

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



Volume LXII Issue 5

May 2026

The poster has a light blue background with a subtle pattern. At the top, the text "MEMORIAL DAY" is in red, and "POTLUCK BRUNCH" is in a larger, bold red font. Below that, "MAY 24 - 9:45 AM" is in red. The central image shows three glass jars: one with yogurt and raspberries, one with granola and walnuts, and one with chia pudding and raspberries. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "BRING YOUR FAVORITE DISH TO SHARE" in white.

MEMORIAL DAY  
**POTLUCK BRUNCH**  
MAY 24 - 9:45 AM

BRING YOUR FAVORITE DISH TO SHARE

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## A Season Apart: Reflections on Sabbatical



This June, I will step away from the regular rhythms of ministry at Mount Olympus Presbyterian Church for a sabbatical. I want to share what this season means, what I hope to receive from it, and how you can hold it and me in prayer.

The word "sabbatical" comes from the Hebrew word "Shabbat" (Sabbath), meaning "cease" and "rest," but in the Biblical understanding, it means more than just a day off. It is a day consecrated to God, when God's people cease to do ordinary labor, but instead rest, worship, and enjoy God's creation. In academic life, sabbaticals are extended Sabbaths, times apart from ordinary duties for the purpose of further education and research in one's field. In recent years, many churches have begun to grant periodic sabbatical leave to pastors and other professional workers.

A sabbatical, according to the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), is a "planned time of intensive enhancement for ministry and mission." Different from a vacation, it is meant to be an opportunity for the pastor to strategically disengage from normal tasks so that mission and ministry might be viewed from a new perspective.

Our MOPC Employee Handbook invites pastors to take a three-to-four-month sabbatical after six years of service (non-ordained staff also have a sabbatical policy at MOPC), and this June marks exactly six years since I arrived at Mount Olympus. This is my first sabbatical in my twenty-three years of full-time ministry. The policy exists because the church understands something true about the long arc of pastoral vocation: that sustainability requires intentional renewal, that the people who care for others must themselves be cared for, and that a pastor who returns from genuine rest serves the congregation far better than one who runs on empty and never stops.

My time away will be from June 17 through September 20, shaped by three intentions.

The first is the renewal of my soul. I plan to spend time in solitude, silence, daily prayer, and physical renewal. I want to listen again for the voice that first called me into this work and return to you genuinely replenished. I plan to do some writing toward a year-long devotional book I've begun to write, on becoming like Jesus.

The second is investment in my family. Devon has walked beside me through six years at MOPC and twenty-three years of ministry life. My kids have endured being uprooted three times during their upbringing due to my work as a pastor. We have a trip planned with our children and my parents for their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and time simply to be present with the people I love most, without the constant hum of congregational life in the background.

The third is research and discernment around a question I believe has something to offer this congregation and the broader church: What does it look like to thrive in the second half of a pastoral vocation? I will be spending time with colleagues and mentors, reading, writing, and letting this season of rest also be a season of gathering wisdom for the road ahead.

Now, here is what I ask of you.

Please pray for me. Not out of obligation, but because prayer is how we stay connected across distance, and I will genuinely need it. Pray that I rest well, listen deeply, and return renewed.

For pastoral care needs, please reach out to your deacon. For emergency visitation and pastoral care, Pastoral Associate Nikki Zyp will be available. As you know, she is gifted, present, and deeply committed to this community. You are in good hands.

This summer is also an opportunity to step up. MOPC has never thrived because of its staff alone. It has thrived because of its members. If you see a need, meet it. If you have been waiting for the right moment to volunteer, this is it. Please also rally around Matt Vaughan, who joins us this summer as our new Youth Director, alongside his wife Amy. Introduce yourself, encourage him, and support the youth ministry with your presence and prayers. And continue to support Nikki, Jen, and Sheila, whose steady, faithful work keeps this community running. Let them know you see them.

