

The Olive Branch

NEWSLETTER OF
OLIVE CREST UMC
FEBRUARY 2021
ISSUE 7

*"But all who humble themselves before the Lord shall be given every blessing, and shall have wonderful peace."
Psalm 37:11*

*"But the Godly shall flourish like palm trees, and grow tall as the cedars of Lebanon."
Psalm 92:12*

ONE HEART TO YOURS ~ PARSON RANDY DILTS

These are just a few of the Scriptures teaching us about the correlation between prosperity and righteousness. Sure seems like there is a lot there to be contemplated! Prosperity and all that it might mean is something we have the opportunity to glean from the Word of God. It is an exciting subject and worthy of spending time with but for this moment I want to pour these Scriptures into a derivative word, "thrive." Thrive is defined as "to prosper, flourish, grow vigorously."

The pastor at Gretna, like a lot of us, was disappointed with comments such as, "How are we going to make it? How are we going to survive?" These questions are built around a negative viewpoint. So – his response was to ask all to rephrase their questions around a structure that would better facilitate finding the answers! He substituted "survive" for the word "thrive", a much better word, a word in alignment with the heart of God. To get the best answer sometimes you have to ask the better question(s)! He came up with 3.

From Surviving to thriving:

- 1. What does it look like for me personally to thrive?**
- 2. What does it look like for Olive Crest to thrive?**
- 3. What does it look like for the surrounding community of Omaha and beyond to thrive?**

These are important questions that we will be spending some time with. My hope is you will spend some quality time in study and prayer answering them for yourself. What changes mentally, spiritually, physically will you need to make in order to thrive in the days ahead. Our culture has floundered its way into some tough times, to simply want to survive is a recipe for failure. God's heart is to prosper, to triumph, to grow, to bring light into darkness; to thrive!

Thank You

Special thanks to Toni Clarke for coming and sharing with us on the 24th about the vital ministry of Assure! We enjoyed having her and it was a blessing to host our December Advent shower for Assure and to adopt a family for Christmas. Thank you all for nice gifts brought in and for shopping for items to help with their boutique. Thanks to folks who sent in their "extra" for Christmas and the end of the year for the church.

*"For Jehovah God is our Light and our Protector. He gives us grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk along His paths.
Psalm 84:11*

*"If you want a long and satisfying life, closely follow my instructions."
Prov. 3:2*



Letters from Lily

United Methodist Global Mission Fellow
in Portrush Northern Ireland

"We rejoice in our suffering because we know that
suffering produces perseverance; perseverance,
character; and character hope.
And hope will never disappoint us."
--- Romans 5:3-5

Read: Romans 10: 1-10 (Message version)

1-3; Believe me, friends, all I want for Israel is what's best for Israel: salvation, nothing less. I want it with all my heart and pray to God for it all the time. I readily admit that the Jews are impressively energetic regarding God—but they are doing everything exactly backward. They don't seem to realize that this comprehensive setting-things-right that is salvation is God's business, and a most flourishing business it is. Right across the street they set up their own salvation shops and noisily hawk their wares. After all these years of refusing to really deal with God on his terms, insisting instead on making their own deals, they have nothing to show for it. 4-10' The earlier revelation was intended simply to get us ready for the Messiah, who then puts everything right for those who trust him to do it. Moses wrote that anyone who insists on using the law code to live right before God soon discovers it's not so easy—every detail of life regulated by fine print! But trusting God to shape the right living in us is a different story—no precarious climb up to heaven to recruit the Messiah, no dangerous descent into hell to rescue the Messiah. So what exactly was Moses saying?

*The word that saves is right here,
as near as the tongue in your mouth,
as close as the heart in your chest.*

It's the word of faith that welcomes God to go to work and set things right for us. This is the core of our preaching. Say the welcoming word to God—"Jesus is my Master"—embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not "doing" anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: "God has set everything right between him and me!"

Devotional: I wanted to give you all a chance to read this passage in the Message version today. I do encourage you to read it also in whatever version you are used to or have available. I quite like reading a passage in a couple of different translations if I can, because it gives me a wider sense of the whole meaning. It is so amazing to me that God's word has been preserved and translated and made available to me to read. It is a real privilege and I do think that all the translations are done to honor God's word and the Truth that is in the Bible. Even the message translation, which is newer, works hard to honor what the text meant in the time it was written and then to make the meaning plain to us, so that everyone can access that Truth that God is speaking to us through His Word.

