



Neighborhood Gatherings

DECEMBER 2019

Newsletter of Mt. Olive and Relief United Methodist Churches



My sisters and brothers, Christmas, the best season of the year, is coming!! A comfortable and cozy sofa with a cup of hot cocoa or apple cider is waiting for you. Your favorite carol has been playing on the radio. Yes, hot cocoa and carols makes our hearts and spirits warm and lifted. Oh! If you feel bored listening to carols, you can turn on the Hallmark channel and watch Christmas movies. Christmas may be about coziness, warmness, relaxing, joy, delicious food, and gift exchanges.

However, our coziness and delicious food are not all about Christmas. So, in our Christian Calendar, we call this season "Advent." I believe that some of you already know what "Advent" means. It is a Latin term that means "coming." This Advent season is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming. Yes, Jesus came to us as lights of hope, peace, justice, joy, and love. Jesus will come back to us on the day of his victory. As we wait for Jesus' coming, I would like to invite you to think how we can color our lives and the world with GREEN color. Why is that? If colors have meaning, what does green mean? Yes, green is the symbol of life, freshness, or newness. God has a green thumb for those who put their trust in God. God's green

thumb will renew our heart and spirit. This is what God promised to us:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Surely, our image of the shepherd is the one who walks together with the sheep. When they confront a field of thorns, the Shepherd walks before the sheep and lets them pass through. Sometimes, our legs are caught by the thorns. But the Shepherd comes to the sheep and frees our legs from the thorns. At the end, we will arrive at the green pasture after we walk through the darkest valley. Yes, our hearts may have weeds. These weeds may be choking the real life that God has given us. But, the green thumb of God is transplanting our exhausted and weary hearts like a dying tree and places it near the living water, giving it life and vitality. That is why Jesus who is hope came to us and has helped our life be shiny with his GREEN light.

God's hope is real. I have witnessed how Jesus's green light is shining on one of my previous neighbor's life. She was living close to my

previous church and came to our food distribution. One day, she asked me to pray for her friend because she lost her firstborn baby. So, we sincerely prayed together. A few months later, she came back to me again with a big smile, "My friend got pregnant again. Guess what? She is expecting on the same date that her firstborn went to heaven." Like this, I am convinced that God has brought the bright green light us in the midst of our brokenness. I also believe that each of us is called to be the green light to our family, our friends, and our neighbors. Becoming a green light is not matter of our situations.

I believe that the way to make the green light brighter is fellowship and connection. When we approach others and let them see our green lights, we will meet our Shepherd Jesus who leads us to the green pasture in the midst of our brokenness. I heard one beautiful story from one of my pastor friend's congregations. His church started to provide a short communion service every Wednesday because of the congregation members' request. One of the members also decided to attend the service because he would kill the time anyway while watching TV. So, he shared his decision with another senior lady who sits by him during Sunday service. She said, "I would love to attend the service, but I can't drive at night." He offered her a ride, and they began to come to church together every Wednesday. One day when he gave her a ride to go home after the service, the senior woman said to him, "Would you come in and have a cup of tea and ginger snaps with me?" He said he would love to, and then they continued to talk over tea and ginger snaps. After their time together, this congregation member said to my friend, "I don't know. When I had tea and ginger snaps with her, I felt connected with her, and felt like God was there." Becoming the green light to each other can happen anytime and anywhere, even in the midst of our brokenness just as God is with tea and cookies. Are you ready to put green lights on your Christmas tree?

Seung Hae



LECTIONARY FOR DECEMBER

December 1st **1st Sunday of Advent**
Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-14
and Matthew 24:36-44

December 8th **2nd Sunday of Advent**
Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19,
Romans 15:4-13 and Matthew 3:1-12

December 15th **3rd Sunday of Advent**
Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 1:46b-55,
James 5:7-10 and Matthew 11:2-11

December 22nd **4th Sunday of Advent**
Isaiah 7:10-16, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19,
Romans 1:1-7 and Matthew 1:18-25

December 29th **1st Sunday after
Christmas Day**
Isaiah 63:7-9, Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18 and Matthew 2:13-23



THE CHRIST CHILD'S BIRTH

In our Christmas celebrations
of merriment and mirth,
Let us not forget the miracle of
the holy Christ child's birth.

For in our festivities
it is easy to lose sight
Of the baby in the manger
and that holy, silent night.

