

# Olivet Connections

January 2026

## NEWSLETTER

### Baptism Class

Any child or adult who has not yet made their confession of faith to be baptized but is ready to prepare through classes, please contact Rev. Hannah at hfisher-ryan@gmail.com by February 1st. We often recommend these classes for children in 4th grade and beyond, but seriously interested younger children are welcome to attend. Baptism classes will meet throughout the Lenten season.

### 2nd Annual Opportunities Fair

Have you ever wondered what ministries at Olivet match your gifts? Are you still “feeling things out” within the community and don’t want to be the one who asks too many questions? Are you curious about what other teams have been up to lately?

Please consider joining us for our 2nd Annual Opportunities Fair. All the active teams/ministries at Olivet will set up information booths in the fellowship hall on **January 25th** during the fellowship hour (9:30am-10:30am). You can stroll around chatting with the leaders and representatives and find just the right place for you to serve! This really is a great opportunity to find out what is at the heart of Olivet and how you can plug in!

### One-on-One Conversations

As we move forward with our Open and Affirming Process, we want to pause to make room for folks who might be holding questions/concerns/hopes in their hearts to have the time and space to ask more of the Grace Expansion Team. We have conversation partners ready to listen! There is a sign-up sheet on the Grace Expansion Table in the Fellowship Hall or you may contact one of the Pastors. Boldly expanding our welcome takes enthusiastic participation by all within our community; let us know how we can include you!

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Opportunities.....	p1 - 4
Outreach .....	p1 - 2
Sustainable Living .....	p3
November Board Mtg.....	p5 - 6
Calendar .....	p7
And MORE good news!	

### SAVE THE DATE

#### OCC Annual Rummage Sale Saturday, February 28, 2026

Watch for more details later in January!

**Start now!** *Start saving and gathering up the things that you'd like to have go to a new home and benefit OCC!*

You may bring: toys, games, puzzles · books · clothing for men, women and children · baby toys, accessories and clothing · home décor · kitchen and dining items · bedroom items · linens, blankets, sheets, towels · crafts, jewelry, fabric · seasonal décor such as Christmas, Halloween, Easter · collectibles · small appliances, tools, · office supplies · outdoor items such as bicycles, garden tools, construction or woodworking tools, lawn furniture, outdoor toys, camping equipment · plants - and more!

Let your neighbors know too that this opportunity is available for them to contribute.

**REMEMBER:** items should be in respectable condition as they are a reflection of our church.



## Book Sale - Coming Soon!!

After a little rest, the book sale is back! It will be **February 8th, 2026** before and after church services.

Of course, to have a book sale, we need lots of gently used books. So, as you get your new Christmas books, put aside a few you've read for the church. We add some of the donated books to our collection and use the rest for the book sale – which produces profits to buy more books.

We will be collecting books from Dec. 26th -Jan 25th. Adults and children, all varieties. Leave your donation in the Adult Library. Thanks!

Carol Gilles, Library Team



## Olivet Angels

How is it possible to tabulate the love that comes out of our faithful community and is delivered into our world. But, here goes...

Our 8 adopted Angel Tree families – that included 28 children and 8 moms – didn't get everything that was on their lists, but they did request and receive the following gifts, some of which may surprise you: bath towel sets (7 families, 31 sets); toilet paper (4 families); sheet/comforter sets (6 families, 12 children); blankets (3 families); diapers (3 families); fishing tackle (1 family, 2 children); Paper towels (2 families); cleaning supplies (3 families); robes (7 children, 1 family); hoodies/jackets/coats (14 children); shoes/boots (9 children); shirts/sweaters (13 children); pants (14 children); 12 Gift Cards to McDonalds, Chipotle, Roblox, Walmart, Bath & Body Works, Steak & Shake, and Columbia Mall; and a wonderful assortment of toys and household items – some of which are: wireless headphones, science experiment kit, nerf gun, African American doll, building blocks, Spiderman night light, fire fighter costume, pots & pans, Barbie dolls, blender, silverware, microwave oven, kitchen utensils, personal hygiene supplies. In addition to these gifts, each family received a laundry basket, a big tin of popcorn, and an Aldi gift card valued at \$30 for each member of their family.

