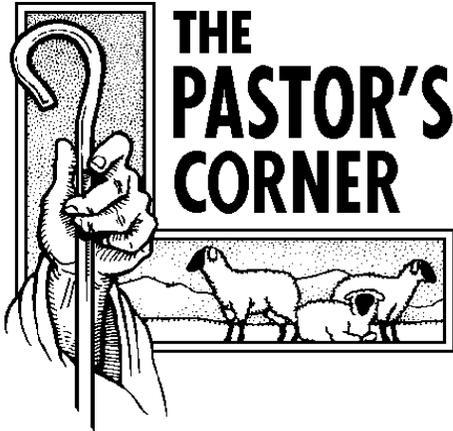




# Neighborhood Gatherings SEPTEMBER 2017

Newsletter of Mt. Olive and Relief United Methodist Churches



*"Whether we think of; or speak to, God, whether we act or suffer for Him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than His love and the desire of pleasing Him".*

—John Wesley

Two years ago in late August, I spent a couple of days at Camp Overlook in the beautiful mountains outside Harrisonburg, Virginia where I had a personal spiritual retreat. At this spiritual retreat I took time for fasting, praying, reflecting, and especially discerning for the days ahead. I had an entire cabin for myself, in fact the entire camp was for myself, but the best part was that I had nature all around me and what the woods had to offer me. I was in such a small but beautiful spot in such a big world, and specially I had no distractions of daily life and I was in communication with God, my Creator. It was just awesome!

I enjoyed praying out loud, singing praises out loud, talking to God in my prayers out loud, reading the Bible and devotionals out loud. During one of my Bible readings I opened it up to Psalm 27:14, which says: *"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."* Wow God! My first reaction was, but... God, I can't wait! The time is here and I must do something now! See, that's why I came to this place! But over and over again, these words resonated in my mind. *Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart*, and the words repeated again... *wait for the Lord!* These questions came to my mind: Wait? How much longer? Wait for what? I am ready, Lord! I can't wait!

I recognize that waiting is not one of my qualities, especially when the pressure is upon us, and the anxiety level rises. Yet, the message is *WAIT! Be strong! Take heart!* Then I realized that God's timing is always perfect. I realized that God's purpose will be fulfilled, but not in the time I want, not in my own time, but in God's time. I realized that I am not alone in this journey, because God is always with me...! God is providing the strength I need. God is giving me the patience I need. God is taking heart with me through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

You don't have to go to the mountains to encounter God or talk to God out loud. I invite you to pray anywhere you are as God is everywhere, even pray in silence as God can hear you... then *wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart.* Wait for the Lord! God's purpose will be fulfilled.

*In God's amazing grace,  
—Pastor Victor*

Joy is prayer. Joy is strength. Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls.

*—Mother Teresa*



Scrapbooking is starting up again at Relief UMC in September.

We can get you started if you have never done this before!

It's time we got our memories in order!

Everyone is welcome to attend.

2017 Dates

September 15<sup>th</sup>

October 13<sup>th</sup>

November 17<sup>th</sup>

No Scrapbooking in December

Time: 6:00 – 11:00 pm

Dinner at 7:00 pm

Please call so we can make a plan for our dinners.

*—Debbie Fauble  
(540) 869-4005*

**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**

**Sunday Worship Service: 9:30 am**



	<u>Worship</u>	<u>Offering</u>
7/02	60	\$ 1,614
7/09	72	\$ 1,401
7/16	62	\$ 1,294
7/23	55	\$ 935
7/30	61	\$ 834
8/06	53	\$ 1,876
8/13	43	\$ 780
8/20	<u>58</u>	<u>\$ 1,164</u>
Avg.	58	\$ 1,237

**SEPTEMBER COMMUNION**

Karen Jeter

**GREETER**

Angie Cuccio

**SCRIPTURE READER**

Karen Jeter



**Save the date:** Mt. Olive is offering AED, CPR and First Aid training, Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 10:00 am. The sign up sheet is in the Narthex and lunch will be provided.



