



# THE OLIVE BRANCH

## JANUARY 2024

# OLIVE BRANCH CHRISTIAN CHURCH

(Disciples of Christ)

**Richard D. Cline, minister**  
**Sara C. Scungio, administrative assistant**  
**757-566-8077 (Church Office)**

**Web Address: [www.ob-cc.org](http://www.ob-cc.org) (with Facebook link)**  
**Office Email Address: [obcc1833@gmail.com](mailto:obcc1833@gmail.com)**  
**Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM**



**CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Lyn & Gerry Medina joined November 26, 2023  
2022 Holmes Ct. E  
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7081  
Cell- Lyn: 630-287-1664  
Cell- Gerry: 757-290-8336  
[lyngerry22@gmail.com](mailto:lyngerry22@gmail.com)

Harriet (Heidi) & Keith McMurdo joined November 26, 2023  
9124 Three Bushel Drive  
Toano, VA 23168-9622  
804-586-8447 (Keith)  
804-896-4863 (Heidi)  
[charles.mcmurdo@aol.com](mailto:charles.mcmurdo@aol.com)

Welcome!

### ALTERNATE ENDINGS

The classic movie "It's A Wonderful Life", starring Jimmy Stewart and directed by Frank Capra, is, for many, a Christmas Tradition. It ranks up there with other must-see movies on the Christmas watch list, such as Elf, Christmas Vacation, Miracle on 34th Street, and White Christmas. Honestly, I find it a little slow in the middle, but the ending more than makes up for any tediousness. The main character in the movie is George Bailey, who has spent a lifetime of self-sacrifice rewarded by failure and the loss of the bank his father started. Unable to make things right, George decides to end his life by jumping off a bridge

on Christmas Eve. Yet Clarence, a guardian angel in hopes of finally earning his wings, intervenes, and shows George what the world would have been like if he'd never been born. The wonderful ending of the movie culminates in George realizing all the trials he faced in his life were of ultimate meaning and purpose. Without him, the lives of those he loves and the town he calls home would be grimmer. Suddenly George is overwhelmed by the donations from people his bank has helped, donations that allow the bank to remain solvent. As the room bursts into song, George learns that Clarence got his wings, which leads to one of the most famous lines in the movie: "Teacher says that every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings."

Such a great ending! Imagine my surprise to discover that the original screenwriters proposed several alternate endings for this movie, before finding the one Director Capra would approve. One ending had George falling on his knees at the close and praying the Lord's Prayer. Another ending had the villain of the movie, Mr. Potter, while counting the money he had stolen from George's bank, suddenly collapsing from a fatal heart attack.

Thankfully, the ending as we know it was approved. And yes, it still brings tears to my eyes every time I watch it, especially when they all sing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and "Auld Lang Syne" at the end.

There are so many takeaways from this movie, but here are two. One, our lives have meaning and purpose as lived out in our families and friends. This needs no explanation. Two, our lives can have different endings. This one needs to be believed.

We need not be that which people expect us to be or look upon and assume we will be. Through Christ, our lives are forever changed. No longer counted as failures, but as children of God, loved by God, eternally. In Christ, we can be the men and women we have always wanted to be. "For God so loved the world..." is not just a memory verse – it is the truth, revealed forever in that babe born in Bethlehem.

So, make 2024 the year you will go and live and love as a child of God – and make some bells ring!

Blessings,  
~Pastor Richard

 **MEETINGS & BUILDING USE**

T.O.P.S.: Tuesdays; 9:30AM; Taylor Hall

Seekers Prayer Group: Tuesdays; 11:30 AM Adult SS Room

Our Day Out: 2nd Wednesdays; 10AM-2PM; Branch Hall

Comfort Ministry: 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays; 10 AM Sandy's Restaurant

DWM Tuesday Bible Study: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays; 2 PM; Taylor Hall

Girl Scouts Troop 1385 Meetings:  
Alternate Wednesdays; September 6 until June 5, 2024  
6:30-8:00 PM; Adult Sunday School Room

OBCC Men's Meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays; 9 AM; Branch Hall with breakfast

