

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



Volume LXII Issue 7

July 2026



For one week in June, our Mt O 4th and 5th graders worked hard volunteering all over the Salt Lake Valley during Service Camp. Turn to page 11 for more photos and to find out how they helped serve our community.

IN THIS EDITION:

Message from Pastor Chris	Pages 2-4
July Sermons	Page 4
Pew Books Dedication Form	Page 5
Kenya Mission Info	Page 6
Message from Nikki Zyp	Page 7-8
Silliman Memorial Details	Page 8

HOW TO LISTEN TO A SERMON - A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR CHRIS

One of the greatest joys of my work, for me, is the journey of preaching. I call it the journey of preaching for several reasons: 1. Because every week is a journey from Monday morning when I open the text to Sunday when the sermon is delivered. The preacher goes on a quest every week. The actual delivering of the sermon is a very small part of that quest. 2. Because sermons don't stand alone in the life of a congregation, and rarely does one's life change as a result of one sermon. Instead, together we are shaped by the collection of sermons delivered and received over a sustained period of time.

Theodore Roosevelt delivered these famous words in Paris in 1910: "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

We tend to read those words and picture the preacher. And preaching is, without question, an arena experience. The person who stands at the pulpit has spent the week in the text, wrestling with what it demands, trying to hear something true, and then standing before a congregation trusting that what they found is worth saying aloud. That is a vulnerable and courageous act. But our theology will not let us stop there, because it insists that there are no spectators in the sanctuary. We are all in the arena together.

The Theology Behind the Listening

Reformed theology holds that the preaching of the Word is a means of grace, set alongside baptism and the Lord's Supper as one of the primary ways God addresses and forms the church. This is a remarkable claim. It means that something is genuinely at stake on a Sunday morning beyond information or inspiration. The Holy Spirit is at work in the speaking and in the hearing simultaneously, and the sermon is not complete until it lands in a listening community. The congregation is not the backdrop for the preacher's performance. The congregation is constitutive of the event itself.

The ancient church knew this instinctively. When scripture was read aloud and interpreted in the gathered assembly, the people were active participants in a living encounter with the Word of God. They brought their lives, their wounds, their questions, and their longings into the room, and those things were part of what the Spirit worked with. Preaching was always communal before it was individual. It happened between people, not simply to them.

What This Season Asks of You

By the time you read this, I will be on sabbatical. Over the coming months, a number of gifted preachers will stand in this pulpit and bring you God's Word. Each one carries a different voice, a different set of experiences, a different angle on the text. That is one of the gifts of this season. God has more to say than any one preacher can carry, and a voice you have never heard before may open something in the scripture you have been walking past for years.

Your part in this communal act matters. Here is how to take it seriously.

Come prepared. Before the service begins, take a few quiet moments to ask yourself where your life most needs light right now. You do not need to announce this to anyone. Hold the question inwardly, and then listen for where the sermon makes contact with it. The most significant moment in a sermon is often the one the preacher did not plan as the climax. It is the sentence that drops into you like a stone into still water. Pay attention to those moments.

Pray for the preacher. Roosevelt's arena language applies here in full. The person at that pulpit is striving valiantly, spending themselves in something they believe is worthy. Your prayerful attention, both before and while they speak, is a form of grace. It is your active contribution to the event.

Engage the text. Bring your Bible if you'd like, even though that is not a common practice at Mount Olympus. Follow along. Let the words land in their original context before the sermon interprets them. The preacher is a guide into the text, and you are a traveler, not a passenger.

Receive it into your body, not just your mind. Notice what stirs in you. Emotion, resistance, relief, conviction, curiosity. These are not distractions from the sermon. They are often the sermon doing its work. The Word of God is described in Hebrews as living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, and it cuts at the level of feeling as much as thinking.

