



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

## OPENING LITURGY

Confident in God's generosity and gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us praise God and give thanks ...

God, we praise you and give you thanks.

**You are good, and your mercy endures forever.**

You gave us a garden with good food to eat.

**We praise you for food that nourishes us.**

You rescued your people from slavery.

**We praise you for freedom.**

You gave us prophets to correct, rebuke and encourage us.

**We bless you for your justice and mercy.**

You gave us your Son, Jesus, to love, redeem and save us.

**We praise you for his death and resurrection.**

You gave us your Holy Spirit to be our Advocate and Comforter.

**We bless you for the gifts of every tribe and nation.**

Strengthen your church with every spiritual gift

**and commission us again to be your servant people.**

Multiply in us the fruit of the spirit:

**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**

Send us in your love and mercy,

**that the world may know you and praise you.**

### Now Thank We All Our God



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,  
2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,



who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,  
the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven,



who, from our mothers' arms, has blest us on our way  
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,  
the one eternal God, whom earth and heav'n adore;



with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to day,  
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.  
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ever more.

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 840*

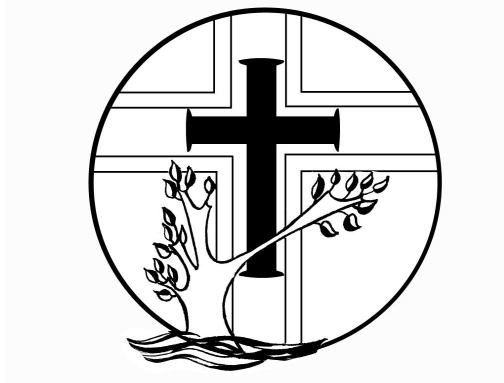
Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Cathering Winkworth, 1827-1878

Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you are the giver of every good gift. Bless us with all that we need for ministry in your name, that we might be a blessing to others. In the name of the one who broke bread and fed the multitudes, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**



**Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**5840 Monroe Street**  
**Sylvania, Ohio**  
**[www.olivetsylvania.org](http://www.olivetsylvania.org)**

### **Our Vision**

Celebrating the power of the Holy Spirit by inviting all people  
to become fully devoted followers of Jesus

### **Our Three-Fold Mission**

Create a safer place for growing, learning, listening and loving  
Address social issues by focused engagement in community partnerships  
Make direct connections for learning, mutual support  
and relief with people around the world

## Agenda

### 111<sup>th</sup> Annual Congregational Meeting Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church Sylvania, Ohio

January 26, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

#### 2023-2025 Mission Goals:

##### Congregational Mission Goals

1. Foster an intentional culture of inclusion, support and advocacy for under-represented persons.
2. Address societal fragmentation by creating safe spaces for people of all ages to connect and reconnect with each other.
3. Encourage and provide opportunities for children and youth participation in worship.

##### Community Mission Goals

1. Surround 15-20-year-olds in the Sylvania Community with practical and spiritual support to nurture wellbeing and provide safety.
2. Enhance our partnership with Urban Wholistics to foster meaningful youth engagement, racial equity and food security.
3. Address gun violence through advocacy in our communities, across Ohio, and at the federal level.

##### Global Mission Goals

1. Support existing ministries with more frequent direct communication with global partners, including the ELCA's Good Gifts program.
2. Strengthen relationships with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (now Global Refuge), Lutheran World Relief, and locally based refugee and asylum seeker efforts through US Together.
3. Promote learning, action, and advocacy related to global climate change.

#### Video

**Call to Order - Ed Rupley**

**Opening Prayer - Pr. Robyn Schmitz**

**Secretary's Report - Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting**

**Page 3**

**Financial Secretary's Report - Mike Vince**

**F-1**

**Treasurer's Report (2024) - Barry Shaner**

**F-2 thru F-4**

**Budget Proposal (2025) - Justin Black, Finance Team Chair**

**F-5 thru F-8**

#### **Ballot Vote on Budget and Candidates/Trustees**

##### Council Candidates 2025

Beginning Second Term: Ed Rupley

First Term: Jenny Quackenbush, Mike Linehan, Amber Espinosa

Completing Second Term: Stephanie Banister and Mandy Tetreau

Completing First Term: Manzetta Jackson and Ed Rupley

Garden of Peace Trustee(s) 1: John Holshoe, second term; Deb Shock, first term.

**Announcements - Pr. Robyn & Pr. Melissa**

**Adjournment - Ed Rupley**

**MINUTES OF THE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING  
OLIVET EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SYLVANIA, OHIO  
January 28, 2024**

Council President Dave Hupp called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. A quorum (56) was met with 200 voting members in attendance.

Pastor Nate invited all to say the opening prayer presented on the screen.

**Prior Meeting Minutes:** No comments or corrections were raised. A motion to accept the 2023 Annual Meeting minutes as written was made by John Gonia, second by Warren Wright. Voice vote unanimously accepted.

**Financial Secretary's Report (Mike Vince):** Discussed giving received for operating budget. Overall decrease of approximately \$24,000 compared to 2022, largely due to a decrease in seasonal giving. Mike pointed out there was not any income from a rummage sale (not held in 2023). Mike took questions from the congregation. A motion to approve the Financial Secretary's Report as presented was made by John Holshoe, second by Joyce Barger. Unanimously approved.

**2023 Treasurer's Report (Barry Shaner):** Deficit for the year of approximately \$58,000. Giving to dedicated funds was higher than the last several years. Barry responded to questions from the congregation. Motion by Bill Hamilton and second by Joyce Barger to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Unanimously accepted by voice vote.

**2024 Budget Proposal (Justin Black):** Approximately 4% higher than 2023 actual giving. Increases in staff salary, benevolence, and building maintenance. Pastoral salary in budget is for two full time pastors. Questions from congregation. Tina Johnson spoke to the maintenance of the building. Carol Miller asked a question regarding the plumbing of the church; Justin and Shannon provided information. A question from Raiden Browning regarding benevolence increase vs. stable amounts to partners and how that was determined. Pastor Melissa responded. No further questions; approval of the 2024 budget is on the ballot.

**Other Ballot Items (Dave Hupp):** Michelle Lane was thanked for her 6 years on council. Presentation of individuals on ballot occurred.

Council: Dave Hupp, Kent Jackman, Dave Bell, Steve Sanderson  
Garden of Peace: John Holshoe

**Synod delegation:** Three individuals: Mandy Tetreau, Hunter Morrison, and Kent Jackman have agreed to attend the synod assembly on June 1, 2024. Dave Hupp asked for a voice vote to send these individuals. Unanimously accepted. Stefan Pomrenke volunteered to be the fourth delegate.

Pastor Melissa shared announcements while ballots were collected and counted.

Dave Hupp discussed the letters that were provided to the congregation (attached to the ballots) from Pastor Nate, Pastor Melissa and Ed Rupley (Vice President) regarding next steps for Pastor Nate and the congregation. A few minutes were provided for the congregation to read. No questions from the congregation.

Dave Hupp discussed two significant events in 2023: 1) the retirement of Pastor Nate with pending disability approval and 2) the contribution by Carol & Harold Leupp to pay off the CLC mortgage. Pastor Nate and Addy Darm then shredded the mortgage in front of the congregation. Warren Wright asked how much was paid in total for the CLC wing. Shannon indicated approximately \$2.1 million.

**Results of the voting:**

- ⇒ 174 affirmative votes to approve the 2024 Budget as presented, 2 no votes – Budget accepted by the congregation.
- ⇒ Write-in youth representative: Maddy Adams (Dave or Ed will confirm her willingness to serve.)
- ⇒ All on ballot for council & Garden of Peace approved.

John Gonia made a motion to adjourn, Justin Hammerling second. The congregational meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mandy Tetreau, *Church Council Secretary*



**Pastor Robyn Schmitz, Interim Pastor**

*They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. - Jeremiah 17:8*

It is my continued honor to walk with you as you listen to the Spirit and consider the future of Olivet. I wonder if you realize the confidence you engender in the future of the church, writ large.

In these exciting times, you have shown a willingness and a piety to listen to the heart of Olivet, while continuing the existing ministry programs, and starting new ones! I've loved the table talks on topics ranging from faith and civic life to creation care.

You took seriously the survey administered by the Transition Team and you welcomed feedback, even when it was challenging. You have been excited and not fearful. Olivet is remarkable in so many ways.

Our volunteer base is ready to jump in at a moment's notice. And yes, we need more volunteers always. You are thoughtful about the desire to build a culture of giving. You stop by my office, often with a suggestion about a hope or question that kept you up at night. You care deeply about your siblings in Christ, and it shows. And again, I wonder if you realize the confidence you engender in the future of the church.

Now that the Transition Team has completed their portion of the work, the Call Committee is close to being set apart and consecrated. Our Ministry Site Profile (Olivet's resume) is ready to be sent to potential candidates. Soon we'll begin selection of pastors the committee will interview. And while all that is going on I will be working with the council and staff to update our job descriptions, policies, constitution and improving our communication and outreach.

I look forward to the next many months and covet your prayers for all of us in this sacred work.

In G-d's Service,  
*Pastor Robyn*

**Pastor Melissa Micham, Associate Pastor**

Dear People of Olivet:

Two words could mark the year we have shared together: **transitions** and **learning**. Olivet's transitions have been numerous: from those whose baptisms have been completed in death—and the changes that makes in our daily rhythms—to our staffing at Olivet. Olivet has had **six changes** in our office/ministry staff since our last annual meeting. With each person who has departed their ministry role, grief and loss are present. With each person who has joined our team, we rejoice.

I thank God for the partnership and ministry of **Pastor Nate, Patty Stammler** and **Chrisann Shaner**. I rejoice in the ministry and partnership we now share with **Pastor Robyn, Sara Martin, and Jill Hepner**.

The faithful labor of our council, under the leadership of **Ed Rupley**, and transition team, under the direction of **Tina Johnson**, have steadied us through many phases of transition, even as God points us toward a newly imagined future together.

One of my *favorite* things is to learn something new. It's why I went back to school in my forties, and it's why I *love* looking up the etymology of words! Although the pacing of this year has been intense at many points, I have also felt like a **kid in a sandbox**. Getting to learn new things about the people of Olivet, flexing different ministry muscles (especially teaching our children), and engaging the present to prepare for what comes next has been a delight.

*With gratitude for your flexibility and prayers during this year of **transition and learning**,*

*Pastor Melissa*

## Ed Rupley, President of Olivet Council

Dear Members of Olivet,

What a year we have experienced together at Olivet!

Could we have imagined God's work over the last 365 days? We have been gifted with Rev. Dr. Robyn Schmitz' ministry guidance toward our future. We have learned about ourselves through the Transition Team's information gathering. And more importantly, you have communicated to the leadership team how to move forward as a congregation.

We have seen a year in transition as we are preparing and adjusting for new leadership. You have recommended to the church leaders to have more events for families of Olivet.

Olivet is a church that cares, makes a difference, and looks to our future for a variety of new ministries. We do not *have* to do this; we *get* to do this. Please read the yearly report and take notice of all the hard-working volunteers that have contributed to a successful year of achievement.

A special thank you to **Barry Shaner** for giving excellent financial guidance during the 18 years he has served as Olivet's Treasurer. He made it easier and special for all the presidents during his term.

The year 2025 looks to be another year of change. The stories will continue to emerge on how we as a church engage with those who want to know Christ. We have challenges ahead, but as a church we can proceed and overcome these.

Thank you for being such a vital part of Olivet Lutheran Church. Blessings to everyone in the new year.

