and people*, along with the many activities which have been shared thus far in this report, continue to make Olivet the wonderful, benevolent circle of love and activity that I have the privilege with which to serve.

Church Office/Building Staff: Our office staff is a circle of support for each other in all daily activities. **Jill Hepner** serving in her second full year, is a great resource for questions/concerns of the parish as our Membership Coordinator or as an office assistant. Also her varied ties to the congregation through kids' ministry is invaluable. You can typically find her in the office Monday, Wednesday & Thursday. **Sara Martin**, Communications Specialist, is a multi-talented staff member in her third year. She has made many connections to ministry leaders and is very innovative with great ideas for needed changes. Last year, we mentioned there were great things being developed in 2025 and they have happened thanks to her, including a new website, major changes to our communications via Constant Contact, and a new look to our quarterly 16-page newsletter, the Olive Press. Sara works Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

For over 25 years, **Mike Vince**, our Financial Secretary, has attended to all matters involving member offerings, bank deposits, reconciliation, on-line banking, accounts payable and such. He's is mostly available at his home if needed by members, anytime.

Staff and volunteers love sharing in the services offered to guests of our Food Ministries on Mondays and Wednesdays, or any day that someone walks in with a need for food.

Kudos to our cleaning team. **Andrea Laws** with building custodial duties plus always "digging in" with our food ministry folks on Wednesdays who support/organize/move food from truck to pallets to the assembly line—to our guests' cars. We appreciate you very much, including **Danika Laws** who joined as our Christian Life Center cleaning/set up staff after John Casper retired to Florida in October. Danika also is responsible for providing cleaning support in the three OCSN classrooms two days per week. Taking over cleaning and set up of the Christian Life Center January, 2026 is Max Chipman, as we welcome him to the staff.

Office Volunteers: Olivet's office has such wonderful support with our volunteers. We especially thank **Cynthia Fett** who has been so helpful on Mondays, a day that is very full of details, managing food guests and other weekly duties, such as writing the acknowledgement cards for memorial gifts to Olivet. **Janet Kish** joined us in 2023, and I believe is here forever doing the Tuesday duties in such a caring and consistent way, calling ministry leaders each week to remind them of upcoming Sunday's duties and giving happy support to Becky and kids' ministry needs. **Mary Glover** and **Pat Sheets** have been faithful on Wednesdays serving guests coming for food. Plus, they are so good at the computer-inputting of our food guests. **Penny Moran**, who is our keen-eyed proofer and greeter on Thursdays, supports various office needs. Mary deserves a "second nod of thanks" as she partners on Friday in readying bulletins and signage, ensuring that all is ready for Sunday. How do we manage when Shannon is on vacation—with a wonderful sub in **Susan Santoro**, who often jumps in to give great support to our office, as has **Jan Kirk** recently. All of our front desk volunteers are so kind and friendly when greeting guests (over 3,000 per year) who come for food, or tending to the needs of callers and visitors. Want to experience some of the JOY that is felt in serving in the office? We can always use subs to fill in when others need a day off. Give Amie a call. We accept volunteers on their terms and availability.

Building Security: In December, 2024, you may have read that we were approved for a second "grant" through the Ohio Bureau of W.C. This new grant has enabled us to acquire an interactive door interface, where all visitors ring the bell and are acknowledged visually and audibly and then allowed entry via a remote door release located INSIDE the office. Also, we now have 3 panic buttons to allow instant connection to police or fire. Going a step further there is a chime installed in the OCNS wing alerting preschool staff of any door activity at their two doors. Have a particular suggestion or interested in church security, please give a call to Bob Mens, Lead Usher or Amie McGee, our Director of Operations.

Thrivent Choice Fund: Thank you to those who have Thrivent Financial investment products and directed their Thrivent Choice Dollars to Olivet. Through your generosity, we were able to reach out in ways we could not through our regular giving. By directing a total of \$7769.13 in Choice Dollars to Olivet in 2025, we provided support for Olivet's Giving Tree (\$2,000), Salem Lutheran Church (\$250), backpacks for the school supplies supporting youngsters globally (\$357.42,) Once is Enough (domestic abuse recovery), toys for their Christmas program (\$350), Lutheran Social Services Food Pantry (\$500), and a trip to the US

southern border for two Olivet members to obtain a border immersion experience (\$1200). These 6 donations amount to \$4657.42 in 2025.