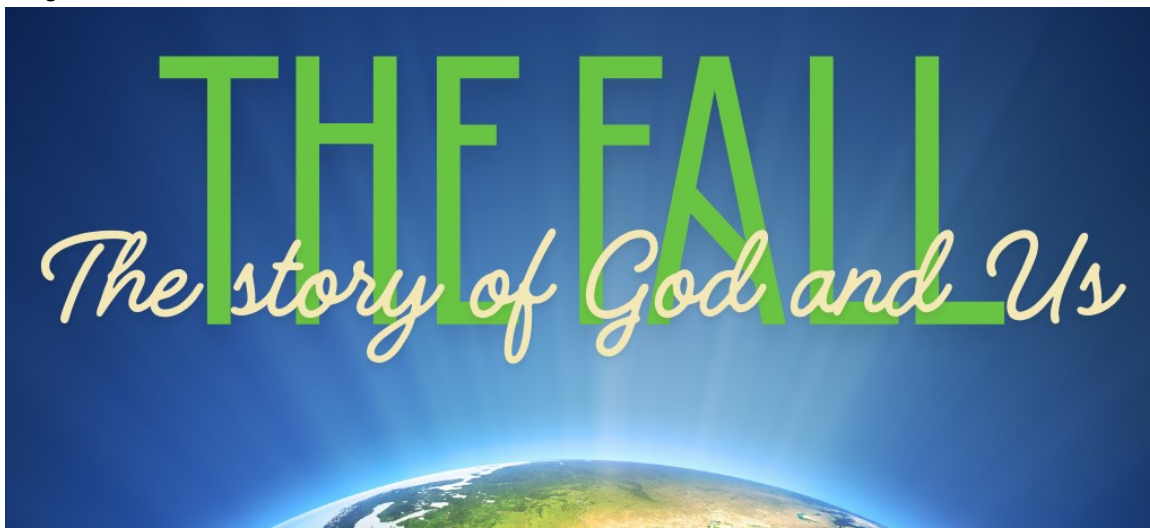
Finally, take genuine responsibility for your own spiritual health while I am away (and when I am not). Do not put your formation or your Sunday morning worship on hold until I return. Come to worship. Engage your small group. Pray. Read. Serve. The spiritual life was never meant to be something a pastor manages for you. It is yours to tend. And by the way, we have a collection of excellent preachers lined up already.

I will return on September 21, expecting to be rested, curious, and grateful. I'm looking forward to this opportunity, not only for me, but for you, as well. I am grateful for your support. Until then, I continue to carry you in my prayers, as I trust you will carry me in yours.

With deep affection and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris", written in a cursive style.

Pastor Chris



### MAY SERMONS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SERMON TITLE</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE REFERENCES</u>
5/3	<i>Cain &amp; Abel</i>	Genesis 4:1–16
5/10	<i>The Flood</i>	Genesis 6:9-22; 7:24; 8:14-19
5/17	<i>Tower of Babel</i>	Genesis 11:1–9
5/24	<i>Human Falleness</i>	Romans 1:18–25
5/31	<i>Create in Me</i>	Psalms 51:1–12

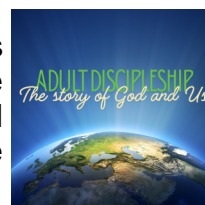
### ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.



**How the Bible Actually Works (Room 501)** This class approaches Scripture not as a "how-to manual", but as an inspired and empowering source for living as people of faith, cultivating God's wisdom within us.

**The Story of God and Us (Room 502)** This Bible study 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!



## Doubt Comes In



“But Thomas the Apostle (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” — John 20:24–28

“Doubt is pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother.” — Kahlil Gibran.

Doubt is something nearly all of us experience at one time or another, and yet it can feel like one of the most isolating emotions. I was recently talking with someone about their faith journey, which they described as “wandering in the wilderness.” I loved that description; honest, vulnerable, and deeply relatable. When we find ourselves in the wilderness, it can feel endless and lonely. We wonder: *Could anyone else understand the questions I’m wrestling with? What’s wrong with me? Why can’t my faith feel simple or certain like everyone else’s?*

This is where we find Thomas after Jesus’ resurrection. Perhaps some of the disciples are celebrating, fully convinced. Others may be quietly hopeful. And then there is Thomas. I imagine him sitting apart, wrestling with questions he cannot ignore, wondering why belief does not come easily for him.

And then, Jesus comes to him.

He does not rebuke Thomas or shame his doubt. Instead, he meets him in it. He offers exactly what Thomas needs so that he can believe—and so that he can be restored to community. It seems that Jesus is less concerned with the presence of doubt and more concerned with the isolation it can create.

As Jesus meets Thomas in his doubt and draws him back into relationship, something new is born. Thomas’ faith becomes deeply personal—rooted not in secondhand testimony, but in lived encounter. In this way, his doubt becomes the very soil where a deeper faith takes root.

Where are you today in your faith? Are you feeling the quiet weight of doubt, the loneliness it can bring? Hear this clearly: doubt is not a failure. It is part of the journey. You are not alone in it, and you were never meant to carry it alone. Let your community walk with you. You may find others just ahead of you, or just behind, asking many of the same questions.

(continued on next page)

And trust this: your doubt will become fertile ground for a new kind of faith to grow.

“What we are confronted with, then, is a foreign land, a passage through a desert; testing and discernment. But in this same land, from which God is not in fact absent, the seeds of a new spirituality can germinate. This spirituality gives rise to new songs to the Lord.” — Gustavo Gutiérrez

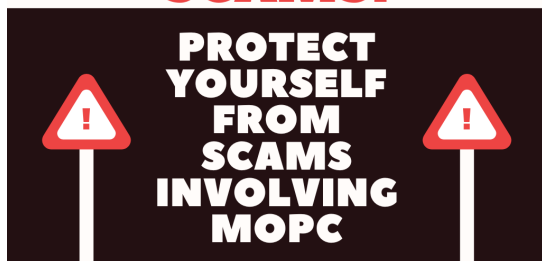
Grace and peace,

*Nikki Zyp*

Nikki Zyp

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## **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.