*Ed Rupley, Olivet Council President*

## FAITH FORMATION

### CHILDREN & YOUTH

**Nursery** - The nursery **re-opened** on Sunday, October 6 after being mostly closed for a few years. It is staffed by two leaders and five teens who alternate Sundays. The nursery is open each Sunday morning for children ages infant-3 years old.

**Sunday School** – Led by Becky Cress

**Spark** (ages 3 yrs to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) was taught by Deb Shock, Becky Cress, and Tom Reynolds

**Club 345** (grades 3-5) was taught by Donna Mens and Karen Rosar

Carol Miller led **music** for all ages of children.

In the spring kids learned about **Gospel** and **New Testament** events with the *Holy Moly* curriculum, returning to the **Old Testament** with *Spark: Classroom* this fall. Both curricula are published by Sparkhouse.

**Body Shop** (grades 6-8) - Led by Pr. Melissa and Becky Cress

**Mentors** in 2024 were Cindy Franklin, Steve Sanderson, Amber & Marissa Espinosa, Hunter Morrison, Cat Carlo, and Eden Pollard.

Youth finished their study of the **New Testament** in the spring and began a unit on **Lutheran Living** with the start of the new school year using the curriculum *Colaborate* through Sparkhouse. This fall youth also learned the **Apostle's Creed** and started the **Lord's Prayer** using *Luther's Small Catechism*.

**Winter Retreat** at YMCA Storer Camps: Body Shop's retreat took place in February. Youth had lessons, played games, took a night hike, and roasted marshmallows. Many thanks to Bob Mens, Donna Mens and Karen Rosar for offering instruction alongside Pastor Melissa.

**Acolyte trainings** were held in the fall.

Body Shop members made three **banners** with Pastor Nate's favorite sayings for his recognition luncheon.

In September, students **assembled school kits** for Lutheran World Relief under the direction of Heidi Lohrmann and Cynthia Fett.

**High School** – Led by Pastor Melissa & Becky Cress

See below for details about the **2024 ELCA Youth Gathering**.

See **Youth & Family Ministry Team** for more youth activities.

A **Christmas party** for high school youth was held in December. Youth played games, shared a meal, and traded gifts in a White Elephant exchange while enjoying each other's company.

**Teacher Recognition** – Handmade Christmas ornaments were given to children's Sunday School teachers, Body Shop mentors, and others involved in children and youth ministries in the last year.

**Created to Be**, the 2024 ELCA Youth & Young Adult Gatherings in New Orleans – Pastor Melissa Micham and Becky Cress

**Seven youth** ages 13-18 and three adult leaders attended the **Youth Gathering**.

**Three young adults** attended the first ever **Young Adult Gathering**, held parallel to the Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

Participants met monthly to prepare mentally and spiritually for the trip.

In February, participants attended a **lock-in** as they moved through preparatory material for the Gathering.

**Fundraisers in 2024:**

Two **scrapbooking events**, organized by Karen Keefer, were held on January 13 and April 27 to gather funds to cover registration, travel, boarding, and meals. *See page 8 for more details.*

A **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner** was cooked by four men and served by youth.

**MILESTONES** - Led by Pastor Nate, Pastor Melissa and Becky Cress

**Baptism classes** were held as needed, led by Jan Kirk.

In the summer, a **First Communion series**, led by Pastors Melissa and Robyn, was held for kids wishing to receive communion.

**High School graduation** was celebrated on Sunday, June 9. Graduates were recognized at each worship service and a reception was held in the courtyard between services.

**Blessing of Backpacks & Electronics** for students returning to classes and working adults was held Sunday, August 18. All who brought something to be blessed received a special tag or sticker for their bag or device.

**Bible Presentations:** Children were presented with Bibles on Rally Sunday – Preschoolers received a *Spark Story Bible*, Third Graders received a *Spark Bible NRSV*, and new Body Shop students received *Colaborate: Lutheran Student Bible NRSV*.

**Confirmation:** Five youth were confirmed on Reformation Sunday, October 27. Three preparation sessions were held for students to create their banners and compose and rehearse their faith statements. A small **reception** was held afterward in the atrium for family, friends and congregants.

A **Bible Workshop** was held in November by Pastor Melissa for kids third grade and up who received an NRSV Bible.

## ADULTS

**Adult Bible Study** meets most Sundays between services in the Teen Room using the devotional *The Upper Room* with Mike Moore leading.

**Women's Monday Morning Bible Study** meets weekly in the Teen Room. We completed a two-year study of the Gospel of Matthew in May. Tim Mackie of the Bible Project recorded a series of sermons on various texts from Matthew, and we used portions of these for our discussions. We also took a look at all four of the Gospels and compared the similarities and differences between the texts. We discovered how Matthew references many texts of the Old Testament and sees their fulfillment in Jesus. In the summer months, we met once a month for a three-session Bible Study written by Dr. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni. In September, we began a study of the prophetic books in the Old Testament, looking in depth at Amos, Hosea, and Micah. Our Advent study used material by Kate Bowler, professor at Duke Divinity School. Beginning on January 6<sup>th</sup>, we will meet weekly at 9:30 in the Teen room for a study on Ephesians. All women of the congregation (and their sisters and friends) are invited to this time of study and fellowship. If you would like to join in using Zoom, please let me know. I am so grateful to Jan Kirk and Donna Mens who teach when I am not available.

- Heidi Lohrmann



**Guys n' Gospel** meets Tuesdays mornings at a local breakfast restaurant. Each week, a constantly evolving group of guys takes a closer look at Sunday's gospel over pastries and coffee.

**Tuesday Table Talks: Faith Seeking Understanding** was launched in 2024. This newly established ministry convenes on the second Tuesday of each month at various locations. Participants gather for a shared meal while exploring topics that bridge faith and daily life. Childcare is provided to allow young families to attend.

### CONGREGATION MISSION EMPHASIS

*Create a safer place for growing, learning, listening and loving.*

Becky Cress, convener

#### **2023-2025 Mission Emphasis Goals:**

1. Foster an intentional culture of inclusion, support, and advocacy for underrepresented persons.
2. Address societal fragmentation by creating safe spaces for people of all ages to connect and reconnect with each other.
3. Encourage and provide opportunities for children and youth participation in worship.

#### **Youth & Family Ministry Team – Becky Cress**

A **Game Night** was well-attended in January by youth, families, and friends.

A **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner** was held, with a trivia competition, in February.

The **Easter Eggs-travaganza** was held March 9. Families did crafts, played games, heard the Easter story, and participated in an Easter egg hunt.

**Vacation Bible School, Tree of Healing**, was held from June 19-23 with about **75 children** attending.

High school and Body Shop youth volunteered as small group leaders and station helpers. Many thanks to all who made this ministry possible!

**Olivet Ice Cream at Mayberry** was held once a month over the summer for youth and their families.

A **lock-in** was held in late June, where youth ate pizza and treats, played games and watched a movie together.

Olivet held a **Beach Day** at Luna Pier in July where youth and adults soaked in the sun, frolicked in the waves, and enjoyed each other's company.

**Rally Sunday** was held September 8. All ages were welcome to reconnect, play yard games, and enjoy root beer floats from Tapped 419's Draught Jeep.

The **Advent Festival** was held December 1. Congregants of all ages received Advent devotionals, participated in activities, and crafted Advent items.

Olivet's **Family Christmas Eve Service** was led by Pastor Robyn and Becky Cress. Over 100 people shared their favorite Christmas stories, sang carols, and participated in a "cookies & milk" communion.

#### **Bible Study & Small Group Team - Heidi Lohrmann, Bob Mens & Mike Moore**

A **Civic Life and Faith** study, developed by the ELCA, was led by Heidi Lohrmann in late summer/early fall (before the election). More than **35 people** attended one or more sessions of the six-part series.

A monthly discussion group named **Tuesday Table Talks** began meeting the second Tuesday of each month. *See above for more information.*

A **kids' book club**, led by Donna Mens, met Thursday afternoons in the Teen Room.

**Tender Hearts Social Circle** – Mike Linehan. Quarterly get-togethers were held at Te'kela.

**Safety Team** – Shannon Walker, team leader. See page 18.

#### **Equity Team, congregational emphasis – Mike Linehan, team leader**

In early summer a **rain garden** was installed as a planet-friendly way to catch and absorb some of the runoff from the roof in the back of the building before it drains into the sewer. Zoo teens and Olivet youth dug and planted under the direction of Amy Dixon. The garden has been dedicated to Pastor Nate.

**Better Together:** Over twenty adults and youth from Olivet marched in the **Toledo Pride Parade** with other churches in an ecumenical demonstration of Jesus' love for all people.

An **Accessibility Team** has formed with the goal of making Olivet more welcoming and accessible for all

ages. Current projects include a more accessible website, developing a “quiet room,” and hosting a Disability 101 series led by Kim Nielsen.

**Q & A (Queer & Allies)**, is a safe space for LGBTQIA+ and allied youth ages 12-18 yrs. They meet monthly for a meal, an activity, to learn about a variety of spiritual practices, and for fellowship and community. In April they took a field trip for dinner out and to the UT Planetarium.

A small **JEDI (equity) library** for adults can be found in the atrium. New books are added periodically and include materials addressing inequalities related to race, disability, LGBTQIA+ identities, indigenous populations, and lower socioeconomic status. Children’s books with themes about equity are being circulated in the sanctuary and CLC bookshelves.

A small team continues to update the **artwork** around the church building to better represent and welcome those in our community. This year the team’s budget was spent on frames for art purchased last year, while planning focused on the adult ed room.

The restroom by the atrium was designated as an **All-Gender Restroom**.

### **Ministries in Support of Our Congregation**

**Advent by Candlelight**, our 12<sup>th</sup> annual, was held on Thursday, December 5, 2024. Our theme was based on the hymn *Creator of the Stars of Night*. Through our devotional readings, shared scripture, and beautiful music, we prepared our hearts for the birth of the promised Messiah, Jesus. Our devotions reflected on God’s people and their journey out of darkness, as God called them back home. Thank you to all who participated in this much-loved Olivet tradition. We were blessed by the musical talents of Sarah Lewis, Carol Miller and the Bells Ensemble, and the vocal talents of Cindy and Danica Franklin. Thank you to the Hostesses who created beautiful table settings and desserts to share. Thank you to the Gents of Olivet, for their attentive beverage service and assistance with clean-up. There were approximately **130 ladies** in attendance.  
- JoAnn Bell and Jan Kirk

**Archivist:** Deb Shock wasted no time continuing to preserve Olivet’s legacy by reviewing and categorizing Olivet’s history in documents, photos and records of important events.

**Bookworms**, Olivet’s women’s book club, was convened by Cynthia Fett in 2006 and has been meeting monthly (summers off) ever since. Books are chosen from any genre, and the chooser leads the lively discussion. Groceries for the food pantry are collected each month.

**Bridge Group:** The group has met for 40 years and plays bridge from mid-September to late April. We meet at 6:30 p.m. at a home of a player who hosts and provides a light dinner on a scheduled basis each Monday. Our champion for the 23-24 season was Dave Tucker. We have a rotating trophy which some might call risqué and a list of past champs hanging in the Christian Life Center hallway across from our pastors’ portraits. Currently we have seven knuckleheads (men) and one woman who play on a regular basis, plus we have a few subs when needed. Bridge is the vehicle that gets us out of the home on those dark winter evenings for food, conversation and competition, with the emphasis on food. We would love more players to join us (permanent or sub), so if you’re a bridge player or have never played but wish to step out of your comfort zone, we can teach you the basics, and you are invited to join us. Bridge is easy peasy: similar to Euchre but on steroids. Hope to see you at the table. Questions: Contact Bob Mens at 419-410-0519 or email [bmens@bex.net](mailto:bmens@bex.net).