I found the passage above to be particularly beautiful in the message translation. It reminds us of one of the more simple and basic concepts of our faith; our Salvation, and lays it out in a beautiful and plain way. Often, we make Salvation complicated, just like this passage warns about. It becomes this complex web of things we have to do, tasks to check off a list, wondering if we measure up, when in reality God has already taken care of it. Like Paul says all we have to do is believe in Christ and proclaim him as our Lord and we are saved. That is it! Hallelujah! Praise God! But so often like the Jewish people I find myself trying to earn salvation, to be good enough for it. If this is you to, be comforted by the fact that you are not alone. Back before Jesus came the Pharisees and Sadducees instituted very strict rules and restrictions on the Jewish people around the Law or Commandments that God had given them to follow. They even added more rules to try and stop people from breaking the "real rules", because many of them believed that if all of Israel could have just one perfect Sabbath where no one sinned or broke any of God's laws, then and only then would the Messiah come. They thought they had to earn Jesus, but that isn't the case at all. Jesus came when we weren't perfect, when we were sinning messes and loved us already. No one did anything to earn Jesus' sacrifice on the cross or to bring about His resurrection, that was all God's doing.

Paul says in Romans 10 that Salvation is God's work, His business, and we have to let go of trying to earn our way into heaven and trust. We have to trust that what Jesus did is enough for all our salvation, that there is nothing we need to do. He has already won. Often this is something that I think many of us know in our heads but living in this kind of Freedom is more difficult. We can trust that God took care of everything for us. And yes, we still need to live God's way, but that will come naturally if we are living out of a trusting relationship with God and in tune with His Spirit. Everything we do for Christ should be an outpouring of what He is doing inside each of us. He wants a relationship with us, that is why He is offering Salvation to us as a gift. It is not a reward, or salary, or quid pro quo, it is a gift from a parent to a child, given in love. You are enough.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, You are so good. You are amazing and You know how to give us good gifts as You are the Best Father we could ever hope for. You gave us the greatest gift of all, Salvation, through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to remember that You have already done the hard work, and that we are meant to live in harmony with You. Help us to let go and Trust in You and Your grace. Thank you for loving us God, even before we knew You. Thank you for sending your Son before we thought we were ready to save us. Thank you for your unending love that fills us and pours out of us, so that others can see Your Glory. Amen.

Fridge Friendly INFO

CALENDAR

Worship Service has returned to the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Mask required, every other pew and 6 ft social distancing guidelines in place.

***Worship Service Sundays at 10:00 am**

Sanctuary and on Facebook Live and Olive Crest Church App

***Karen Baptist Church at 1:00 pm**

***Trustees: 2/2 at 6:00pm**

***Scout Sunday 2/7 at 10:00 am**

***Simon Says Mission @ Completely KIDS 2/9 at 5:30 pm**

***Leadership Team: 2/11 at 1:00 pm**

***Communion and Love Offering for Simon Says Book Drive 2/14 at 10:00am**

***Ash Wednesday Service 2/17 at 6:00pm**

***Simon Says Mission @ Ronald McDonald House 2/23 at 5:30 pm**

***Life Line Screening 3/3 from 9-5**

***Grand Reopening of God's Closet Fifteen Cent Sale 3/3 from 9-5**

**Office Hours:
Tuesdays from 1-4
Thursdays 10-4**

Contact Information:

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FEBRUARY MISSION



**BOOK DRIVE
FOR
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL**

Newsletter / calendar submissions due by 3rd Friday of each month.



Dear Friends,

January 7, 2021

I pray that your holiday was a special time.

Thank you so much for helping make Assure's Christmas Adopt-A-Family program a success once again. We were able to bless 60 families with gifts of toys, clothes, food, etc. - all of which made their Christmas a little brighter. That is the most we have ever assisted! I cannot thank you enough.

As always, the looks on their faces and tears in their eyes, as they picked up their gifts, was so amazing. Several of the families said that this had been a hard year so the only thing their children got for Christmas was what they received from YOU. I am so happy that we can give each family a Christmas that they otherwise wouldn't have. Each and every family said what a blessing this was to their family. Several families that said that they thought they would receive a gift or two. They were "blown away" by the generosity of all of YOU! They couldn't afford one gift to any of their children. Many of the families have tried to shield the hardships during this time, especially with COVID. Having Christmas gifts be one less worry, helped take the burden off of their shoulders. The families saw YOUR love and YOUR kindness. It is so great how we can come together to make a difference in the life of a family - an opportunity to share God's love with those around us.

Each family is asked to write a personal thank you to YOU. If they do, I will send it to you.

We would never be able to help so many families without all of YOU! God provided each of you to help make a family's Christmas a little brighter. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. We couldn't have done it without YOU!!!

In His Name,

Leanna Hyatt
Leanna Hyatt
Client Programs Director

Thank you Olive Crest Family for your generous donations to the Assure Women's Center Baby Shower

FEBRUARY MISSION



The Simon Says: "Birthday Blessings" Program distributes new books and room decorations to children who are inpatient at Children's Hospital on or near their Birthday. Simon Says provides the books and supplies and the Child Life Department decorates the child's room.

