

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



Volume LXII Issue 2

February 2026



Ash Wednesday Services

7 A.M. & 7 P.M.
FEBRUARY 18, 2026

There will be two Ash Wednesday services held Wednesday, February 18. At 7 a.m., Pastor Chris will offer an open space for self-led contemplative practice and the imposition of ashes. You may come anytime during the hour and remain as long as you feel led. At 7 p.m., we will hold a corporate worship service with the imposition of ashes.

IN THIS EDITION:

Message from Pastor Chris	Pages 2-3
February Sermons	Page 4
Adult Discipleship	Page 4
Message from Nikki Zyp	Page 5
Intro to MOPC Class	Page 6
Greet Your Deacon	Page 6

LENT AND THE JOY MEDITATION



The forty-day season of Lent begins this month, on February 18. Lent is a season of solemn observance in the Christian (liturgical) calendar. Lent is honored by many Protestant denominations, the Orthodox (though with slightly different dates), and the Roman Catholic Church, in preparation for Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday and goes for forty days (plus Sundays), concluding on Holy Saturday (Easter Eve). The forty days are meant to remind us of the forty days and forty nights Jesus spent in the desert, as well as the forty-year wilderness sojourn of the Hebrews, and the forty days Noah spent on the water.

The observance of Ash Wednesday often involves the marking of an ash cross on the Christian's forehead. We are reminded of our mortality (*ashes to ashes, dust to dust*), and we enter a season of repentance, fasting, and abstinence. Lent is about the inward journey—dying to ourselves and following Jesus to the cross. Lent is about obedience. Union with Christ. It's about sharing in Christ's suffering in order that we may share in his resurrection. Remembering our baptism is at the heart of this season.

Lent is a season of self-examination and reflection. It's a season to deepen our awareness of God's presence in our lives. Lent should draw us closer to the Lord in preparation for the great Easter celebration.

I would like to share a contemplative prayer I use during Lent. Feel free to carve out 20 minutes of time to reflect on the passage below and pray the J.O.Y. meditation that follows.

John 1:35–42

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The J.O.Y. Meditation is about learning to focus on Jesus, Others, and Yourself.¹

1. Focus on the Gospel passage above, John 1:35-42.
2. Sit quietly for a few minutes. Focus on your breathing (the word for “Spirit” in the Bible is also translated, “breath”). Attend to God’s presence in your breathing. Simply slow down your mind.
3. Read the passage slowly, taking in everything that is happening in the scene as Jesus talks.
4. Focus on Jesus. What was on his mind and heart that day? How did he feel about the people he was addressing? Why did he say these things to these people on this particular day?
5. After a while, slowly read the passage again. Think about the listeners in the story. Imagine where they were standing or sitting in relation to Jesus. Why were they there? What were they thinking? What were they seeking? What may have been their fears? Hopes?
6. Return to reading the passage a third time. Now imagine Jesus facing you and saying and doing to you what he said and did that day. How are you feeling about Jesus as he speaks? What is he really trying to say to you? How would your life change if you were to allow this gospel message to take root in your heart? How willing are you to make those changes?
7. If you feel called to do so, say “Yes!” to Jesus’ invitation for transformation within you.
8. Conclude your prayer time by asking God to transform you into the person God calls you to be.

With peace and joy,



¹Mark Thibodeaux, *Armchair Mystic* (Cincinnati: OH, Franciscan Media, 2001), 82-83



The church office will be closed on February 16 in observance of Presidents' Day



FEBRUARY SERMONS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERMON TITLE</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE REFERENCES</u>
2/1	<i>The Gift of Poetic Action</i>	Matthew 5:1-12
2/8	<i>The Gift of Public Witness</i>	Matthew 5:13-20
2/15	<i>The Gift of Unpredictable Jesus</i>	Matthew 17:1-9

NEW SERMON SERIES - JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

2/22	<i>Into the Wilderness</i>	Matthew 4:1–11
------	----------------------------	----------------

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP



Medical Ethics (Room 501)

Have you ever had to wrestle with a difficult decision about your health care or the care of a loved one? Drs. Mark Templeman and Mike Magill, along with invited experts in medicine, theology, and philosophy, will discuss a variety of medical topics in the context of our faith and current medical ethics principles. In February, we will tackle the topics of substance abuse, premature birth, and gender affirming care. Come prepared to share your thoughts and feelings about these challenging topics and to learn from the experts and each other.

The Character of God (Room 502)

This is a series on the character of God based on God's own self-description in Exodus 34. Join us as each week we consider God's compassion, grace, patience, loyal love, and faithfulness.





