

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



Volume LXII Issue 1

January 2026



ANNUAL REPORT

A lot happened at MOPC in 2025! We sent a group of 34 people to Kenya this summer on a mission trip with ByGrace. We welcomed Pastoral Associate Nikki Zyp, and we completed several major facility improvements, including replacing the parking lot and the roof on the west wing of the building.

You'll want to check out our 2025 Annual Report, which highlights MOPC's many ministries and activities from the past year. The report will be available in print on Sunday, January 18, and on our website the following week.

A Congregational Meeting to receive the Annual Report will be held on Sunday, January 25, at 9:30 a.m.

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR CHRIS

January always feels a little like standing on a front porch at sunrise. The year is just beginning to brighten, and we get to pause for a moment and take in what's unfolding. In the church calendar, this is the Season of Epiphany. It is a time when we look for moments of clarity, insight, and surprise that help us see our lives, our relationships, and our community with greater honesty and hope.



3rd Graders receiving Bibles

Mount Olympus Presbyterian Church is experiencing many signs of life in this season. People continue to find community in meaningful ways, and the connections that form on Sunday mornings often carry into the week through friendships, Bible studies, and shared service. New members bring fresh energy and new stories that strengthen our collective life. Longtime members continue to show remarkable dedication and generosity, offering wisdom and stability that anchor the congregation. Our children and youth contribute questions, enthusiasm, and creativity that enrich our worship and shape our future. Together, these signs reveal a church that is growing in depth and vitality.

I am especially enthusiastic about the new elders and deacons who begin their service this month. These leaders will bring thoughtful perspectives, steady commitment, and a genuine love for the church. Their presence will strengthen our already-strong elders and deacons, and their willingness to serve reflects the best of our shared calling. Each of them steps into ministry with a deep sense of responsibility and a desire to nurture the spiritual health of our congregation. I am grateful for the energy they bring to our leadership teams, and I look forward to the ways their gifts will guide and support the life of Mount Olympus in the coming year.

The start of a new year offers an opportunity to nurture practices that support flourishing, both personally and as a community. Many people begin the year by establishing rhythms that create space for reflection, gratitude, and spiritual grounding. These practices may include a daily moment of quiet prayer, a return to a favorite passage of Scripture, a weekly walk with a trusted friend, or a renewed commitment to Sabbath rest. Each of these practices strengthens our capacity to live with clarity and intention.

Our community life also flourishes when we choose to engage with one another. Every gathering at Mount Olympus, whether it is worship, a small group conversation, a committee meeting, or a mission project, provides an opportunity to deepen relationships and strengthen our shared purpose. Encouraging one another, offering hospitality, and showing genuine interest in each other's lives foster a culture where belonging can grow. These everyday acts of connection build a foundation of trust and joy that supports the work God is doing among us.

The year ahead holds meaningful possibilities for our congregation. We will continue to welcome those who seek a thoughtful and spacious approach to faith. We will cultivate learning environments that nurture honest questions and spiritual growth. We will serve our neighbors with compassion and generosity. As these commitments take shape, Mount Olympus will continue to grow as a community in which people experience hope, strength, and companionship.

As we step into January, I feel deep gratitude for the Spirit that fills our church. I see dedication in our leaders, creativity in our ministries, warmth in our fellowship, and a genuine desire for spiritual depth in our communal life. These qualities create a strong and vibrant foundation for the coming year.

May the light of Epiphany guide us into a season of flourishing and joy. May we enter this year with open hearts, attentive spirits, and a willingness to grow. And may our shared life at Mount Olympus continue to reflect the goodness and grace that sustain us all.

