

# THE OLIVE PRESS

December 2025  
EDITION 43



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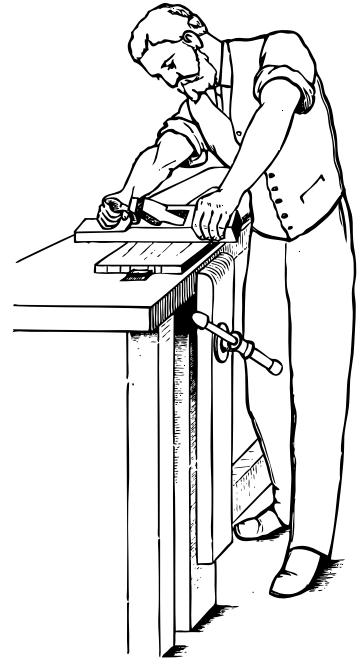
HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS



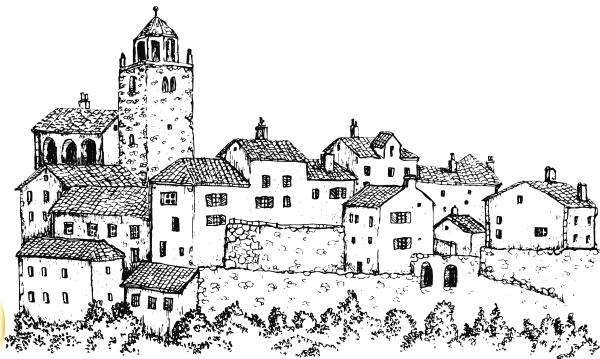
# THE SAMARITAN'S HEALING

This month, we heard a sermon about Lukas 17. I'd like to retell this story from a different perspective:

I'm from Samaria. I came here when leprosy took over my left arm. It was a strange thing: the arm never hurt but I lost any feeling in it. The arm got yellow-dark, and soon I become unable to move it any longer. After that, nothing changed on my body anymore. But my life did – people would not want to be anywhere near me. I lost my job as a carpenter in Samaria, and finally, I couldn't stand it any longer and moved here, to this tiny village in Israel. We are a small group of people with this disease. Our place is at the edge of the village, where there is a little bit of water, so a couple of small olive trees have grown here, giving us shade. Sometimes, people come and bring us leftover food to a bench, not too close to us.



Then, this morning, we heard that this wandering teacher, Jesus, was in the village, and he might walk by our place. Simon, our leader, laughed out loud about the idea that he could stop by. However, sometime after sunrise, a group of people came along our street, staying in respectful distance. 'Hey Jesus?' heckled Simon. 'Master! Have mercy on us!' Typically, such words tended to create fear, and sometimes, people so addressed left a few small coins, even though we always had trouble using them, as nobody wanted to accept them from us.





The group of strangers stopped walking. And then it happened: the guy actually came to us. Nobody does that, for fear to get this life changing disease. But he didn't seem to care at all! He looked at us as if we were normal people. And after a moment of silence, he said: 'Why don't you go to the high priest, he'll make it official that you don't have leprosy anymore?'

We didn't know if we should laugh or declare him crazy. But he looked so calm and serious that we fell silent. Then Simon nodded to us, and we all started to walk towards the village center, although we were not usually allowed to go there. Even Lazy got up – his real name was Lazarus, but we called him Lazy, as he had always just laid down on an old piece of cloth. Now it seemed that he really had only been lazy, as he got up without a problem. When we started walking, I suddenly felt some tingling in my left arm, and it moved with my steps in rhythm. I could see that the others all experienced similar feelings, and we realized that the high priest might actually declare us healthy.



*faith*

Then Simon told me that I, as a Samaritan, could not possibly enter the temple to the high priest. I stopped and thought for a moment. I slowly went back to our place. To my surprise, Jesus was still there. I felt incredibly thankful to this man for giving me a life again. I fell down and touched his feet – I could even feel them with my left hand – and thanked him, crying. And for the first time, he seemed a little surprised and said 'were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? God, save this stranger!' And a moment later: 'Arise, go your way, your faith has made you whole.' And I got up and for one moment looked at his face. It was filled with love. I think, I'll go back to Samaria tomorrow.



Advent





Advent is a season of anticipation—a time when we wait, watch, and prepare for the coming of Christ. The candles, the carols, the scripture readings—all are reminders that the Light of the World is drawing near. Yet in the rush of December, it's easy to let the season slip by without truly preparing our hearts.



This year, what if your family began a new Advent tradition? It doesn't have to be complicated. You might light a candle each Sunday and read a short Bible passage about hope, peace, joy, and love. You could open a simple Advent calendar that includes a verse or prayer for each day. There are so many different devotionals available for use and a variety of Advent calendars.