Recently, I was talking with a friend about a book we were both reading. She had already finished it, while I was only partway through and wavered in my commitment to actually see it to the end. We had different opinions about the book, and as we talked, we each shared what we loved—and what we didn't. It was a genuinely enjoyable conversation, but at the time, I didn't think much about it beyond that moment.

A few days later, I found myself picking the book back up. As I read, I realized something had shifted. I was reading with refreshed eyes. My friend's insights stayed with me, shaping how I approached the story. Passages I previously would have skimmed or found tiresome suddenly felt meaningful. I noticed themes I had overlooked and beauty I might have missed entirely. That conversation brought a new kind of life to the book, and I'm happy to report that I finished it—and truly enjoyed it. Had my friend not been open with me and shared her honest perspective, I likely would have set the book aside, missing out on something unexpectedly meaningful. While this was a low-risk conversation with a trusted friend, it taught me something important about community and vulnerability.

In our world today—which often feels polarized and quick to judge—it can be scary to share a different point of view, even when the topic seems simple. We may fear conflict, misunderstanding, or rejection. And yet, part of being faithful and engaged members of a community is showing up as our true selves. That is what vulnerability looks like. It is choosing honesty over self-protection and connection over comfort. Brené Brown, often called the queen of vulnerability, describes vulnerability not as weakness, but as the birthplace of connection. She reminds us that if we want to live fully and deeply connected lives, we must be willing to take emotional risks. Scripture echoes this truth. In Ecclesiastes we read, “Two are better than one... For if they fall, one will lift up the other” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10). God created us not for independence, but for interdependence.

There is another aspect of vulnerability that is just as important: the way hearing different perspectives can enrich our own. Returning to that book conversation, I realized that my friend's perspective didn't diminish mine—it expanded it. It was as if I could suddenly see another color that had always been there, but I lacked the eyes to notice. This is what vulnerability can do at its best. Proverbs reminds us, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). When we allow ourselves to be known and listen openly to others, we are shaped into wiser, more compassionate people.

So my encouragement to you—and to myself—is this: be willing to share your true self, and practice being a receptive listener when others do the same. As we take these small but meaningful risks, we make space for God to work in and through our relationships, becoming more fully the community God calls us to be.

Grace and peace,

Nikki
Zyp



We will hold an *Intro to MOPC* class on Sunday, February 15, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. This class is for anyone who wants to know more about what MOPC believes and how it operates. For those who are new and those who have attended for awhile. Whether you are looking to become a member or simply curious to find out more about MOPC. Sign up in the gathering area if you would like to participate. Childcare is available upon request.



Joyous Journey is a monthly gathering of parents and allies as we walk the journey of life with our LGBTQ+ loved ones. On February 1st, we will watch *1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted a Culture* and discuss it over the next few months. To learn more about this film, you can go to www.1946themovie.com. Please join us the first Sunday of every month in Room 507 at 9:45 a.m.



GREET YOUR DEACON

On Sunday, February 8, between services from 9:45-10:45 a.m., all are welcome to join us at our Greet Your Deacon event! Each deacon team will have a table in the gym ready with snacks and conversation. We are eager to meet you and hope to see you there.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Disciple- ship for All Ages 9:45 am Joyous Journey	2 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	3 6:30 am Men's Bible 11 am PW 7 pm Worship Team 7 pm AA	4 7 pm Mt O Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	5 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 6:30 pm Wm's Bible 7 pm Stephen Min	6 7 pm Rescue Mission 7 pm AA	7 11 am AA
8 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Greet Your Deacon 7 pm Contemplative Worship	9 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	10 6:30 am Men's Bible 6 pm Finance 7 pm Deacons 7 pm AA	11 7 pm Mt O Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	12 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 12 pm Adult Fellowship Lunch 6:30 pm Wm's Bible	13 9 am Sandwich Making 4:30 pm St. Vincent's 7 pm AA	14 10 am Utah Food Bank 11 am AA
15 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Adult Discipleship 12:30 pm Intro to MOPC	16 Office Closed 7 pm AA	17 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Session 7 pm AA	18 7 am & 7pm Ash Wednesday Services 2 pm Chronic Conditions	19 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 6:30 pm Wm's Bible 7 pm Stephen Min	20 7 pm AA	21 11 am AA
22 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Disciple- ship for All Ages	23 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm Personnel 7 pm AA	24 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Adult Min 7 pm Facilities 7 pm AA	25 7 pm Mt O Youth 7 pm Mt O 45	26 7 am Men's Bible 9:30 am Wm's Bible 6:30 pm Wm's Bible	27 7 pm AA	28 11 am AA

FEBRUARY Birthdays
and Events



UTAH
FOOD
BANK

The MOPC team will meet on Saturday, February 14, from 10 a.m. until noon (or however much time you can give) at the Utah Food Bank Warehouse, 3150 S and 900 W. What a great way to spend Valentine's Day by showing love for others! Children over age 6 are welcome with a parent. No open-toed shoes are permitted for your safety. See you there!