With peace and joy,



Pastor Chris



JANUARY SERMONS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERMON TITLE</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE REFERENCES</u>
1/4	<i>The Gift of Light</i>	John 1:1-9
1/11	<i>The Gift of Committed Community</i>	Matthew 3:13-17
1/18	<i>The Gift of Unbridled Curiosity</i>	John 1:29-42
1/25	<i>The Gift of Bold Action</i>	Matthew 4:12-23

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

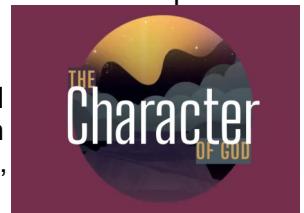


Medical Ethics (Room 501)

Have you ever had to wrestle with a difficult decision about your health care or the care of a loved one? At some point, many of us will likely be confronted by decisions on things like end-of-life care, infertility, pregnancy complications, abortion, congenital problems, gender identity concerns, addictions, and vaccinations. This series will begin with one session on a process for safe, respectful dialogue on issues that can elicit intense feelings (January 4) and one on the relevance of medical ethics to our faith (January 11). Then, Drs. Mark Templeman and Mike Magill, along with invited experts in medicine, theology, and philosophy, will discuss these topics in the context of our faith and current medical ethics principles. 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)

On January 4, we begin a six-week 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.





I've been thinking a lot about Mary, the mother of Jesus, lately—perhaps because we've just come through the Christmas season. I imagine Mary, having experienced one divine encounter after another, slowly coming down from that spiritual high back into ordinary, everyday life. Think about it: first, an angel appears to her, then she miraculously becomes pregnant. Elizabeth's baby leaps in the womb when Mary and Jesus (in utero) draw near. God inspires both Mary and Elizabeth to speak prophetic words. And that's just the beginning. There's the journey to Bethlehem, labor and delivery in a stable, the star, the shepherds, the wise men, and then fleeing to Egypt.

All of this must have felt like a dream to an uneducated, Middle Eastern teenage girl.

And then life went back to normal... or as normal as it can be when you're raising the Son of God. Mary had to learn how to be a mom, change diapers, and be married. She had a home to manage and the daily, unglamorous tasks that fill every ordinary life. Mary had to navigate the transition from an incredible spiritual mountaintop experience to the quiet rhythm of everyday living. I think we often skip over this part of her story—I know I do. Yet this is the part I relate to most. We've all experienced spiritual, emotional, or mental "highs"—those exciting moments when we feel fully alive. But those moments inevitably fade, and we find ourselves back in the real world. Our divine encounters don't end when we come down from the mountain. In fact, I believe the way we encounter God in the mundane is just as important—if not more so—than those breathtaking mountaintop moments.

Brother Lawrence, a French Carmelite monk from the 1600s, understood this beautifully. His conversations and letters, later gathered into the book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, describe his simple life as a lay brother who worked in the monastery kitchen for fifteen years. He wrote that he tried to do "everything for the love of God, asking as often as possible for grace to do his work." He went on to say that "we ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed."

As we settle back into the routines of ordinary life, I invite you to join me in practicing the presence of God in all we do—approaching even the most mundane tasks with great love and welcoming God into each moment. May these simple, everyday moments be as transformative as the mountaintop ones.

Grace and peace,

Nikki
Zyp

Nikki

INCOMING ELDERS



Mike Bicker has been a member of Mt Olympus for almost 30 years. His kids attended the youth ministry programs through high school. Mike has been going to Men's Bible study with the Thursday group for the past 14 years. He has just retired from the golf industry after managing two courses for 35 years. He always said he would like to be more involved with the church when he retired and had the time to give, so now is the time. Mike looks forward to serving in any capacity that he can. Mike hopes to get to know more of the great people at Mt O, and being on session is a good way to start!

Sarah Jelsema has been an MOPC member since 2019. She attends the 8:30 a.m. service with her family. Sarah, her husband, Chi Yen, and their sons, Peter and Paul, have enjoyed the benefits of participating in activities at MOPC over the years. She is happy to take a turn helping keep the church running smoothly. Sarah works as a lawyer at an Oregon-based law firm and specializes in intellectual property litigation.



Gary Peterson is a retired Veterinarian who ran a small-animal practice for 52 years. He has been a member of MOPC since 1983. Gary has served as an elder in the past. Serving on both the facilities and personnel teams. He has worked in the sound booth at the 8:30 a.m. service for years, during the first and second weeks of each month.