9/01 Aleck Beeman  
 9/04 Tracy Einstein  
 9/06 Jacob Lewis  
 9/07 Judy Brown  
 9/08 Hershell Kelly  
 9/09 Crystal Duvall  
 9/09 Hannah Hudson  
 9/12 Olivia Hottle  
 9/12 Jim Lewis  
 9/15 Christine Anderson  
 9/15 Ashton Strosnider  
 9/17 Donna Sheets  
 9/20 Brenda Newpher  
 9/21 Brad Strosnider  
 9/24 Jessenia Gomez  
 9/25 Joe Stanley  
 9/26 Ana Lilia Mendoza  
 9/26 Eric Schmidt  
 9/27 Molly Saville



9/05 Hershell & Sharon Kelly  
 9/08 Mike & Ginger Strosnider  
 9/11 Robert & Teresa Walther  
 9/22 Gary & Terri Hudson



## “THE “OLIVE BRANCHES”

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

The Olive Branches met for our monthly youth group meeting on August 9<sup>th</sup>. With school starting for some and last minute vacations our attendance was a great surprise. We served McDonald's for supper and had a great time of fellowship.

As some of you know, the trustees of the church and a few of the church members have been working extremely hard to help build and put together the new classrooms down stairs for our youth. During our youth group, the children along with adults went over to the Sunday School rooms and put everything back in the rooms and got them ready to go! We have grown tremendously and keep continuing to multiply which is a great blessing to the church and the community. As summer comes to a close and everyone is back we will resume our normal Sunday School classes on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. If anyone is interested in helping out with classes, please let Little Brenda (Brenda Newpher) know. Due to the increasing count of youth, we would be extremely grateful to have the help. You don't need to know the bible word for word and if you are like me, you will learn quite a lot along with the kids while teaching. We provide all the materials.

Also, we discussed our Malt Shop which took place Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. We will fill

you in with that news next month. I would like to thank everyone in our church family along with the surrounding community that ALWAYS support our youth in everything they do. I absolutely love talking to people and seeing/hearing how amazed they are at the amount of active youth we have in the church. This would not be so if it wasn't for all the support we get from everyone! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Our next Youth Group meeting will be September 13<sup>th</sup>. We will be meeting on Lutheran Blvd starting at 5:45 and then drive together as a group to the designated parking area to do a Hymn Sing which will start at 6:00 pm. We would like to have as much support as we can and would love to have the adults join us. It is a great way to mesh the older and the younger generations together and close the gap between the two. We look forward to another great opportunity to go beyond the church walls & bring smiles to those around us outside of the church!

Please keep your eyes and ears open in the future for announcements on upcoming events as we will be announcing them soon.

As ALWAYS . . . A Special THANK YOU to all the parents, grandparents and church family who volunteer and work together to help build and mold our youth! It takes a lot of hard work and dedication not only our children but to the church to make these things happen. The youth is the future of our church — without them there would be no future!

### **This Day's Smile**

All kids are scientists, and all kids are artists. They all read. How is it that we give up such big things?

—*Janna Levin*



Please join us on October 1<sup>st</sup> for our ANNUAL YOUTH SUNDAY. Our youth invites you to gather with them for Sunday service.

This year we will have the privilege of having Nick Jones give the “Message” during service. As some know, our youth give the congregation a break on this day and each stepping up during the service so the adults can sit back and enjoy. Each youth has a task to do during the service. If any of them likes to sing — there are places (as you know) in the service they may. I just need to know what they will be singing and it needs to be appropriate for church. Our youth have been very good at choosing current songs and changing words if they need to. They must provide the back ground music, if any, or if they need someone to play the piano, I can make arrangements. Some of our youth download the back ground music on a flash drive and we can play it on the laptop. If they choose this, they will need to get it to Victor as soon as they can so that he can be sure it works prior to services.

