

December 2021

Making the grace\* of God real for people.

# Olivet Connections

\* "The meaning of life. The wasted years of life. The poor choices of life. God answers the mess of life with one word: 'grace.'" *Max Lucado*

## CLOSE TO HOME—ADVENT 2021

It is hard to believe this year is coming to a close! At the same time, we usher in a new liturgical year with the start of Advent. This year, we are once again partnering with A Sanctified Art to offer a series entitled "CLOSE TO HOME." We'll take time to acknowledge and celebrate that Emmanuel is with us, and yet, God's promised day—our everlasting home—is not fully realized.



We look forward to worshipping with you this season as we welcome the Christ child into our hearts and homes. Below you'll find a few of the opportunities you will have to participate in this season at Olivet.

### HANGING OF THE GREENS

**Saturday, November 27 - 10:00 AM**

Help us adorn the sanctuary and building for the Advent season. If you would like to bring an ornament from home to help decorate our sanctuary tree, you may do so on November 21 or November 28.

### ADVENT CALENDARS & DEVOTIONALS AVAILABLE

**Sunday, November 28**

A special Advent calendar and devotional booklet—both related to our theme—will be available to pick up this day. They both include daily prompts to help guide our journey through this season.

### CHRISTMAS CANTATA

**Sunday, December 12 - 10:30 AM**

Our choir will be leading our worship this Sunday with a beautiful cantata. *NOTE: Due to copywrite issues, this service cannot be recorded and shared online. It will be offered in person and broadcast over the radio at 10:30 AM.*

### VISIO DIVINA SERVICE

**Sunday, December 12, 10:30 AM**

A special *virtual* visio divina service will be offered on Olivet's YouTube channel on December 12. Visio divina is Latin for "divine seeing," and this will be a service that incorporates prayer, scripture, and art to encourage meditation and reflection.

### CHRISTMAS CAROL HYMN SING

**Sunday, December 19 - 10:30 AM**

We'll begin worship on the fourth Sunday of Advent with some caroling! Come spread some Christmas cheer with us!

### BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

**Sunday, December 19 - 6:00 PM**

This worship service is designed to create sacred space for the grief, longing, and heartache that feels close to home—especially during the holiday season. This service will be offered in person in the sanctuary. It will also be recorded and uploaded on our YouTube channel on Monday, December 20.

### CHRISTMAS EVE

**Friday, December 24, 5:00 PM & 8:00 PM**

We are offering two Christmas Eve services—a simple service at 5:00 PM and a more traditional lessons & carols service at 8:00 PM. Our current Covid protocols will be in place for both services. A service will also be uploaded to our YouTube channel later in the evening on Christmas Eve.

### AT-HOME WORSHIP

**Sunday, December 26**

We will not be having in-person worship on Sunday, December 26. Instead, we invite you to spend the sabbath in meaningful reflection and prayer from the comfort of your home or on ground that is holy to you. In this newsletter you will find an at-home liturgy to help guide you in your worship.



# Chosen Home: An At-Home Liturgy for Sunday, December 26, 2021

Written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

In an effort to help care out meaningful space for reflection and prayer during a busy holiday season, we offer you this at-home liturgy in place of an in-person service. Use it in the comfort of your own home or on ground that is holy to you. Regardless of where you worship, God will be there.

## Supplies

- Advent wreath or candle
- Lighter or matches
- Bible
- Blank piece of paper or a journal
- A computer or phone to play music
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: a stationary note card

## I. Set the Space

In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, take a moment to create a space for calm. Light the candles in our Advent wreath. If you don't have an Advent wreath, light a candle you have on hand. Pour a cup of tea. Play some Christmas music in the background. Turn off the TV and silence your phone. Breathe deeply. Allow this place to become holy ground.

