

The mission of Mount Olympus Presbyterian Church is to invite people to experience Jesus Christ and become his passionate followers.



**MOUNT OLYMPUS**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Volume LXI Issue 12

December 2025

# *Christmas Eve Services*

5 p.m. Children & Family Candlelight Service

8 p.m. Contemporary Candlelight Service\*

11 p.m. Traditional Communion Candlelight Service\*

\*The 8 p.m. & 11 p.m. services will be in-person and live-streamed on Facebook.

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## Advent: The Coming Light

Dear Friends,

Every year around this time, life seems to speed up. The lights go up, the calendars fill, the lists get longer. For many of us, December feels like a sprint—an endless game of catch-up with our own expectations. And yet, right in the middle of all that motion, Advent whispers a different invitation: slow down, look deeper, pay attention.

Advent isn't the church's attempt to compete with the holidays; it's our way of remembering why they matter at all. Underneath all the decorating and shopping and planning is a deeper ache—an ache for peace, for hope, for a sense that our lives are moving somewhere beautiful and true. That ache is holy. It's the soul's way of saying, We are waiting for God again.

In one of his Advent letters from prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that only those who wait for God can truly celebrate Christmas.<sup>1</sup> He wasn't talking about sitting still—he was talking about living with expectant trust, about daring to believe that even now, in this complicated world, God is still being born.

That's what Advent is about. It's not about pretending we're not busy; it's about carrying a quiet flame within all that busyness. It's about learning to see the sacred flickering inside ordinary things—the laughter at a dinner table, the kindness of a stranger, the forgiveness we didn't think we could give. It's about practicing the kind of hope that changes how we see the world.

Henri Nouwen called this “active waiting”—a hope that doesn't escape the world but leans into it with love.<sup>2</sup> We wait not by doing nothing, but by living as if love is already here. Because it is.

This Advent at Mount Olympus Presbyterian Church, we'll gather in worship and conversation to remember that the story of Jesus' birth is not just ancient history—it's our story, still unfolding. We'll light candles against the dark and sing songs of longing and joy. We'll explore together what it means to wait faithfully, to act meaningfully, and to find God's presence even when life feels unsteady.

So come, even if you feel rushed or weary. Come with your lists, your hopes, your losses, your prayers. Come ready to breathe again. For in this season, we are reminded that God still comes into the noise, the beauty, and the mess of real life.

And that's worth waiting for.

With peace and joy,



Pastor Chris

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *\*Letters and Papers from Prison\**, letter to Eberhard Bethge, December 17, 1943 (Touchstone, 1997), 186.
  2. Henri J.M. Nouwen, *\*Seeds of Hope: A Henri Nouwen Reader\**, ed. Robert Durbach (Image, 1997), 65.
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**WAITING WELL:** What does Advent have to say to us about waiting as a spiritual discipline that contributes to emotional health, spiritual vitality, and faithful action? Join us for group discussion and individual reflection as we explore personal applications of the Advent sermon series.



**DECEMBER SERMONS**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERMON TITLE</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE REFERENCES</u>
12/7	<i>Not All Actions Are Created Equal</i>	Matthew 3:1-12
12/14	<i>That's Okay, I'll Wait</i>	Matthew 11:2-11
12/21	<i>Don't Drop the Baby</i>	Matthew 1:8-25
12/24	<i>The Gift of Fragility</i>	Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
12/28		Matthew 2:13-23

**THE COMING LIGHT**

Waiting is generally something that the world does not like to do. Waiting is inconvenient and, depending on the source of the waiting, can be seen as some kind of affront to our personhood or perceived as the result of incompetence or malice. Sure, there are times when the frustration of waiting is justified and worthy of challenge. Learning to wait well, no matter the reason or the season, is a spiritual discipline that contributes to emotional health, spiritual vitality, and actions that are grounded in faith. This series will look at ways in which we can wait well, challenging the negative assumptions that waiting means inaction, apathy, or a lack of passion, and moving toward waiting that is deliberate, disciplined, and just.

Brooks, Kyle E. A Preacher's Guide to Lectionary Sermon Series, Volume 2: Thematic Plans for Years A, B, and C (p. 3). (Function). Kindle Edition.



There will be a Congregational Meeting following the 8:30 a.m. service on Sunday, December 21. This meeting is for the purpose of electing officers, the 2026 Nominating Committee, receiving the budget, and approving the pastor's terms of call.