**C.A.R.E. Group - Connecting And Reaching (Olivet’s) Elders:** Our ministry is to keep those senior members “Connected” to Olivet who are homebound, in assisted living/nursing homes, are experiencing unusual, serious difficulties and are on the prayer list, or are unable to attend service/activities. Mailed cards, phone calls and prayers are the primary methods by which the “connection” is made. Sometimes visits are included as appropriate. All of the group takes this mission to help brighten these seniors’ days with unexpected and personal notes to help them realize that Olivet remains committed to supporting them no matter where they live or what difficulty they are experiencing. Caregiver Daily Devotions are also provided to family unpaid caregivers whose priority is to help a senior family member 24/7. Special thanks to Pastor Melissa who assists us with the names, locations and any other information that can be legitimately shared to help us provide the most appropriate cards, messages or phone calls. Our continued thanks to the **Mary Lou Gabel Memorial Fund**, which designated the C.A.R.E. Group with some of its

yearly funds. These funds help with mailing and the costs for devotional booklets and other items directly related to the C.A.R.E. group.  
- *Cindy Riedel*, director

**Can Recycling:** A *shout out* to all those who brought in aluminum cans! They are recycled with the help of Deb Shock, Bill Hamilton and John Casper. Keep 'em coming and we turn them into CASH at the local recycle station. Reminder: **WE ONLY WANT POP CANS.** Drop them in the blue containers at the Welcome Center and Christian Life Center entrance. THANKS!

**Coffee & Fellowship:** We are percolating along at the Mark Johnson Memorial Coffee bar with coffee, tea, hot chocolate and sometimes treats. Warren Wright is our faithful barista for first service and Mary Glover, Joyce and Ed Rupley see to it that the Vine has coffee, as well as taking care of the cleanup afterwards. Any Vine attendees that would like to help with supplying the Vine should contact Tina Johnson at [marktinajohn@gmail.com](mailto:marktinajohn@gmail.com). Treats are welcomed at both services. Store bought or homemade, we are not picky. We are "The Welcome Place," and there is nothing like a little treat that says, "Welcome!" Sign up at the coffee bar or contact Tina Johnson.

This special project was totally donor-funded and will forever remind us of our beloved member, Mark Johnson, and his love of fellowship with coffee, where people gather and enjoy each other. Thanks to Tina Johnson for making this a reality!

**College Student Outreach** led by Michelle Lane. The College Student Support Ministry began in 2001 and is intended to support any undergraduate college student, home or away, who has their name submitted to the church office. Notices of this ministry are placed in our publications as well as postcards sent to any family with a known qualifying student. Olivet sent care packages to 12 students prior to finals in both the spring and fall.

**Communion Visitation:** Nearly two dozen members of Olivet Lutheran Church, who are unable to attend worship regularly due to infirmity, transportation or other needs, received communion in their residence this year. In addition to a quarterly visit from a pastor, these congregational members ensure our beloved saints receive communion each month: **Dave & JoAnn Bell, Darla Culberson, Jennifer & Addy Darm, Nancy Hamilton, Rinda Holshoe, Bob & Donna Mens, Mike Moore, Penny Moran, Susan Santoro and Chrisann Shaner.** Linda Lewin has recently joined our team.

Special thanks to **Pastor Marcus Lohrmann** for providing routine visitation during periods of transition this year and to **Pastor Merlin Jacobs** (spring) and **Pastor Bruce Quatman** (fall), who were on call for Pastor Melissa one day each week, and routinely responded to needs at the drop of a hat.

**Cooking (Funeral) Ministry,** supported by a caring and reliable crew of Olivet ladies, attempts to offer funeral support with wonderful meals for grieving Olivet families. We have been abundantly blessed this year with great response to pleas to make funeral dinners available. Olivet offered three funeral dinners over a period of nine days recently. Thanks also to the many who responded with salads and desserts to enhance the meals.

**Euchre:** Joyce Rupley and Karen Rosar led the group, which met on the second Thursday of every month in 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Teen Room. Fellowship and fun are the goal of the group and all are welcome with any skill level. Snacks are optional but always welcome. Players draw a random number for table position and rotate through the tables, which allows players to talk to everyone. An optional donation is collected and the group determines which charity they want to donate the money to at the end of the year.

**Leisure League:** I am so pleased the Leisure League is in its 46<sup>th</sup> year providing seniors with monthly day trips/activities and a yearly community service project to keep them active and involved. Each year, the members donate to and help our Harvest Sale, from which the profits are used to purchase the many personal care items for the clients of Toledo's Cherry Street Mission. Then, for Christmas, we assemble **125 men's bags** and **16 deluxe bags** for the **women** living at Sparrow's Nest. We are so grateful to a number of Olivet women who made and donated all the hats and scarves for these clients. This year, memorial donations to Olivet were given to honor wonderful member, Harold Leupp and former group chaplain, Pastor Jack Ware. How blessed we are to not have had any accidents or serious problems on our fun day trips or activities.  
- *Cindy Riedel*, volunteer director

**Men's Golf League**, led by Barry Shaner and Ric Shock, played on Monday nights in spring and summer this season.

**Mutual Ministry Team:** This team's mission is to meet with the pastors quarterly for personal support and to provide a forum for brainstorming, conflict resolution guidance, and prayer.

**Rummage Sale:** We happily report that the very popular Olivet Rummage Sale did occur in 2024, raising **\$6,911**. This amount is applied toward our Operating Budget, as Miscellaneous Income. Chalise Underwood volunteered to assist in a leadership role, which spurred on others to again step into their subcommittee roles. This undertaking is successful because of the commitment of soooo many Olivet members. First and foremost after needing "people" is the need for the nice flow of goods that are donated. Anyone volunteering their time agrees that it is a fun, interactive event and once involved, they return for multiple shifts, whether it's set up of tables, organizing tables of merchandise, support with food for volunteers, advertising, sign-making, packing up the left overs and driving them to local shelters or Good Will drop off locations. There's something for any capacity of time you may be willing to offer. It "takes a village" and the village of Olivet definitely stepped up. We invite anyone thinking of assisting—in a co-chair capacity, to share your ideas and/or availability with any of your church leaders. Shannon and the office staff will happily take your call and support/organize as we always have. Olivet's Rummage Sale has a great reputation for being so organized, and we do have wonderful subcommittee folks who will surely step forward again. Let's keep this tradition and look forward to the 2025 Rummage Sale. Keep time on your calendar for the 4<sup>th</sup> week of July. (Likely sale dates: July 24, 25, 26)

**Scrapbooking/Crafting Day** is typically a triannual event at Olivet with events being held in January, April and October in 2024. Karen Keefer continues to lead and organize this effort which supplements specific youth activities or other ministries. For 2024, the January and April events raised \$5,000 which supported expenses for the **2024 ELCA Youth Gathering** and **Young Adult Gathering**. High school youth served food and helped to unload and load guest's vehicles, while parents donated food and themed baskets for a silent auction. The October event was a fundraiser for the **Olivet Choir** program, enabling the purchase of a **new cantata**. The choir members were active in supplying food items needed for the event as well as provided help at the event in the kitchen, supporting Karen in serving, set up and cleaning. This event raised approximately \$2,700. The event is very popular with women attending to spend a day in our Christian Life Center doing their craft in addition to being served a fabulous breakfast, lunch and snacks. Our Scrapbooking event is known as the best in the area—all because of the fine effort of Karen. She is tireless in her attention to the food, as well as obtaining and offering raffle prizes, a massage therapist, and an opportunity to buy scrapbooking supplies from a dealer at the event. A huge thanks to Karen for the many, many years of doing this for the good of the youth of Olivet.

**Women's Retreat 2024** was held on Saturday, March 2 and Sunday, March 3 in Adrian, Michigan. **Twenty-five ladies** had a wonderful weekend of fellowship, activities, and music focused on the Bible study: *In the Footsteps of the Savior, Following Jesus through the Holy Land* by Max Lucado. We traveled to the many places Jesus traveled with his disciples during his ministry. The ladies enjoyed lunch and dinner together, followed by a movie night with snacks and popcorn. Thank you to our dedicated committee. Pastor Lee Ann and Pastor Melissa completed our time together with a heartfelt Sunday morning service.

**Please save the dates: Saturday March 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025.**

The annual Olivet Women's Retreat will be held in Findlay, Ohio at the newly renovated Country Inn and Suites. Our DVD Bible study will be led by Barb Roose: *Finding Jesus in the Psalms: A Lenten Journey*. Together, we will reflect on Jesus' ministry as we discover comfort and hope through scripture from the Old and New Testaments. A weekend of fun activities and wonderful fellowship. **Please join us.** Invite a friend, a co-worker, your sister, your mom...all are welcome.

- Jan Kirk and the Women's Retreat Committee

## WORSHIP

9:00 a.m. Sunday — Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. Sunday — Contemporary Worship, The Vine, in the Christian Life Center

Our Sunday gatherings answer God’s call for us to worship. The following groups enable and enhance our corporate worship.

**Altar Guild** has evolved into a collaboration of ladies and even a couple of gentlemen who devote time and energy to both of our sacred worship spaces—Sanctuary and Christian Life Center. The “take charge” team of Chrisann Shaner and Linda Hoetzl have led the group admirably this past year with scheduling, ordering supplies, having several meetings, and even a summer picnic. Altar Guild’s duties include attending to the weekly pick up and placement of altar flowers, setting up communion, changing of candles and paraments as well as set up and removal of our treasured seasonal decorations used in Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Advent and Christmas. Baptisms, funerals and weddings, of course, require special care. The team who assists at the Vine Service at 11:00 a.m. is even involved in duties such as ushering and communion assisting. Thank you all for the spirit with which you serve God and Olivet.

**Tech Team:** The Tech Team, led by Tyler Martin, ensures that the audio and visual components of all services run smoothly. Worship services and a number of other special church events are live-streamed and are also available at any time on Olivet’s YouTube channel. The link is included in the weekly Constant Contact email and on the Olivet website. All technology improvements with microphones, lighting, and livestream are skillfully handled by the extremely dedicated and hard-working team of Tyler and Michael Schuster. The Tech Team needs and welcomes new members for the positions listed below. All training is provided.

9 a.m. Sanctuary Team / Sound & Stream Volunteer: Start and stop live stream of service; turn microphones on and off and adjust audio levels throughout the service. Current members are: Duane Abbott, Shelley McMacken, Matt Olrich, Danny Pietras, and Susan Santoro (Coordinator).

Christian Life Center Team / Media/PowerPoint Volunteer: Create a presentation from a template for the Vine service. Run presentation during the service; start and stop live stream. Current members are: Carol Borton (Coordinator), Margie Burns, Erin Dress, Susan Santoro, and Beth White. Sara Martin, Communications Specialist, prepares pre-service PowerPoint announcements.

Christian Life Center Team / Sound Volunteer: Turn microphones on and off and adjust audio levels. This is currently done by Tyler Martin.

**Welcome Ministry** this year was facilitated by Pastor Nate, Chrisann Shaner, Pastor Melissa and Jill Hepner. **13** new members joined our community of faith. There were a total of **six baptisms** and a confirmation class of five. What a way to grow!