### TIPS FOR CHILDREN

- Invite your kids to have a hands-on role in this liturgy by having them collect the supplies from around the house, lighting the candles, turning off distractions, etc.
- Before you begin the liturgy, invite your children to create a special place for you all to sit and reflect. They can make a comfortable fort out of pillows for you to sit on the floor or gather all the supplies needed around the table.

## II. Opening Prayer

One common psychological practice for clearing our mind and opening space in our hearts is to write a "brain dump." In a brain dump, you write down everything that's on your mind: to-do lists, concerns, worries, things that pop into your subconscious—anything that might distract or pull away from the here and now.

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Choose a Christmas song<sup>1</sup> and as the music plays, commit to writing down your brain dump prayer until the song ends. If you run out of things to write, give yourself space to listen, and trust that more ideas will come.

When the song is over, pray the following words:

*Holy God, even here, even now, you are with me. And so, I pray—hover over this swirl of words that make up a prayer. Read between the lines. See what weighs heavy on me. Know what distracts and carry it all. I am giving it to you. I am clearing out space. I am opening myself up to draw closer to your home. Gratefully I pray, Amen.*

### TIPS FOR CHILDREN

Encourage kids to draw what they're thinking and feeling instead of writing, if that feels easier. There's no wrong way to pray.

## III. Read + Reflect

Read Luke 2:41-52. Give yourself permission to read it two or three times through. During your first read, pay attention to what words stand out. During your second read, pay attention to what emotions stand out. On your third read, pay attention to what actions stand out.

Discuss or journal, using the following questions and observations:

- Jesus stays behind in the temple when his parents head home. Why do you think Jesus stays?
- In this story, we get a glimpse of Jesus coming into his own self. He is on his own, listening, and asking questions. And "all who heard him were amazed at his answers." What spaces have allowed you to be who you are truly called to be? Where do you feel the freedom to come into your own being? Reflect on what makes those spaces unique.
- Jesus refers to the temple as a house—God's house. In your experience, has the church been a home to you? If so, how? If not, why not? What steps need to be taken to allow all churches to reflect the same welcome, safety, and security of a loving home?

### OPTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

- This story is of Jesus spending time at church. What is your favorite part of our church? What are some of your favorite memories at church?
- When Jesus is in the temple, he reads the Bible. Do you have a favorite Bible story?
- Jesus tells his parents he likes being at the temple because it is God's house. What is the best part about being home? How do you feel when you are home?

<sup>1</sup> You can listen to the Sanctified Art Close to Home playlist on Spotify:  
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3Y40ddQ745bYzMIpUnpUL?si=4cde8e3d2d5841cc>

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## IV. Share the Good News

Worship calls us outside ourselves to connect with others and the world. To close the service, think of a person or a place that has helped you be your true self or has made you feel at home, just as Jesus was being his true self and felt at home in the temple. Send them a text, write them a letter to mail, or call them to thank them for their grace and welcome.

### TIPS FOR CHILDREN

Invite your kids to make a video message and send it to a family member. Not interested in writing a card or making a video? Try making a batch of cookies to drop off with a babysitter, teacher, or neighbor. There are lots of ways to express gratitude.

## V. Closing Words

Close this sacred time by reading and reflecting upon the following poem. Blow out your candles. Close your journal. Allow yourself to re-enter the world refreshed, renewed, and grateful.

### Chosen Home

There are a million ways to choose a home.

We choose to make it work.

We hang a wreath on the door of our shoebox apartment.

We invite company over.

We ask, "Would you like coffee with that?"

We choose to make the most of it.

We take up watercoloring or kickboxing and show up to class.

We mostly embarrass ourselves, but we were there.

We choose to not go it alone.

We sign up to volunteer and make ourselves a nametag.

We slide weary bones into weary church pews.

We shake hands and say hello.

We let the music cover us, like a blanket, or a prayer.

We choose to love what we have.

We look in the mirror and speak kindly to our body.

We buy flowers at the market and arrange them in jelly jars.

