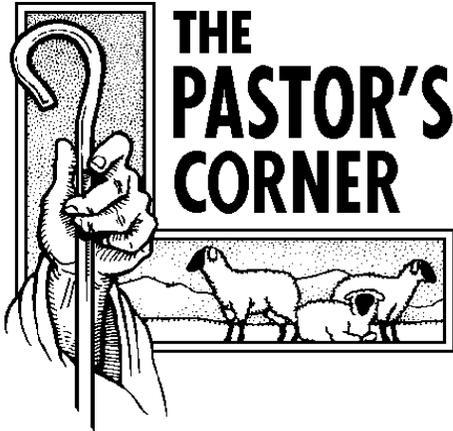




Neighborhood Gatherings DECEMBER 2017

Newsletter of Mt. Olive and Relief United Methodist Churches



For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. – Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

I was recently reflecting upon the word Advent, which means coming. But what is coming? The Advent wreath contains five candles. There are three purple candles, one pink and a white candle in the center of the wreath. We light one candle each Sunday during Advent and some wonder what they mean?

Each candle is lit each Sunday in preparation of the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Eve. The first purple candle represents "Hope". We recall the hope we have in Christ as in His birth our hope is born.

The second purple candle is the candle of "Peace". It is sometimes called the Bethlehem Candle, which reminds us of the place in which preparations were made to receive and cradle the Christ child.

The third candle is pink and it is the candle of "Joy". It reminds of the joy that Mary felt when the angel Gabriel told her that a special child would be born to her — a child who would save and deliver his people.

And the fourth candle is purple, which is the candle of "Love". This light is meant to remind us of the love that God has for us. Jesus shows us God's perfect love. He is God's love in human form. The bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Then, on Christmas Eve we light the white candle in the center, which is known as the Christ candle, which symbolizes that Christ is born.

So what is "coming" during Advent, many times it goes over our heads and we miss it all together. What is "coming" is not the gifts we will give or receive. What is coming is not Santa Claus. What is coming is not the singing of Christmas carols. What is coming is the birth of Jesus. We celebrate Jesus and his birthday.

So with that in mind, let us keep Christ in

Christmas as we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the stranger or the unwanted, care for the ill, love our enemies, and do unto others what you would have done unto you.

Jesus is all around us. So let us take the time to enjoy Jesus' company and together celebrate Christmas with Christ.

Let Jesus be born in your hearts. Let Jesus live in your hearts.

*In God's amazing grace,
Pastor Victor*



Bring your Christmas Cards to church and save postage.

December 6th. — 6:00 pm

Olive Oyls Cookie Exchange at Mt. Olive UMC.

December 9th — 7:00–9:00 pm

2nd Annual Cheer & Carols —at Hampton Inn (See inserts)

December 10th — Joint Christmas Dinner after Relief worship with Mount Olive. Chicken, drinks and rolls will be provided for that dinner.

December 16th — 5:00 pm at Relief UMC. Christmas Caroling for the shut-ins. Soup will be supplied after singing — bring finger foods.

December 17th — 9:30 am at Mt. Olive UMC Youth Talent Show.

December 24th — 10:00 am Joint Christmas Sunday Worship at Relief UMC

December 24th — 7:00 pm Joint Christmas Eve Service at Mt. Olive UMC. Holy Communion and Stage Left leading music.



DON'T FORGET JESUS

Christmas is a special time
To reflect on Jesus Christ,
The wonder of His lowly birth
Brings meaning to our lives.

There really is no other reason,
We celebrate this day,
The birth of God precious son
And the life, He willingly gave.

But so much seems to distract us
In the busyness of our lives,
We lose our focus in all the happenings,
Not knowing, we leave out Christ.

We lose sight of the true meaning
As we endlessly rush about,
Trying to find that perfect gift,
Seems to cloud our Saviour out.

We need to stop and reflect awhile,
Remembering our precious Lord,
His birth, His life and sacrifice
And all that He stands for.

For though the world may celebrate,
It seems, though, for other reasons,
Let's keep in mind that Jesus Christ
Is the true meaning of the season!