Book Wish List can be found on

Amazon @

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/5MGVQF0BWVHY?ref_=wl_share

Learning Express Omaha @ <https://learningexpress.com/omaha/giftr/registry/view/uid/FF5107188917/>

**Books can be sent to Simon Says Missions 11435 Sahler St. Omaha Ne. 68164
or dropped off at Olive Crest UMC 7180 n. 60th St Omaha Ne. 68152**

For more information on all of the Simon Says Programs visit <https://olivecrestomaha.org/missions>

Olive Crest has new ways to stay connected IN THE NEW YEAR...

Introducing the new Olive Crest Website:

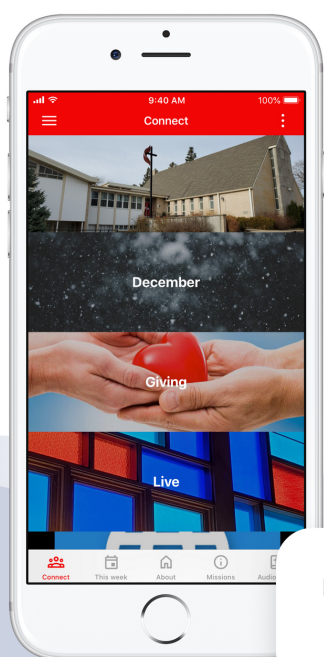
(copy the following address into your computers search engine)

<https://olivecrestomaha.org/>

now from the website you can access everything you need to know about our church, view past sermons, watch Sunday morning on Facecook Live, browses the Missions page, read current and pass newsletters, check the calendar and Give online.

Download the new Church App on your phone for easy access to view sermons, check the calendar, give an offering, follow all the exciting things that our missions support and be connected with notifications and alerts.

Download link found on the Olive Crest Facebook page,
or Website @ <https://Olivecrestomaha.org>
or text olivecrestumc to 888-364-4483



Stay connected with Olive Crest United Methodist Church by finding us on The Church App!



Text **olivecrestumc** to **1-(888) 364-4483** to download



Contact Brenda @ 402-571-7468 with questions

Looking at 2021 – (and beyond)!

Folks spend some time in prayer this time of year considering their giving for the year ahead, how they will spread around their special giving and how that might stretch out their overall giving. The tithe goes to the storehouse, we are taught that. I know from experience many do not tithe; I don't intend to give much time to that. You can read what position that puts you in, in your Bible. My hope is that some of the numbers I want to run by you will springboard your giving to our Olive Crest storehouse and give you information to perhaps bridge from where you currently are to where God asks/admonishes/expects you to be.

We have 94 members and our church adopted a budget of \$122,661.00. That divides out to \$1305.00 per member. Broken down across 52 Sundays that is \$25.00 per Sunday. When we became members we made a vow before God that we would support our church/entity with our tithes, presence, prayers, talents, etc.

Now, another way to look at things! We have 66 giving units, that includes members and non-members together. The dividing gives us \$1859. Again, broken down across 52 Sundays gives \$36 as a per Sunday benchmark. This is a much more realistic view. We hope you are tithing or working closer to it every year and these numbers represent more of a floor for you!

So now would you consider this? What some churches do is provide information on what the apportionments are for the conference and district and ask for a specific gift to cover those relational expenses that are included in our budget. Our conference apportionments for 2021 are \$12,738 and I will use membership for this dividing which gives us \$130.00 and our district mission shares are \$736.00 which divides out to \$8.00 per member. A gift to cover "your" piece of this pie made early in the year would be extremely helpful. Of course, name it on your check so it could be posted as such, celebrated as such, and one slice of your giving "pie" would be taken care of! (I know, the pie symbolism is only so/so!)

Church members, please pray over this! Whatever else you do is equally as vital to provide for ongoing monthly expenses. What if this gift was made at Ash Wednesday when we begin the Lenten season, the time of year when we intentionally examine our walk with God and our response to Him? We serve an awesome God! We serve a God who desires that we thrive in this day and time and not simply trudge along in some sort of survival mode, moping over ways to fail. Our tithes, offerings, and alms are ONE area of our walk with our Lord. As the Bible tells us our giving, spending, and how we handle our money in general reveals our heart toward God. It is an area worth talking about, praying over, and checking in with God to see and hear what He wants done in your life. Next newsletter we should spend time talking about vision. We will move toward that with the three questions put forth in this month's newsletter!

Two final quick things; first I DO NOT how much anyone gives. There are things that are my business and things that aren't. This comes under none of my business. That decision was made in April of 1985 in my first appointment and I hold that to this day. So that is out of the way. Second, all this information is given to help you establish a floor for your gifting plans. Knowledge is power and as friends and members of this church these are handles for you to use! We simply hope this helps! These numbers deal with the basic budget and gives a starting point as the church also moves forward and engages the many additional mission tasks and needs we are called to be about. These "next level" opportunities really define who we are and how useful and obedient we will be as the Holy Spirit speaks to our church.