



OLIVE BRANCH



Olivet United Methodist Church
13575 Olivet Road, Lusby, MD 20657
410-326-8400—olivetumc-lusby.org

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ! The Olivet family has much to celebrate during this Winter season of ministry. Our *All the Good* Advent Bible Study with Pastor Marianne Brown was a delight; thank you, Pastor Marianne! Also, the evergreens that populate our Sanctuary during Advent always bring lasting warmth to my spirit. That held true even on the coldest Christmas Eve in living memory. Our church heater was struggling (understandably) to keep the Sanctuary warm, but I wasn't worried. I knew that our body heat would do the trick, since that's the power of the Body of Christ. And wouldn't you know it: the Sanctuary warmed up by 10 whole degrees during the course of the service!



I always say that Olivet is a giving church, and your generosity continues to astound me. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for your pastor's gift this Christmas! I already felt deeply appreciated but the generosity of the gift meant so very much to me all the same. It's a blessing to be with you and I'll always thank God for leading me to serve among you.

I'm pleased to report that our brand-new Olivet Leadership Board is now in full swing. Last Spring and Summer, we explored this possibility among Olivet leadership and also with everyone in our congregation. I appreciated your willingness to ask critical questions about it, since that's how valuable learning always happens. Olivet officially voted to adopt the 1-Board Model during our annual Church Conference on October 20, 2022. The benefits of this church governance structure are multifold, with a main one being that everything is much better streamlined. If you have any questions about how this works, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. For more information on the Olivet Leadership Board, check out page 2.

Olivet tried another new thing in 2023 and that thing was Winter Weekend VBS! Rachel Crim and I came up with



this idea and we let God guide us through it. Regular Summer VBS always comes with a full kit of supplies ready for us to use but we created our own curriculum, decorations, and crafts for this Olivet original event. Lots of love went into it and we were beyond thrilled to have just under 20 children participate. Was-

n't the energy during worship on January 22nd absolutely wonderful? One of our goals in 2023 is to involve more children in the life of the church, and that starts with us thinking outside the box. How can we be hospitable to children of all ages? What does children's ministry look like in this day and age? What can we do to teach our young friends about the God that will always love them?

Our Olivet family is profoundly thankful for Darrell Warner and his yearslong ministry of leading Project Echo, and we've now welcomed our new 3-person team with great enthusiasm. Peggy Wilson, Sue Shubert, and Betty Ellis are doing a terrific job heading up this ministry and they encourage everyone to participate if and when they can. For more information on Project Echo, check out page 8.

Lastly, I'd like to express my gratitude to Ruth Dixon and Chris Stelloh-Garner for leading worship while I was away in early January. My mom and I (we still can't believe it) had the amazing privilege of going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Each site where Jesus walked fed my soul in some powerful ways and I'm eager to continue reflecting on the experience.

There's much to look forward to in the coming months, as always! My favorite church season is always the next one, so that means I'm ready for Lent. Let's get that purple out!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Alex
410-231-1115

olivetumcpastor@gmail.com

Olivet Leadership Board Update



The Olivet Leadership Board had our very first meeting on Tuesday, January 17th at 7:00PM. Everything the Board does equips Olivet for ministry, meaning that the Board's primary goal is to help the whole church "Rejoice in Jesus, Grow in our Faith, and Pass it on!" The Board decided to continue with its name "The Olivet Leadership Board" before we reviewed our church goals for 2023. These goals include:

- 1) Begin a new missions ministry in our community.
- 2) Involve more children and families into the life of the church.
- 3) Reinvigorate youth ministry with an active youth group of at least 5 youth.
- 4) Reengage lay visitation efforts by creating a network of pastoral care check-ins.
- 5) Strengthen Olivet's evangelistic outreach efforts.

We have concrete action steps for each of these goals and the Board will return to them throughout the year to assess how the church is progressing. We also learned all about our financial operations from Gianna Giannelli, our Olivet Treasurer, and heard an overview of current and past Olivet ministries from our new Lay Leader, Chris Stelloh-Garner. Lastly, we began reviewing church policies, which we will continue to do in our next few meetings. The Board will provide a detailed update on our newly revised church policies in the Spring newsletter.