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday Lunch Bunch: 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays; 11 AM; 501 Galley

 **SERVICES & HOURS**

Sunday Services:

8:30 AM Branch Hall                      11:00 AM Sanctuary

Sunday School:

NFH Sunday School following the 8:30 service  
Andy's Sunday School at 9:30

Nursery:

Open on Sundays: 8:15AM-12:15PM

Office Hours:

Mon-Fri 8:30AM-1:30PM



**NOTE:** The church office is closed on Monday, January 1, 2024.



Elders Meeting: Wednesday, January 3; 6:30PM

Cemetery Cleaning: February 1-10



**PRAYER LIST**

**Church Family:** Kay Ainsworth, Karen Barrow, JC Biggs, Linda Brown, Janet Dombrowski, Phyllis Gardner, Curt Griffin, Nancy Griffith, Irma Gustafson, Clay Harrison, Elaine Henk & Family, Family of Tommy Hickman, Keeta Hodson, Anne Holland, Linda Hutton, Cheryl Johnson, Bruce Kerr, Carole Kerr, Jean Lawrence, Diana Love, Keith McMurdo, Dallas Mitchell, Joann Mitchell, Bob Schmidt, Barbara Thiel, Jerry Van Cleave, Sarah Waid, Ronnie Yeatts

**Friends:** The professional and volunteer women and men who protect and defend us, Our Nation, Natasha Angel (Bob & Sharon Herndon's friend), Dave Archibald (Larry & Louise Smith's son's friend), Family of Roberta Baker (Linda Garrett's aunt), Bill Caldwell (Liz Ripley's brother), Denny Dasher (Dennis & Anita Dasher's son), Evala (Norm Hall's daughter), Cody Ferguson (Amy Ferguson's nephew), Nancy Ferguson (Amy Ferguson's mother), Jane Marshall (Val Mason's sister), Sue Martin (Michelle Wright's sister-in-law), Lynette Mills (Joann Mitchell's sister), Julie Painter (Anita Dasher's aunt), Marolyn Pierce (Carolyn Hunt's sister), Zak Reynolds (Larry & Louise Smith's grandson), Logan Ripley (Liz Ripley's grandson), Andrew Smith (Mary Louise Rich's son-in-law), Brenda Walker (Chuck Walker's mother), Darlene West (Liz Ripley's sister), Jason (Lorraine Beasley's son), Lola (Missy Harbour's friend's niece)



18 Charles & Naomia Barker



06 Kayla Walker  
08 Phyllis Gardner  
08 Rudy Ruskey  
09 Sheila White  
11 Harold Barker  
11 Kathryn (Katy) Henderson  
12 Ann Darst  
14 Colleen Wright  
15 Erich Hodson  
17 Shirley Harrison  
18 Amy Gilliam  
19 Jimmy (JC) Biggs, Jr.  
23 Bob Herndon  
27 Clay Harrison

- 30 Linda Hutton
- 31 Dennis Cotner
- 31 Skip Jensen

how to access your account or add a picture, please contact the office and Sara will be happy to help. Thank you!



**ELDERS & DEACONS & DEACONESSES**

		THIS MONTH'S DEACONESS
		Teri Tench
01/07/2024	Kim Riffle Teri Tench	
	Haley Creech (Maralyn Carr) Tracy Creech Will Hatcher Jeremy Dill	
01/14/2024	Sheila Yeatts Linda Williams	
	Missy Harbour Dennis Cotner Ryan Matschke David Love	
01/21/2024	Will Hatcher Ann Bradshaw	
	Judy Eley Jane Hatcher Joann Mitchell Joshua Fulgham	
01/28/2024	Andrew Pfister Joyce Allen	
	Amy Ferguson Karen Barrow Anita Dasher Danny Pitts	



The OBCC Family extends condolences to Elaine Henk and Family. Elaine's daughter-in-law, Lisa, passed away on December 12, 2023.



**OUR DAY OUT-2<sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAYS**

What a beautiful crisp sunny day we had for our Christmas ODO. Everyone arrived in festive garb bearing a lovely present for our unusual gift exchange. Clay Harrison gifted me a lovely Christmas poem which Christy Jensen read, and I have asked Sara if she would include it in the newsletter as it is beautiful. Our prayers go out to Clay as his health is declining.