—M. S. Lowndes

Lectionary for December

December 3 Isaiah 64:1-9,
1 Corinthians 1:3-9, Mark 13:24-37

December 10 Isaiah 40:1-11,
2 Peter 3:8-15a, Mark 1:1-8

December 17 Isaiah 64:1-4, 8-11, 1
Thessalonians 5:16-24, John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24 — Christmas Eve Morning
Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19, Genesis 22:15-18,
Isaiah 9:2,6-7, Isaiah 11:1-3a, 4a, 6-9,
Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:1, 3-7, Luke 2:8-16,
Matthew 2:1-12, John 1:1-14

December 24 — Christmas Evening
Isaiah 9:2-7, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-20

December 31 Isaiah 61:10-62:3,
Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:22-40

In Loving Memory

Relief and Mt. Olive congregations will be remembering for a long time, Ruth Earnshaw who passed away November 17th. I also had the pleasure of working with Ruth and becoming her friend. Ruth did a lot of things for Relief including heading up Sunshine Cards, attendance spreadsheets for the church, visiting others, writing and helping with the monthly newsletters, along with mailing to others newsletters who couldn't attend church. Those were just a few of the things that she did for us.

We lost a special lady in Ruth, but we know she is no longer suffering and that she is at peace.

A quote from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: "He spoke well who said that graves are the footprints of angels."

—Brenda

MT. OLIVE UMC NEWS

*"Where We GOT FAITH!
And so can you!"*

327 Mount Olive Road
Winchester, VA 22602

SUNDAY SERVICES AT MT. OLIVE

Adult Sunday School: 8:30 am
Worship Service: 9:30 am

*Give
THANKS
to the Lord*

	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Offering</u>
11/05	70	\$ 1,789
11/12	65	\$ 1,014
11/19	<u>68</u>	<u>\$ 1,429</u>
Avg.	67	\$ 1,410
10/23	46	\$ 838
	<u>Correction to last month</u>	



DECEMBER COMMUNION

Debbie Rotz

DONUT DAY

Angel Holliday & Brenda McDonald

GREETER

Teresa Walther

OLIVE OYLS

"Cookie Exchange"

SCRIPTURE READER

Tracy Einstein



- 12/02 Ethan Lafferty
- 12/03 Calan Bell
- 12/04 Rick Knight
- 12/05 Kara Canoles
- 12/06 Gary Hudson
- 12/13 Heather Gomez
- 12/14 James Lopez
- 12/14 Jenna Morell
- 12/16 Angie Cuccio
- 12/19 Debbie Rotz
- 12/20 Hank McDonald
- 12/20 Randi Strosnider
- 12/22 Ginger Strosnider
- 12/25 Jesus
- 12/25 Susan Lewis
- 12/26 Ana Mendoza
- 12/31 Natalie Heath

Happy Anniversary

- 12/14 Rodger & Jane Ramey
- 12/19 Tracy & Amanda Einstein
- 12/27 Mark & Aimee Hoffman
- 12/24 Mark & Stacey Roy
- 12/31 Jerry & Elsie Stickley



Do you know that nothing you do in this life will ever matter, unless it is about loving God?
—Francis Chan



Don't forget in the hurly-burly of the upcoming months that the pantry boxes at the front of the church need to be kept filled for those in need. Use the following list to go by in bringing in items!

- Ooodles of Noodles
- Dinty Moore dinners
- Tuna in bags
- Peanut butter
- Spaghettios
- Cereal (name or store brands of Cheerios, Rice Krispies, Frosted Flakes, Chex)
- Canned vegetables (beans, corn, peas, carrots, beets)
- Boxed or bagged Mashed potatoes
- Fruit cups
- Rice
- Soup
- Ravioli
- Jelly

—Cleo Manspile



THE "OLIVE BRANCHES"

The Church is the soil and the children are the crop . . . Thanks for helping them grow!

With the holidays here, the Olive Branches have been in full motion forward. We had our November youth meeting on November 8th and helped our church missions team put together Paw Packs for the children in our area schools. This is such an important mission as it helps be sure children get a good meal and snacks on the weekend when they are out of school.