## **MUSIC MINISTRIES**

**Rejoice & Jubilee Handbell Choirs:** We had a wonderful year of ringing some outstanding music for our worship services in 2024. We rang several numbers with our Olivet Choir, which is always wonderful. We had several small ensembles ring for our service and also at the All Saints Memorial Service at Wolf Creek in November that was beautiful. We had another ensemble ring for the Advent by Candlelight Service on December 5, 2024, as well as a memorial service for Harold Leupp.

Our December 15, 2024, Christmas Handbell Concert was very nice. It was a challenge this year with Norovirus and Covid attacking our members the day before and the day of our concert. We were blessed to have subs stepping in last minute to learn seven numbers for the concert. It turned out excellent with over 200 people in attendance. The audience was wonderful. We were blessed to have Shelley McMacken run the livestream so those who were unable to attend were able to watch it online. God bless Shelley and Tyler Martin for making this available to us.

In September 2024, we welcomed three new members to Jubilee: Teri Laurer, Brock Laurer and Angel Carlo. They have been a wonderful addition to our handbell choir. Angel was only able to ring with us through December due to work. We will miss you, Angel. We will welcome three new members in Jubilee starting in January 2025: Courtney Hartung, Pam Heaton, and Kristen Ressler. I am excited to have all of our positions filled in Jubilee for 2025. Each group has thirteen positions to ring. In order for us to ring, we need all 13 positions filled. When people are ill, on vacation or out of town, we need to get

subs. Thanks to everyone who subbed during 2024 – we had a lot of subs, and I appreciate you more than you know! THANK YOU! We always welcome new members. If you are interested in joining our handbell choir, please contact me.

I am thankful to all of our members for their dedication to our handbell choirs. It is hard to believe it has been 40 years since Rejoice had our first rehearsal in January 1985. We are hoping to have a special Sunday on May 4, 2025, to honor our handbell choirs. We are blessed, as a congregation, to have kept this music ministry vibrant and strong for 40 years. I am honored to have been the director since the beginning. Sue Meyer and Carol Leupp are also members who started with Rejoice in 1985. Many of our other members have been with us 35-38 years. We are beyond blessed to have tremendous talent in our church. Thanks to ALL OF YOU who have been a part of this fantastic ministry. God Bless you all with good health and happiness in 2025.  
- Carol Miller, director

**Spark and Club 345 Children:** I would like to take this opportunity to let the children of our congregation know what JOY they bring to my life, as well as the teachers, Donna Mens, Karen Rosar, and Deb Shock. It is a highlight to sing with them on Sunday mornings, before they go to their classes. We have the best time singing great songs about Jesus and His love for us. The children will be joining our Handbell Choir and Olivet Choir in a number for Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025, at the 9:00 service. We will be practicing the song on Sunday mornings. I am really looking forward to it. There will be percussion, and we will be singing “Shout, Sing, Celebrate by Joel Raney” – very exciting beginning to our Palm Sunday service. You can listen to it on YouTube to learn it as well. I want to thank all of the parents, grandparents and others for bringing children to Sunday School on Sunday mornings at 10:10 a.m. The children bring TOTAL JOY to all of us! God bless you all.  
Ring and Sing for Christ,  
- Carol Miller, director                      Cell: 419-283-1895                      Email: carolamiller5@hotmail.com

**The Olivet Choir** served the congregation in many ways. Notable are the outstanding Lenten and Advent cantatas performed to appreciative audiences. The latter's attendance was recorded at 228. This was due to the publicity efforts of Diane Wilkie Smith and Rachael Cammar. The service was combined, Vine and Traditional, an approach worth repeating in the future.

Programming for the year was varied. Repertoire ranged from gospel, spirituals, classical, hymn arrangements and liturgical songs plus major works.

The ensemble has now risen to a membership of 29. New members include: Alyssa Desotell, BGSU graduate, first-year elementary music teacher in the Sylvania School District; Ivan Cobb, BGSU graduate, first-year middle school music teacher in Toledo Schools; Jack Ulrich, Sylvania High School graduate, former student of Samantha Olrich; Nan Plenzler, long-time singer in community choirs, who is making plans to join our church; Linda Lewin, recently retired from teaching and administrative duties in UT's nursing program; and Addy Darm, 9th grader at Northview High School.

On another note, Olivet Choir just learned that Warren and Noreen Wright have decided to retire from the ensemble. They have given years of service to the cause and depart with God's Blessings and the well wishes of the whole Choir.

For the first time ever, Olivet Choir performed a non-musical function this past year. At the invitation of Karen Keefer, choir members assisted in hosting a large scrapbook event in the CLC. Providing home-cooked food to participants proved to be spirit building and helped generate money for the purchase of music. The choir stands ready to help out again. Special thanks to Chrisann Shaner and Fred Sandmann for leadership.

The director wishes to express his heartfelt appreciation for the choir's ministry at the memorial service for Rodney Henthorne and the musical preparation rendered by Keith Hamen.

In closing, thank you Sarah Lewis for being the engine supporting our voices. And thank you, members of Olivet Church, for your support of our music program!

- Steve Hodge  
*Olivet Choir Director, 34 years service*

**The Vine Praise Band**, led by Ash Lovegood. Happy New Year from the Olivet Worship Band! In 2024, this wonderful group experienced growth in multiple areas - in the number of members, with their musical skills, and their love for leading the congregation into worship. We are excited to continue growing in 2025, and we are grateful to continue leading The Vine Service in worship.



## COMMUNITY MISSION EMPHASIS

Mike Linehan, convener

*Address social issues by focused engagement in community partnerships.*

In 2023, subgroups of the Community Mission Emphasis Team continued established ministries and emerged to focus on these new 2023-2025 goals:

1. Surround **15-20-year-olds** in the Sylvania community with practical and spiritual support to nurture wellbeing and provide safety.
2. Enhance our partnership with **Urban Wholistics** to foster meaningful youth engagement, racial equity, and food security.
3. Address **gun violence** through advocacy in our communities, across Ohio, and at the federal level.

Updates on those three goals:

In 2023, our **15-20-year-old** team joined with members of the community mission emphasis **gun violence team** and two of our **congregational teams** (foster intentional culture of inclusion, support and advocacy and address societal fragmentation) to discern a shared vision. Given the risk LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults bear for self-harm and being targets of violence, we initiated a monthly drop-in opportunity for Queer youth and Allies. *See details under "Congregational Mission Emphasis."*

Sonia Flunder-McNair from **Urban Wholistics Farms** recently honored Olivet with the Community Partner Award, acknowledging our three-year dedication to her youth urban farming program. Olivet's support extended beyond financial contributions, with over 20 youth and adult volunteers actively participating in monthly Olivet Saturdays at the farm. In 2024 alone, Olivet provided **over \$2,000** to the Urban Wholistics Farms summer youth program. This investment has not only benefited the youth but has also strengthened the bond between our two organizations.

A testament to the power of even small acts of kindness, Olivet's \$500 donation in August initiated a meaningful partnership with **Salem Lutheran Church**. This contribution facilitated a **regular supply of fresh produce** from the Urban Wholistics Farm Market to **Salem's weekly community meal**, nourishing both bodies and spirits. Incidentally, Pastor Mike Hanck was recently elected to the board of directors at Urban Wholistics Farms.

Olivet's **Gun Violence Reduction Taskforce** made substantial strides in 2024. Key accomplishments include:

- **Community Support:** Allocated **\$150** from Community Mission Emphasis funds to **Sisters4Unity** to purchase a bed for a gunshot wound victim.
- **Advocacy and Learning:** Sent two representatives to the **Gun Violence Prevention Summit** at the Ohio Statehouse. Organized a seminar, "How Things Work at the Ohio Statehouse," with Rachel Coyle and Rep. Michele Grim, attracting over **60 attendees** from **15 organizations**.
- **Community Engagement:** Hosted a presentation by **Malcolm Cunningham**, Director of Toledo's **Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement (MONSE)**, at Epworth UMC, reaching over **30 attendees**.
- **Policy Impact:** Supported the passage of the "**Healing & Compassion Fund**" by Toledo City Council, which provides up to \$2,000 to individuals and families affected by gun violence.

Updates on other Community Mission Emphasis initiatives:

The **Food (In)Security Team** continued to gather hygiene items for the **Redeemer Lutheran Church Food Pantry**. For the first half of 2024, congregational donations of over 1,900 rolls of toilet paper were delivered to Redeemer. A transition occurred mid-year as Redeemer requested we collect toothbrushes and toothpaste instead of toilet paper, as that need was now being met by an outside vendor. (Note: as of January 2025, this vendor is no longer able to supply toilet paper, so Olivet will shift back to toilet paper collection.) In the last 6 months of 2024, congregational donations of over **880 toothbrushes** and 750 tubes of **toothpaste** were delivered. In addition, the team created backpacks containing basic food and hygiene items that are ready for Olivet's food pantry visitors, when needed. Finally, the team contributed \$300 through Meijer Simply Give for a **\$900 benefit** for the Sylvania Area Family Services Food Pantry.

Members of the Equity Team assisted with the January 2024 **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebratory Worship** at Glenwood Lutheran Church. Two members are on the steering committee that is preparing for Glenwood's January 2025 MLK event, as well. Olivet contributed \$500 toward the 2025 event and traditionally provides desserts for the catered meal.

In April, a **Social Justice Retreat** titled "From Micah's Mountaintop: Seeds of Change in Action" was held in the Christian Life Center. The seminar explored social justice through the lens of **Micah 6:8**: to act justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with your God. Almost 30 attendees heard four diverse speakers as they discussed how they carry out social justice work in their lives.

Olivet's commitment to **Salem Lutheran Church** extended into 2024. An Olivet member volunteered their time to conduct blood pressure screenings at Pastor Mike's Tuesday community meals. In April, a special shower and educational event was held for several new mothers in the neighborhood—each attendee received nearly **\$1000** worth of baby care items. Members of Olivet's Equity Team actively participated in a summer picnic/concert at Salem and a Thanksgiving dinner hosted by a nearby church. Additionally, Olivet's \$500 contribution to Urban Wholistics established a steady flow of fresh produce for Pastor Mike's weekly community meals at Salem.

Olivet provided the use of our Christian Life Center for the non-profit **Once Is Enough** to host its annual Christmas celebration and giveaway on Saturday, December 21. Over 200 people attended, with 18 tables loaded with toys/gifts for families fleeing domestic violence. Olivet also donated **\$300** for toy purchase.

Olivet's 2024 **quarterly benevolence** supported partnerships with these area ministries: **Northwestern Ohio Synod, Lutheran Social Services, Genacross Lutheran Services, Luther Home of Mercy, Lutheran Inter-Synodical Deaf Ministries, Sylvania Area Family Services and Redeemer Lutheran Church.**

### **Ministries in Support of Our Community**

**Giving Trees:** What a generous response for the families of Sylvania Area Family Services and children of Redeemer Lutheran Church. This year, we were able to provide gifts for 14 children at Redeemer and offer gift cards for food to their families. We also gave gift cards to 30 individuals to purchase gifts and food through Sylvania Area Family Services. We were able to help some folks within our Olivet family as well.  
*- Deb Shock*

**The Prayer Shawl Ministry Team** was started by two avid knitters, Charlotte Shaffer and Joyce Barger, in the Spring of 2005. At 93, Joyce is still very much involved in this important ministry today. Over the years, by knitting or crocheting, we have freely given approximately 1,440 hand-made prayer shawls. At the end of the year, approximately 45 shawls were given in 2024. Our shawls are meant to be tangible evidence of our prayers for God's peace and comfort to the recipients. They are freely given to **ANYONE** in need of comfort or support during an illness or the loss of a loved one. Our shawls are available by contacting the church office. We meet once a month and provide the yarn needed to knit or crochet a shawl along with patterns and guidelines to follow. As we close these meetings, we pray over each shawl turned in. We depend on cash donations to keep this ministry going, and we need knitters and crocheters who would like to create these beautiful shawls. There are no deadlines or any materials to purchase; just using your hands and talent for God's work. We had a few of our members donate over 160 hats to Cherry Street Mission, and other donations were given to help keep those in need warm during the winter months. We also donated 15 red, white, and blue lap-blankets to Flag City Honor Flight based in Findlay. Thank you to all who support this wonderful ministry.  
*- Jan Kirk and the Prayer Shawl Ministry Team*  
Balance in this fund: \$1,637

### **FOOD MINISTRIES**

**Daily Bread, Olivet's Wednesday Free Community Meal:** As we celebrate the 15th year of the Daily Bread community meal, we cannot help but marvel at how far we have come. Many similar community programs have come and gone, and we are still providing meals nearly every week.