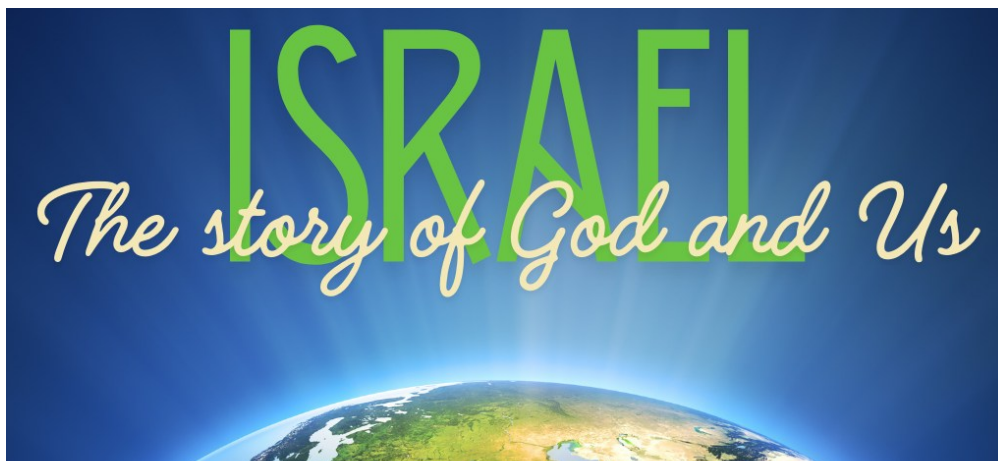
Take one thing with you. A sentence. An image. A question. Write it on the back of your bulletin or in your phone. Sit with it over lunch. Let it follow you into the week. The sermon does not end when the benediction is spoken. It ends when the word has done what it came to do in your life.

Commit to something concrete. Ask yourself before you leave the building: what does this ask of me? A sermon that produces only a feeling has done half its work. The full movement of preaching runs from proclamation to formation to action. You complete that arc.

A Closing Word

This congregation knows how to be present. I have witnessed it across six years of Sundays, and it is one of the things I love most about this community. You lean in. You bring your whole selves. You let the Word have room to move.

Carry that same quality of attention into this summer, and extend it generously to every voice that stands in this pulpit. They are in the arena. So are you. And the God who speaks through the foolishness of preaching, as Paul once called it, will meet you there.

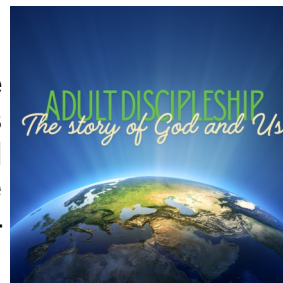


JULY SERMONS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERMON TITLE</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE REFERENCES</u>	<u>GUEST PREACHER</u>
7/5	<i>Joseph Forgives</i>	Genesis 45:1–8, 15	Rev. Catherine Putnam
7/12	<i>Burning Bush</i>	Exodus 3:1–12	Rev. Robin Nygaard
7/19	<i>Passover</i>	Exodus 12:1–4	Rev. Robin Nygaard
7/26	<i>Red Sea</i>	Exodus 14:10–16, 21–31	Rev. Mirjam Haas-Melchior

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

The Story of God and Us: We will continue throughout the summer with our Bible study that parallels the sermon series by providing an opportunity to further explore the themes and Scriptures in small group discussion and exchange. Come with your questions, ready to learn from one another! Sundays at 9:45 a.m. in Room 501.



Dedicate a new Bible or Hymnal



NEW BIBLES AND HYMNALS

We're excited to be getting new Bibles and hymnals for our sanctuary. If you would like to dedicate one in honor or loving memory of someone special, you may do so with a \$25 donation, which covers the cost of either a Bible or a hymnal. When making a donation, please indicate whether it is for a Bible or a hymnal and to whom you'd like it dedicated. A dedication label will be placed inside the front cover.

DEDICATE A PEW BIBLE OR PEW HYMNAL

For \$25* per book, you can help MOPC purchase new pew Bibles and hymnals.

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

YOUR NAME _____

PHONE # _____

Check here if you would like your gift to be anonymous

BIBLE HYMNAL

Given in honor of in memory of

A gift from

Name _____

BIBLE HYMNAL

Given in honor of in memory of

A gift from

Name _____

HOW HAVE YOU PAID?* Check

Venmo

*Indicate "Sanctuary Books" in the memo of your payment.

KENYA MISSION TRIP JUNE 2027

We will be taking a multigenerational mission trip to the ByGrace schools in Nairobi, Kenya, in June of 2027. The tentative dates for the trip are June 4-16. We will spend five days working at the ByGrace school and one day worshipping with them, then go on a four-day safari adventure exploring Amboseli National Park and Tsavo West. Please pray about whether God is calling you to join this mission effort. Junior high and senior high youth are welcome to join the team with a parent. We hope to limit the number of team members to 34. We have done two previous mission trips to the ByGrace school in 2023 and 2025. Contact Dennis Winge for more details at dennis.winge@hsc.utah.edu



Tentative Schedule for the Trip:

Friday, June 4: Depart on flights to Nairobi

Saturday, June 5: Arrive in Nairobi and take transportation to the Kijiji Guest House on the campus of African International University

Sunday, June 6: Worship at ByGrace and an afternoon hike in Ngong Hills

Monday, June 7 to Friday, June 11: Work projects at the school

Saturday, June 12: Depart for Amboseli National Park with lodging at the Kibo Safari Lodge, with an evening safari drive