Poinsettias for church families and neighbors who are enduring significant illness, grief, or isolation were also provided for by the Angel Tree project. 15 live plants were purchased from our own Sarah Frost (grower extraordinaire) and presented, as well as 13 virtual

## 2026 Olivet River Retreat

During these cold, gloomy days it is good to look toward warmer days! It is time to start planning our Annual River Retreat on the Meramec River at Ozark Outdoors in Leasburg, MO. This year we are broadening our welcome!

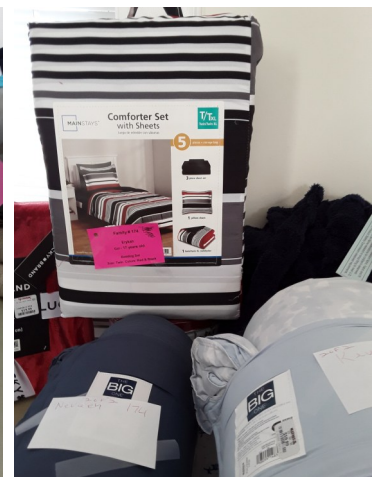
Whether you want a full weekend camping experience or just an afternoon on the river, we hope you will consider joining us. Tentative dates of **July 31-Aug 2** are being explored. Lodging options include your own tents or campers, hotel rooms, and cabins. This year we are also adding a day pass option.

Come and float or sit along the river Saturday and join us for fellowship and food! Please let Pastor Natalie know by **January 15th** if you would like to join us!

“poinsettia greetings” delivered to our friends who are unable to accept or do not wish a live plant.

With deep gratitude on behalf of these families, your Outreach Team extends thanks to:

- everyone who ate Thanksgiving Dinner and made a contribution;
- our Shepherds Team who lovingly assembled lists and made sure poinsettias were delivered led by Natalie Dixon Crewell;
- all who purchased family gifts and brought them to the church;
- all who provided money for gifts and poinsettias;
- our special shopping elves - Lori Valleroy, Kim Amiot, and our Youth Group shoppers led by Hannah Ryan;
- our gift packers - Carla Lind, Marilyn Bettenhausen, and Linda Reed Brown; and
- the family gift delivery drivers Dennis Bettenhausen and Linda Reed Brown.





Dearest Olivet Family:

Once again your generosity and thoughtfulness have overwhelmed us! We are all so profoundly grateful for the many ways in which you express your love each day, and most especially over the Christmas season. Olivet is a community of abundant love, and we are blessed to call you our own.

With humble love and gratitude,

Hannah Ryan, Co-Minister  
 Natalie Dixon Crewell, Co-Minister  
 Janis McCray, Church Facility Custodian  
 Angie Carlson, Choir Accompanist  
 Adriene Floyd, Administrative Office Coordinator / Worship Arts Supervisor

Happy New Year!

### Note of Thanks

Many thanks to Olivet's Shawl ministry for the lovely, warm shawl that I received. The colors are perfect for me, and I'm generally cold, so I wear it often! I found a pin that had been my grandmother's and it acts as a matching clasp, so I'm hands-free as I wander. When people tell me I look good for going through treatment, I credit the prayers, thoughts and love that Olivet has so freely given me. Your shawl is a constant reminder of that love. Blessings...

Carol Gilles

### Caring for God's Good Creation

As the new year begins, Olivet's Sustainable Living Team is planning a variety of programs and events. A **Bird Walk** at Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area with Melina Matheney of Missouri River Bird Observatory has been scheduled for **Saturday, April 18th**. According to State Ornithologist Kristen Heath-Acre, this should be a good time to see both song birds and shore birds. This event builds on interest generated by our Bird Walk last fall at the 3M Flat Branch-Hinkson Creek Wetlands Trail.

We hope to offer a **book discussion series** during Eastertide ... **April 12th – May 17th**. Watch for more information in Olivet's February newsletter.

**Seeds 'n Sprouts** is scheduled for **Sunday, April 26th**. We plan to offer specialty tomato and pepper seedlings, select annual flowers, herbs and native plants all grown by volunteers. Donations are gratefully accepted to offset cost of supplies.

We also start plants for Olivet's landscape beds, including our Children's Garden, and grow tomato and pepper seedlings for the Interfaith Community Garden, a cooperative effort by Newman Center and Congregation Beth Shalom. Last year the Garden raised 1,670 pounds of produce distributed to persons in need, primarily through the Food Bank Market.