We suspend serving during Vacation Bible School, the rummage sale, one week at Thanksgiving and two weeks at Christmas. This year, we served over **5,600 meals**, including 325 at Thanksgiving. This 15%

increase over 2023, sadly, tells us how much this valuable ministry is needed.

Our ability to continue to serve the community is totally due to the ongoing support of our Olivet family, and for that we are so very thankful. We are also blessed to have our faithful volunteers who give generously of their time and talents. A special thanks goes to those who donate the take-out trays and to Main Street Sweets in Sylvania, whose graciously donated unsold pastries are such a treat to our guests.

We apologize to the environment for the use of Styrofoam trays for our take-out dinners, but it is financially unrealistic to use any other form. We continue to recycle as much as possible, collect compostable waste, and donate unused food to the weekly food distribution.

As we look forward to 2025, we invite you to participate in this valuable ministry in any way that you are able and ask that you please keep us and those we serve in your prayers.

- Holly Lewandowski

Current balance in the Daily Bread account: **\$12,377**

**Weekly Wednesday Food Distribution** of fresh produce and bread is delivered each week by the Northwest Ohio Food Bank. We also have a couple of angels who pick up bread and desserts from area stores. This year, the food bank has not been able to provide produce each week, so we purchase lettuce, carrots, onions, and sometimes apples, oranges or cuties, from Costco. That comes from the money you donate to the food pantry. We greatly appreciate your generosity. We also have angels who donate eggs and butter to be given out. We have a farmer who donates potatoes when he has extra. We truly do believe in the fishes and loaves miracles, so each week, eight people stand out in the heat, rain and freezing weather giving food to the most appreciative people. We appreciate the help we get from kids who occasionally help out when not in school.

We gave food to **4,753 households** and fed **11,493 individuals**. That is over 100 plus cars going through our parking lot on any given Wednesday afternoon. Our numbers keep going up every year. This year, we increased by 708 households or 1,431 individuals. We also give out our left-over food from Daily Bread to these guests. Between the Food Pantry and Food Distribution, we gave out enough food to provide **163,647 meals to 19,011 individuals**. Any food which is not given out on Wednesday is then taken down to Cherry Street Mission, Redeemer Lutheran Church, or Salem Lutheran Church. We do not limit zip codes as some pantries do, however, the majority of our guest are from the Sylvania area. Again, we thank you for your monetary donations which help feed this ministry.

- Penny Moran

**Olivet's Food Pantry** is kept stocked by both the congregation, and the individuals who go to the food bank, pickup and deliver food back to the church. Volunteers stock the shelves and pack up the **70+ bags of groceries** that are given out each week. Our cost is kept low because the Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank charges 18 cents per pound of food. Plus, we look for sales on the other needed items we cannot get from the food bank. Thanks to your generous donations of food and money, we are able to keep the pantry well supplied. We served **2,941 households** with bags of groceries in 2024. That is **7,519 individuals**. We appreciate your kind support.

- Penny Moran

**Current balance: \$14,090**

**Olivet Cares** provides information on community resources for **mental health, addiction, youth and aging**: <https://olivetcares.weebly.com>.

**Olivet Christian Nursery School:** Founded in 1967, OCNS offers an enriched curriculum which follows the Ohio Early Content Standards and prepares children for kindergarten in a play-based, parent cooperative setting. OCNS is open to all children ages 3-5 who are potty-trained. Morning sessions are offered 9:00-11:30 a.m. (M-F); Lunch Bunch option is available for an additional fee, 11:30-12:30 p.m. (M, W & Th). Current enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is **96 students** with **seven employees**. Registration for the 2025-2026 school year is now open for current and returning families. Open registration begins January 21. Please contact **Director, Jennifer Crooks**, to schedule a tour: 419-882-4616 or email: [ocns@bex.net](mailto:ocns@bex.net).

## GLOBAL MISSION EMPHASIS

Steve Sanderson, convener

*Make direct connections for learning, mutual support and relief with people around the world.*

In December 2022, we established the following **goals for 2023-2025**:

1. Support existing ministries with more frequent direct communication with global partners, including ELCA's Good Gifts program.
2. Strengthen relationships with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (now **Global Refuge**), Lutheran World Relief, and locally based refugee and asylum seeker efforts through US TOGETHER.
3. Promote learning, action, and advocacy related to global climate change.

2024 was an active year. The team's objective coming into the year was to continue to build relationships with our global partners and continue our work with immigration and refugee assistance. Also, we wanted to place more emphasis on the third of the three objectives: promote learning, action and advocacy related to global climate change.

Throughout the year we, along with many others at Olivet, continued to help the Vozniuks settle in the United States. 2024 was a good year for them, but not without many challenges. In March, Tymo started at Capable Kids, a school that specializes in education of children with autism. The school has had a positive impact, especially with communication skills. He also loves his weekly time at a horse farm, riding and caring for the horses as part of a program provided by Lucas County Developmental Disabilities (LCDD). Ivan is doing very well at McCord Middle School. His English has improved dramatically (probably the best in the family at this point). Mariia began nursing school in the spring but decided after the summer period to pause until her English improved, as it became evident that would become more of an issue as she progressed further. While in school, she also completed an STNA program (State-Tested Nurse Aide) and is currently working as a Nursing Aide amongst other jobs. Viktor continues with FedEx where he started in December 2023. In November, he was offered a promotion to supervise a facility in Wisconsin, but he and Mariia decided to decline the offer because Tymo and Ivan are established and doing so well here. In July, we celebrated the Vozniuks' one-year anniversary in the United States, where the Vozniuks expressed their heartfelt thanks to Olivet.

In July, Olivet hosted a visit from David Brondos, who is the missionary that our congregation helps support in Mexico. David delivered the sermon and also the children's message at our combined worship on July 21, and there was a gathering for him following the service. The Lohrmanns hosted David and others at their home the evening prior, which was attended by members of both the Olivet and the synod global mission teams. David greatly appreciated our hospitality and it was wonderful to visit with him.

In September, Heidi Lohrmann, assisted by others on the Global Mission team as well as Body Shop young adults and leaders, assembled 100 school supply kits that are sent to children around the world who in some cases are not able to attend school due to lack of these materials.

In October, we co-hosted along with the synod Global Mission Board "Walking With: ELCA Partners to Accompany Migrant, Immigrant and Refugee Communities". Our guest speaker was Shannon Baker. Shannon had recently finished a year with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program and served in Mexico where part of her mission was spent working in a migrant shelter in Guadalajara. Shannon communicated stories about the lives of people that she met at the migrant center that illustrated their circumstances. Information associated with other Lutheran affiliated organizations was also presented, including the Immigration Ministry of the Lutheran Church of Mexico, Global Refuge, Border Servant Corps and AMMPARO. The session ended with a time of prayer. In advance of the event we participated in calls with each of the organizations to understand their work in more detail.

In November, Heidi led the Global Refuge "Hope for the Holidays" program. There was a strong response from the people of Olivet. About 277 Christmas cards were signed to be distributed to immigrants stuck in migrant camps over Christmas.

Also in November, the Global Team learned that a monetary gift sent early in the year to Lwihomelo congregation - our partner congregation in Tanzania - had finally been received by Pastor Emma. The money will help put a roof on their new church.

In December, Heidi introduced an Advent ELCA Good Gifts program to the congregation to aid persons in 86 countries with various gifts that make a significant difference in their lives. The gifts include livestock, clean water access, school fees and supplies, business loans and technology tools to name some examples.

Also in December, we joined with Amy Dixon of the Equity team to plan events around sustaining our planet - caring for creation - during the 2025 Lent season. Barb Stough is the Global Mission team lead and explored various resources in 2024. Cynthia Fett and Amy spoke to the congregation in a temple talk on December 15, offering an opportunity to be involved to any congregation members interested.

Finally, in December, the Franklin family, our synod and Olivet welcomed Keila Reyes-Salazar. Keila is from Guadalajara, Mexico and a member of the Lutheran Church of Mexico. Keila originally planned to attend the ELCA Young Adult Gathering in New Orleans with Olivet teens and young adults earlier in the year but did not receive her VISA in time, which was very disappointing. An offer was made for Keila to visit us when she received her VISA. Keila arrived December 13 and departed on December 23. She was welcomed and received an Olivet prayer shawl as a gift at the December 15 Vine service. Her visit also included the Olivet High School and Alumni Christmas Party on December 20, and a gathering of synod global mission board members the following day.

- Steve Sanderson

Olivet's 2024 quarterly benevolence included support totaling **\$3,000** for Rev. Dr. David and Alicia Brondos.

### **Ministries in Support of Olivet's Global Outreach**

**Common Thread Quilters** began their endeavor in 2016 with six members. We have grown in number to 12 plus many members who help tie quilts on a Saturday in March/April and those donating sheets. Our "selective" quilt raffle allowed participants to choose which quilt jar they wanted to put their tickets into.

Again, this year, we completed 220 quilts to send to **Lutheran World Relief** and give locally to **Redeemer** and **Salem Lutheran Churches** and **Wolf Creek residents**. We were pleased to hear LWR distributed quilts to those who lost homes in North Carolina to a hurricane.

Another new venture was putting together packets of quilt squares for members to make a quilt top. We will try this again this year!

Please join Quilters on Tuesday Mornings as we assemble the layers needed for a quilt. - Carol Leupp

**Operation Christmas Child:** Thank you, Olivet members, for the 44 shoeboxes sent out through the church.

- Deb Shock

### **SUPPORT MINISTRIES**

Shannon Walker, Director of Operations

The following subjects, ministries *and people*, along with the many activities which have been shared thus far in this report, continue to make Olivet the wonderful, benevolent circle of love and activity that I have the privilege to serve with.

**Church Office/Building Staff:** Our office staff is a circle of support for each other in all daily activities. **Jill Hepner** began this past summer as Membership Coordinator, acclimating so quickly to the various office duties. She brought experience from her years as a teacher's aide and as a past Olivet office volunteer. Also her varied ties to the congregation through kids' ministry is valuable. **Sara Martin**, Communications Specialist, is a multi-talented addition to our staff as of February 1, 2024. She has made many connections to ministry leaders and is very innovative with great ideas for needed changes. Her involvement in bringing Olivet more current with needed website changes, increasing focus on disabilities and other important subjects is her FOCUS! We look forward to new ideas and changes in communication with our congregation, community and beyond.

Some of our I.T. support has come from a generous woman, **Chris Witzell**, with whom we have been affiliated since 2004. One of my long-term partners in financial matters is **Mike Vince**, our Financial Secretary. Mike's attention to detail in dealing with the important matters of member offerings, bank deposits, reconciliation, accounts payable and such is so appreciated.