Olivet's Thrivent Choice Dedicated Fund stands at **\$10,574.** at year's end. The request form is available in the church office. Requests fall into one of four categories: 1. Community Outreach; 2. Seminarian Support; 3. Youth; 4. Mission Trips.

Thrivent Members!

If you have not directed your Thrivent Choice Dollars for the current year, you have until March 31, 2026. If they are not directed by March 31, 2026, they will be lost. We hope to see more involvement if possible.

Olivet's Thrivent Choice Team: Pastor Melissa, Sue Davis (team leader), Phil Dress, Bill Hamilton, Donna Mens, Matt Olrich, and Derek Cipiti, our congregational Thrivent representative.

The Memorial and Honoraria Committee's ministry is to provide a way for family and friends to memorialize or honor their loved ones. Thoughtfully applied to the mission and ministry at Olivet Lutheran Evangelical Lutheran Church, these gifts are an expression of faith. Honoraria gifts are given to recognize family and friends for special events and/or significant events in that person's life. Olivet's quarterly publication, The Olive Press, lists all donations received and in whose memory. We invite you to read these as they are publicized. The process through the church office is to send thank-you cards for each donation received and then a report, with a list of donors, to the family of the deceased. This is typically done about 3 months after their passing, as donations come in sporadically.

A deceased member's next-of-kin may then designate how they wish the funds, received in their loved one's name, to be used within Olivet's ministries. In 2025, after much follow up by Memorial Fund team members, funds were released by next-of-kin for various ministries to include the atrium area renovation with approximately \$6,000 spent on the beautiful array of couches, love seat end tables, cocktail table, lamps, glass round table and 8 matching chairs. Others designated funds to immediately be directed to the Quilting Group, Handbells, Olivet Choir, youth projects, & Christian Life Center speaker/electrical project.

Good news from this team...Carol Cook & Shelley McMacken have agreed to co-lead this team, which includes, Dave Simko, Greg Fett, Helene Lyon, and as needed Shannon or Amie, as staff liaison. At a scheduled December meeting, this team made a proposal to put a cap on the \$\$s that should lie within the Memorial Fund (Dedicated Acct) - that amount to be \$20,000 maximum. This proposal was affirmed by the Finance Team the same week and then "acted on" by Council at their Dec. 18 Council meeting, as a rule going forward. Monies including requests are governed by the Memorial Fund team.

An updated Memorial & Honoraria brochure is available at church entrances and the Welcome Center to provide information.

Current balance: \$47,869

HR Team (formerly Personnel Team) is responsible for developing policies and procedures that assist staff in managing all aspects of employee relations and the employee lifecycle within our organization. This includes: recruitment and hiring, attracting, and selecting candidates for job openings; help with training where needed; and help with compliance and policy enforcement. The Team, with approval from the Congregation Council, implements these procedures and policies with adherence to Olivet's mission and ministry. A Standard Operating Procedures manual (Director of Operations) was completed by Shannon. Staff changes in 2025: Pastor Melissa Micham installed as lead minister in September; Amie McGee hired as Director of Operations in December. A search team comprised of Shannon Walker, Susan Santoro, Stan Machosky & Joyce Rupley initiated the search for Director of Operations in September. Shannon advised in November, 2024 of her intent to retire January 15, 2026. Also advising of her plan to step away from her position of Praise Band Team Leader is Ash Lovegood., with a date of Dec. 31, 2025. Job descriptions were created for Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor, Director of Operations, and Contemporary Worship Music Director. New organizational charts were drafted and updated. Reviews of security clearance and codes were attended to. Concerns regarding conflicts were also addressed. - Ed Rupley
HR Team members: Dave Bell, Linda Gubbe, Stan Machosky, Ed Rupley, Mandy Tetreau and Shannon Walker.

Endowment Fund: During the calendar year 2025, the Greater Toledo Community Fund (GTCF) continued its management of the assets of Olivet's Endowment Trust Fund. Another strong market performance in 2025 produced a positive return resulting in a current ending balance of **\$58,609.55**. The goal of the Endowment Fund, as printed in the Trust document, is to grow the fund through contributions and market

performance. Once the fund value reaches \$100,000, annual distributions of amounts in excess of that goal may be permitted to those qualifying groups/projects as approved by the Church Council and the congregation. If you wish additional information concerning the Endowment Trust Fund, please contact any of the elected Trustees or the church office staff. Brochures describing the Endowment Trust Fund are available in the information area at the Welcome Center. John Gonia, as Lead Trustee, may be contacted by email with any questions at gonia@johngonia.com.