The youth look forward to this each year. I will be approaching your child/children in the next few weeks so please let me know if they have not said anything to you about that by September 10<sup>th</sup>. I would like to invite the youth from our sister church to join us for this service. If you are interested, please let Brenda Newpher or Victor know as soon as possible so that I can be sure to give you a part in the service. [bnewpher21@live.com](mailto:bnewpher21@live.com) or (540) 931-1785

—*Brenda Newpher*



During our blanket drive in July, we collected fourteen blankets which will go to children who need them through the Bright Future Program.

We are still collecting school supplies and will continue to through September. The following school items needed are: #2 pencils, notebooks, 1 inch binders, scissors, loose leaf paper, glue sticks, tissues, colored pencils and crayons.

**Thanks so much for the school supplies donated by Relief.**

Again this year we will be providing twenty (paw packs) every third weekend to children through the Bright Future Program. Anyone wanting to make a donation, please see Heather or me.

Gleaning has begun and I will try and get a date set up in October for us to glean apples.

Thanks to everyone who contributed.  
—Angie Cuccio

**CARD MINISTRY**

Our card ministry is done by Mrs. Carol Place. She is great at sending out cards to our members, family and friends. She send out a card for every birthday and anniversary. If there is need of a Thinking of You card, Sympathy card, You are In Our Prayers card (or any other occasion), she sends out a card as soon as she can.

Please let her know if you know of someone that would benefit from knowing we at Mt. Olive UMC are thinking of them and have them in our prayers.

**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>
7/23	16	49	\$ 1,857
7/30	16	47	\$ 1,408
8/06	12	48	\$ 1,658
8/13	15	40	\$ 1,483
8/20	<u>13</u>		\$ <u>1,203</u>
Avg.,	14		\$ 1,521

Also received:

Building Fund	\$ 100
C-CAP	\$ 61
Memorial Fund	\$ 740
Nurture	\$ 200
Shelter/Fellowship Hall Use	\$ 275
Women’s Retreat	\$ 74

**TREASUER’S REPORTS** are available on the table in the back of the Sanctuary immediately 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

**SEPTEMBER LAYREADER**

Kim McDonald



9/02 Brittany Huffman  
 9/03 Mark Snider  
 9/04 Andrew Eaton  
 9/05 Roy Goldsmith  
 9/06 Karen Musser  
 9/07 Kevin Messick  
 9/07 Donald Snapp  
 9/12 Ashley Moffett  
 9/12 Brenda Moffett  
 9/14 Teresa Boyd  
 9/14 Lauren Sipe  
 9/14 Logan Sipe  
 9/15 Joe Alger  
 9/20 Joan Anderson  
 9/20 Jeremy Boyd  
 9/21 Jimmy Boyd  
 9/21 Stephen Lobell  
 9/23 Dalton Boyd  
 9/23 Dana Russell  
 9/24 Jessenia Gomez  
 9/26 Laura Gentry  
 9/26 Sallie Wilfong  
 9/28 Jody Hawse  
 10/02 Sharon Boyd  
 10/02 Matthew Gentry  
 10/02 Brittany Ginn  
 10/02 Jennifer Roy



9/10 Sammy and Kimmy Orndorff  
 9/10 Donald and Sheila Snapp  
 9/17 Ivan and Danielle Snapp  
 9/24 Scott and Kelly Boyd  
 9/27 James and Adele McGeachy



## **SEPTEMBER OUTREACH SPOTLIGHT**

During the month of September, we will be getting Christmas cards ready to send to our troops, to Veterans Hospitals and to Fisher Houses around the world. A Fisher House is “a home away from home” for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. The homes are normally located within walking distance of the treatment facility or have transportation available. There are seventy-one Fisher Houses located on twenty-four military installations and twenty-nine VA medical centers. Many more houses are under construction or in design. These cards will be sent through the South Washington County Military Support Group. Since 2013 more than 783,500 cards have been sent to military members. You can get your own Christmas cards, make cards—(no glitter please) — or get cards from the basket on the table in the back of the Sanctuary. Please have all cards/supplies in by no later than Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. All these items have to be boxed and shipped in order for the troops/veterans to receive them by Christmas. These Christmas cards do not need envelopes. You can include a personal appropriate greeting on each card, and please sign each card. If you wish, you can also include your address, but this is optional.