As a friendly reminder, this is a brand new church governance structure for Olivet. We no longer have a Finance Committee, Staff-Parish Relations Committee, or Church Council. The Leadership Board handles everything that falls under what each of those committees did in the past. Doug Hood serves as our church Trustee and heads up our Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Team. For more information, check out our Fall newsletter's article on page 4 (which covers the Q and A that our District Superintendent, Dr. Johnsie Cogman, led here at Olivet on Sunday, August 28th) and/or watch our Baltimore-Washington Conference's Training Tuesday video at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MQJcIX4e5A>.

The Olivet Leadership Board is always here for you, and we welcome any and everyone to join us for our meetings! We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00PM in-person with Zoom available. We are

The Leadership Board

Class of 2023

Bob Evans
Susan Graham
Val Hermansen

Class of 2024

Tiffany Gaines, Chair
Terry Goss
Jeanette Roland

Class of 2025

Betty Ellis
Susan Hood
Peggy Wilson

Lay Leader/Lay Rep to Annual Conference

Chris Stelloh-Garner, through 2025

Other Appointed Leaders

Leadership & Nominations

Kathy Heil, 2023
Marva Burgess, 2024
Marjorie Zimmermann, 2025

Trustee/Head of Buildings & Grounds

Support Team

Doug Hood

united in our commitment to keep our meetings at exactly one hour. Our primary aid is having a detailed agenda for every meeting. Feel free to contact Pastor Alex or our Chair, Tiffany Gaines, to view the upcoming agenda and/or our last meeting's minutes. If you'd like to bring a new topic to the Board, please notify Pastor Alex or Tiffany. We thank everyone for your open hearts and minds as we've transitioned to this new model of church leadership!

In Christ,
Tiffany Gaines, Chair
Pastor Alex

Support Team Updates

Buildings & Grounds

We purchased a whole new furnace for the Good News Center in December 2022, and we are pleased to report that the Meeting Room in the Good News Center will be newly painted this quarter. Also in December, we approved the purchase of brand-new chairs for the Fellowship Hall and Meeting Room, and they will be arriving this quarter.

~Doug Hood, Church Trustee

Finance

Our Olivet Church finances are continuing to be positive. We are thankful that the congregation has been generous in meeting the stewardship goal of \$4,000 per week. The Finance Committee has held regular meetings during November and December. We now transition to the One-Board Model for the leadership of Olivet in 2023.

Olivet's Treasurer, Gianna Giannelli-Schmidt, has provided the financial reports each month for review.

The Good News Center has a new furnace, the water treatment work has been successfully completed, and the Garden Guild is planning for additional beautification during 2023.

Please pray for our continued financial health and for God's blessings on all the Children of God.

May Peace be With Us,
~Bob Evans

Garden Guild

During the garden's long-needed rest, the planting continued. Calvert County Reforestation Plants (CCRP) are in the ground!!!! Fifty trees and shrubs were planted on December 15, 2022, for free, a conservative estimated \$4,600 value. New Jersey Teas (*Ceanothus americanus*) and Virginia Sweet Spires ("Little Henry") were planted around the parking lot behind the church. Dogwood (*Cornus Florida*), Red Tip (*Cereus Canadensis*) and three American Beauty Berries (*Callicarpa Americana*) were planted behind the church adjacent to the fence and walkway. The rest of the trees and shrubs were planted around the outer perimeter of the cemetery for erosion management and control. In addition to the above-mentioned trees and shrubs, the following were planted: Black Chokes, Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus Aromatica*) and Red Twig Bush. This completes the second CCRP planting that OUMC has been awarded.

Thanks to each and every one of you for all your support to the OUMC Garden Guild this and past years. All your OOOOHs and AHHHHs have made it worthwhile. I know you and I can't wait for the spring show.

~Susan Hammond

United Men's Ministry

The interest in re-establishing a Chartered UMM unit received a positive "kickoff" on 14 January when the assembled Men agreed to meet on the third Saturday of each month at 0900 hrs. The agreement

Calling All Laity

**REJOICING IN JESUS,
GROWING OUR FAITH, PASSING IT ON!**

As Olivet welcomes 2023, we also welcome the opportunity to focus on our mission and our ministries: what we're doing, why we're doing it, and what might need to be tweaked to respond to what God is calling us to do. As your new Lay Leader and Representative to the Annual Conference, this will be my focus.