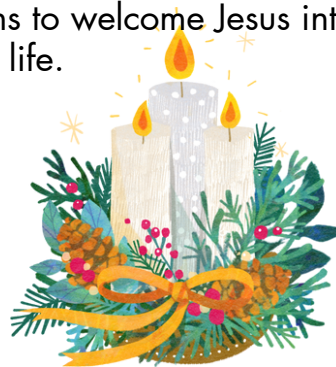


Advent traditions invite us to slow down and notice God's presence. They help children and adults alike understand that Christmas is not only about presents under the tree—it's about the presence of Christ in our homes and hearts. When we make space for reflection and prayer, we discover anew the wonder of Emmanuel, "God with us."



You can find Daily Prayers for the Advent season from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at [lcms.org/prayforus](https://lcms.org/prayforus) then click on December.

Choose an Advent activity that works for you and make it a tradition. Or maybe you gather around the dinner table once a week to share what it means to welcome Jesus into your daily life.



As we move through these four weeks before Christmas, let's be intentional about preparing room for Christ. Whether you light a candle, read scripture together, or pause for a moment of quiet each day, let it be a reminder: the Savior is coming—not just into the world long ago, but into our lives right now. Advent starts Sunday December 1<sup>st</sup>.





# Origins of Christmas Traditions

## The Christmas Tree

Legend has it that Martin Luther began the tradition of decorating trees to celebrate Christmas. One Christmas Eve, about the year 1500, he was walking through snow-covered woods and was struck by the beauty of a group of small evergreens. Their branches dusted with snow shimmered in the moonlight. When he got home, he set up a little fire tree indoors so he could share this story with his children. He decorated it with candles, which he lighted in honor of Christ's birth.

The Christmas tree tradition most likely came to the United States with Hessian (German) troops during the American Revolution and with German immigrants to Ohio and Pennsylvania. The Christmas tree was born in 1851 when Catskill farmer, Mark Carr, hauled two ox sleds of evergreens into New York City and sold them all. By 1900, one in five American families had a Christmas tree.

## The Date of Christmas

The idea to celebrate Christmas on December 25 originated in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Catholic Church wanted to eclipse the festivities of a rival pagan religion that threatened Christianity's existence. The Romans celebrated the birthday of their sun god, Mithras during this time of year. Although it was not popular, or even proper to celebrate people's birthdays in those times, church leaders decided that in order to compete with the pagan celebration they would themselves order a festival in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Although the actual season of Jesus' birth is thought to be in the spring, the date of December 25 was chosen as the official

birthday celebration as Christ's Mass so that it would compete head on with the rival pagan celebration. Christmas was slow to catch on in America. The early colonists considered it a pagan ritual. The celebration of Christmas was even banned by law in Massachusetts in colonial days.



## Mistletoe and Holly

Two hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Druids used mistletoe to celebrate the coming of winter. They would gather this evergreen plant that is parasitic upon other trees and used it to decorate their homes.

They believed the plant had special healing powers for everything from female infertility to poison ingestion. Scandinavians also thought of mistletoe as a plant of peace and harmony. They associated mistletoe with their goddess of love, Frigga. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe probably derived from this belief.

The early church banned the use of mistletoe in Christmas celebrations because of its pagan origins. Instead, church fathers suggested the use of holly as an appropriate substitute for Christmas greenery.





## The Candy Cane

Candy canes have been around for centuries, but it wasn't until around 1900 that they were decorated with red stripes and bent into the shape of a cane. They were sometimes handed out during church services to keep the children quiet. One story (almost certainly false) that is often told about the origin of the candy cane is as follows:

In the late 1800's candy maker in Indiana wanted to express the meaning of Christmas through a symbol made of candy. He came up with the idea of bending one of his white candy sticks into the shape of a candy cane. He incorporated several symbols of Christ's love and sacrifice thought the candy cane.

First, he used a plain white peppermint stick. The color white symbolizes purity and sinless nature of Jesus. Next, he added three small stripes to symbolize the pain inflicted upon Jesus before His death on the cross.

There are three of them to represent the Holy Trinity. He added a bold stripe to represent the blood Jesus shed for mankind. When looked at with the crook on top, it looks like a shepherd's staff because Jesus is the shepherd of man. If you turn it upside down it becomes the letter "J" symbolizing the first letter Jesus's name. The candy maker made these candy canes for Christmas, so everyone would remember what Christmas is all about.

Bill Dahlgren,  
Joe Stewart,  
Case Dahlen, &  
John Gragg



We  
wish  
you  
a  
Merry  
Christmas

## Santa Claus

The original Santa Clause, Sr, Nicholas, was born in Turkey in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. He was very pious from an early age, devoting his life to Christianity. He became widely known for his generosity and the poor. But the Romans held him in contempt. He was imprisoned and tortured. But when Constantine loved Nicholas to go free. Constantine became a Christian and convened the council of Nicaea in 325. Nicholas was a delegate to the council. He is especially noted for his love of children and for his generosity.

The Dutch kept the legend of St. Nicholas alive. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Holland, Dutch children would place their wooden shoes by the hearth in hopes that they would be filled with a treat.