*Helen Steiner Rice
Living Christmas Every Day*

MT. OLIVE UMC NEWS

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

327 Mount Olive Road
Winchester, VA 22602

SUNDAY SERVICES AT MT. OLIVE

Worship Service: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am

Give
THANKS
to the Lord

	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Offering</u>
11/03	43	\$ 1,626
11/10	49	\$ 550
11/17	37	\$ 655
11/24	<u>43</u>	<u>\$ 1,166</u>
Avg.	43	\$ 1,004

DECEMBER



Debbie Rotz



Angie Cuccio
The Valentin Family



Cecilia & Braudelio Rojas



12/03 Calan Bell
12/04 Rick Knight
12/05 Kara Canoles
12/06 Gary Hudson
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
12/26 Ana Mendoza



12/14 Rodger & Jane Ramey
12/27 Mark & Aimee Hoffman
12/24 Mark & Stacey Roy
12/31 Jerry & Elsie Stickley



STAGE LEFT BAND will lead our music on Sunday, December 22nd. Starting in 2020 Stage Left will be at Mt. Olive — January 19th, February 16th, March 15th, March 29th, possibly April 26th and then again on May 17th. We are very blessed to have them.



THE “OLIVE BRANCHES”

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

During our November Youth Meeting, we were blessed to have Tessa Morell as our speaker. She shared with us she has personally been struggling with for the past three years. It was very difficult for her to be able to finally talk about this not only with her family, but also her friends, peers and others around her. Tessa actually spoke about two things in her life that she has been going through. One is her struggle with her faith and believing in God and the other with who she truly is on the inside not only as she appears on the outside. This is something that we all experience in our lives at one time or another. Maybe you personally have not yet and it may never cross your path. When certain things happen in our lives, such as getting older and growing up or maybe even a life experience (good or traumatic), we sometimes begin to look at things in a different perspective. We seem to question more and look deeper into things and while doubt inside begin to settle in. This tends to lead us in different directions in life and it is all we can do to try and find some kind comfort within. It is hard to fathom for some because we cannot see or it is not proven that certain things happen or exist. We need to find our own way to prove these things to ourselves. It can be today, tomorrow, next week or even while we are on our final hours here on earth.

Some may never see or find this. We as Christians must be able to help each other, not by pressure or shame, but through example, reassurance and communication. These hardships endured by us all blur our vision and it is hard for us to see what lies ahead. But, by keeping an open mind and regaining the ground we had so aimlessly lost and finding the faith that was once there. Through communication and sharing the difficult things in our lives with those who care about us, we can be reassured that we are not alone. Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask someone to walk with you as you!

The saying is true, “During difficult times, you will truly find out who your true friends are.” It is a hard pill to swallow and leaves us feeling unloved or unwanted. If you take the time to stop and look at the whole picture and what God has surrounded you with, you will see it all has purpose, the good and the bad. God will test us in ways that we cannot see if a lesson truly lies within but by having faith in him and all his work, you will be the person he is leading you to be. Our youth are strong, they are finding their way and purpose in life. By sharing some of their struggles, it helps the adults (and youth) understand some of the actions/reactions of others. Please remember that our youth have difficult times in their lives too. Their struggles are our struggles! As adults, we get so wrapped up in our busy lives, we forget to take the time to listen not only to our youth but to each other. Now is the time to stop yourselves for a few minutes and ask someone how their day is or how their week went. It's not hot apple pie all the time . . . we need to let some of the heat out of the oven! Remember, it is not good to try to hide or forget, it will follow you around like toilet paper stuck to your shoe. Only when you stop to take care of it, will you

really feel at peace! Our youth learn from us, we learn from them also. We had great discussion, questions, feedback, advice and resources to help that were brought forward.

This has been a blessing to not only to our youth but also to the adults. We were very blessed that evening as we had a group of about ten people join together, share the experience and great discipleship. We shared a wonderful meal of chicken, potato wedges, macaroni/potato salad, along with cupcakes and donuts for dessert. Thank you all for helping out with the meal that evening which was enjoyed by all and made our day so much easier not having to worry about what to have for supper or how we are going to fit that into our schedule.

Our December meeting will be Wednesday, December 11th at 6:30 pm. The speaker will be Jonathan Ramey. For those of you who are not aware, one of the youth will be giving a sermon or speaking on a topic for discussion on these evenings. I highly encourage everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, to join us! Please remember to come with an open mind and open heart as some of the issues discussed may be difficult for some. We heard during our first meeting in September how important it is to our children that we take time to listen/talk to them and also the hugs that we share with them mean so much! Thank you so much to everyone for supporting all we do. Hope to see all of you December 11th at 6:30 pm. Due to these evenings being a school/work night, we provide food so that is one less worry for the day and it lasts about an hour. Bring a friend, neighbor or invite someone you cross paths with. If ANYONE (youth or adult) would like to give their testimony, give a sermon or have words

they would like to share/discuss, please contact Brenda Streit (Newpher).

b_ newpher21@live.com or 540-931-1785 (leave message or text).

Romans 14:1 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.