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There are a million ways to choose a home.  
So like Jesus in the temple  
who chose to stay,  
who chose to speak,  
who took up space because he knew he was home,  
I invite you to do the same.  
Put your body  
where your soul feels alive.  
Give yourself permission  
to take up space there.  
Stay, as long as it takes.  
Return, as often as you need.

There are a million ways to choose a home.  
Choose wisely. We need you here.

*—Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed*

## OLIVET EDUCATION ASSISTANCE LOAN FUND

One of the challenges of a growing church, such as Olivet, is keeping newcomers informed of all the traditions, programming, and “perks” within our fellowship. For many in our congregation one of the “best kept secrets” is the Olivet Education Assistance Loan Fund.

In the 1970’s, Ham Holt (one of the pillars of Olivet) passed away. His family requested that a student loan fund be established in his memory. Contributions in lieu of flowers went into this fund, named the Holt Memorial Fund (later renamed Olivet Education Fund). A few years later his wife Edna also passed and memorial contributions for her were added to the loan fund. Under the guidance of Martin Behymer (longtime friend, neighbor and church leader) the Holt family established the criteria for the use of the fund. The fund was to be available for low interest loans to members of the community who needed money to begin or continue their education – vocational school, college or adult education. Administrators of the fund were to be Olivet’s minister, Board chair, and treasurer. The fund would be self-sustaining and open to other contribution for those who saw the benefit of the fund.

Olivet Christian Church Education Assistance Loan fund is to help members, family members, or friends of the church to attain a degree or certification from an accredited postsecondary educational institution. This is a loan which must be repaid.

The maximum loan amount is \$3,000 prorated over 2 semesters, 3 trimesters or 4 quarters a year. This is based on a full-time academic load of 12 hours. Loans to part time students will be prorated based on number of hours being taken. Loans are subject to the availability of funds.

Following graduation, or separation from school, the loan applicant has one of two options for repayment of the loan.

- Elect to repay the full balance of the loan within 1 year of graduation, or separation from school, with no interest charged; or
- Repay over time with an Annual simple interest charge of 5%.

Administrators are the Minister, Board chair, and Treasurer. Applications are available by contacting the church office or the church treasurer, Diane Bartley.

## EMBRACING THE GOOD NEWS FOR PLANET EARTH ... CLOSE TO HOME

More fully appreciating God's good creation and our connections to one another have been positive outcomes of our struggles with the pandemic over the past 18 months. With a friend or family member, we invite you to participate in one of these activities:



Christmas Bird Count during the period December 14, 2021 to January 5, 2022, sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Check Columbia Audubon's local website <https://www.columbia-audubon.org/events/> for local details. More information also available at <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>

First Day Hike: Most of Missouri's state parks offer hikes on January 1<sup>st</sup> to get folks off to a great start in the new year. Contact our local state parks for details.

- **Rock Bridge Memorial State Park:**  
573-449-7402
- **Finger Lakes State Park:**  
573-443-5313

Watch the January newsletter for a comprehensive list of **Close to Home** adventures (within 50 miles of Olivet). Try something new each month in the new year.

Need the perfect gift to enhance enjoyment of the outdoors? Consider *Missouri State Parks and Historic*

*Sites – Exploring Our Legacy – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.* Also visit Missouri Department of Conservation's online shop, [www.mdcnatureshop.com](http://www.mdcnatureshop.com) for the 2022 Natural Events Calendar, books and other items. *Discover Missouri Natural Areas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* by Mike Leahy, item # 01-0297, has just recently been published.

Inspire kids in your life to get outdoors with a subscription to *Xplor*, published 6 times a year by MDC and free to Missouri residents. Go to <https://mdc.mo.gov/magazines/xplor> to subscribe. Out-of-state subscriptions, \$5 per year; out-of-country subscriptions, \$8 per year. You won't find a better value anywhere else.