On November 29th the Olive Branches along with our Mt. Olive Church Family met at the Heart Havens Home in Kernstown. Heart Havens is a non-profit organization that provides residential support to adults with a developmental disability. It is more than just a roof and a bed. Heart Havens provides group homes in neighborhoods across Virginia where adults with a developmental disability live as independently as possible while being supported by twenty-four hour staff. We met there to decorate the outside of their home. We hope that if you get a chance to stop by and see the wonderful decorations and smiles that accompany them. They will truly enjoy the holiday season and will remember us each time they see them. What an awesome feeling to have knowing we helped put a smile on their face.

On December 13th the Olive Branches will be returning to the Orchard Woods in the Lutheran Community for Christmas Caroling. We **invite everyone** from Mt. Olive and Relief along all of your family and friends to join us. We will be meeting in the dirt lot in front of Round Hill Fire Hall at 5:40 pm and then driving back to the designated parking area together at 5:50 pm. They have to let us in with a scan card so we will be walking in together. We will be singing from 6:00-6:30 pm and will be eating afterwards. It is indoors so as long as the road conditions are good we will see you there!

On December 17th, the youth at Mt. Olive will be having a talent show. Our youth did a fantastic job last year and really enjoyed themselves. It was such an amazing sight to see and hear all the talent in the church. . Our children are AWESOME!! All youth must let Ms. Brenda know what you will be doing by Sunday, December 10th. Please be sure to practice at home as we will not have much time on Sundays.

Hope you all enjoyed your Thanksgiving as I know we all have so much to be thankful for!

Thank you all for all the effort you put into the youth. I just cannot say enough how great they are and it is due to all those in their homes, the church and the community that help to guide them in a positive direction. They are definitely heading on the right path and learning all they can along the way.

— *Brenda Newpher*



A little boy, age eight, gave a profound definition of parenthood: "Parents are just baby-sitters for God."

— *Glen Wheeler*

Children are God's apostles, day by day sent forth to preach of love and hope and peace.

— *Unknown*

Prayer does not change God; it changes me.

— *C.S. Lewis*

Blessings hemmed with praise will not unravel.

— *Unknown*

When you can't put your prayers into words, God hears your heart.

— *Unknown*

Strength, rest, guidance, grace, help, sympathy, love—all from God to us! What a list of blessings!

— *E. Steinbock*

RELIEF UMC NEWS

"In Sharing, We Know Christ."
 5275 Middle Road (Rt. 628)
 Six miles SW of Valley Avenue

Sunday Services at Relief:
Sunday School, 10:00 am
Worship, 11:00 am



	<u>S.S.</u>	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Offering</u>
10/22	14	56	\$ 1,776
10/29	10	42	\$ 1,999
11/05	15	47	\$ 2,155
11/12	12	42	\$ 1,682
11/19	<u>14</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>\$ 1,982</u>
Avg.	13	50	\$ 1,919

Also received:

C-CAP	\$ 51
Chairs	\$ 50
Scholarship	\$ 763
Shelter/Fellowship Hall Use	\$ 370
Shoebboxes	\$ 277
Witness	\$ 810

TREASUER'S REPORTS are available on the table in the back of the Sanctuary after each Administrative Board Meeting. Please feel free to pick up one. If there are none when you go to get one, please let me know.

—Elwanda Luttrell
 Treasurer
 (540) 869-7198
elwand@verizon.net

DECEMBER LAYREADER

Kim McDonald



- 12/01 Ernie Campbell, II
- 12/01 Marshall Golliday
- 12/01 Richard Turk
- 12/06 Olivia Beringer
- 12/06 Michael Sipe
- 12/08 Jim Douglas
- 12/09 Leslie Lobell
- 12/11 Herb Earnshaw
- 12/15 Kim Martin Watt
- 12/25 Jesus
- 12/27 Donald Graff
- 12/29 Sue Boyd
- 12/31 Barnaby Watten
- 1/01 Scott Boyd
- 1/01 Doris Hardy
- 1/05 Susan Chagrin



- 12/03 Earl & Elwanda Luttrell
- 12/04 Greg & Janet Unger
- 12/14 Roy & Jennifer Goldsmith



DECEMBER SPOTLIGHT

A special thanks to all who signed Christmas cards for the troops, VA Centers, and Fisher House residents. I mailed a total of six-hundred one cards. These will be distributed by the Washington County Military Support Group.