Staff and volunteers love sharing in the services offered to guests of our Food Ministries on Mondays and Wednesdays, or any day that someone walks in with a need for food.

Kudos to our cleaning team. **Andrea Laws** with building custodial duties plus always "digging in" with our food ministry folks on Wednesdays who support/organize/move food from truck to pallets to the assembly line—to our guests' cars. We appreciate you very much, including **Danika Laws** who joined as our Christian Life Center cleaning/set up staff after John Casper retired to Florida in October. Danika also is responsible for providing cleaning support in the three OCSN classrooms two days per week.

Constant Contact and website updates are a weekly endeavor of Shannon, now aided by Sara and Jill, with the pastors supporting with inspiring devotions and hints of the upcoming Sunday's message/worship.

**Office Volunteers:** Olivet's office has such wonderful support with our volunteers. We especially thank **Cynthia Fett** who has been so helpful on Mondays, a day that is very full of details, managing food guests and other weekly duties, such as managing the acknowledgement cards for memorial gifts to Olivet. **Janet Kish** joined us in 2023, and I believe is here forever doing the Tuesday duties in such a caring and consistent way, calling ministry leaders each week to remind them of upcoming Sunday's duties and giving happy support to Becky and kids' ministry needs. **Mary Glover** and **Pat Sheets** have been faithful on Wednesdays serving guests coming for food. Plus, they are so good at the computer-inputting of our food guests. **Penny Moran**, who is our keen-eyed proofer and greeter on Thursdays, supports various office needs. Mary deserves a "second nod of thanks" as she partners on Friday in readying bulletins and signage, ensuring that all is ready for Sunday. How do we manage when Shannon is on vacation—with a wonderful sub in **Susan Santoro**, who often jumps in to give great support to our office, as has **Jan Kirk** recently.

All our front desk volunteers are so kind and friendly when greeting guests (over 3,000 per year) who come for food, or tending to the needs of callers and visitors. Want to experience some of the JOY that is felt in serving in the office? We can always use subs to fill in when others need a day off. Give Shannon a call. We accept volunteers on their terms.

**Building Security:** On December 27, 2024 Shannon received approval for a **\$6,750 grant** from the Ohio Bureau of Workman's Comp. Our emphasis on building security cannot be overstated, as you know from our commitment to remain in a "locked condition" during weekday office hours. Olivet Christian Nursery School operates within our building (since 1967), and the safety of our children, staff, guests and members is our constant focus. To that end, in 2021, through an \$18,000 grant, we installed cameras, remote door controls and new steel classroom doors to better secure the school and building. This new grant will enable us to acquire an interactive door interface, where all visitors ring the bell and are acknowledged visually and audibly and then allowed entry via a remote door release located INSIDE the office.

Also, we will have 3 panic buttons to allow instant connection to police or fire. Going a step further there will be a chime installed in the OCNS wing alerting preschool staff of any door activity at their two doors. These coming enhancements will be completed before summer through the work of Habitec Security Company, with whom we have been associated for many decades. This grant, only available to schools, is on a 3:1 basis, meaning that the total \$9,000 estimated cost will be covered 75% (\$6750) by the grant; and Olivet will contribute the other 25% = \$2250. We are blessed to be able to qualify for this as we provide for a preschool within our building. We celebrate this great news of approval as we look forward to 2025. Any contributions for Olivet's portion are gratefully accepted.

**Thrivent Choice Fund:** Thank you to those who have Thrivent Financial investment products and directed their Thrivent Choice Dollars to Olivet. Through your generosity, we were able to reach out in ways we could not through our regular giving. By directing Choice Dollars to Olivet in 2024, we provided support for Olivet's Giving Tree, Sylvania Area Family Services "back to school" supplies, Olivet's Help Has Arrived fund, shipping fee for quilts going abroad, Once is Enough (domestic abuse recovery) Christmas Program. See Dedicated Acct on page F-5.

Thrivent members' generosity, by directing Choice Dollars, generated **\$5,314** that accumulated in Olivet's Thrivent Choice Dedicated Fund. **Current balance: \$7,463.** The request form is available in the church office. Requests fall into one of four categories: 1. Community Outreach; 2. Seminarian Support; 3. Youth; 4. Mission Trips.

### **Thrivent Members!**

If you have not directed your Thrivent Choice Dollars for the current year, you have until March 31, 2025. If they are not directed by March 31, 2025, they will be lost. We hope to see more involvement if possible.

Olivet's Thrivent Choice Team: Pastor Melissa, Sue Davis (team leader), Phil Dress, Bill Hamilton, Donna Mens, Matt Olrich, and Derek Cipiti, our congregational Thrivent representative.

**Landscape Team:** This team of members continues their devotion to all the varied perennial gardens that surround Olivet. The creativity in each garden is awesome and thanks are due to those who donate their time and occasionally their dollars. Thanks to Cathy & Steve Sanderson, Ed Rupley, Tina Johnson, Deb



Shock, Bob Mens, Mike Cook. A special project taken on by the team was replanting grass where an overgrown section of weeds/scrub trees propagated near the shed on our west side property. A year-end expense of \$2,000 occurred when four dead pine trees that bordered Dave White's needed removal, as one threatened to fall. The look and the care of our property says much about Olivet, and we always invite others to join the effort! Love nature, planting or just being outside—call the office and see what needs are on the agenda. :)

**The Memorial and Honoraria Committee's** ministry is to provide a way for family and friends to memorialize or honor their loved ones. Thoughtfully applied to the mission and ministry at Olivet Lutheran Evangelical Lutheran Church, these gifts are an expression of faith. Honoraria gifts are given to recognize family and friends for special events and/or significant events in that person's life. Olivet's bi-monthly publication, *The Olive Press*, itemizes all monies received and in whose memory. We invite you to read these as they are publicized. A deceased member's next-of-kin may then designate how they wish the funds, received in their loved one's name, to be used within Olivet's ministries. As an example: the new middle railing and two supports you see leading to our altar were a gift from the Memorial Funds received in Harold Leupp's name. The process through the church office is to send thank-you cards for each donation received and then a report, with a list of donors, to the family of the deceased. This is typically done about 3 months after their passing, as donations come in sporadically.

An updated Memorial & Honoraria brochure is available at church entrances and the Welcome Center to provide information to assist people considering a monetary gift. Committee members: Dave Simko, and Shelley McMacken. Any inquires about the process may be directed to Shannon in the church office.

Follow up: The plaque memorializing Ed & Phyllis Ruff was inlaid in the outer northern section of lawn. The Ruff family donated the many trees in 2023 that line the property on the border of the plaza next door. 2024 Year-End Balance: **\$58,412**. See Dedicated Fund in Financials.

**Personnel Team:** Responsible for developing policies and procedures that assist the staff in understanding the expectations for a position at Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church. The team, with approval of the Congregation Council, implements these procedures and policies with adherence to Olivet's mission and ministry as our central focus. Staff changes in 2024: In late spring, Olivet received a resignation from Chrisann Shaner, who remains an active Olivet member. We are appreciative of her 18 years of service. Officially taking on her duties in August as Membership Coordinator is Jill Hepner. Jill and Jon are longtime members of Olivet with daughters Emily and Abigail as active youth. Also resigning was Jon Casper who, with his wife Pam, has relocated to the Bonita, Florida area, where they are enjoying retirement. John was our Christian Life Center Custodian, fix-it guy since 2006. Taking on duties for CLC custodial care is Danika Laws, daughter of Rich and Andrea Laws. Mentioned last year - Patty Stammmler resigned after 16 years with Olivet and then Sara Martin, wife of longtime Olivet member and volunteer Tyler Martin, applied for the position of Communications Specialist and stepped into the role February 1. Welcome Sara, Jill, and Danika to the Olivet staff! - Stan Machosky

**Endowment Fund:** During the calendar year 2024, the Greater Toledo Community Fund (GTCF) continued its management of the assets of Olivet's Endowment Trust Fund. A strong market performance in 2024 produced a positive return resulting in a current ending balance of **\$50,345.75**. The goal of the Endowment Fund as printed in the trust document, is to grow the fund through contributions and market performance. Once the fund value reaches \$100,000, annual distributions of amounts in excess of that goal may be permitted to those qualifying groups/projects as approved by the Church Council and the congregation. If you wish information concerning the Endowment Trust Fund, please contact any of the elected Trustees or the church office staff. Brochures describing the Endowment Trust Fund are available in the information area at the Welcome Center. John Gonia, as Lead Trustee, may be contacted by email with any questions. [gonia@johngonia.com](mailto:gonia@johngonia.com).

**Finance Team:** Comprised of a group of extremely gifted business professionals with expertise in the field of finance, banking, and management, this team is dedicated to the stewardship of Olivet's finances and meets monthly. The team works with staff to initiate and work out the details to administer the annual budget, as approved by Council and Congregation. Shannon details weekly income vs. goal in Olivet's weekly Constant Contact email which is sent to 350 households. Justin Black (team leader), Barry Shaner

(treasurer), Shannon Walker (staff), Mike Vince (staff/financial secretary), Kevin Kornowa, John Gonia and Bob Mens. Olivet THANKS **Barry Shaner** for his 18 years of service as he steps away from the role of Olivet's Treasurer effective January 26, 2025, at the Annual Meeting. He held this "volunteer" role with such expertise and wisdom, leading Olivet through many interesting, if not challenging times.

**Tellers** meet every Monday to count & balance the weekly offering. Shannon prepares the deposit for the bank courier to pick up. Thanks to our faithful members: Jerry Dunaway, Greg Fett, John Husman, Nancy Kelley and Marlene Schober. Nancy has stepped away from this position, with our gratitude! We welcome Sue Davis who joined the effort in 2024.

**Olivet's William & Martha Cox Garden of Peace** was dedicated on Sunday, November 11, 2007.

It continues to provide a safe and serene final resting place for the cremated remains of Olivet members and their immediate families, plus former members, staff, and their immediate families. Brass plaques in the Garden memorialize those interred there, and additional plaques remember loved ones interred elsewhere. A total of forty-nine interments have occurred since 2007, including six in 2024.

Twenty-two additional Olivet family members have now pre-planned their interment here. Arranging interment is a simple procedure for those considering this beautiful life memorial. Brochures with full details are available in the church office.

The garden provides a beautifully landscaped, peaceful, private, and quiet place for remembrance, prayer, and meditation. 2024 saw repair work completed on the fountain and the irrigation system, as well as additional landscaping, including several flowering bush removals and replacements.

2024 Trustees: John Holshoe (chairperson), Karen Keefer (secretary), Helene Lyon (financial secretary), Ann Hansen, Mike Linehan and Donna Mens. Sandy Husman assisted as an ex-officio member and design chairperson. Both Pastor Tuff and Pastor Melissa served as spiritual advisors, with Ed Rupley continuing as the Garden archivist.

2025 begins with the election of two trustees. The first is Mike Linehan, who has graciously volunteered to now serve a second three year term; the other is Deb Shock, filling the spot for Karen Keefer, who has served seven years – two three year terms plus an additional year (due to our one year suspension of activities during the height of the Covid pandemic). We are grateful to Karen for her dedication to Olivet's Garden of Peace.

Continuing in 2025 there are four other trustees, still serving their term commitments: John Holshoe, Helene Lyon, Ann Hansen, and Donna Mens. Sandy Husman continues as an ex-officio member and design chairperson. Pastor Melissa serves as spiritual advisor, and Ed Rupley remains the Garden archivist.