Alie Serrato was born and raised in Salt Lake City and spent 20 years living in Silicon Valley before returning to Utah. She and her husband have four children, along with a dog and a small flock of chickens that keep life lively at home. For the past 20 years, she has worked as an attorney in both the justice system and business immigration. Outside of work, she loves to travel, spend time with friends, and get lost in a good book. While cooking isn't her favorite pastime, she's always up for enjoying great food.

Brian Strike and his family—his wife, Jessie, and their daughters, Lucy (9) and Ellie (6)—have been attending MOPC for the past three years. They became members a year ago, and Brian has served on the Nominating Committee in 2025. Brian and Jessie have lived in Salt Lake for 15 years, having moved from Nashville, Tennessee, where they met while attending college.

Brian has worked in the biotech industry for over 20 years and currently serves as the head of marketing for a company focused on improving the diagnosis of infectious diseases. In his free time, he enjoys hiking and skiing with his family and listening to nonfiction audiobooks.



Dawn Wright and her family came to MOPC in 2019. She and her husband, Jared, met in Los Angeles, where they lived for about 10 years before moving to Utah in 2013. They have three children – Adeline (14), Asher (12), and Davis (8). Their family enjoys spending time together in Salt Lake's arts and entertainment district.

Dawn works as Community Relations Director at Select Health and regularly teaches a class at the University of Utah.

On Sundays, you can find Dawn leading Parents Café – a ministry that has blessed her life immensely.

INCOMING DEACONS



Vicky Bicker grew up in Evanston, Illinois. She attended the University of Utah and graduated with a BFA in dance. After school, she married her husband, Mike, and taught dance at the Children's Center while also performing with Repertory Dance Theater. Later, she went back to school to become a Physical Therapy Assistant. Vicky recently retired from the Granite School District after 20 years working with children with special needs. Mike and Vicky have three children and have been members of Mount O for about 30 years. This will be her second term serving as a deacon. She looks forward to meeting the families and helping where she can.

Mara Chinchilla emigrated from Honduras in 1993 and is now a US citizen and considers it her home. She has two undergraduate degrees in Communications and Health Sciences Administrative Services, and a Master's in Health Administration. She is currently a realtor and also works as a Patient Coordinator for the University of Utah Community Clinics.

Mara is the proud mom of six adult children and became engaged to Nathan McBride, who also attends MOPC, at the beginning of 2025. She loves to sing, write poetry, sell houses, and play pickleball. Two things Mara loves most in life are to serve and to love, so she is honored to be elected a deacon.



Chris Chytraus is a retired nurse. She has been a member at MOPC since 2013. She has taught Sunday school, served as a deacon and an elder, and is happy to help on the deacon board again. Chris has two children, Christopher and Megan. She can frequently be seen with her granddaughter, Lola, who loves to attend church with her.



Kristy Hyres moved to Salt Lake City in 2018, after growing up in Southern California and then spending time in Seattle, the Bay Area, and Virginia. Kristy and her husband, Alex, began attending MOPC in 2022 along with their daughters, Elodie (9) and Lucia (6). Kristy teaches 2nd grade and enjoys reading, traveling, baking, and gardening. Kristy and Alex have enjoyed leading their community group for the past year, and she is looking forward to this new opportunity to serve the church community as a deacon.

Jean Keller was born and raised in a large family in Wisconsin and graduated from the College of Nursing at Marquette University. She enjoyed a 40-year career helping people before retiring. Jean's hobbies involve being out in nature: biking, hiking, XC skiing, etc.

She and her husband, Wes, have been married for 56 years and have four adult children and six grandchildren.

Jean is thankful to be asked to continue helping as an MOPC deacon and looks forward to being more involved in the MOPC faith community.