Also, a special thanks to all who filled a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child and/or gave money for shipping. I delivered twenty-six shoe boxes, including shipping and handling for these boxes to the distribution center. On this same date, I delivered ten new blankets, food, and thirty plus cups of vegetable soup to C-CAP.

A special thanks to all who participated in putting together a Thanksgiving dinner bag. We had a total of thirty-two bags. Four bags were distributed by church folks. Sherando High School received eighteen bags, Middletown Elementary School (through the MAMA project) received six bags and Orchard View Elementary School received four bags. Hats and gloves were given to Sherando High School and the MAMA project for distribution where needed.

For the month of December, we will be collecting blankets, pillows, and sleeping bags (all sizes). All MUST be new. These will be distributed to various community charities throughout the county and city, i.e., Salvation Army, Red Cross, and other local agencies. Please put the items in the Willing Workers Classroom (the last classroom on

the left) before the elevator. The due date is no later than Sunday, December 17th, so they may be delivered before Christmas.

On Sunday, December 17th a special collection will be received for the Virginia Family Services., This will be received at the end of our worship service.

This month, the members of Our Family Group, decorated and signed one-hundred Christmas cards, which were added to the ones that you signed. They also colored large wooden pumpkins. Pastor Victor, Sandra Ramey, Debbie Fauble, Eunice Musser and myself, prepared their annual Thanksgiving Dinner. We also furnished desserts for the dinner. The Support Group furnished everything but the dessert and we did the cooking and serving. In December the group will be working on making a snowman out of the creamer bottles that many of you provided. We have various other Christmas projects available for them.

Starting the first Sunday of Advent, December 3rd — Daily Advent Decorations will be given (one per family) and a bank, which all the money in the bank will go to the Society of St. Andrew. If you would like to write a check, please make the check to Relief UMC and then one check will be written for all the money collected. The banks will be due in on Sunday, December 31st.

We are still collecting used eyeglasses and hearing aids. These can be placed in the box on top of the wardrobe cabinet in Pastor Victor's office at the back of the Sanctuary. These are given to the Local Lions Clubs.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Elwanda Luttrell, Outreach Chair.

As the end of the year is nearing, I just want to thank all for their generous support of all the Mission and Outreach projects that you have supported during the year. We

have been able to reach many souls during the year.

Merry Christmas to All.

*Elwanda Luttrell
Chair Mission/Outreach
(540) 869-7198
elwand@verizon.net*

*Thanks!
for your
Support!!*

LOST AND FOUND

Relief has a pair of reading glasses, a purple earring and a silver necklace with a birthstone on it. If any are yours please, pick up from the bookshelf in the office.

FYI

Mt. Olive Mailing address:

327 Mt. Olive Road
Winchester, VA 22602-1685
Mt. Olive Church: (540) 877-3424
Website: www.mtoliveumc.org
Facebook: Mount Olive UMC

Relief Mailing address:

5275 Middle Road
Winchester, VA 22602-2788
Relief UMC: (540) 869-5775
Website: Reliefumc.com
Email: VictorGomez@vaumc.org

Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez
Cell Phone: 1-202-285-5767



If you have new information on your current address, phone, email, children in college, etc. please let me know.

You may call the Relief office at 869-5775, leave a note on the desk in the office or email me at amitch@shentel.net. Thank you for helping to keep our data current!

—Brenda



The deadline for our January 2018 Neighborhood Gatherings Newsletter is Friday, December 22nd. The January Newsletter will be available Sunday, December 31st.

Please make an effort to put your church information in the newsletter. The newsletter will be on both churches Websites. If you have any suggestions, etc., please feel free to let me know.

Call the Relief Office at 869-5775, home phone (540) 465-4515 or email me at home: amitch@shentel.net

—Brenda