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 February 13.

ADULT FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON



The speaker for our February luncheon will be Russ Fericks from Wasatch Presbyterian Church. Russ's program will be "Search and Discovery on the Civil Rights Trail. Traveling through the south tracking America's complicated racial legacy and exploring her complex racial destiny." Come along, bring a friend, and your favorite dish to share. Join us on February 12 at noon in the gym. Helpers to set up are always welcome! Thank you.

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, February 18, at 2 p.m. Please text or call Janet Nelson at 801-560-9044 for the Zoom link or more info.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)



On February 3, we will have our annual Brunch Out at Marie Callender's restaurant at 11 a.m. Please call Mardi at 801-942-1160 to reserve your spot.

Mardi Lessey will also be leading our Bible study this month.

-Pauline Forster



Almost forty percent of foster parents quit within the first year due to a lack of support. Currently, a family in our church needs our help. The Care Communities program, associated with Utah Foster Care, provides support to foster families through Care Teams of 8-10 individuals or families. Each team provides a consistent connection, which improves outcomes for children and empowers foster families to continue fostering. MOPC Local Mission Team is offering the opportunity to form a Care Team through Care Communities. On February 15, Jenny Hill from Care

Communities will present a Minute for Mission at both worship services. We will hold a meeting soon for people interested in joining a Care Team. Please watch for the day and time in the One Minute Email. There are two training sessions involved: one online for 90 minutes and one in person for 150 minutes. These training sessions are excellent parenting resources that provide skills for understanding behavior resulting from trauma. The program is research-based and led by the needs of the individual foster family. More information is available at utahcarecommunities.org or by contacting Carol Day.



Mt O Youth

For more than 25 years, Mt. O Youth has hosted an amazing Winter Retreat in Sun Valley, Idaho. This year, as we found ourselves between Youth Directors, we weren't sure the retreat would happen. But thanks to an incredible team of dedicated volunteers, we were able to continue the tradition! In mid-January, more than 40 students and leaders traveled to beautiful southern Idaho to ski, play, worship, study, and deepen their relationships with God and with one another.

A heartfelt thank you to Jesse Allen, Courtney and Brian Babb, Bonnie and Tyler Beck, Anne Eshelman, Ty Johnson, Hannah McBrayer, Jonathan O'Neal, and Kris Zyp for making this meaningful weekend possible!





Mt O Kids

It's only February, but I'm already looking ahead to summer. This is not simply because I prefer warmer weather, but because summer is a very exciting time at MOPC. Vacation Bible School, our biggest event in Children's Ministry, is held every July! MOPC will host VBS for over 150 kids (ages 4 years old through 5th grade). The only way such a huge event is possible is with a big team of fabulous and dedicated VBS volunteers! We have volunteer positions for all ages: middle school students (those who have *completed* 6th grade) through great-grandparents! And we have volunteer positions for all interests: teaching, mentoring, snack preparation, decorations, tech support, supply acquisition and organization, music, set-up/clean-up, etc. Please mark your calendars now and watch for more announcements over the next several months. You won't want to miss this incredible week!

-Jen Christensen, Director of Family Ministry



MOPC VBS COMING JULY 13-17, 2026, 9 A.M. TO NOON!

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
Facilities Manager	Serene Cutler

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
Pastoral Associate: nzyp@mtopres.org
Exec. Administrator: sbarnish@mtopres.org
Newsletter Items: sbrozek@mtopres.org
Mount Olympus Presbyterian Church
3280 East 3900 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84124

Website: www.mountolympuschurch.com
Visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/mountolympuspresbyterian

Elders Serving on Session

Class of 2026

Carol Day
Megan Judkins
Edward Owens
Mark Templeman

Class of 2027

Brad Hayden
Rick Spratling
Tammy Stevenson
Dawn Wright

Class of 2028

Mike Bicker
Sarah Jelsema
Gary Peterson
Alie Serrato
Brian Strike

OUR MINISTRY OF CARE

Board of Deacons

Adrienne Alward, Sherrie Bertrand, Vicky Bicker, Chris Birch,
Mara Chinchilla, Chris Chytraus, Thea Hayden, Julie Holtrop, Kristy Hyres, Jan Ingerson,
Karen Jackson, Jean Keller, Micah Mahaney, Pam Mahaney,
Marilyn Marshall, Tamara Pluth, Becky Sowards, Jim Sowards

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