The annual **Spring Property Work Day** is currently scheduled for **Saturday, May 2nd**, when Olivet's Property Team will lead us in planting annual flowers, adding native plants where needed, mulching trees and watering new plantings.

Visit the Sustainable Living Team's Table at Olivet's upcoming **Opportunity Fair** on **Sunday, January 25th** to ask questions and make suggestions. We look forward to seeing you then.

~Sustainable Living Team

### February Edition Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles to the February edition of the OCN will be **WEDNESDAY January 21st**. Newsletters will be mailed and posted to the website the following week. Articles may always be submitted ahead of schedule. Thank you!



## A Calendar Overview of 2026

In late fall of each year, Olivet's Program Council looks toward the new year's scheduling of events. Dates are set for the ENTIRE YEAR so that event conflicts will be held to a minimum. Many events are set by the liturgical calendar - the church year calendar that tells us when Lent begins, or where Easter will fall. Other events - particularly those of the local church - must be scheduled by the Program Council.

The Program Council meets via Zoom, approximately quarterly, to plan for events, discuss ways to improve Olivet's experiences, and look toward the future. If this sounds intriguing to you, you can "drop in" on the next Zoom meeting Monday evening, January 19th, at 5:30p.m.

For your 2026 early planning, below are just some of the dates your Council has already scheduled:

### **January 25 Olivet Opportunity Fair**

Before and after worship, the Fair offers an overview of the many opportunities Olivet has to offer.

### **February 8 Book Fair**

Sponsored by the Library Team, the book fair gives you an opportunity to donate books to the sale, and to buy those hidden gems donated by others.

### **February 28 Annual Rummage Sale**

One of the primary fundraisers for Olivet, the rummage sale takes many hands to coordinate, and offers limitless opportunities to contribute and to BUY!

### **March 14 Olivet's Got Talent!**

If you missed the last talent show, you HAVE to come to this one and experience the sheer JOY! And share your hidden talent with your church friends!

### **April 5 Easter at Olivet**

Preceded by Good Friday worship on the 3rd, Easter Sunday worship is always an uplifting experience.

### **April 26 Seeds n Sprouts**

The annual flower and garden plant sale has become a beloved and much-anticipated event.

### **May 31 Graduate Recognition Sunday**

Recognizing our graduates at ALL levels of their education, and particularly celebrating our high school graduates, this Sunday offers a chance to acknowledge the hard work of our students.

### **June 13 Olivet BBQ**

The thing for which Olivet is known! Come be a part of this mighty event that raises money to split between Olivet and a charity chosen each year as a grant recipient.

### **July 31 Annual River Retreat**

This 3-day fellowship event offers camping, floating, food and fellowship. Or any combination of the above! New this year: day passes for those who wish to drop in for the day.

### **August 23 Blessing of the Backpacks**

Acknowledging the start of a new school year and the importance of support for our kiddos (and adults in education), Blessing of the Backpacks sends our students and teachers into a new year with our prayers and a special blessing.

### **September 13 Ice Cream Social & Kickball Game**

Another beloved annual event, this Sunday evening is both fun and entertaining. Watch the kickball game between the youth and the adults!

### **October 4 Blessing of the Animals**

Bring your much-loved pets to Olivet for a special blessing from the pastors. New this year: a time change to 4pm for your convenience.

### **October 25 Hayride & Wiener Roast**

Throw on your flannel shirt and join your Olivet friends for a ride on the hay wagon and a wiener roast around the fire pits.

### **November 8 All-Church Thanksgiving Dinner**

Featuring a free-will donation in support of the Angel Tree program, the Thanksgiving Dinner features the yummiest of dishes and the best fellowship!

### **November 28 Hanging of the Greens**

The church is made even more beautiful during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Come help us decorate the fellowship hall and sanctuary as we prepare for the birth of Jesus.

### **December 16 Blue Christmas**

This service is the perfect opportunity to slow down, take a deep breath, and reflect on the real importance of the season. Featuring quiet music and an interactive format, this service has something for all.

Watch the Updater each week for information about these and other events!