Finance Team: Comprised of a group of extremely gifted business professionals with expertise in the field of finance, banking, and management, this team is dedicated to the stewardship of Olivet's finances and meets monthly. The team works with staff to initiate and work out the details to administer the annual budget, as approved by Council and Congregation. Shannon details weekly income vs. goal in Olivet's weekly Constant Contact email which is sent to 350 households. Justin Black (team leader), Bill Cook accepted the role of Olivet's Treasurer January 2025 (from Barry Shaner), Shannon Walker (staff), Mike Vince (staff/financial secretary), Kevin Kornowa, John Gonia and Bob Mens. We welcome two new members to this team, Amie McGee, Director of Operations, (Dec.1, 2025) & Tyler Martin, master of many projects.

Tellers meet every Monday to count & balance the weekly offering. Shannon prepares the deposit for the bank courier to pick up. Thanks to our faithful members: Jerry Dunaway, Greg Fett, John Husman, Sue Davis and Marlene Schober.

Olivet's William & Martha Cox Garden of Peace Olivet's Garden of Peace was dedicated on Sunday, November 11, 2007. It continues to provide a safe and serene final resting place for the cremains of Olivet members and their immediate families—as well as former members, staff, and their immediate families. Brass plaques in the Garden memorialize those interred within, and additional plaques remember loved ones interred elsewhere. A total of fifty-three interments have occurred since 2007, including four in 2025.

Twenty-four additional Olivet family members have now pre-planned their interment here. Arranging interment is a simple procedure for those considering this beautiful life memorial. Brochures with full details are available at the church office.

Our garden offers a beautifully landscaped, peaceful, private and quiet place for remembrance, prayer, and meditation. 2025 saw repair work continuing on the fountain, work that was interrupted by the approach of winter. Additional fountain work is being planned for 2026. All of the engraved brass nameplates in the Garden were also replaced this year, due to extensive weathering. The replacement plates are now re-lacquered after engraving, to improve long term resistance to the elements. The Garden continues to be maintained by the trustees and volunteers—our “Garden Angels”.

2025 Trustees: John Holshoe (chairperson), Deb Shock, Helene Lyon (financial secretary), Ann Hansen (secretary), Mike Linehan and Donna Mens. Sandy Husman assisted as an ex-officio member and design chairperson. Pastor Melissa served as spiritual advisor, with Ed Rupley as Garden archivist.

2026 begins with the election of two new trustees, replacing Helene Lyon and Ann Hansen, both of whom served two, full three-year terms, plus an additional one year extension during the Covid period. The new trustee candidate names will appear on the ballot at the congregational meeting in January 2026.

Continuing in 2026, there will be four trustees still serving their current term commitments: John Holshoe, Donna Mens, Mike Linehan and Deb Shock. Sandy Husman will continue as an ex-officio member and design chairperson and Ed Rupley will serve as the Garden archivist again in 2026.

Property & Landscape Team

Tina Johnson, leader

Indoors—Joyce Rupley and Tina Johnson painted the office restroom a lively buttercup yellow. Bill Hamilton did some repairs to occasional tables and painted the outdoor metal mailbox this year, with much of the inside work done that can be completed via volunteers or hiring professionals when budget allows.

Outdoors—the property team focused on four areas: the perennial garden by the church office entrance, an overgrown garden by the dumpster, the stairs going down from the bell garden and the fence line along the property line between the church and the laundromat.

Deb Shock designed and provided the supplies for a stone path meandering through the perennial garden. Volunteers supplied the muscle. The garden was renamed for Luann Canham Kornowa, who recently passed on and who, along with Linda Hoetzel, designed and planted the garden, contributing plants from their personal gardens. The stone path sets off the beauty of the perennials nicely.

The fence line between the laundromat and the church is covered with invasive wild grapevines and

other weed trees and bushes. Together with the laundromat owner, the invasive plants were knocked down and trimmed to keep it under some semblance of control. Much brush and overgrown branches were removed.

A garden next to the dumpster was eradicated as overgrown. This spring we will plant grass which will be much lower maintenance than the garden required.

The remainder of the gardens, which includes the garden along the playground fence, the bell garden, the garden of bushes along the east wall of the CLC, and the small garden by the mailbox, were trimmed and weeded, removing dead plants and replanting as needed. Amy Dixon continues to maintain the Pastor Nate Tuff sacred rain garden which filters rainwater, near the east end of the building.