Micah Mahaney has enjoyed doing metal fabrication/smithing and watching his granddaughter grow up while living in Utah. He and his wife, Pam, have been members of MOPC for two years and attend the 11 a.m. Sunday service. Micah helped to write the Anti-discrimination Policy for the Presbytery of Utah and always enjoys his friends in their book studies. Serving on the LMT Committee and the Chronic Conditions group and attending Men's Retreats have been blessings to Micah. As a deacon, he looks forward to meeting, socializing with, and serving congregants and interfaith groups.

INCOMING DEACONS CONT'D

Pam Mahaney and her husband, Micah, relocated from Texas in 2022 and joined MOPC in 2024. They regularly attend the 11 a.m. service with their granddaughter. As a deacon, Pam wants to support MOPC leadership, members, and the local community while deepening her faith. She enjoys serving with MOPC in various ways already. After semi-retiring from a career in healthcare administration in June, Pam now works part-time designing outreach programs to encourage health plan members to access preventive and chronic care services. She enjoys walking her dog, reading, listening to podcasts, gardening, and crafts, and family activities.



Jonathan O'Neal and his wife, Kristina, became members of MOPC in 2023. They have four children and usually attend the 11 a.m. service and participate in Parents' Café. Jonathan works in Real Estate and comes from a construction background. Becoming a deacon has been a meaningful process for Jonathan. To be asked to serve in this capacity of connecting with people and serving others in our congregation is something he loves to do, and it will be an honor to be a part of such a caring and giving group of faithful leaders.



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.



The church office will be closed on January 1 for New Year's Day and January 19 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

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



UTAH
FOOD
BANK

The MOPC team will meet on Saturday, January 10, at 10 a.m. until noon (or however much time you can give) at the Utah Food Bank Warehouse, 3150 S and 900 W. Let's start the New Year off right with helping 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 January 9.



ADULT FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

At our January gathering, Joel Holtrop will share his time spent with the Indigenous People of Brazil. We are excited to hear of these adventures, and we don't even have to leave the country! Bring along a friend and your favorite dish to share for some fun, food, and fellowship as we take an armchair trip to Brazil. We will meet on Thursday, January 8, at noon in the gym at MOPC. Start 2026 off with a fabulous program with Joel. See you there!



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, January 21, 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 January, how much snow will fall
We can be "doers" in Winter if we answer the call.

In December, we heard the story "The Gift of the Magi," read by Julie Davidson with delicious refreshments, including figgy pudding made by Dave Richerson. We have been graced by some of our men's cooking lately! A donation was also made to the Utah Food Bank in December.

Our regular MOPC PW meeting will be on Tuesday, January 6, at 9:30 a.m. at MOPC in the gym. We will start the new year off with light refreshments and a guest speaker! Our speaker will be Amy Boyock, who will present on foster parenting and share ways we can be "doers" without parenting. Our January hostesses will be Roberta Bolton and Sher Santaw. There will be no Bible study on days that we have a guest speaker. We look forward to welcoming newcomers, as well as our guest, Amy. Hope to see you all on there!

-Pauline Forster



A birds eye view of our new roof. Did you know even the design of our roof professes our faith?



Mt O Youth

We wrapped up 2025 in Mt. O Youth with a laughter-filled Christmas party—complete with a hot chocolate bar and a silly white elephant gift exchange (see picture below). This year, we've been blessed by dedicated volunteers who give of themselves so generously to love and support our youth students. A special thank you to Heather Allen for tirelessly overseeing our Wednesday night youth programming while we're between youth directors.

We're excited to see what God has planned for Mt. O Youth in 2026!





Mt O Kids

After many weeks of practice, the children of MOPC led a wonderful Children and Family Christmas Eve Service! A special thank you to Megan Judkins, Hannah McBrayer, and Amy Beckler for their preparation and positivity in directing our children during this special service.

-Jen Christensen, Director of Family Ministry



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

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Elders Serving on Session

Class of 2026

Carol Day
Megan Judkins
Edward Owens
Mark Templeman

Class of 2027

Dana Baird
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, Jonathan O'Neal, 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