- Used eyeglasses and hearing aids can be placed in the box in the office at the back of the Sanctuary. These are given to the Local Lions Clubs.
- Please continue to bring food items and place in the box in the vestibule for C-CAP, as well as any money on the altar on Communion Sunday.
- Our October Project will be our Annual Samaritan Purse — Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry. Now is the time to get school items to put in these school boxes, and other items—some places will be just going into summer when these boxes are received.
- Our November/December Project will be the Blanket Drive. All new only blankets, pillows, sleeping bags will be appreciated. They will be given to local charities.
- An offering will be received during the month of December for the United Methodist Family Services. This service helps with adoptions, foster homes, counseling, and many other services throughout the state for children and families.

A special thanks to all for all the support of Outreach/Missions throughout the year. Many people in our area are touched by your generosity.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

—*Elwanda Luttrell*  
*Outreach Chair*  
 (540) 869-7198  
[elwand@verizon.net](mailto:elwand@verizon.net)



Just a reminder about the Ice Cream Social on September 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm in the afternoon. Mt Olive is invited to attend – they can bring something if they want to or just come anyway. Basically, desserts/home-made ice cream.

—*Thanks,*  
*Joanna*

Dear Friends at Relief Church,

Even though I've become a bit relaxed in communicating not a day goes by that you're not on my mind. Thank you so much for the love, prayers and a special thank you to each of you who signs my cards. Love and hugs to each of you.

*Love,*  
*Nat*

# Reminder

**Earl Luttrell asks us to please, when we leave the elevator, to make sure both the gate inside the door and the door (test them) are completely closed!**

**The only way it can be summoned empty from one level to the other is if both gate and door are closed as required to ride with someone in it. Thank you for honoring this request.**

## ROAD TRIP

Two Sundays ago it was announced in church that we were getting a new minister. Not only that, but that we were forming a new Charge with a church unfamiliar to most of us. We were told that Hites would be independent of us and receive a part-time minister to ease their financial strain. Once the announcement was made, our youth were a little bit shocked by people's reactions and maybe a little bit worried. They were concerned about our Pastor Richard's feelings, worried about the new minister, and how people would react to him being from a different culture and liking more modern worship than what we are used to.

What did it mean? Did it mean that we couldn't be involved in activities with the people from Hites anymore? Did it mean that everything would change all at once again? After all, we haven't had the same minister for more than four years for as long as they could remember. The youth told me that if we allow change, at least a little bit, from time to time, maybe we wouldn't have to switch ministers every four years.

I asked the youth what we should do about their worries and concerns. They told me we should pray for our church. Please remember that these guys are teenagers. They also said maybe if we educated people they wouldn't be afraid. Yes, the teenagers have picked up on our adult fears. I asked how they thought we should go about educating people. They weren't sure. They reminded me we can't change people's minds or get rid of their fear, but God can.

So, we prayed about it together, hoping God would show us what needed to be done. It came to us later that week that we should go and see what this other church was all about and meet the new minister. It seemed like a better idea than spending time worrying, listening to rumors, or letting the unknown upset or scare us.

Sunday morning April 30<sup>th</sup>, five of us left Relief's parking lot and met two other members to attend Mt. Olive's 9:30 am Worship. Here is what we found when we got there:

The people were the same socio-economic cross section we have here.

Their Church sits in a pretty country spot a little off the beaten path too.

Their church has also been around a while.

They too have friendly greeters who pass out bulletins.

They were dressed in the same variety you see here, from dresses or suits to jeans and shorts.

The order of worship looked familiar.

They also have a piano.

They have a projector in their ceiling and good sound system too.

Their minister is friendly.

What was different?

When we walked in everyone we came in contact with stuck out their hand and introduced themselves without reservation but without being pushy. It just seemed natural. Several different people, one at a time, came over to us and introduced themselves even after we sat down. There didn't seem to be assigned seating. They offered us coffee, tea, or hot chocolate in cups with lids.