# OLIVET CHRISTIAN CHURCH BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 17, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

## Present:

Officers: Karen Broz, Chris Valleroy, John Cuning

Board Members: Gabrielle Comstock, Mary Dewey, Jason Enright, Carolyn Henry, Joyce Mast, Rita Reeder, Jim Spain, Justin Walensky

Staff Members: Reverend Hannah Ryan, Reverend Natalie Dixon Crewell

Treasurer/Finance: Jason Enright and Ken Bartley

The November 2025 Olivet Church Board Meeting was called to order by President Karen Broz at 7:01 pm. Reverend Hannah opened the meeting with a prayer.

New 2026 board members were welcomed as non-voting guests.

## Additions to the Agenda:

- Old Business – Update on the parking lot letter
- New Business – Proposed cell tower on Olivet property
- Motion to approve additions made by Jim Spain, seconded by Rita Reeder; motion passed.

The minutes for the October 2025 board meeting were reviewed and approved.

## Financial Reports

The Financial Reports for October 2025 were presented by Jason Enright. The Balance Sheet, Cash on Hand Reports, and the Budget vs Actual for October were reviewed. Chris Valleroy moved to approve the financial report with correction noted in the discussion and an updated report submitted, Joyce Mast seconded the motion; motion passed.

- There was a miscalculation on the income on the budget to actual report. The report should show the budget short by \$9,803.82, not \$20,000. Jason will update the report.
- Discussion on the request from last board meeting to have the font size to make the report easier to read. Jason will work with the contractor to make the reports more condensed and easier to read.

Finance Chairperson, Kenneth Bartley reported October finances

- Need to break out sources of income for future reports
- Income is up \$11,406 in October putting the church in the black financially.
- Discussion occurred regarding interest in seeing the reports be simplified to make them easier to understand.

## Minister Reports

Reverend Natalie Dixon Crewell

- The hayride went well this year with about 50 people attending
- Attended the second community organizing training meeting with the Faith and Solidarity group.
- The Grace Expansion team is making progress
- Toured the Opportunity Campus recently
- The theme for Advent this year is “What Do You Fear”.
- Have been working with the Shepherds with discussions on caretaker burn out.

Reverend Hannah Ryan

- Church youth completed the Angel Tree gift shopping last Friday
- The children’s Christmas play will be recorded this coming Saturday.
- Planning is in process for Advent.
- Working stewardship letter and end of year financial statements
- Attended a preaching retreat in Arizona
- Attended an ordination at Broadway Christian Church

## Unfinished Business

- Policy updates:
  - ⇒ The team has not met recently.
  - ⇒ Making plans to have someone come in to review building security
  - ⇒ The policy team would like approval to create a secondary team to review and recommend updates to the finance policies. Justin Walensky moved to approve the request, Chris Valleroy seconded, and the motion passed.
- Update on the parking lot letter
  - ⇒ The letter discussed in a previous meeting was hand delivered to the old

church

- ⇒ A telephone discussion was held with the church’s minister regarding Olivet’s concerns.
- ⇒ Also discussed the potential that they may not be able to use the parking lot if Olivet’s congregation grows enough to need the entire parking lot.

**New Business**

- Review of Finances Report – Audit Review Team, Linda Reed Brown and Nancy Foss
  - ⇒ The team’s report for 2024 includes several recommendations.
  - ⇒ The policy team has recommended that a group be set up to update finance policies.
  - ⇒ Recommendations were not a preconceived list but based on questions that arose during the review process.
  - ⇒ Audits are supposed to be done annually, but have not been done for several years.
  - ⇒ The audit team approach was to protect the congregation and the people handling money.
  - ⇒ Discussion was tabled until the December 2025 meeting
- Cervinka Fund Use for 2025 – Linda Reed Brown
  - ⇒ Funds from this bequest are to be used by the Outreach Team for crisis situations in the church’s ministries.
  - ⇒ Outreach can now use these funds to: provide additional food support for families as result of government shutdown, has decided to provide \$1,250 for Faith and Solidarity to support food outreach for local families.
- Property Update –Karen Broz
  - ⇒ Additional insulation has been added to the attic at an expense of \$4,720. The church can expect to save approximately \$600 to \$800 per year on utility bills. Project is consistent with the church’s Green Chalice efforts.
  - ⇒ The old pews have been sold for \$2,000
  - ⇒ Improving the sound system in the sanctuary.
  - ⇒ Widening the east driveway.
- New board Officers for 2026 Needed – Karen Broz
  - ⇒ Karen and Chris will start recruiting board officers for 2026.
- Proposed cell tower on Olivet property – Dave Mast
  - ⇒A cell tower company has approached the church about putting a 180-foot-tall cell tower on church property along with a small building and a fence surrounding the tower and building.
  - ⇒Two options have initially been proposed by the company: 1) a 99-year lease for a one-time payment of \$100,000; or 2) a 50 year lease for \$650 per month (with the right to cancel the lease).