The Dutch spelled St. Nicholas as Snit Nicolas, which became corrupted to interclass, and finally in Anglican, to Santa Clause. In 1882, Clement C. Moore composed his famous poem, "A Visit from St. Nick," which was later published as The Night Before Christmas. Moore is credited with creating the modern image of Santa Clause as a Jolly fat man in a red suit.

The most wonderful tradition is a candlelight service at Mt. Olive on Christmas Eve and then on Christmas Day enjoying family dinner with my family. The greatest Christmas gift is eternal life with Jesus. All the elders wish you a very merry and blessed Christmas. Jesus is the reason for the season.

Written by Bill Dahlgren

# PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES



Patrick enjoys playing with the mini pumpkin games in the classroom!



# PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Damon enjoys reading books!



November was a fantastic month, and we already had some rain. We have new families starting soon, and our parents love our school. The preschool hosted an "Obstacle Course Fun Run," and we raised over \$4000.00.

David will be traveling to Arizona to speak at a conference. Our Open House is scheduled for November 15th. Our air plants are thriving, and parents are purchasing a lot of them.



Our monthly Christian curriculum consists of the stories Hannah Prays, Samuel, David and Jonathan, and Elisha's Home.

Our discovery point is that God blesses our homes and is with us to help us with our problems, especially our sins. He gives us victory over sin through Jesus.

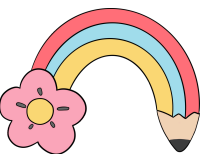


Aviana enjoys playing house at her preschool



Written by **Preschool  
Director David Welch**

photos by **David Welch**





# In Memoriam Pat Forbess





We remember with love and gratitude our dear friend and Church member, Pat Forbess, entered eternal rest on Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at the age of 86. Pat was a cherished part of our Mount Olive Lutheran Church family and a shining example of faith, kindness, and joy.

Pat was devoted to her family. She shared 59 wonderful years of marriage with her husband Ron. Together they raised three sons, Greg, Doug and Ron who brought her great pride and happiness. Her warmth extended to everyone she met, always welcoming others with her beautiful smile and gentle spirit.

Pat's life reflected her love for God and for people. Whether serving in the Church, caring for her family, or sharing laughter with friends, she radiated grace and goodness. Her presence among us was a blessing, and her memory will continue to inspire love and faith in our community. Pat's gentle presence and joyful heart will be deeply missed, but her legacy of faith, love, and laughter will continue to bless all who knew her.



We give thanks for her life and rejoice in the promise of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Please keep Ron and the entire Forbess family in your prayers!

"Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Lord."

—Matthew 25:23



# CALENDAR



## DECEMBER 2025

| SUNDAY                                                    | MONDAY                   | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY            | THURSDAY                      | FRIDAY                      | SATURDAY                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 30<br>9am Confirmation<br>9am Bible Class<br>10am Worship | 1<br>ESL Class @ 9:30am  | 2       | 3                    | 4<br>9:30am Preschool Chapel  | 5<br>GROVE 6:30pm-8pm       | 6                                                                         |
| 7<br>9am Confirmation<br>9am Bible Class<br>10am Worship  | 8<br>ESL Class @ 9:30am  | 9       | 10                   | 11<br>9:30am Preschool Chapel | 12<br>GROVE 6:30pm-8pm      | 13<br>Youth Group 7pm<br>Mt. Olive Champagne Christmas Luncheon 12 - 3 pm |
| 14<br>9am Confirmation<br>9am Bible Class<br>10am Worship | 15<br>ESL Class @ 9:30am | 16      | 17                   | 18<br>9:30am Preschool Chapel | 19<br>9:15am Parents Chapel | 20                                                                        |
| 21<br>9am Confirmation<br>9am Bible Class<br>10am Worship | 22<br>ESL Class @ 9:30am | 23      | 24<br>Christmas Eve  | 25<br>Christmas Day           | 26                          | 27<br>Youth Group 7pm                                                     |
| 28<br>9am Confirmation<br>9am Bible Class<br>10am Worship | 29                       | 30      | 31<br>New Year's Eve | 1                             | 2                           | 3                                                                         |

Holidays and Observances: 24: Christmas Eve, 25: Christmas Day, 31: New Year's Eve

*Homemade*  
GIFTS MADE EASY

\*For further calendar updates, please visit [www.mtoliverpv.com](http://www.mtoliverpv.com)



# Editor's Message

thank  
you

*Greetings, Mount Olive!*

Blessings to you, MOLC congregation! Thank you for taking the time to read the 43rd Edition of the Mount Olive Press.

I hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter. For anyone who would like to contribute to next month's newsletter, don't hesitate to send an email to [office@mtoliverpv.com](mailto:office@mtoliverpv.com)

Additionally, if you are perhaps new to the congregation, or have not had the chance to introduce yourself, don't be shy! We would love to hear from you.

Thank you for all of those who contributed to this newsletter: Chief Elder Bill Dahlgren, Preschool Director David Welch, President Ulrike Ziegner Hokanson, and Youth Director Julie Kurtz.

It is always nice to get a newsletter and learn something new each time.

God Bless!



*Lauralee Lapid*





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