**Gifting Close to Home - COMOGIVES** sponsored by the Community Foundation of Central Missouri provides opportunities throughout December to both honor a friend and support any of 148 nonprofit organizations working to benefit people in central Missouri. Many local programs which Olivet's Outreach budget and Outreach BBQ grants help support are included here: Rainbow House, Habitat for Humanity, Turning Point, Voluntary Action Center, The Wardrobe, Heart of Missouri CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates, plus many, many more. Visit <https://comogives.com/> to learn more.

~Sustainable Living Team

## ADULT CLASS ON ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY THIS WINTER

Does the universe reveal a sacred purpose? Can humans find meaning in a sacred nourishing enfolding of the whole planet? Does our Christian faith see the earth as a single living community? These and other questions will be considered in a Sunday morning adult class on "Ecological Spirituality/Theology" for 8 sessions (January 16 through March 13). Sessions will meet in the Multipurpose Room from 9:00 to 10:00 AM.

Themes will include: the environmental crisis, our Biblical/Christian heritage, cosmologies new and old, contribution of Indigenous cultures, contemporary theology, modern movements, personal ecological spirituality, and the Christian imperative for church and public policy, etc. Larry Brown will be the instructor.



## YEAR-END GIVING

Your gifts to Olivet Christian Church are gratefully acknowledged and have helped to support the work of Jesus Christ locally, regionally, and around the world.

- Olivet Children Ministries (VIRTUAL Christian Education, Vacation Bible School, Youth Group, etc.)
- Loaves & Fishes Soup Kitchen
- Disciples Mission Finance (Reconciliation)
- Week of Compassion/Church World Service
- Olivet - Hands On Ministry/Christian Education/Sustainability/Worship
- And the list goes on .....

Please consider giving TODAY and help Olivet close out the year strong. Together, we can make new and better Christ followers who influence the culture and impact the city of Columbia and the world for the glory of God.

Checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2021 will be receipted in 2021, though they may not be received by Olivet until 2022.

You also have the option of making contribution on-line Give Now! <https://olivetchristian.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ae0796ae6ccb38538918923e1&id=a52505346c&e=fd6c72bbde>

The following options are available for giving in support of Olivet and its mission to serve Jesus Christ in today's world:

- **Cash Contributions:** December 26 is the last Sunday in 2021

- **Stock gifts:** Olivet has an investment representative who is available to accept stock transfers. Since this takes a few days to take place and there are bank holidays to take into consideration, it must be initiated at least 15 working days prior to year-end (preferably by December 8th). Contact Ken Bartley if you need more assistance or information.
- **Charitable IRA Rollovers:** For those who qualify in 2021 (at least age 70 ½), it is important for the donor to inform the church treasurer (Diane Bartley) of the transfer because Charitable IRA Rollover checks often contain no information identifying the donor.

Your Olivet contribution statements will be mailed by January 31, 2022. Statements are also available upon request by emailing the church office ([olivetcc.office@gmail.com](mailto:olivetcc.office@gmail.com)) or Diane ([bartleys@missouri.edu](mailto:bartleys@missouri.edu)). Statements will be sent out to the name and address that is on file in our ServantKeeper database. If you have moved recently please let the church office know your current address so we can keep our records correct. All financial gifts/contributions to Olivet are considered charitable giving and are tax-deductible.

Once again, thank you for your generous commitment to the work of Jesus Christ through Olivet Christian Church.

~Merry Christmas and Happy New Year~  
Diane Bartley, Treasurer  
Ken Bartley, Finance Chair

## CROP WALK 2021 UPDATES

The final tally is in! The Columbia CROP Hunger WALK has topped our 2019 (\$16,453.20) and 2020 (\$17,499.99) totals in grand style – as of November 15th, our 2021 tally stands at \$20,305.66! What a wonderful way to celebrate walking together again. Thank you!