- ⇒Verizon will be the anchor company; other cell phone companies could use the tower in the future with additional fees.
- ⇒Has attempted to contact owners of neighboring properties who have also been contacted by the same company.
- ⇒Only place they can put the tower on Olivet’s property is on the north side of pavilion.
- ⇒Will need an easement for a road to access the tower.
- ⇒Dave has a drawing of where the tower can be placed. He will send the drawing to Karen.
- ⇒This will have positive benefits to the neighborhood by expanding cell service in the local community.
- ⇒Motion made to allow the property committee to enter into good faith negotiations with Horvath Company for the placement of a cell tower on Olivet property, and bring a contract back to the board for approval by Jim Spain, seconded by Justin Walensky; motion passed.

The board meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Submitted by John Cunning

**Thankful for our Coffee Team**

One of the many things about Olivet that stands out is its love of fellowship and joy in community. It is such a welcoming experience to enter Olivet’s doors and be met by friendly faces and the aroma of a nice hot cup of coffee!

Your Olivet Coffee Team is comprised of church folks who understand and value the gift of serving others. Lovingly organized by Rockie Alden, the coffee team seeks to bring folks together over a cup of coffee and light snack during the time preceding Sunday morning worship. Any person wishing to contribute their time may reach out to Rockie.

Your Coffee Team servers for the month of January are:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| January 4:  | Rockie & Mike Alden                       |
| January 11: | Lucy Lee & Chastidy Bailey                |
| January 18: | Lenora Smith, Mary Furness & John Cunning |
| January 25: | Amanda Durbak & Rockie Alden              |

Next time you grab a drink or snack in the Fellowship Hall, why not thank your volunteers for their support of Olivet’s community of warmth and welcome?

**Sunday, January 4****EPIPHANY SUNDAY**

9:30AM JYF Sunday School / Worship & Wonder  
 9:30AM Fellowship Time  
 10:30AM Worship

**Monday, January 5**

12:00PM Bible Study (Zoom)  
 1:30PM Staff Meeting (Zoom)  
 4:00PM Loaves & Fishes

**Wednesday, January 7**

6:30PM Chime Choir  
 7:00PM Choir

**Saturday, January 10**

9:00AM Sustainable Living 2026 Planning  
 10:00AM Un-Decking the Halls

**Sunday, January 11****BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

9:30AM JYF Sunday School / Worship & Wonder  
 9:30AM Fellowship Time  
 10:30AM Worship

**Monday, January 12**

12:00PM Bible Study (Zoom)  
 1:30PM Staff Meeting (Zoom)

**Tuesday, January 13**

10:00AM Grief Support Group

**Wednesday, January 14**

6:30PM Chime Choir  
 7:00PM Choir

**Sunday, January 18****2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

9:30AM JYF Sunday School / Worship & Wonder  
 9:30AM Fellowship Time  
 10:30AM Worship

**Monday, January 19****Martin Luther King Day**

12:00PM Bible Study (Zoom)  
 1:30PM Staff Meeting (Zoom)  
 5:30PM Program Council (Zoom)  
 7:00PM Board Meeting (Zoom)

**Wednesday, January 21****Newsletter Articles Due**

6:30PM Chime Choir  
 7:00PM Choir

**Sunday, January 25****3RD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY****9:30AM Olivet Opportunity Fair**

9:30AM JYF Sunday School / Worship & Wonder  
 10:30AM Worship

**Monday, January 26**

12:00PM Bible Study (Zoom)  
 1:30PM Staff Meeting (Zoom)

**Tuesday, January 27**

10:00AM Grief Support Group

**Wednesday, January 28**

6:30PM Chime Choir  
 7:00PM Choir



## Olivet Christian Church

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Articles for the Olivet Connections Newsletter  
must be received  
by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month,  
and will be edited for clarity and/or brevity.

The Church Office is open 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
Monday through Thursday.

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