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



The date for MOPC to work at the Utah Food Bank has been changed to Saturday, May 16, due to a different schedule at the food bank. We will meet from 10 a.m. to noon. Helping others is who we are! Remember, during Saturday sessions, children must be 12 and over to volunteer with a parent. Closed-toed shoes are

required. See you at 3150 S and 900 W at the Utah Food Bank!

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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. Children 12 and older may help. The next opportunity to help will be May 8.

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### ADULT FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON



Thursday, May 14, will be our last Adult Fellowship Luncheon with a scheduled speaker! We will feature our own Dr. Beth Akers, whose presentation is titled “The Future of Higher Education in America.” Beth received her Ph.D. in economics from Columbia University and is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where she focuses on the economics of higher education. Prior to this, she was a senior

fellow of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a member of the Council of Economic Advisors under President George W. Bush. She is a noted author and has testified before Congress, and her writing and research have been published or featured in Bloomberg View, Boston Globe, Education Next, and several other publications. We look forward to her presentation, so come along, bring a friend, and share your favorite dish, for fun, food, fellowship, and a timely program. On June 11, the MOPC Service Camp kids will serve us and chat with us! Save that date.

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)



May with its flowers and perhaps some snow  
Will find us being “doers” still on the go!!

May 5 will be our last scheduled monthly meeting for this season. We will have a potluck salad luncheon at 11:30 a.m. in the gym at MOPC. We will have a guest speaker, Nick Gonzales, Executive Director of Stone of Hope Youth. This program is dedicated to mentoring underserved and at-risk males ages 9–18.

The Wise Women Panel luncheon drew 40 women. On the panel were Chris Chytraus, Alie Serrato, Shauna Huston, Mindy deHoll, and Karen Jackson. They shared their experiences and perspectives on faith, marriage, and parenting. More luncheons will be held in the fall, winter, and spring. The intent of these events is to create an intergenerational, inclusive, caring community.

-Pauline Forster



## 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, May 20, at 2 p.m. Please text or call Janet Nelson at 801-560-9044 for the Zoom link or more info.



The church office will be closed on May 25 in observance of Memorial Day.



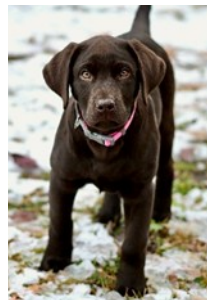
# Family

We're so excited to welcome Mt. O's new Youth Director, Matt Vaughan! He'll begin at Mt. O in mid-May. Please read a letter from Matt below.

Hello Mt. O! I'm very excited to be your incoming Youth Director. My wife Amy and I are moving from Kansas City. We loved meeting your hiring committee and staff and felt so welcomed when we visited Mt. O earlier this year! Thank you for calling me to join your staff!

Mt. O will be the third Presbyterian church where I've been a Youth Director. I've led dozens of mission trips, ski retreats, and wilderness adventures with our youth groups. My favorite youth trip is a week-long wilderness camping and canoe trip through the Boundary Waters lakes and streams in Northern Minnesota.

Here are a few things to know about Amy and me and our family: We have a Chocolate Labrador Retriever puppy named Maggie – she is eight months old and loves to steal our shoes. Our kids often call her the third child (and sometimes our favorite child – oops!).



Our youngest son, Jack, is a sophomore at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona. He recently visited Zion National Park, and he approves of our move to Utah! Jack plays club tennis on the traveling college team, and he is studying physics and astronomy.

Our oldest son, Sam, recently graduated from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. He still lives there and works at a Civil Engineering firm. His dog, Walter, is also a chocolate lab. Sam loves to ski and hike, so he's excited to visit us in SLC.

Amy is a Physical Therapist and will be working at St. Mark's Hospital. She loves to travel and planned a camping trip for us through Utah early in our marriage, and we visited eight national parks on that trip. She's always ready for an adventure! She loves tennis, football, mountains, beaches, and walks with our dog.

I love to ski and hike. I'm a decent photographer and a weekend mechanic. I love watching the Kansas Jayhawks play basketball. I enjoy traveling. I've been vegetarian or pescatarian for a long time (ask me about that Dominican Republic mission

# Ministry

trip when a few of us got sick!). And I'm currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. I'm leaving my job in academics – I work for a nonprofit that provides continuing education to church staff. Personally, I try to be a good friend, dad, husband, and follower of Christ.

One of my favorite verses is Matthew 6:34. Jesus said, "So do not worry about tomorrow... today's trouble is enough for today." I tend to think of these words in terms of tasks and challenges – not trouble. We've had a lot to do in preparation to join you, but we've taken it one day at a time and are thrilled that we'll be in SLC soon!

We're so looking forward to meeting you all, and we'll be praying for you in the meantime.

Peace,

Matt and Amy (and Maggie and Sam and Jack)



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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
Director of Youth Ministry	Matt Vaughan
Treasurer	Roberta Bolton
Director of Childcare	Jolie Bawden
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  
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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 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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## 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, 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