## ANGEL TREE GIFTS AND POINSETTIAS

The Angel Tree, our annual gathering of gifts for children in families that we adopt and delivery of Poinsettias is well underway. Send your donation to the Church by November 29 and we'll do the shopping for children's gifts and for the poinsettias. Make your check payable to Olivet Christian Church and note Angel Tree in the description line.



## IMAGINE GOD'S LOVE REVEALED - CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING

On December 12 and 19, we will receive a special offering that supports our Region of Mid-America ministries. That means that we have the benefit of having our ministers nurtured, our youth and adults attend camps and conferences, and support for the work required to call a new minister by our Ministerial Search Team.



## THANK YOU!

We want you to know how much we appreciate your thoughts & prayers, the cards & emails & phone calls. The prayer shawl group gave Steve a beautiful lap-ghan that he's been using in this cooler weather. Thank you for helping us on this journey.

Love, hugs, & prayers for each of you.

~ Steve & Carla Lind

Thanks to the church & all of the members for their thoughts & prayers.

~ Steve Huffman

Dear Members of the Shawl Ministry,

Thank you for the beautiful shawl and the reminder of the many prayers said for me and my family. It is a wonderful sentiment and a way to help me remember I am a child of God. Thank you for this gift!

~ Vicki Boyd Kennedy

Dear Olivet,

I want you to know that this pastor feels appreciated! Thank you to each of you who sent notes, offered gifts, and shared kind words for Pastor Appreciation Month. It is a joy to serve alongside each and every one of you. I thank God regularly for calling us to one another.

~ Blessings of Peace,  
Rev. Hannah

To the Olivet Community,

Thank you so much for the sweet (and I mean that literally AND figuratively) gifts in recognition of Pastor Appreciation Month! Both Hannah and I were delightfully surprised! (Good job, Joe, et. al for springing that on us!) Above all, I am so grateful for this community of faith, and the blessing of serving as part of this ministry team! Thank you so much for your support and for the heart and soul you show every day! Olivet is a special place! Glad to be on the journey together!

~ Peace and Grace,  
Rev. Coletta

## OLIVET CHURCH BOARD MEETING - OCTOBER 26, 2021, 7:00 PM

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Amanda Durbak, Joe Reeder, Barbara Fitzgerald, Vickie Spain, Dennis Bettenhausen, Jan Poe, Kim Amiot, Inge Decker, Kendall Enright, Tony Keel

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Reverend Hannah Ryan, Reverend Coletta Eichenberger, Diane Bartley, Ken Bartley

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Amanda Durbak at 7:02

Opening Prayer offered by Reverend Coletta Eichenberger.

### **GOVERNANCE:**

The minutes from the September meeting had been emailed to the members prior to the meeting Barb Fitzgerald moved to accept the minutes as presented, second by Joe Reeder. Motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Diane Bartley sent out reports via email prior to the meeting for review.

The cash on hand report lists the bank accounts plus any of the restricted balances which is now a negative number; there is less cash than are in the special funds. The budget versus actuals shows that September was another negative month; more was spent than came in. The old church rent is back to being put in the ministry fund because there is a balance of 12 months' rent in that account. Motion to approve the report as presented by Kim Amiot, second by Dennis Bettenhausen. Motion passed.

### **Finance Committee Report:**

Ken Bartley presented the finance report. The balance sheet shows, under 'other current assets', the 'LPL unrealized gains and loss' is at \$1,372.03. That is the increase in value of our brokerage account as of September 30th. The market has been improving since then, more than doubling the current gain. The growth fund increased in value by 20%. The value fund increased in value by 7.5%. The overall value of the account since March has increased 14.5%. In the cash on hand report, when looking at the assets or

total bank accounts which includes the special funds, the total is \$223,272, however when looking at the budget to actuals, that is approximately the same amount of money that we have expended in the first three quarters of 2021.