Hebrews: 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

THANK YOU MY WONDERFUL YOUTH FOR ALWAYS PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD...YOU ARE THE HANDS AND FEET OF GOD AND SHOW IT IN EVERYTHING YOU DO!

During services on November 10th, our youth honored our Veterans during "Time with Younger Congregation." We opened and welcomed Elijah Shiley singing "Will the Circle Be Unbroken." To follow, each Veteran was called by name and branch of military to the front of the church. They were gifted with a baseball cap also donning the branch of military in which they served and also an "Armor of God" pin to go with it. They were then serenaded by Elijah Shiley with "Proud to Be an American." We thank you ALL so much for your Service!

On December 15th our youth will be having our Annual Christmas Talent Show in lieu of the traditional Sunday service. The youth have been anxiously awaiting this time of the year to share their talents with us! Please contact Brenda Streit if you would like to participate. ALL participants MUST let Brenda know what they will be doing by Sunday, December 8th, 2019.

We are leading the youth into being great, great disciples! Thanks for being great examples of God's work! A Special THANK YOU to all the parents, grandparents and church family who volunteer and work together to help build and mold our youth! Each compliment they receive is a reflection of each and every one of you. Everyone plays a part in how our youth grow and continue to make our world a better place! It takes a lot of hard work and dedication not only by our children but by the church to make these things happen. The youth are the future of our church . . . without them there would be no future!

—Brenda Newpher (Little Brenda)



Please join us for our **Prayer Group** on Wednesday, December 11th at 11:00 a.m.

Everyone is welcome to come and participate.



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Bring your Christmas cards for the congregation and deposit them in the stocking. Save on postage! The cards will be distributed the fourth Sunday of Advent along with the oranges/tangerines and candies."

Advent: the time to listen for footsteps. You can't hear footsteps when you're running yourself.

— Bill McKibben

Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus!

—Neal A. Maxwell

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>
11/03	5	35	\$ 1,363
11/10	7	34	\$ 1,339
11/17	8	40	\$ 2,300
11/24	<u>8</u>	<u>44</u>	\$ <u>1,429</u>
Avg.	7	38	\$, 1,607.

Also received:

C-CAP	\$ 41
Memorial	\$ 50
Church Use	\$ 150
Shoe Boxes	\$ 66
Witness	\$ 360





12/01 Ernie Campbell, II
 12/01 Richard Turk
 12/06 Olivia Beringer
 12/06 Michael Sipe
 12/09 Leslie Lobell
 12/11 Herb Earnshaw
 12/15 Kim Martin Watt
 12/25 Jesus
 12/29 Sue Boyd
 12/31 Barnaby Watten



12/03 Earl & Elwanda Luttrell
 12/04 Greg & Janet Unger



Worship Team

DECEMBER LAYREADER

Elwanda Luttrell

WORSHIP LEADER

Kim McDonald



Come and join us for a free casual holiday event celebrating the joy of Christmas and the opportunity to support AbbaCare, the Winchester area nonprofit Pregnancy Care Center.

CHEER and CAROLS

A free community event sponsored by Relief Church!

Saturday, December 7th, 2019

6:30 pm – 9:30 pm

West Oaks Events Center

4305 Middle Road, Winchester

Your evening entertainment will be headlined by “Stage Left,” including performances by other local talent. Heavy hors d’oeuvres, hot chocolate bar, photo booths, and free on-site child care will be provided.

We are asking that in the spirit of giving, you bring a donation of one or more of the following items. Abba is continually in need of wipes, shampoo, lotion, bath wash, bibs, children’s books, rattles, pacifier, Walmart Gift cards (\$20.00 maximum per card), sizes 0-18 months: clothes (new only), disposable diapers and socks. Envelopes will be provided for cash donations.

If we keep Christ in our heart, Christmas has no end. —Anon

Where you start is not really as important as where you finish. —Zig Ziglar



DECEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The Outreach committee members, Robin Sweet, Eunice Musser, Debbie Fauble and Elwanda Luttrell provided the monthly craft with the Our Family Peer Support Group in Front Royal. This month, the craft was making Thanksgiving placemats and Thanksgiving cards. The committee members also cooked, provided cookies, brownies and cake, and attended the Our Family annual Thanksgiving dinner on Friday, November 22nd. Each month, the members look forward to coloring sheets and word searches that are related to the time of the year.

This time of the year is busy for all, but especially when it comes to missions/outreach. One hundred goody bags which were decorated by the Our Family members and were delivered to the VA Outpatient Center in Kernstown on Monday, November 4th. These bags had candy, "thank you for your service" sticker message, and a pumpkin stress ball. Also, bags were decorated by Our Family for our Church Veterans, which were presented on Sunday, November 10th. A special thanks to Eunice Musser who baked the cakes. Our veterans also received a pumpkin stress ball.