In doing so, following are my primary functions:

- ◆ represent lay members within Olivet
- ◆ foster the role of laity in mission and ministry
- ◆ meet regularly with Pastor Alex
- ◆ serve as an active member of our Leadership Board and other groups, our annual Church Conference, and the BWC Annual Conference
- ◆ continue my faith journey through study and training opportunities, and encourage all lay members to do the same

Over the coming months, I'll be reaching out to you, but please feel free to touch base with me as well. My email address is stelgar@comcast.net, and 443-968-6295 works for text and phone chats. I look forward to working with you!

Shalom, Chris Stelloh-Garner



The **Sunset** on the Southern Emmaus Community was earmarked by the awarding on January 14, 2023, a donation of the remaining funds in our treasury of \$7,717.21 to the Community with A Cause United Methodist Church.



De Colores

~jCeferino Eppsi

was not "**chiseled in stone**" if an alternate time proved more convenient based on an upcoming survey to be taken.

We continue to encourage Men to avail themselves to the free app **LIVE BOLD** created specifically for Christian Men. The app can be downloaded from the App Store or from **UnitedMensMinistry.com**.

~Ceferino Epps



Children Crafting



Santa's Firetruck

Winter Weekend VBS



Altar Nativity Scene



A Wedding

and

A Baptism



Gianna Giannelli & Todd Schmidt were wed on November 12, 2022.



Spencer Louis Thom was baptized on November 6, 2022.



The Sacrament of Baptism is offered to anyone at any age. Baptisms can be done in the church during worship service, or in the river at a church member's beach close by. If interested, contact Pastor Alex at 410-231-1115 or at olivetumcpastor@gmail.com.

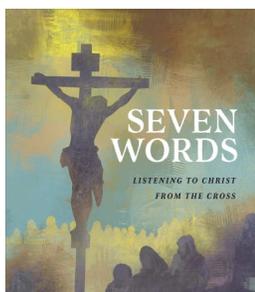
Lent & Easter Schedule



Tuesday, February 21st
5:00—7:00 PM
Olivet Fellowship Hall



Wednesday, February 22nd
12:00 PM & 7:00 PM
Olivet Sanctuary



Lenten Bible Study
March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, & April 5
11:00 AM and 7:00 PM
Olivet Meeting Room



Sunday, April 2nd
9:30 AM Church Service
Olivet Sanctuary



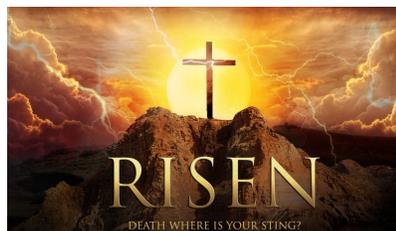
Thursday, April 6th
7:00 PM
Olivet Sanctuary



Friday April 7th
11:00 AM SMILE processional from St. Peter's to Our Lady Star of the Sea for the 12:00 PM service.
7:00 PM evening service at St. Paul UMC



Sunday, April 9th
6:00 AM
Drum Point Beach in Lusby



Sunday, April 9th
9:30 AM Church Service
Olivet Sanctuary



Immediately following the
9:30 AM Church Service

OLIVET MISSIONS CORNER

Ripple Center — An adult day care service center in St. Mary's County where Pastor Alex and several Olivet volunteers lead a worship service with Communion every Thursday at 10:30 AM.

Project Echo — A homeless shelter for men, women, and families. The Olivet family donates a meal for 40 people on the first Sunday of each month.

SMILE (Service Makes Individual Lives Exciting) — Olivet is one of the founding members of this volunteer, ecumenical, non-profit, community organization. Olivet provides financial assistance from the donations offered on Communion Sundays. There are always volunteer opportunities in the food pantry and thrift shop.

ANTI-RACISM GROUP — Folks from Olivet, St. John and Eastern UMCs gather monthly to discuss the issues of racism guided by Jemar Tisby's book, *How to Fight Racism*. Here is a photo of the group at a pot luck gathering.



LOVE IN ACTION — Doug & Susan Hood, along with their grandchildren, loading the truck with books from Olivet's former library. All books were donated to a local non-profit.



Ahh!
Job Well Done!