Assistance is always appreciated with the gardens. The gardening team generally holds two maintenance sessions each year in the spring and fall. Weeding is a constant need. Appreciation to Gary & Bobbie Crane, Cathy & Steve Sanderson and Deb Shcok who have “adopted” a garden to maintain through the year.

2026 will offer opportunities for painting enhancements, as noticed when this team did a walk-thru with Tom Reynolds, who will soon be offering quotes on the targeted areas. Tina Johnson, Bob Mens and Deb Shock provide the primary leadership and are always looking for new volunteers.

2025 Facility accomplishments of note

Shannon Walker, Director of Operations

\$9,000 security updates include: remote door control INSIDE our office for the outer office door; 3 panic buttons for school/office safety direct call to Sylvania PD; chimes as alert in OCNS wings; and new video/audio doorbell to see and speak with visitors. Similar to a grant received in 2020, this 3:1 grant provided \$6,750, with \$2,250 being Olivet’s portion (paid by the Dedicated Memorial Fund). Grant initiated by Shannon with the help of OCNS Director, Jennifer Crooks, to complete the application in the name of Olivet Christian Nursery School (OCNS), Ohio Bureau of Workman’s Comp safety program available for schools.

Sewer gas odor mystery...Mechanical room known as the HVAC room has 75 yr old 6” pipe that has corroded. This pipe runs along the floor (behind a heavy cabinet) and had corroded to have a 6-inch-wide OPEN hole which had the capability to rupture and dump raw sewage if not for the sleuthing of our plumbers from Fry Bros, who were called to investigate. Cost of \$1,650 to repair but also a warning to be aware of many other old pipes within our building.

Door repairs or adjustments. Stafford Door Company, our partner in any entry door issues, made a service call and addressed 5-6 different recent door issues.

Welcome Ctr. replacement of door/lock/handle mechanism. McElheny Locksmith investigated this specialized brass door mechanism that failed locking via our lock system. Decided to postpone the \$2,700 repair until fall as one side of door lock did function. Replacement completed in December after a 3-month wait for parts.

Gutter repair work began with clearing some gutter debris to correct overflow during heavy rain at back doors. Some anticipated maintenance/repairs also done where needed around building’s perimeter. We’ve gained a new trusted gutter contractor – Jeff Crawford Eves.

A beautiful paver pathway was initiated by digging a 7” trench winding through the perennial garden, located outside of the office windows. Then Deb Shock installed the hundreds of pavers brought from Howard Kolbe’s property to create a beautiful pathway. Read on.... Also see Property Team.

Luann Canham Kornowa Memorial Garden: This garden was then dedicated June 19, in memory of Luann Kornowa, following her memorial service. She was known to have planted this perennial garden several decades ago with others and also tended it for many years. Watching it sprout its beauty each spring is a particular joy to many of us nature lovers. Note the two granite memorial plaques in the garden recognizing both dear Howard Kolbe, who passed in 2024, and dear Luann.

Leak of a manifold in boiler lines was repaired by Fry Bros. plumbing, a problem that surfaced in May and resulted in ceiling damage in our hallway near atrium and much of the Spark Room ceiling. Charge of \$3,400 for repair, then \$3,100 for a new drop ceiling done by OK Ceiling, Inc.

Technical accomplishment highlights: CLC left storage room lights converted to LED, improvements to Olivet's network (with much thanks to Bob Mens and Mike Cook), trialed multiple PTZ (pan, tilt, zoom) cameras for the sanctuary, integration device for automatic water shutoff valve was purchased to cut down on false alarms, used laser projector purchased for CLC and installed, projector purchased and installed in sanctuary, speaker mounts purchased in 2023 for CLC finally mounted, all lights in atrium replaced with LED. **Projects in the planning stage for 2026 include:** replacing CLC lights with LED, completing the setup of a Teams Room in the Adult Ed Room, sound proofing/deadening project in the CLC.

FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

NEW ROOF FOR ENTIRE BUILDING. Estimated use left is 4-6 years. CLC roof installed 2006. Original east-west roof was replaced in 2007.

NEW PARKING LOT PAVEMENT. Several areas have been only resurfaced. The entire lot will need replacement. Estimated \$100,000.

OLIVET'S ORGAN. Our fully electronic organ was installed in 1984 and is starting to show its age. A meeting was held with an Allen Organ representative and the local dealer representative from Craig's Pianos. From this meeting, it was determined that a brand-new console and speakers for the sanctuary would cost around \$200,000 to \$250,000. The current organ is still supported by service and parts if needed.