On Monday, November 18th, twenty-one (21) shoeboxes and a check for \$189 were delivered to the Kernstown UMC for shipment to Boone NC.

To date ten (10) Thanksgiving bags have been delivered to Orchard View School, eleven (11) to Sherando High School, and I

have five (5) so far for distribution to the backpack program at Middletown Elementary School, more will be sent here depending on the final count.

I have been taking items to C-CAP. So far, I have taken a quilt, a pillow, 5 children's blankets, and twenty-three (23) blankets for the Christmas give away. Also, bags of new socks and underwear have also been delivered as well as food items. C-CAP still needs volunteers to help in the pantry, interview area, and clothing area. If interested in volunteering contact me.

I will still take items which are listed on the bulletin boards, up until Wednesday, December 11th.

On Sunday, January 5th, we will be celebrating Epiphany Sunday, with a luncheon after worship, and please bring items for C-CAP. Items that are always needed are: pull top can (Hearty) read to eat soups, pasta sauce, cans of beets and spinach, pancake syrup, sugar, flour, spam, and canned hams. There is a box in the vestibule for all C-CAP items.

There is a box in the back office for used glasses and hearing aids.

Since we don't have a special Christmas program, the money that usually was collected through this event is now being sent as a budget item in the mission/outreach budget. The money (\$200) goes to the United Methodist Family Services. This program makes an impact in the lives of high-risk children and families every day.

A special thanks to everyone who has helped make this Mission/Outreach year such a successful year.

If questions, contact Elwanda Luttrell, Outreach/Mission Chair.

Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Safe, and Healthy New Year.

Elwanda Luttrell, Outreach/Mission Chair

From the Treasurer: The end of the year is fast approaching and if anyone has bills that need to be paid, (which are not the regular bill), please turn them into Elwanda as soon as possible. All bills need to have a check request and be signed by committee chair for the activity/event. Thanks.

(540) 869-7198
elwand@verizon.net

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

Email: (pastorseunghae@gmail.com)

Rev. Dr. Seung Hae Yoo-Hess

Cell Phone: Pastor Cell: 404-993-5919

Relief Mailing address:

5275 Middle Road
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 Relief UMC: (540) 869-5775
 Website: Reliefumc.com

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Rev. Dr. Seung Hae Yoo-Hess

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The deadline for our January 2020 Neighborhood Gathering Newsletter is **Friday, December 20th**. The January Newsletter will be available Sunday, December 29th.

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



December 1 2 Chronicles 25-27; Luke 9:37-62
 Read Now

December 2 2 Chronicles 28-29; Luke 10:1-24
 Read Now

December 3 2 Chronicles 30-31; Luke 10:25-42 Read Now

December 4 2 Chronicles 32-33; Luke 11:1-28
 Read Now

December 5 2 Chronicles 34-36; Luke 11:29-54 Read Now

December 6 Esther 1-2; Luke 12:1-31 Read Now

December 7 Esther 3-5; Luke 12:32-59 Read Now

December 8 Esther 6-8; Luke 13:1-22 Read Now

December 9 Esther 9-10; Luke 13:23-35 Read Now

December 10 Haggai 1-2; Luke 14:1-24 Read Now

December 11 Joshua 1-3; Luke 14:25-35 Read Now

December 12 Joshua 4-6; Luke 15:1-10 Read Now

December 13 Joshua 7-9; Luke 15:11-32 Read Now

December 14 Joshua 10-12; Luke 16 Read Now

December 15; Luke 17:1-19 Read Now

December 16 Joshua 16-18; Luke 17:20-37 Read Now

December 17 Joshua 19-21; Luke 18:1-23 Read Now

December 18 Joshua 22-24; Luke 18:24-43 Read Now

December 19 Nehemiah 1-3; Luke 19:1-27 Read Now

December 20 Nehemiah 4-6; Luke 19:28-48 Read Now

December 21 Nehemiah 7-9; Luke 20:1-26 Read Now

December 22 Nehemiah 10-11; Luke 20:27-47

Read Now

December 23 Nehemiah 12-13; Luke 21:1-19 Read Now

December 24 Micah 1-3; Luke 21:20-38 Read Now

December 25 Micah 4-5; Luke 22:1-20 Read Now

December 26 Micah 6-7; Luke 22:21-46 Read Now

December 27 Zechariah 1-4; Luke 22:47-71 Read Now

December 28 Zechariah 5-8; Luke 23:1-25 Read Now

December 29 Zechariah 9-12; Luke 23:26-56

Read Now

December 30 Zechariah 13-14; Luke 24:1-35

Read Now

December 31 Malachi 1-4; Luke 24:36-53

Read Now