Mark Your Calendar

New Members Class



Sunday, February 26th
11:00 AM — 12:00 PM
Olivet UMC's Good News Center

Summer VBS



Tuesday—Friday, June 20—23
Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:11, "Give us this day our daily bread." Children will enjoy God's daily bread for our VBS this summer!

Summer Mission Trip



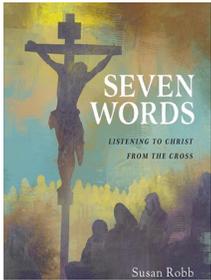
June 25—July 1
Open to anyone going into 9th grade and above.
Contact Pastor Alex for details at
410-231-1115, or olivetumcpastor@gmail.com.

LENTEN & SPRING BIBLE STUDIES

All studies are **1 hour** in length on Wednesdays
11:00 AM and 7:00 PM in the Good News Center Meeting Room
Available on Zoom. Open to everyone. Come as you are!



Lent Study / led by Pastor Alex

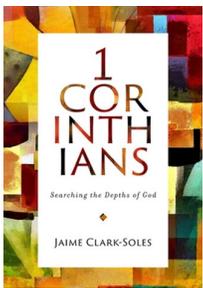


Seven Words: Listening to Christ from the Cross, by Susan Robb

6 sessions: March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, & April 5

This study will invite us to consider Jesus' last words while on the cross. Taken together, these words offer us a portrait of Jesus' humanity, a display of forgiveness, and a glimpse of God's inclusive Kingdom. May we journey through Lent with the cross always in sight.

Spring Study / led by Pastor Alex



1 Corinthians: Searching the Depths of God, by Jaime Clark-Soles

6 sessions: Apr. 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17, 24

This study will take us through the apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Paul is addressing a group of people who are attempting a totally new experiment known as a Christian community. We will examine the teachings of Paul, with attention to spiritual gifts, the joys and challenges of living in community, human sexuality, and the logic of the cross, death, and resurrection. Let's apply these lessons to our faith and be the Church!

NOTE: While prior reading is not required for these studies, reading along in the accompanying books week-to-week will offer more opportunities for learning and engagement. The chapters are short and written for a wide audience. We invite you to follow along chapter by chapter!

Please let Gerri, in the church office, know if you would like to purchase a book. If in need of a scholarship, please contact Pastor Alex at: olivetumcpastor@gmail.com.



Bible studies are a wonderful way to learn more about God in the context of our loving faith community. We invite you to come with questions, questions, and more questions! The beauty of group engagement is that we can gift one another with our insights. Let's dig into the Word of God.

All are welcome!



**Sunday, February 5th
10:30 AM**

Immediately following the 9:30 AM worship service in Olivet's Fellowship Hall.

Submit your best homemade chili to be judged, or just come and taste all the entries and vote.

A sure fun time for all!

Olivet Picture Directory

Be on the lookout for a church-wide updated picture directory. If you would like a hard copy, please call Gerri in the church office at 410-326-8400. It will be emailed to everyone in early February. For questions or to update any information, email Gerri at:

olivetumcoffice@comcast.net.



Project ECHO is a non-profit FREE homeless shelter in Prince Frederick that provides several different services for people experiencing homelessness.

Olivet donates a meal the first Sunday of each month.

We want to thank Darrell Warner for his many years of service as our coordinator.

We welcome our new coordinators Betty Ellis, Sue Shubert & Peggy Wilson as they have volunteered to take over this vital ministry.

To donate a food item, select one item from the menu that is provided the second week of each month and shared in worship and by email. Please contact Sue Shubert at 443-975-1058 if you would like to be added to the distribution list.



Holy, Gentle Yoga
with Ruth
Lauderbaugh

Fridays at 10:00 AM

Come join Ruth (and Teddy) for an easy workout of stretching and balance in Olivet's Fellowship Hall. Questions? For questions, call Ruth at 443-771-5474.