**Property Team** (established 2023 by Tina Johnson) Accomplished projects list 2024:

- Refresh of garden by playground fence.
- Door at back of sanctuary exiting toward laundromat repaired and painted; new step added.
- Salt and snow-damaged floor by Teen Room door and door frame repaired. Awning added to door exterior to create weather buffer.
- Bell in Bell Garden repaired and painted.
- Sanded and painted railing going from Bell Garden to boiler room.
- Various overgrown bushes and weeds removed or cut back.
- Ceilings and walls repaired throughout building, including sanctuary.
- Walls prepared for new wall hangings purchased by Equity Team.
- Walls repaired and repainted in lead pastor's office
- Wooden stand in sanctuary repaired and painted by Bill Hamilton.
- Painted exterior trim outside Pastor Melissa's office.

We can always use additional help. If you have a few hours to spare, we have a job for you. Contact Tina Johnson, Bob Mens, Mike Cook, or Shannon Walker.

- Tina Johnson, team leader

## ACCOMPLISHED PROJECTS - 2024 At a Glance

### **NEW PHONES activated last January, replacing the phones from the '70s was in the recent budget.**

Olivet has now fully transitioned over to the new VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) based phone system. This new system provides us with significantly more features and improves phone call quality. If you have called the church in the past year, hopefully you will have noticed how voices are much clearer.

**STAFF COMPUTERS replaced with 6 new laptops and 1 new desktop.** This donation including installation was a **GIFT** from Tyler and Sara Martin. The laptops are such that they can be used at home remotely to all the shared devices/documents that are onsite. These new computers are set up using enterprise grade features that are provided for free through Microsoft. This new setup is significantly more secure, faster, and simplifies how things work. In addition, Olivet is able to save money by no longer needing to purchase services for anti-virus or backup, as this is provided for free through Microsoft. Olivet is beyond grateful for this valuable gift.

**NEW OFFICE FURNITURE** was a particular delight for the office staff last spring when we got a lead that a local attorney, Steven Marcus, was retiring and had many pieces of beautiful mahogany-style furniture available. Upon seeing it, Shannon voiced our delight in acquiring as many pieces as possible. Steven offered it completely free, which included 4 complete 2 or 3 sectioned desk suites, 3 bookcases, 3 chairs, 1 couch with 2 matching chairs, and 1 reception desk. The changeover to the new future was at a cost of \$2,200 by a local moving company, which included new set up plus the removal of all those heavy Steelcase desks. A thank you gift was sent to him.

**LEAK DEVICE** is the name of the automatic shut off valve that was the subject of fundraising in mid-2024. This \$12,000 investment, put into service in mid-November, acts to detect too much water usage over a certain amount of time. If triggered, it will automatically turn off the water to the building. There has been a lot of fine tuning with this system due to the large number of false alarms. However, if there was to be another issue with pipes freezing and bursting, we will be able to minimize the damage by automatically shutting off the water to the building.

**2 COMPLETELY RENOVATED RESTROOMS** in our main hallway had been in Shannon's daily prayers to be accomplished in 2024. Voila – we now have beautiful epoxy garage style floors with a new décor including new paint, new stall dividers, and trash receptacles. This \$9,000 project was funded by several donors. The result exceeded our expectations as we were determined to do it right, such as now adding stall doors to the men's room and totally new locks.

**NEW KEYBOARD FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER.** The Vine team began experiencing trouble on the 2017 digital piano in December. Knowing its importance to worship made this a priority. Tyler quickly researched a great deal (\$5,473) and an anonymous donor funded the December 31<sup>st</sup> purchase. The piano arrived and was set up in early January.

**NEW RAILING AND 2 SUPPORTS INSTALLED IN THE SANCUTARY,** on the approaching steps to the altar. This safer access to the area is welcomed by many and has been voiced for a couple of years. This \$1,600 project was completed in December by Hayes Ornamental Co. and funded by memorial funds received in memory of Harold Leupp.

**ADDITIONAL SMOKE DETECTORS PROJECT.** Part of the special plea in 2024 was for the \$8,000 addition of detectors in HVAC Room, Boiler Room, and attic space. We're advised that an additional detector should be installed that will complete the project soon.

**2 NEW 75" SMART TVs** came about in December with a mention that Bible studies and other events would benefit by having better electronic access in the Teen Room and the Adult Ed room to DVDs and web-based info. Using Congregational Ministry funds from the budget, we acquired 2 multi-featured TVs on Black Friday for \$500 each. The second one was a donation. Michael and Tyler installed them and first use was January 6 for Bible study. See NEXT PAGE for plans in the works to build a TEAMS ROOM out of the Adult Ed Room.

**PAINTING OF THE COLUMNS, GABLE & DENTIL WOODWORK** – Sanctuary: \$6,000

**REMOVAL OF 4 PINE TREES** – West side of property: \$2,000

**REPLACEMENT OF CEILING IN SUNDAY NURSERY (due to roof leak):** \$ 3,200

**ROOF REPAIRS** – Several throughout the year due to missing shingles/wind: \$1,600

**REORGANIZATION OF BASEMENT** – with much old, unused equipment recycled.

### **SOONER RATHER THAN LATER PROJECTS IN RESEARCH STAGE FOR 2025**

**ENHANCED CAMERA VIEWS FOR SANCTUARY LIVE-STREAMING** with additional camera views (pan, tilt, view), providing close ups of the pulpit, altar, baptismal font, and bell choir.

**PLANS TO BUILD OUT A TEAMS ROOM SYSTEM** by Tyler using the new smart TV in the Adult Ed Room, which will provide an excellent space to host meetings with people both on site and away from Olivet. This will be a donated enhancement to be used by many for years to come.

### **WISH LIST AND/OR IN PLANNING STAGE**

**NEW BELTPACK MICROPHONES FOR THE SANCTUARY:** \$2,300. An additional wireless handheld mic would be handy for some events. Current mics are all functioning.

**SPEAKERS FOR THE CLC:** Step 1 accomplished with speaker mounts purchased. Step 2 - new speakers, \$3,000. Matching subs for speakers, \$2,000.

**PERMANENTLY MOUNTED PROJECTOR IN THE SANCTUARY:** \$2,000-\$4,000.

### **FUTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

**NEW ROOF FOR ENTIRE BUILDING.** Estimated use left is 4-6 years. CLC roof installed 2006. Original east-west roof was replaced in 2007.

**NEW PARKING LOT PAVEMENT.** Several areas have been only resurfaced. The entire lot will need replacement. Estimated \$100,000.

**OLIVET'S ORGAN.** Our fully electronic organ was installed in 1984 and is starting to show its age. A meeting was held with an Allen Organ representative and the local dealer representative from Craig's Pianos. From this meeting, it was determined that a brand-new console and speakers for the sanctuary would cost around \$200,000 to \$250,000. The current organ is still supported by service and parts if needed.

It bears repeating year to year that **we owe Tyler Martin a debt of gratitude** for all his collaboration to tackle so many tasks. At Tyler's side, often consulting, is **Michael Schuster**, who also deserves praise for his various expertise. Their propensity to research, analyze and make recommendations are integral to our operations at Olivet. Their very detailed report on many of the above projects is available in the church office and is submitted to Council. *Excerpts of it are contained within the above report.*

Thanks to the many folks mentioned and not mentioned in the pages of this Annual Report. You all make Olivet what we are—a caring, wonderful group of souls praising God through our daily work together.

I love sharing the joys and the challenges for these 21+ years of my rewarding ministry among YOU ALL!

*Shannon Walker*, Director of Operations

**We have the most devoted staff! Check out the years of service of many here, who together with Pr. Melissa and Pr. Robyn, offer so many gifts and talents! We are blessed by God!**

**Pastoral Team**

**Rev. Dr. Robyn Schmitz**

Interim Pastor (2024-25)

Part-time salary

pastorrobyn@olivetsylvania.org

**Melissa Micham**

Associate Pastor (2016)

pastormelissa@olivetsylvania.org

**Rebecca Cress**

Director of Children, Youth and Family

Ministries (2021)

rcress@olivetsylvania.org

**Music Staff**

**Dr. Stephen Hodge**

Adult Choir Director (1991)

stevehodge7464@gmail.com

Part-time salary

**Carol Miller**

Handbells Director (1991)

carolamiller5@hotmail.com

Part-time salary

**Ash Lovegood**

Praise Band Director (2020)

ashleyatolivet@gmail.com

Part-time salary

**Sarah Lewis**

Organist/Accompanist (2022)

sapianohymn@gmail.com

Part-time salary

**Administrative/Building Staff**

**Shannon Walker**

Director of Operations (2003)

operations@olivetsylvania.org

Full-time salary

**Jill Hepner**

Membership Coordinator (2024)

membership@olivetsylvania.org

Part-time, 20 hrs/wk

**Sara Martin**

Communications Specialist (2024)

communications@olivetsylvania.org

Part-time, 12 hrs/wk

**Mike Vince**

Financial Secretary (2001)

kvince@bex.net

Part-time salary

**Andrea Laws**

Day Custodian (2009)

Part-time, 20 hrs/wk

**Danika Laws**

Christian Life Center Custodian (2024)

Part-time, 6 hrs/wk

**Sunday Nursery Staff**

Leaders: Cat Carlo, Marissa Espinosa

Teen Helpers: Josie Billau, Lily Hammerling, Emily Hepner, Eden Pollard, Addie Ruddy

Part-time, 3 hrs/wk

**2025 PLANNED EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS**

Women's Retreat | March 1 & 2

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper | March 4

Ash Wednesday | March 5

Olivet Choir Lenten/Easter Cantata | April 6

Palm Sunday | April 13

Easter Sunday | April 20

Vacation Bible School | June 16 - 20

Rummage Sale | Plan for Late July

Confirmation Sunday | October 26

AND MUCH MORE TO COME!

Planned 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays with 10 a.m. worship:

March 30: CLC

April 27: TBD

June 29: Sanctuary

August 31: TBD

November 30: TBD

**2024 MONTHLY ATTENDANCE**

MONTH Time	IN PERSON			STREAM		
	9 a.m.	11 a.m.	10 a.m.*	9 a.m.	11 a.m.	10 a.m.*
Jan	315	170	219	216	132	125
Feb	423	244		273	125	
Mar	857	333		543	204	
April	378	176	251	221	95	121
May	492	229		252	95	
June	422	207	188	267	121	87
July			498			288
August	392	192		218	84	
September	473	252	196	226	102	82
October	479	266		275	121	
November	343	224	154	230	97	113
Dec	360	195	323	291	112	220
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4934</b>	<b>2488</b>	<b>1829</b>	<b>3012</b>	<b>1288</b>	<b>1036</b>

	9 Live & Stream	11 Live & Stream	10 Live & Stream
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7946</b>	<b>3776</b>	<b>2865</b>

	In Person	Stream	Total
Ash Wednesday	82		82
Mid-Week Lenten Services	89		89
3/28 Maundy Thurs	66	42	108
3/29 Good Friday		31	31
3/30 Easter Vigil	30		30
3/31 Easter Sunrise			
<b>Holy Week Total</b>	<b>267</b>		<b>340</b>

	In Person	Stream	Total
Christmas Eve			
4:00	110		110
7:00	172	3	175
9:30	155	144	299
<b>Christmas Eve Total</b>	<b>437</b>		<b>584</b>

\* Combined Services

The Attendance Numbers reflect Sunday services are for informational purposes.

Any services that are not on Sunday are listed separately.