Nominations for Deacons and Elders are as follows:

### **Deacons**

#### Class of 2028

Vicky Bicker  
Mara Chinchilla  
Kristy Hyres  
Jean Keller  
Pam Mahaney  
Micah Mahaney  
Jonathan O'Neal

#### Class of 2026

Adrienne Alward  
Christine Chytraus  
Karen Jackson

### **Elders**

#### Class of 2028

Mike Bicker  
Sarah Jelsema  
Gary Peterson  
Alie Serrato  
Brian Strike

#### Class of 2027

Dawn Wright

### **2026 Nominating Committee**

#### Nominated for Election

Jesse Allen  
Nancy Petersen  
Jim Wight  
Dennis Winge  
Gayle Wolfe

#### Representative Members

Elder Mark Templeman  
Deacon Adrienne Alward





## The Light Shines in the Darkness

We are entering the season of darkness. Between the end of daylight saving time and the long nights that follow the winter solstice, it's dark by 5:30 p.m., and I'm feeling ready for bed by 9 p.m. If all of life moves in rhythm and in season, then this is certainly the time for rest and turning inward—a time for cozy drinks by a crackling fire, quiet evenings, and keeping our loved ones close.

But this is also a time to acknowledge the darkness. We often want to rush past it, filling every quiet moment with sound, light, or distraction. Yet, in our spiritual lives, darkness and light carry deep significance. One of the very first acts of creation was when God spoke light into being: *"Let there be light."* (Genesis 1:3) From that moment on, Scripture tells the story of God bringing light into every place where darkness threatens to take hold.

Throughout the Old Testament, we see God lighting the way for His people. When darkness fell over Egypt, the Israelites still had light in their dwellings. In the wilderness, God guided them with a pillar of fire to give them light (Exodus 13:21). The psalmist proclaims, *"It is you who light my lamp; the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness."* (Psalm 18:28) God's light is not only illumination—it is guidance, protection, and life itself. *"For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."* (Psalm 36:9)

Then, in the fullness of time, light took on flesh and lived among us. Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12) In John's Gospel we read this profound assurance: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* (John 1:5) The birth of Christ is the dawning of that unquenchable light—the promise that no amount of shadow can extinguish God's presence or hope.

This is the invitation of Advent. It is a season not just of waiting for light, but of learning to see it even now—to notice its flicker in our world, in our communities, and within ourselves. The darkness is real, but it is not final. God's light still breaks in, offering hope, guidance, and warmth. And the miracle doesn't end there. Christ's light now shines through us. Jesus tells us, his followers, *"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others."* (Matthew 5:14-16) So as we journey through these shadowed days, may we rest in the hope that the Light of Christ still shines brightly—and may that light be reflected in us, bringing warmth and hope to others along the way.

Grace and peace,

Nikki  
Zyp

Nikki



The Presbytery of Utah now has a monthly e-newsletter. If you are interested in what is going on throughout the valley and state, you are invited to subscribe. Go to the Presbytery of Utah website, [www.pbyutah.org](http://www.pbyutah.org). On the home page, scroll to the bottom and complete the required information under “Join our e-newsletter” in the lower left corner.

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**Joyous Journey** is a monthly gathering of parents and allies as we walk the journey of life with our LGBTQ+ loved ones. We spend time learning and discussing how to care for and support the LGBTQ+ community and each other. Content includes educational videos, affirming Christian books, and fellowship. Please join us the first Sunday of every month in Room 507 at 9:45 a.m.

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The church office will be closed on December 25 and 26 for Christmas and January 1 for New Year's Day. The office will be closing at 3 p.m. on December 29-31.

**32nd Annual Performance**

*Highlights from George Frideric Handel's*

# *MESSIAH*

**Sunday, Dec. 14th, 7PM**

*Olympus High School Performing Arts Center  
4055 South 2300 East*

USED WITH PERMISSION. "AND I PARTOOK" BY KRISTIN YEE. COURTESY OF ALTUSFINEART.COM © 2025

**SCOTT MILLER** Conductor

**CLARA HURTADO** Soprano | **MANDI BARRUS** Mezzo-Soprano


**TODD MILLER** Tenor | **CHARLES HAMILTON** Bass

**KEITH DAVIS** Trumpet | **MEGAN PERRY** Harpsichord

*Presented by the Salt Lake Holladay Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of  
Latter-Day Saints and the Holladay Community Messiah Foundation  
together with members of the Holladay Interfaith Council.*