There is an unrestricted cash on hand balance of -\$6,552. Ideally this would be positive number; however going into the pandemic, on February 28, 2020, the unrestricted cash on hand balance was -\$71,759. One year later on February 28, 2021 the unrestricted cash on hand balance was -\$50,395. One month later on March 31, 2021, due to the forgiveness of the PPP loan, the balance was -\$3,929. The church is in a better financial position than we were a year ago, but we still need to grow the revenue to get a positive balance.

The budget to actual report shows a net operating income of -\$16,753.13. If the prepaid pledges are applied to the balance, it would be -\$5,700. The first three quarters of 2021 show that revenue is down 7% and expenses are up 10.6%. One factor that would help the revenue would have been the income from the garage sale which is not taking place in 2021. Typically the fourth quarter is the best revenue quarter of the year, with giving patterns, it is not expected to be significant enough to get the balance in the positive.

Discussion included the question of refinancing the loan for the property which is currently 4.99%. At this point it is on the radar, ideally the financials would be in a better position, particularly the balance sheet and income statement. With the bank recently helping achieve the PPP loan repayment, it may not be the time to play hardball, however Ken Bartley will consult with the bank and get their opinion.

### **MINISTER'S REPORT:**

Rev. Ryan: This month Reverend Ryan has been working with youth and families to find a better time for Youth Group. She continues to offer gathering opportunities both in person and online and seek to

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## OLIVET CHURCH BOARD MEETING CONTINUED

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find times that work for the most youth. She continues to send monthly informational emails about Children and Youth opportunities at Olivet and is working to create some education opportunities for Advent.

Reverend Ryan met with Personnel Chair Rob Foss to complete performance reviews for Adriene and Becky on September 28th. She has communicated with several local musicians in the hopes that they might help us find an accompanist. However, there are no current leads.

Advent preparations continue, the theme will be "Close to Home," and they are working with several others to create sanctuary adornments and to create special ways to connect and worship during this season.

Reverend Ryan put together the Narrative Budget for the Annual Meeting with input from various committee chairs and worked with Becky and Coletta to ensure the Annual Meeting packet was complete. She continues to meet with the Search Team to interview candidates, discern, and help organize candidate visits.

Reverend Ryan has attended two webinars on topics related to faith and immigration which have been hosted by the Borderlands Institute of Brite Divinity School. She was able to have some time off October 18-23 and is planning to attend a retreat for some alumni of Bethany Fellows November 16-19. She will be off the following Sunday, November 21.

### Rev. Eichenberger:

Reverend Eichenberger continues to share leadership with worship and preaching. She is helping to coordinate the decorating of the sanctuary for World Communion Sunday. She continues to participate in weekly staff meetings and Bible study. She participated in the Annual Meeting, a security camera assessment, and the program council. She is

participating in a 2 week, 2 hours each evening seminar on 'Ending Well', creating advanced directives.

Reverend Eichenberger wrote an article in the newsletter about Ron Gaus. Ron was the building manager that was hired by a church in St. Louis that was Rev. Eichenberger's last interim. He is an out of the box thinker and has helped several churches look at how the facilities they have can be used to generate revenue as well as serving the community. He will be here on November 14th for lunch and discussion after the service.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### Search and Call Update:

Coletta Eichenberger reported that there is an in-person candidate interview coming up. The candidate will meet with the Search Team, the Shepherding Team, Reverend Ryan, Reverend Eichenberger, and any additional staff that can attend. The Search team is unanimously positive about the candidate.

#### Security Camera Update:

Reverend Ryan reported that Bob Broz, Reverend Eichenberger, and Becky Teacutter met with Bill Doll from Alarm Communications Center, Inc to talk about our security needs at the church. The cameras are required to be purchased in sets of four. The group decided that planning on purchasing eight cameras and installing four of them, keeping the additional four for use at a later time, it is a little less expensive than purchasing two packages of four if more are needed. The plan is to put the first camera on the northeast corner of the front of the main building which will cover the multipurpose entrance and parking lot and all the way to the pavilion and the dumpster area. The second camera will be on the north aspect of the front entrance which will cover part of the parking lot and look out toward the cemetery. The third camera will be on the south aspect of the front entrance and will cover the other direction giving a wider view of the parking lot. The fourth camera will be on the southwest corner of the