Total attendance for 2024 is 15,511.

Total attendance for 2023 was 14,225.



## FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 2024

The Fiduciary responsibility of the Financial Secretary is to identify, record and report to the Congregation Council monthly, and the congregation annually, financial income from contributing members and other sources.

The following pages identify the detailed categories that financial contributions and/or transactions were made to Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church in 2024:

### Income Review 2023 vs 2024

Budget Income, (Regular Envelope Offering, Seasonal Offering, General Support Offering and Savings Account Interest) increased by \$ 22,537.92 for a 3.3% increase.

1. Regular Envelope Offering increased by \$19,914.99 for a 3.07% increase
2. Seasonal Offerings increased by \$7,234.00 for a 80.1% increase
3. General Support Offerings decreased by \$4,196.82 for a 14.8% decrease
4. Savings Account Interest decreased by \$414.25 for a 38.7% decrease

Many thanks to the following people for their assistance: Jerry Dunaway, John Husman, Greg Fett, Marlene Schober, Nancy Kelley, Sue Davis, Barry Shaner, and Shannon Walker.

### CONTRIBUTION INCOME REPORT – Fiscal Year 2024

Regular Offering		
Envelopes	\$667,720.86	\$ 667,720.86
Seasonal Offering		\$ 16,169.00
Advent	\$ 245.00	
Ash Wednesday	\$ 699.00	
Maundy Thursday	\$ 390.00	
Lent	\$ 790.00	
Good Friday	\$ 250.00	
Easter	\$ 4,300.00	
Thanksgiving	\$ 405.00	
Christmas	\$ 9,090.00	
General Support Offering		\$ 24,222.49
Loose	\$ 11,251.43	
Misc. Income / OCNS ( Rent, Kroger Cares)	\$ 12,971.06	
Mortgage Payment Offering	\$ -	
Non Contribution Income		
Savings Account Interest	\$ 656.11	\$ 656.11
General Fund Income		708,768.46

# Dedicated Funds - 2024

Account Name	Balance 12/31/2023	Income	Expense	Balance 12/31/2024
Adult Choir Scholarship	4,293.08	8,850.00	(8,020.00)	5,123.08
Adult Education	8.76	-	(8.76)	0.00
Altar Guild	3,174.90	50.00	(47.16)	3,177.74
Bell Choir Fund	2,245.38	1,355.00	(885.49)	2,714.89
Choir Music Fund	1,814.03	5,564.00	(2,938.84)	4,439.19
Food Pantry Outreach	7,731.55	14,942.62	(8,583.63)	14,090.54
Daily Bread	9,855.88	8,473.00	(5,951.77)	12,377.11
Faith In Action (Mary Lou Gabel)	13,920.39	-	(521.11)	13,399.28
Flowers	-	1,829.00	(1,569.00)	260.00
Help Has Arrived	982.95	4,312.00	(3,400.00)	1,894.95
New Life Group	567.33	-	(567.33)	-
Prayer Shawl Ministry	1,503.93	550.00	(415.40)	1,637.93
Quilting Ministry	1,367.00	1,489.00	(2,116.42)	739.58
Rummage Sale	-	29.00	(29.00)	-
Sacred Garden	-	1,140.00	(1,140.00)	-
Scrapbooking	3,840.00	7,940.50	(11,650.50)	130.00
Sunday School	(12.07)	12.17	(0.10)	0.00
Sr. High 2023 Budget	(140.09)	140.09	-	0.00
Thrivent Choice Programs	6,248.74	5,313.92	(4,100.00)	7,462.66
Ukraine Family	8,406.59	1,000.00	(9,406.59)	-
Vacation Bible School	-	1,134.00	(1,134.00)	-
Vine Audio	-	-	-	-
Wedding Deposits	763.62	225.00	(130.00)	858.62
Women's Retreat	591.27	2,510.00	(2,697.90)	403.37
Trust Fund Interest	2,632.35	791.15	(3,064.66)	358.84
<b>TOTAL TRUST FUND</b>	<b>69,794.99</b>	<b>67,650.45</b>	<b>(68,377.66)</b>	<b>69,067.78</b>
Youth Gathering	23,589.95	7,986.08	(24,678.46)	6,897.57
Body Shop Camp Storer	3,610.88	3,840.00	(1,870.00)	5,580.88
Senior High Camp	1,282.88	-	(211.09)	1,071.79
Youth Fund Interest	1,475.84	223.76	-	1,699.61
<b>TOTAL YOUTH FUNDS</b>	<b>29,959.55</b>	<b>12,049.84</b>	<b>(26,759.55)</b>	<b>15,249.85</b>
Garden of Peace Prepaid	20,000.00	4,000.00	(2,000.00)	22,000.00
Garden of Peace	18,812.77	10,025.00	(4,827.22)	24,010.55
Garden of Peace Interest	4,098.15	507.68	-	4,605.82
<b>TOTAL GARDEN FUNDS</b>	<b>42,910.92</b>	<b>14,532.68</b>	<b>(6,827.22)</b>	<b>50,616.37</b>
Memorial Funds	43,311.92	16,740.00	(1,639.82)	58,412.10
Landscaping	917.00	250.00	(1,167.00)	-
Memorial Funds Interest	1,674.91	549.76	-	2,224.67
<b>TOTAL MEMORIAL FUNDS</b>	<b>45,903.83</b>	<b>17,539.76</b>	<b>(2,806.82)</b>	<b>60,636.77</b>
Scholarship Fund	9,983.79	-	-	9,983.79
Scholarship Fund Interest	600.18	116.31	-	716.49
<b>TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP FND</b>	<b>10,583.97</b>	<b>116.31</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,700.28</b>
Capital Campaign	(5,850.00)	-	-	(5,850.00)
Building Improvement Fnd	3,260.89	18,329.06	(16,969.10)	4,620.85
Sanctuary Painting	-	9,304.49	-	9,304.49
Building Improvement Int.	1,453.86	75.19	-	1,529.05
<b>TOTAL BUILDING FUND</b>	<b>(1,135.25)</b>	<b>27,708.74</b>	<b>(16,969.10)</b>	<b>9,604.89</b>
<b>TOTAL DEDICATED FUNDS</b>	<b>198,018.00</b>	<b>139,597.79</b>	<b>(121,740.35)</b>	<b>215,875.44</b>
<b>Savings Accounts</b>				
Reserve Account	66,977.26	10,000.00	10,000.00	66,977.26
Reserve Account Interest	8,494.83	716.34	-	9,211.17
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS ACCOUNT</b>	<b>75,472.09</b>	<b>10,716.34</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>76,188.43</b>
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS FUND</b>	<b>273,490.09</b>	<b>150,314.13</b>	<b>(111,740.35)</b>	<b>292,063.87</b>

INCOME	2024 Actual	Budget 2024	Budget 2025
Envelopes-Regular	667,721		
Loose Offerings	11,251		
Seasonal Offerings	16,169		
Miscellaneous Income	12,971		
Mortgage Payment Offering	-		
Savings Account Interest - Barry's Int. Dec.	656		
<b>Total Regular Giving</b>	<b>708,768</b>	<b>710,000</b>	<b>737,000</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>Budget 2024</b>	<b>Budget 2025</b>
<b>Benevolence</b>			
NW Ohio Synod, ELCA	42,562	42,600	42,600
Lutheran Social Services	1,200	1,200	1,200
Missionary Support	3,000	3,000	3,000
Lutheran GENACROSS	1,200	1,200	1,500
Luther Home of Mercy	600	600	600
Toledo Deaf Ministries	600	600	300
Sylvania Area Family Services	1,200	1,200	1,200
Redeemer	3,000	3,000	3,000
New Salem	-	-	1,200
<b>Total Benevolence</b>	<b>53,362</b>	<b>53,400</b>	<b>54,600</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>Budget 2024</b>	<b>Budget 2025</b>
<b>Gathering Ministry</b>			
<b>Welcome</b>			
Advertising Christmas & Easter	600	400	400
<b>Total Welcome</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>Worship and Music</b>			
Worship Expenses	2,875	3,000	2,900
Worship Supplies	595	1,500	1,000
Backup Organist/Vine	900	800	800
Keyboard Maintenance	450	600	700
Music Staff Expenses	186	200	200
Flowers self sustaining	433	-	-
Funeral self sustaining	168	-	-
<b>Total Worship and Music</b>	<b>5,607</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>5,600</b>
<b>Total Gathering Ministry</b>	<b>6,207</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>6,000</b>

EXPENSES	2024 Actual	Budget 2024	Budget 2025
Support Ministry			
Salaries, Allowances, Taxes			
Pastors (All Defined Compensation)	101,343	149,949	144,044
Salaries-Staff	152,357	149,507	153,993
Wages-Hourly	54,523	53,943	61,395
Continuing Education (All)	2,949	3,700	3,000
Travel & Professional Expense (All)	3,499	5,100	4,400
ELCA Pension Benefits	19,109	23,995	21,754
ELCA Medical/Dental Benefits & Dis. Ret.	45,402	68,369	58,539
Employer Paid Taxes (All)	17,773	15,911	17,027
Transitional Pastor	29,938	-	23,782
Additional Pastor Supply	6,163	-	-
Call Process Expense	8,173	-	1,900
<b>Total Salaries, Allowance, ...</b>	<b>441,229</b>	<b>470,474</b>	<b>489,835</b>

Property	2024 Actual	Budget 2024	Budget 2025
Equipment	1,408	1,200	1,200
CLC Mics, etc./Sound Equipment	-	800	600
Supplies	5,505	5,922	5,800
Repairs & Maintenance (HVAC)	22,901	14,500	16,500
<b>Total Property</b>	<b>29,813</b>	<b>22,422</b>	<b>24,100</b>

Operating Expenses	2024 Actual	Budget 2024	Budget 2025
Insurance	25,589	25,135	25,424
Ricoh Duplicator	7,635	7,900	8,100
Postage Machine Lease	1,743	1,500	1,500
PC Supplies	386	500	500
Misc. Office Supplies	1,913	1,800	1,800
Postage	1,152	1,500	1,800
Computer Expenses	728	1,000	1,000
Allied Waste Services	2,733	3,000	3,000
Boiler Permit-State of Ohio	137	150	150
Division of Elevator Inspection/+service	2,028	1,550	2,000
Fire Extinguisher Service	325	550	550
Snow Removal	4,480	7,400	7,000
Lawn Care	5,101	4,200	4,600
Insect Control (Terminex)	1,146	1,120	1,225
Habitec (Alarm)	3,511	1,600	4,000
Lawn Sprinkler-Foreman	403	600	600
Accounting Service (Vanco & Paycor)	7,238	6,200	6,800
Financial Secretary (Mike)	8,866	8,866	9,132
Data Entry - Mike	5,944	5,944	6,122
Electric	21,408	20,000	22,000
Gas	12,352	19,500	17,000
Water	4,239	3,700	3,700
Telephone -	1,997	1,632	1,850
Internet only- BEX	461	910	720
Spec. Tax Assessment-Lucas	1,567	1,567	1,567
NW OH Synod Meeting (rotating years) 2024	700	600	-
All Other Miscellaneous	1,366	600	700
NonContract Labor	7,546	4,200	6,000
Shepherd Staff	575	600	600
Carpet Cleaning	150	600	600
Mortgage Payments	-	-	-
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>133,418</b>	<b>134,424</b>	<b>140,040</b>
<b>Total Operations Support &amp; Mortgage</b>	<b>604,460</b>	<b>627,320</b>	<b>653,975</b>

# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

God's love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA](https://LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA).



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