The announcements and upcoming events were scrolling across the wall in front of the sanctuary when we walked in. Since their wall is white, they don't need a screen. Since it was the fifth Sunday, they had what they called a blended service. Their piano player explained to us, with a smile, that she gets fifth Sunday's off. To the right of the stage there was a band, yes a band in a country United Methodist Church! They used acoustic guitars, a tambourine, and what I'm told is called a Cajon. They weren't that different from some of the bands we've had here for the Yard Parties. They weren't too loud for the space. The songs were familiar and upbeat, everybody sang. People sang

out, in part because they were looking up at the words on the screen, rather than face down in a book. Some people clapped their hands or moved their feet. It was one of the most uplifting versions of *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms* I've ever participated in. Since they don't have an official choir, they had a "pick up" choir at the time of the anthem. Several random people went up front, including one of us, and sang an anthem in a round directed by a band member. During some parts everybody sang. It wasn't perfect but was heart felt and joyful.

The pews were full and looked as though they would have been even without us there. There was no generation missing. There were even babies (Please notice the plural on that word). They passed the peace. We stopped doing that so long ago our teens don't remember it, but were completely fascinated by it. One of them even took notes during the whole experience. For the children's moment the front pew was full of kids ranging from tiny little ones to teens. A kid lit the candles wearing shorts and flip flops. No body minded.

The minister has a slight accent but not enough of one to keep those of us with hearing instruments from understanding. The sermon drew us in. It included the congregation in the walk to Emmaus in such a way that we felt like we'd been there. I'll never look at that passage of scripture the same way again.

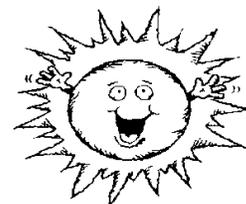
Was everything perfect? No. But, we felt like we'd been in the presence of the Holy Spirit even before we met the minister or before the worship started. We left smiling about the whole worship experience, not just the minister. We were still smiling when got back to Relief, so much so that the first person to see us said something like "look at all those smiles!"

So where does that leave us? We can still participate in activities with Hites; we just won't have the same minister. Maybe God allowed this

change because having two dwindling congregations is a powerful spiritual drain on any minister. The last four ministers before Pastor Richard, including the interim one, told us as much. Maybe changing the relationship between our churches is what each church needs to grow. It will allow the new connections to draw us each back to joy in the Lord, in each other, and in our worship. It will release the financial strain on Hites so they can focus on other things. It might open our eyes, minds, and hearts here at Relief to see that worship can be joyful and inclusive to people we don't know. It might allow Pastor Richard to branch out in his new appointment in ways we would've never allowed him to do here. We thank God we got to know Pastor Richard, Yvonne, Jennifer, and Peter and for their service and support over last several years.

Those of us who went on this road trip encourage everyone else not to take our word for it, but to go a few at a time and see for yourselves. We also invite you keep on praying with us for God's guidance and blessings for Pastor Richard and his new church, for Hites, for unity and growth in our church, for our new sister church and pastor.

—Molly Thorne



**SUNSHINE CARD SIGNING**  
**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17<sup>th</sup>**

—*Ruth Earnshaw*

**FYI****Mt. Olive Mailing address:**

327 Mt. Olive Road

Winchester, VA 22602-1685

Mt. Olive Church: (540) 877-3424

Website: [www.mtoliveumc.org](http://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](http://Reliefumc.com)**Email:** [VictorGomez@vaumc.org](mailto:VictorGomez@vaumc.org)**Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez' Cell Phone:**

1-202-285-5767

**Newsletter**

The deadline for our October 2017 Neighborhood Gatherings Newsletter is Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The September Newsletter will be available Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>.

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 (540) 465-4515 or email me at home [amitch@shentel.net](mailto:amitch@shentel.net)

—Brenda



If you have new information on your current address, phone or email, 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](mailto:amitch@shentel.net). Thank you for helping to keep our data current!

—Brenda