Sunday, June 13: Safari drive in Amboseli National Park, lunch and dinner at Kibo Lodge

Monday, June 14: Drive to Tsavo West, afternoon safari drive at Tsavo; stay at Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge

Tuesday, June 15: Drive back to Nairobi, farewell at ByGrace, and depart for the US

Wednesday, June 16: Arrive in Salt Lake



Last year, my husband and several of his adventure-loving friends discovered hiking poles. If you've spent any time on the trails recently, you've probably noticed them too. Apparently, hiking poles are not just a passing fad. They reduce strain on your joints, improve stability, increase calorie burn, and can even be used to clear spiderwebs, test the depth of a creek crossing, or deter a bear.

Naturally, my husband wanted to share this life-changing discovery with me. He explained the many benefits of hiking poles. Every time we hiked, he found a way to mention how much better my life would be if I would just give them a try. He even offered to buy me my own pair.

I had nothing against hiking poles. I simply liked my current setup. I enjoyed having my hands free. So I declined his repeated invitations to join the hiking-pole revolution. But he persisted. All summer long, whenever we hit the trail together, he turned into a hiking pole evangelist. While I did not doubt that hiking poles were good news for him, they were, at that time, not for me. Eventually, his zeal became so intense that I told him that if he mentioned hiking poles one more time, I would stop hiking with him altogether. After that, he wisely backed off.

Ironically, it was only after the pressure disappeared that I became curious. I did a little research of my own. Then, on one particularly steep downhill trail, I asked if I could borrow his poles. To his credit, he showed remarkable restraint. He did not launch into another sales pitch. He did not even smile smugly. He simply handed me the poles. And, over time, I became a convert.

I think about that experience often because, as Christians, we have genuinely good news to share. Not only the good news of salvation, but also the good news of the many promises of God: grace, forgiveness, community, hope, and God's faithful presence in our lives. Yet sharing good news requires more than enthusiasm. It requires wisdom. The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us that "for everything there is a season ... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7). Knowing what to say is important. Knowing when to say it may be even more important. You would not tell someone who is grieving to stop mourning and start dancing before the Lord like David. You would sit beside them in their sorrow. Likewise, someone wrestling with doubt may not need simple answers. They may first need someone willing to listen.

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Paul writes, "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). When we enter into partnership with God, we can sense the leading of the Holy Spirit and determine how to share the power of God rather than foolishness. That, however, takes wisdom, patience, and relationships—not just with God—but with our recipient. Sometimes that means speaking. Sometimes that means listening. Sometimes it means waiting patiently until someone is ready to borrow a hiking pole.

May God grant us the wisdom, patience, and compassion to be bearers of good news in ways that are truly heard as good news. Peace.

Grace and peace,

Nikki Zyp
Nikki Zyp



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 6:30 pm Wm's Bible	3 Office Closed 7 pm Rescue Mission 7 pm AA	4 11 am AA
			5 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Independence Day Brunch	6 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	7 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Office and Tech 7 pm AA	8
Youth Week						
12 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Adult Discipleship 7 pm Contemplative Worship	13 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	14 6:30 am Men's Bible 6 pm Finance 7 pm Deacons 7 pm AA	15 2 pm Chronic Conditions	16 6:30 pm Wm's Bible 7 pm Security Team	17 7 pm AA	18 11 am AA 2 pm Silliman Memorial
VBS						
19 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Adult Discipleship	20 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm AA	21 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Session 7 pm AA	22	23 6:30 pm Wm's Bible	24 Office Closed 7 pm AA	25 11 am AA
26 8:30 & 11 am Worship 9:45 am Adult Discipleship	27 12:30 pm Staff 7 pm Personnel 7 pm AA	28 6:30 am Men's Bible 7 pm Adult Min 7 pm Facilities 7 pm AA	29	30 6:30 pm Wm's Bible	31 7 pm AA	



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Mt. O will be hosting Vacation Bible School July 13–17. **We have reached our maximum capacity for participants**, with over 150 kids registered for this amazing week. The only way we're able to welcome so many children is because of the incredible support of our volunteers. From youth students to grandparents—and every age in between—our volunteers make VBS possible. We're so grateful for the enthusiasm they bring to help create a meaningful and fun week for our kids. Sign up to volunteer for VBS at vbspro.events/p/mopc2026, or by contacting Jen (jjchristensen@mtopres.org). You won't want to miss out on this exciting week!

Another way you can help is by donating supplies for VBS. You can find slips with needed donations on the wall in the Gathering Area.

BEWARE OF SCAMS!



