

THE OLIVE BRANCH

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
OLIVE CREST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ONE HEART TO YOURS PARSON RANDY DILTS

"So I pray that God, who gives you hope, will keep you happy and full of peace as you believe in Him. May you overflow with hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13

As I write this 2020 has yet to release its grip. There is some December yet to go. It certainly has been an interesting year, one that many are ready to put behind them. So many things, events regarded as traditional were canceled; scheduling changed in some cases. It was discouraging at times.

At our house we are Canadian football fans and the loss of their championship game, the Grey Cup held in early December, has been particularly poignant. The pageantry, the crowds, even the snow that often falls are things we really miss! The RCMP "always" carries the Cup into the stadium through the crowd. A winner is "always" crowned. Not this year.

It's clear that if we place our hope in traditions, the things that "always" happen on schedule, we can end up being disappointed. Lots of folks have had their hope challenged and diminished in a variety of ways. God is still in control, still saying look up for your redemption draweth nigh! Paul said to the fledging church at Rome, "May you overflow with hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Where is the world to recapture its hope, where but the church. This is the place God designated to be a vehicle of His grace, His power, His hope; a place where we could be filled with hope, the kind that brings joy and peace. So much so we would overflow into the world around us. Renew, refill your hope in Jesus! Soon the new year will come with new blessings, new opportunities, new ways to be blessed and be a blessing. May we all be made ready. My prayer for all of us is that we have a blessing filled 2021 and are used mightily by the Living God!

Thank You

The Assure Christmas shower is still ongoing so thanks for everything that has been brought in and for everything yet to come. The little tree looks good with gifts on and around it! Our church adopted one family through Assure's "adopt a family" for Christmas and that was a lot of fun!

That would be a great thing to do for 2021 by itself and hopefully we could do more than 1 family. Thanks to all as well for your year-end special gifts to the church. Thank you for enabling the church to carry on its mission in Omaha and beyond.



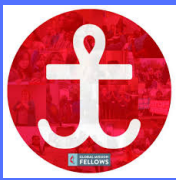
Merry Christmas And Happy New Year To You All! Be sure to extend a

"Merry Christmas" and now "Happy New Year" to servers, check out people, friends and family.

Seems like you hear it less and less, as there are those who would like the Christian voice to be muted. Just refuse to buy into that void and fill it with honest well wishes for a blessing filled Christmas.

Jesus truly is the reason for the season. Let your world know that. I hope you will send this year on its way by remembering the church and its mission works with abundant gifts!





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**

Dear Olive Crest Family!

Merry Christmas and welcome to a New Year! I have been very blessed at the end of 2020 to return home to Omaha for Christmas and the New Year! I have really enjoyed getting to spend time with my family and share in the holidays and laughter with them. I will be returning to Portrush at the beginning of 2021 and ask for your prayers as I travel back in January for safety, as well as the transition back to Northern Ireland as I get ready to start a new season at the Surf Project. Around the beginning of March, we plan to start our next round of events and hope to be able to run most of the events we did in the past. Not everything will be the same but we have gotten pretty good at adjusting, especially this past Autumn. When I wrote my last update to you, our Autumn season was just starting, and we weren't sure what it would hold. We were able to hold a six-week Kids Club on Sunday afternoons and a week of Kids Club at Halloween as well as do two months of University Surf Club. We were also able to work with other youth organizations and churches to do various day events. We adapted to hosting our events almost entirely outdoors. It was great to be able to still have events and do our ministry even as the restrictions kept changing and to reach so many people during this difficult time. With the season finished I was able to return home for Christmas which has been really special. I have also had the joy of getting to attend Olive Crest the weeks I have been home, and I humbled that you would have me speak. I am excited to share stories with you from my time with The Surf Project and to let you see how this experience has shaped me this past year. While it hasn't been without its challenges, I have really enjoyed my time in Portrush so far and I am excited for the opportunities that lay ahead as my experience so far will help as my role expands in new ways next year.

It has been so amazing to be able to come home for Christmas and to visit with my family. I have missed them a lot this past year. One of my favorite Christmas traditions is going to look at Christmas lights. My whole family will pile into the car and drive around looking at the different Christmas lights in neighborhoods all over town. It was one of the things I wanted to make sure I got to do when I was home this Christmas season. I love finding houses that are decorated beautifully or are clever or just especially unique. Decorating your house in Christmas lights actually stems from an old tradition and was originally done by placing candles in windows, to remind us that at this time of year, in the midst of the darkest time of year, that Christ the Light of the World comes to bring light in the darkness. In John 1:5 it says, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it". This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible because it gives me hope and drives away fear. It reminds us that Jesus' light cannot be swallowed up or defeated by any kind of darkness no matter how terrifying the darkness might seem. To me that is the most beautiful part of the Christmas message, that God chose to come to earth, in our darkest season, even though we weren't perfect or ready because He loves us so much. We decorate our houses in the cold dark months of December and sync the lights to music and drive around looking for our favorite light display because it reminds us that darkness doesn't have the final say, God's love and light does. That is the Good News I will leave with you in the wake of this Christmas season. It is already past Christmas but remember this in the coming months because winter isn't going away, the struggles of 2020 aren't just going to disappear overnight, and we all have things in our personal lives that at times seem especially dark. The Good News is that Christ enters into each of those situations too, bringing His light and love into our lives. He keeps coming again and again into our lives, reminding us that His light cannot be defeated.

-Lily Jones

CALENDAR

Fridge Friendly INFO

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**

***Guest Speaker: GMF- Lily Jones** 1/03 at 10:00 am

***Trustees:** 1/5 at 6:00pm

***Simon Says Mission @ Completely KIDS** 1/11 at 5:30 pm

***Leadership Team:** 1/14 at 1:00 pm

***Simon Says Mission @ Ronald McDonald House** 1/26 at 5:30 pm

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

Contact Information:

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**Special Guest Speaker:
'Global Mission Fellow'
Lily Jones
January 3rd @ 10 am**

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

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

Introducing the new Olive Crest Website:

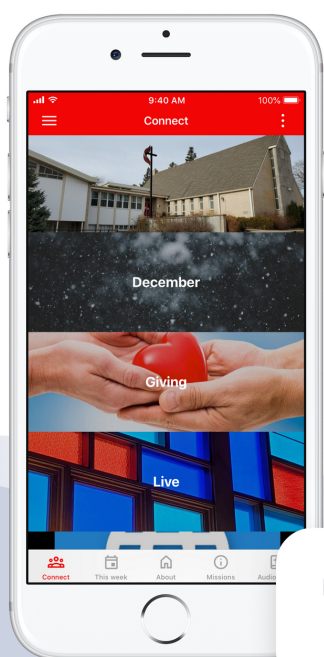
(copy the following address into your computers search engine)

<https://olivecrestomaha.org/>

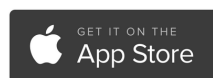
now from the website you can access everything you need to know about our church, view past sermons, watch Sunday morning on Facebook Live, browse the Missions page, read current and past newsletters, check the calendar and Give online.

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