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## OLIVET CHURCH BOARD MEETING CONTINUED

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fellowship hall which will cover part of the gazebo and down the WW driveway. At some point in the future, cameras on the back side of the building. The total quote including the installation is \$2,407.50. Discussion included concerns that if the spare cameras are not needed for several years, would the technology be outdated, and how sturdy the cameras are. There has been previous vandalism in the cemetery, however due the internet currently available everything needs to be wired in, so there is not a good way to get a camera to cover that location with enough definition to be beneficial. One idea suggested is to put a decoy camera by the cemetery as a deterrent. The recommendation from the group is for the board to approve a range of \$3,000-3,500 in case any additional fees occur. Joe Reeder moved to approve the recommended range, second by Inge Decker. Additional discussion after the motion was consideration of placing cameras to cover the playground area. The motion stayed the same. The motion passed.

**2022 Board Officers:** The board is looking for officers for the coming year. Positions include the Chair, Vice Chair, a secretary. The positions are open to any board members that will be serving in 2022. The oncoming board members are invited to sit in for the November and December board meetings.

Discussion on Visioning for the future: The board has been wanting to formally discuss planning for Olivet's future. There have been many changes occurring

due to the pandemic, the search for a co-minister, and various other reasons. The church is adapting and can make different beautiful. The plan is to work on securing the church's future as well as thinking about what do we want, who we are we as a congregation. In the new year, with the new board together, we can intentional visioning that is thoughtful, thorough, and can loop in other leaders of the church such as mission family leaders. Discussions can involve finances and structure, but also spirituality, who God is calling us to be in this time.

Discussion on this topic included the board reinstating a board retreat at the church to help focus and plan. The meeting with Ron Gaus can help with forming ideas. In the past recommendations have including starting a stewardship campaign or a group book discussion. It would be great if the new co-minister was part of the visioning process, however this is not a fast process and we will be establishing a direction and foundation that a new co-minister can help to build on and bring in a new outside perspective. It is recognized that we have done visioning in the past, but the changing environment leads us to see the benefit of re-establishing ourselves. The visioning process also needs to include the congregation's input as a whole.

A motion to adjourn by Inge Decker.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM  
Respectfully submitted,  
Kendall Enright

## FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

The Food Pantries in Central Missouri and Boone County are always in need of assistance. The list below contains suggestions for donations. Items donated in the fourth quarter of 2021 will go to **Central Missouri Food Pantry**. Place your items in the Food Pantry area of the Fellowship Hall.

- ✓ Any canned fruit or dried fruit
- ✓ (peaches-pears-fruit cocktail-applesauce)
- ✓ Canned fruit juice or packets

- ✓ Jams or jelly
- ✓ Fruit pie filling

### ALTERNATE

- ✓ Jell-o pudding mixes or packets
- ✓ Microwave popcorn
- ✓ Catsup/mayo/mustard



## DECEMBER OLIVET ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

### Wednesday, December 1

7:00 PM Choir

### Sunday, December 5

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

#### **Poinsettia Sunday**

9:30 AM Worship & Wonder

10:30 AM In-person & Drive-in Worship

3:00 PM Worship posted to YouTube

3:30 PM Youth Group (Zoom)

### Monday, December 6

12:00 PM Bible Study

1:30 PM Staff Mtg.

4:30 PM Loaves & Fishes

### Wednesday, December 8

7:00 PM Choir

### Sunday, December 12

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

#### **Christmas Special Offering**

9:30 AM Worship & Wonder

10:30 AM Christmas Cantata & Worship

10:30 AM Visio Divina Service (YouTube)

3:30 PM Youth Group (Zoom)

### Monday, December 13

12:00 PM Bible Study

1:30 PM Staff Mtg.