We want to make you aware of a scam targeting churches.

Some individuals have received emails or text messages that appear to come from our pastor or church staff—but these messages are not legitimate. Scammers often gather names from publicly available sources, social media, or use contact information obtained through other means.

These messages typically create a sense of urgency and may ask for gift cards, money, or personal information. This is one example, "How are you doing today? Do you have some time? I have a request I need you to handle discreetly. I am currently busy; there are no calls, just reply to my email."

Please remember:

- Our pastor and staff will never request gift cards, money, or sensitive information by email or text.
- Always check the sender's actual email address, not just the display name, as scammers often use addresses that look similar but are not correct.
- Do not respond to suspicious messages or click on any links. Delete the email.

If in doubt, contact the church office directly to verify, 801-277-2674. Thank you for helping us protect our community.



ONE MINUTE EMAIL UPDATE

Give us one minute and we'll keep you in the loop!

Are you signed up for our weekly One Minute Email Update? It's a great way to stay up to date on what's going on each week at MOPC. If you'd like to receive these emails, please contact the church office at 801-277-2674 or email sbarnish@mtopres.org and we'll add you to our One Minute Email list.



Our regular monthly volunteer Saturday is July 11 from 10 am until noon (or as much time as you can give). We will meet at the Utah Food Bank at 3150 S and 900 W. We look forward to having a fun time while helping others less fortunate. On Saturdays, children 12 years and older are welcome with a parent. Remember that closed-toed shoes are required. Hope to 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. Children 12 and older may help. The next opportunity to help will be July 10.



ADULT FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

Thank you, Miss Jen, and all the Service Camp kids, for a great lunch and for the fun of conversing with all of you! This is always something we look forward to each June. You are all a wonderful example of our youth today. Blessings and many thanks again.



The church office will be closed on **July 3** in observance of Independence Day and **July 24** for Pioneer Day.



INDEPENDENCE DAY POTLUCK BRUNCH

JULY 5 ★ 9:45 AM



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 206 at 9:45 a.m.



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, July 15, at 2 p.m. Please text or call Janet Nelson at 801-560-9044 for the Zoom link or more info.



Mt O Youth

Grateful to Join the Staff

Thank you for your kind and hospitable welcome! My wife, Amy, and I are settled into our new home in Murray, and we are excited to be part of our incredibly talented staff at Mt O. It is a joy and honor to serve as your new youth director.

-Matt Vaughan, Director of Youth Ministry



Youth Week – A Summer Quest!

The highlight of our summer youth calendar will be Youth Week on July 5–9! We've planned five solid days of fellowship and service activities for youth who have completed grades 6-12.

Students may sign up for the entire week, part of the week, or individual days. An official Mt O Youth T-Shirt is included with most activities! Learn more and register online at: tinyurl.com/mtoyouth26

VBS Week and Thank You Celebration

Youth are invited to help with VBS week on July 13–17! Contact Matt or Jen for more information. We'll have a thank-you celebration activity on Friday, July 17, at 12 pm to share appreciation for the youth who volunteered as leaders all week. We'll share information with youth volunteers during VBS!



Mt O Kids

In June, Mt. O Kids hosted a weeklong “Service Camp” for 4th-5th graders. We started the week talking about Jesus’ call for us to love and serve others. Then we traveled all over the Salt Lake Valley, practically living out this call by volunteering in Big Cottonwood Canyon, at Youthline, the Animal Shelter, St. Vincent de Paul Dining Hall, Tiny Tim’s Toys, and The Sharing Place. We also hosted the Adult Fellowship Luncheon, decorated ornaments for Operation Ornament, and made 500 sandwiches for St. Vincent’s. It was an amazing week with 25 incredible kids!

-Jen Christensen, Directory of Family Ministry



Visiting the kittens at the animal shelter.



Preparing snacks at St. Vincent de Paul’s



Trail cleanup in BCC with the US Forest Service.



Sanding cars at Tiny Tim’s Toys.

Ministry Staff

Pastor	Chris Pritchett
Pastoral Associate	Nikki Zyp
Executive Administrator	Sheila Barnish
Administrative Assistant	Sarah Brozek
Director of Family Ministry	Jen Christensen
Director of Youth Ministry	Matt Vaughan
Treasurer	Roberta Bolton
Director of Childcare	Jolie Bawden
Facilities Manager	Serene Cutler

Contact Information

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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
Kris Zyp

Class of 2028

Mike Bicker
Sarah Jelsema
Gary Peterson
Alie Serrato
Brian Strike

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Marilyn Marshall, Tamara Pluth, Becky Sowards, Jim Sowards, Judy Spratling

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