Do Justice

Love Kindness

Walk Humbly with

God! (Micah 6:8)



Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church

BWC Annual Conference

Wed May 31—Fri June 2, 2023

Baltimore, MD

BIRTHDAYS

February



- 01 Gracelynn Blackistone
- 04 Myrna Smith
- 05 Pastor Alex Thomas
- 06 Marijayne Biggans
- 07 Lindsay Benson
- 11 Jack Shunk
- 17 Bonnie Barrett
- 17 Marva Burgess
- 19 Thomas Goss
- 19 William Harrison
- 23 Carl Hammond
- 25 Sue Stevenson

March

- 04 Lily Kreamer
- 06 Anne Keehn
- 07 Dana Shepherd
- 07 Jessica Williford
- 07 Timothy Johnson
- 09 Melynn Wisniewski
- 16 Joan Holmes
- 23 Delaney Postanowicz
- 26 Roy Blackistone
- 28 Kayla Barrett
- 30 Bob Evans



April



- 01 Don Seidenspinner
- 05 Kirsten Sleeth
- 09 Richard Harris
- 10 John Davis
- 12 Rhys Harris
- 13 Madison Tompkins
- 18 Lisa Wisniewski
- 20 Jan Biggans
- 20 Lilah Shepherd
- 27 Chris Stelloh-Garner
- 29 Gail Klares

AA = ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

We had to quit playing God. It didn't work. (1)

It is when we try to make our will conform with God's that we begin to use it rightly. To all of us, this was a most wonderful revelation. ***Our whole trouble had been the misuse of will power. We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us.*** To make this increasingly possible is the purpose of A.A.'s Twelve Steps. (2)



"We have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for the day. Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it. Our attitude is everything." ~ Charles R. Swindoll

"We must speak to God as a friend speaks to his friend, servant to his master; now asking some favor, now acknowledging our faults, and communicating to Him all that concerns us, our thoughts, our fears, our projects, our desires, and in all things seeking His counsel." ~ St. Ignatius of Loyola



From Ephesians 4

²² Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything - and I do mean everything - connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life - a God-fashioned life, ²³ a life renewed from the inside ²⁴ and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you. ²⁵ What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. (3)

**"You don't think your way into a new kind of living.
You live your way into a new kind of thinking."**

~ Henri Nouwen



Hope Instead of Depression...

AA Weekly Meeting, 7:00 AM

Saturday Breakfast (12 & 12)

Olivet UMC, 13575 Olivet Rd, Lusby, MD 20657

All are welcome!

Questions? Call Bob Evans at 410-279-6664

- (1) Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) p. 62
- (2) Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions p. 40
- (3) The Message

~Bob Evans
to be continued...



Newsletter from Missionaries Nan McCurdy & Miguel Mairena



Dear Friends of GYTTE:

We thank God for you and your churches that keep us in your prayers and also donate to the ministries of Give Ye Them to Eat that bring hope to the people of the state of Puebla, Mexico.

We are grateful for so many things: the first would be you and your love for the Mexican people and for the GYTTE ministry. The next would be that Covid is way down, and by December we will have hosted three mission teams (AWARE teams) – two from Pennsylvania and one from Spokane, Washington. They provide concrete help, encouragement and also accompany our staff and so me of the people with whom we work. This gives us hope!

The last two groups worked on a compacted earth home for our employee Veronica (who you may remember lost two brothers and her parents in the last two years). They also helped with work at the Tree of Life Center.



March Basic Health Course

2022 has been an amazing year in community-based health (More Than a Bandage). Some 40 women took the beginning course for a week, half in March and half in September. Our Health staff, Betsy and Panchita also spent a week in the mountains of Puebla with Indigenous women focusing on self-esteem and prevention of violence. We also had five regional meetings and a final Health Promotor celebration in November.



September Basic Health Course



Xalcuahutla Pueblo Nahuatl Group

Our staff has suffered quite a bit this year with the death and illness. Most of you know that Rey's son David nearly died and was hospitalized for over a month. Because of your donations he received the medicines he needs. He is doing great! Marce, who had severe anemia is also better and is back to working parttime.

We send a special thanks to those who provide educational scholarships to youth. These young people likely wouldn't be studying without your help.

This year we worked with members of ten communities teaching them to build dry ecological toilets, wood-saving stoves, gabions, different kinds of composting, recycled paper and dried fruit.



When working with people who have sheep and goats, we always think of the shepherds – very humble people – who receive a message of hope from an angel as they are keeping watch over their flock. "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace ..."

In Christ,

Nan, Miguel, Marian, Clara, Cata and the rest of the team.

Website: gyttenham@aol.com