### Wednesday, December 15

7:00 PM Choir

### Sunday, December 19

*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent*

#### **Christmas Special Offering**

9:30 AM Worship & Wonder

10:30 AM Christmas Carol Hymn Sing

3:00 PM Worship posted to YouTube

3:30 PM Youth Group (Zoom)

7:00 PM Blue Christmas Service

### Monday, December 20

No Bible Study

1:30 PM Staff Mtg.

7:00 PM Board Meeting

### Tuesday, December 21

*1<sup>st</sup> Day of Winter*

### Wednesday, December 22

**Newsletter Mailed**

### Friday, December 24

*Christmas Eve*

5:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship

8:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship

### Saturday, December 25

*Christmas Day*

### Sunday, December 26

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of after Christmas**

At Home Worship

### Monday, December 27

**Church Closed**

### Tuesday, December 28

**Church Closed**

### Friday, December 31

*New Year's Eve*

**Church Closed**



December

## REFLECTING ON AN ADVENT HYMN

The season of Advent includes the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. There are many traditions connected with Advent. The most familiar is that of lighting candles on an Advent wreath.

Another tradition involves singing the verse of the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" on the seven days before Christmas. The verses were based on ancient prayers known as the "O Antiphons" that were first sung in Latin.

Most modern hymnals contain a version of this hymn, although the number and order of verses sometimes changes, as does the translation. Each verse of the hymn talks about Jesus coming into our world and uses a different name for Jesus.

The words to the hymn are written below. Being very old, they may seem rather strange, so a brief explanation is given for some of the terms, along with a suggestion for reflecting on each verse. Sing a different verse each day of the week for the four weeks of Advent.

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here,  
until the Child of God appear.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.**

This verse does not refer to the modern nation of Israel, but to all of God's people (often called "Israel" in the Bible). It asks that Jesus help set people free. Who are people in the world who need to be set free? Where are some places where good news of God's love that Jesus brings can make a difference?

**O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
and order all things far and nigh;  
to us the path of knowledge show,  
and help us in that way to go.**

In the Bible, Wisdom doesn't mean knowledge or the things we learn from books. Instead, it's when God's Spirit is inside us and help us know, deep in our heart, what is right and how God wants us to live. Proverbs 8 tells us that Wisdom helped God create the world, and 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that Jesus is the Wisdom of God. Talk about something you know by heart.

**O come, O com, O Adonai,  
who came to all on Sinai high,  
and from its peace a single law  
proclaimed in majesty and awe.**

*Adonai* is a Hebrew word used to refer to the name for God that Moses learned when speaking to God at the burning bush (Ex. 3:2). Sinai is the mountain where God gave the torah or law to the people. Reflect on how Jesus helps us learn how to live in God's way.

**O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,  
from every foe deliver them  
that trust your mighty power to save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave.**

Jesse was King David's father. King David was considered a great king who was fair and good and the people long for a new ruler from the line of David. He was also a shepherd, and Jesus - who was descended from David - showed us that being a shepherd was a wonderful way to be a leader. Who are some people who show servant leadership?

**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by your advent here;  
love stir within the womb of night,  
and death's own shadows put to flight.**

Dayspring was an old-fashioned way of meaning "new dawn" which is part of the song of Zechariah in Luke 1:78. Zechariah sang this song to his infant son, John the Baptist, imagining some of the things that Jesus would do. This new dawn would bring about God's mercy, bringing new life, love, and joy upon the earth. How has the birth of Jesus brought joy into your life?

**O come, Desire of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of humankind;  
O bid our bitter conflict cease,  
and be for us our Prince of Peace.**

The prophet Isaiah spoke of a Prince of Peace (9:6) who would come and bring justice and righteousness. Matthew understood that Jesus was this person, and while we do not know if this is who Isaiah meant or not, we do know that the things Jesus taught can help the world to live in peace. How can you help to bring peace in the world?



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