*Free Admission—Children over the age of 8 are welcome.  
Auditorium doors will open for seating at 6:30 PM.*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	2 6:30 am Men's Bible 9:30 am PW 7 pm Worship Team 7 pm AA	3 7 pm Mt O Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	4 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 6:30 pm Wm's Bible 7 pm Stephen Min	5 7 pm Rescue Mission 7 pm AA	6 11 am AA
7 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Discipleship for All Ages 9:45 am Joyous Journey	8 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	9 6:30 am Men's Bible 6 pm Finance 7 pm Deacons 7 pm AA	10 7 pm Mt O Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	11 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 12 pm Adult Fellowship Lunch 6:30 pm Wm's Bible	12 9 am Sandwich Making 4:30 pm St. Vincent's 7 pm AA	13 10 am Utah Food Bank 11 am AA
14 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Discipleship for All Ages 7 pm Contemplative Worship	15 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	16 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Session 7 pm AA	17 2 pm Chronic Conditions 7 pm Mt O Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	18 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 6:30 pm Wm's Bible 7 pm Stephen Min	19 7 pm AA	20 11 am AA
21 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:30 am Congregational Meeting 9:45 am Discipleship for All Ages 12:30 pm CM Christmas Eve Practice	22 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	23 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Adult Min 7 pm AA	24 3:30 pm CM Christmas Eve Practice  <u>Candlelight Services</u> 5 pm Family 8 pm Contemporary 11 pm Traditional Communion	25 Office Closed	26 Office Closed 7 pm AA	27 11 am AA
28 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Adult Discipleship	29 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	30 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm AA	31			



## WARM SOCK DRIVE

"When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matt.25:38-40

With the onset of cold weather, many in our community need help staying warm. As a Matthew 25 church, MOPC helps by providing new warm socks to The Rescue Mission, The Women's Shelter, and The Salt Lake City Mission. Many local stores offer great sales on socks this time of year, so when you are out doing your holiday shopping, please consider picking up some socks to add to the

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## PRISON FELLOWSHIP ANGEL TREE



For the last 40 years, MOPC has partnered with Prison Fellowship Angel Tree to provide presents to children of prisoners, helping to support their relationships with their children while they are incarcerated.

MOPC has volunteered to provide two presents each for 80 children with one or more incarcerated parents, along with a special note from their parent(s). The parent(s) sign their child(ren) up to participate in the program, and their caregiver agrees to let the child participate.

On the Sundays of November 30, December 7, and 14, the children's tags and gift suggestions will be displayed on a tree in the gathering area. You may select a child or a family of children and purchase two gifts, each valued at \$25-30, for each child. Then, deliver the gifts to the child(ren) before Christmas.

For any questions, please contact Gwen Mitchell at 801-550-4437



It's time to order your poinsettias! If you would like to help enhance our Christmas worship services, please fill out the form below and return it with \$15 per plant (cash or check made payable to MOPC—noting "Poinsettia" in the memo) to the church office. It is important that we have all requests NO LATER THAN SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7. The Christmas poinsettias are yours to take home after the 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service on December 24. Thank you for your special contribution to our services!

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

Given ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Given ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Given ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Given ☐ in honor of ☐ in memory of  
Name \_\_\_\_\_



UTAH  
FOOD  
BANK

MOPC's Team will meet Saturday, December 13, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Utah Food Bank, 3150 East and 900 West. People are hungry, and we can help them be fed by volunteering our time at the food bank. Children six and older are welcome to help with a parent. Come along and help others less fortunate!

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Every 2nd Friday of the month, volunteers from MOPC help serve our community by giving their time to assist St. Vincent de Paul in providing food to those in need. On these Fridays, at 9 a.m., we gather in the MOPC kitchen to prepare sandwiches to be delivered. Then, at 4:30 p.m., MOPC volunteers by serving meals at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Hall. The next opportunity to help will be December 12.

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### ADULT FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON



Fa, la, la, la, la – do you hear it? – Christmas is in the air. Come and join us for a fun time on December 11 at noon. Bring along a friend and your favorite dish to share. The Mt O Childcare children will sing for us, Ralph Paisley will read to us from Luke 2, and Bonnie and Ralph will lead us in a sing-along. Get your vocal chords ready!

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### MOPC CHRONIC CONDITIONS SUPPORT GROUP



If you or a loved one is affected by a chronic condition, we invite you to check out our support group. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month via Zoom to talk, pray, and encourage one another. Our next meeting is Wednesday, December 17, at 2 p.m. Please text or call Janet Nelson at 801-560-9044 for the Zoom link or more info.