It bears repeating year to year that **we owe Tyler Martin a debt of gratitude** for all his collaboration to tackle so many tasks. At Tyler's side, often consulting, is **Michael Schuster**, who also deserves praise for his various expertise. Their propensity to research, analyze and make recommendations are integral to our operations at Olivet. Their very detailed report on many of the above projects is available in the church office and is submitted to Council. *Excerpts of it are contained within the above report.*

Thanks to the many folks mentioned and not mentioned in the pages of this Annual Report. You all make Olivet what we are—a caring, wonderful group of souls praising God through our daily work together.

We have the most devoted staff! Check out the years of service of many here, who together with Pr. Melissa, offer so many gifts and talents! We are blessed by God!

Pastoral Team

Melissa Micham

Lead Pastor (2016)

pastormelissa@olivetsylvania.org

Full-time salary

Pr. Robyn Provis

Interim Pastor (May 2024-June 2025)

Rebecca Cress

Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries (2021)

rcress@olivetsylvania.org

Full-time salary

Music Staff

Dr. Stephen Hodge

Adult Choir Director (1991)

stevehodge7464@gmail.com

Part-time salary

Carol Miller

Handbells Director (1991)

carolamiller5@hotmail.com

Part-time salary

Ash Lovegood

Praise Band Director (2020-2025)

Part-time salary

Sarah Lewis

Organist/Accompanist (2022)

sapianohymn@gmail.com

Part-time salary

Sunday Nursery Staff

Leaders: Cat Carlo, Marissa Espinosa (til Aug 2025)

Teen Helpers: Josie Billau, Lily Hammerling, Emily

Hepner, Eden Pollard, Addie Ruddy

Part-time, 3 hrs/wk

Administrative/Building Staff

Shannon Walker

Director of Operations (2003-Jan 2026)

Amie McGee

Director of Operations (Dec 1, 2025)

operations@olivetsylvania.org

Full-time salary

Jill Hepner

Membership + Ministry Coordinator (2024)

membership@olivetsylvania.org

Part-time, 20 hrs/wk

Sara Martin

Communications Specialist (2024)

communications@olivetsylvania.org

Part-time, 12 hrs/wk

Mike Vince

Financial Secretary (2001)

kvince@bex.net

Part-time salary

Andrea Laws

Day Custodian (2009)

Part-time, 20 hrs/wk

Danika Laws

Christian Life Center Custodian (2024-2025)

Classrooms Custodian (2026)

Part-time, 6 hrs/wk

Max Chipman, Part-time, 3-5 hrs/wk

Christian Life Center Custodian. (Jan 2026)

2026 PLANNED EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper | February 17

Ash Wednesday | February 18

Women's Retreat | March 7 & 8

Olivet Choir Lenten/Easter Cantata | March 22

Palm Sunday | March 29

Easter Sunday | April 5

Vacation Bible School | June 15 - 19

Rummage Sale | Plan for Late July

AND MUCH MORE TO COME!

Planned combined worship at 10 AM:

March 22: Sanctuary May 31: CLC

August 30: CLC

2025 MONTHLY ATTENDANCE

MONTH Time	IN PERSON			STREAM		
	9 a.m.	11 a.m.	10 a.m.*	9 a.m.	11 a.m.	10 a.m.*
Jan	334	194	176	179	118	74
Feb	369	197		255	110	
Mar	470	232	133	284	145	58
April	531	141	316	307	72	244
May	547	184		415	106	
June	433	175	154	207	114	129
July			463			296
August	447	195	101	258	139	83
September	365	156	328	259	281	154
October	509	198		331	125	
November	558	217		346	135	
Dec	264	119	335	101	110	255
TOTAL	4827	2008	2006	2942	1455	1293

	9 Live & Stream	11 Live & Stream	10 Live & Stream
Grand Total	7769	3463	3299

	In Person	Stream	Total
Ash Wednesday (noon)	30		30
Ash Wednesday (evening)	100	29	129
4/17 Maundy Thurs	84	60	144
4/18 Good Friday	102	44	146
4/20 Easter Sunrise	26		26
Holy Week Total	342	133	475

Christmas Eve	In Person	Stream	Total
4:00	66		66
7:00	112		112
9:30	194	101	295
Christmas Eve Total	372	101	473

* Combined Services

The Attendance Numbers reflect Sunday services are for informational purposes.

Any services that are not on Sunday are listed separately.

Total attendance for 2025 is **15,479**

Total attendance for 2024 was **15,511**