## **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)**



Here comes December with packages and Christmas bells,  
But the most important event is Jesus' birth, the story to tell.

Our monthly meeting will be on Tuesday, December 2, at 9:30 a.m. in the gym. We'll start with light refreshments, and the meeting will begin at 10 a.m. Our Bible study will be led by Marilyn Marshall, and the hostesses will be Mike Richerson and Jill Baskett. In Honor of Betty Rider, the Christmas story will be read, carrying on her tradition for December.

Due to a generous specified offering, we were able to send a \$300 donation to the Thank Offering. This offering helps fund worthwhile projects worldwide, as well as locally. We recently had a "Native American Sisters" program and donated \$700 to the local Organization "Restoring Ancestral Winds." This organization supports Utah's eight federally recognized tribes by addressing domestic violence and sexual assault in their communities. It provides education, training, and advocacy to the tribes and organizations that serve Native Americans throughout Utah.

-Pauline Forster

## **MATTHEW 25 GIVING OPPORTUNITY**



Our current national economic situation, along with the recent government shutdown, has created an urgent need for food donations to support those struggling with food insecurity. In response to this food emergency, our Local Missions Team donated \$ 1,000 to local organizations that provide food for our hungry neighbors. Any members who would like to join us in addressing this need are encouraged to do so either through private giving or by putting non-perishable food donations in the Crossroads wagon in the gathering area.



# Mt O Youth

6th-12th grade students: Save the date for our annual Winter Retreat. This will be an amazing long weekend in Sun Valley, Idaho! More details coming soon.





# Mt O Kids

Last month, we were happy to give Bibles to ten of our 3rd-grade children. This is a wonderful rite of passage that MOPC celebrates every year. When we place importance on the act of giving them their own Bible, we do much more than hand them an ancient book. Instead we celebrate by saying, "this book matters, it is important, you are important, we want you to study and know the Word of God, you are loved, we want you to learn about Jesus and grow closer to him, we want you to learn about yourself, have direction for living in the world, love others, and love God."

-Jen Christensen, Director of Family Ministry



8:30 a.m. Service Bible Presentation



11 a.m. Service Bible Presentation



Reception with 3rd graders and their parents.

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## Ministry Staff

Pastor	Chris Pritchett
Pastoral Associate	Nikki Zyp
Pastor Emeritus	Jeff Silliman
Executive Administrator	Sheila Barnish
Administrative Assistant	Sarah Brozek
Director of Family Ministry	Jen Christensen
Treasurer	Roberta Bolton
Director of Childcare	Maddie Woodruff

## Contact Information

Office Hours:  
Mon-Thurs 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri. 9 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Phone: (801) 277-2674  
Fax: (801) 277-2059  
Pastor: [cpritchett@mtopres.org](mailto:cpritchett@mtopres.org)  
Pastoral Associate: [nzyp@mtopres.org](mailto:nzyp@mtopres.org)  
Exec. Administrator: [sbarnish@mtopres.org](mailto:sbarnish@mtopres.org)  
Newsletter Items: [sbrozek@mtopres.org](mailto:sbrozek@mtopres.org)  
  
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**Visit us on Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/mountolympuspresbyterian](http://www.facebook.com/mountolympuspresbyterian)

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## Elders Serving on Session

### Class of 2025

Amy Beckler  
Shauna Huston  
Kaye Freeman  
Armand Van Hien

### Class of 2026

Carol Day  
Megan Judkins  
Edward Owens  
Mark Templeman

### Class of 2027

Dana Baird  
Brad Hayden  
Rick Spratling  
Tammy Stevenson

## OUR MINISTRY OF CARE

### Board of Deacons

Adrienne Alward, Jill Baskett, Lonnie Baskett, Sherrie Bertrand, Chris Birch,  
Chris Chytraus, Thea Hayden, Julie Holtrop, Jan Ingerson, Karen Jackson,  
Marilyn Marshall, Debora Owens, Tamara Pluth, Becky Sowards,  
Jim Sowards, John Terrion, Anne Gerrie van Hien

### Stephen Ministers

Eric Brozek, Bethany Jones, Mike Magill, Kristina O'Neal\*, Susan Parker,  
Danielle Vaughns, Jim Wight, Kathy Wight, Lauri Winge\*

\*Stephen Ministry Leadership Team