Then everyone chose a present from the colorful bunch and were told not to open or peek. Following instructions, the presents were passed, stolen, and exchanged for several reasons including the color one was wearing, age (over 80), and lastly Tyler could choose any one he wanted. Then all could open what they ended up with and the real laughter and bartering began.

Christmas caroling was next and then one of my favorite parts: sharing special Christmas memories.

Chef Shelia delighted our taste buds with two kinds of soup, ham biscuits, salad, homemade cookies, fudge, and ice cream.

Jane, our artist extraordinaire helped us make a beautiful soldier/nutcracker ornament. Tyler, with the help of his sidekick Mary, wrapped up our day with bingo calling. Prizes galore gave everyone a chance to be a winner two or three times.

I cannot begin to explain the peace and love that enters my heart every time we have ODO and I pray that the coming year will again fill our hearts with gladness.

May God Bless You Always,  
*Marnie Brickhouse, Coordinator*



**DIRECTORY DEADLINE DATE**

The OBCC Directory is now online! You can access your account at [members.instantchurchdirectory.com](https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com).

We would greatly appreciate any pictures you could add to the directory to help our newer members put faces to names. We will be supplying hard copies of the 2024 OBCC Directory beginning in February. It would be wonderful to have photos attached to as many names in our pictorial directory as possible.

The deadline to submit pictures or ANY changes to your information in the directory (address, email, phone number, birthday/anniversary dates, etc.) is **Tuesday morning, January 16, 2024.**

If you would like to have your picture taken, Sara will be happy to take your picture in the office and upload it to the directory for you. Alternatively, you can bring in a picture or request to use the picture from the old pictorial directory. If you have any questions regarding





Worship & Wonder **WORSHIP AND WONDER RETURNS**

Worship and Wonder, our Biblical storytelling program for children, is back! Children ages 3-8 are invited to leave the sanctuary after the children's message and travel with an adult to our sacred Worship and Wonder Space in the Education Building. There they will remove their shoes and be admitted into a place filled with wonder and dedicated to the worship of God in an age-appropriate setting. Each week, a different biblical story will unfold before them. They will have an opportunity to play, sense, see, hear, and smell the presence of God and conclude their time together with a feast. After each child receives an individual blessing, he/she will reunite with a parent in the hallway outside the Worship and Wonder space. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Linda Williams, Landa Simmons, or Ann Bradshaw.



**DWM CHRISTMAS DINNER**

Despite the damp, cold weather and a traffic accident which blocked the road for several hours, the turnout was amazing!

Punch and Hord 'oeuvres gave everyone a chance to eat and greet. Richard started the evening with a heartfelt prayer and a delicious dinner and dessert was enjoyed by all. Sheila then announced a special gift (\$1000) given in Richard's honor to the teaching hospital in India that Landa Simmons has been so much a part of. She also announced that Shirley Harrison, who has been the treasurer for DWM for years and years, was retiring, and Joyce Allen would be accepting the position. Shirley was unable to attend, but a gift will be taken to her, and Sheila asked that when you see her, please let her know how much she is appreciated.

Richard Bradshaw then delighted us with tales of the children's program at Christmas way back when he, Danny Pitts, and David Nunn were youngsters. Laughter and smiles filled the room. He then read a beautiful story about the littlest angel and his unusual gift for the baby Jesus.

Raffle ticket fun followed, ending with Kay drawing Emily Dill's number for the lovely bowl made by, you guessed it, Doug Dill. She declined and the next ticket drawn by Kay's neighbor was Kay's. She was delighted.

Emilio and his daughter Kenzi sang *Silent Night* which was beautiful.

Richard finished the evening reminding everyone about what they learned throughout the evening and hoped that, as a church, we will share peace and love with all we meet. Jesus is the reason for the season.



Thank you all again for supporting DWM so that we can continue to support others in our church, community, and world!



**SPECIAL THANKS**

Words cannot express the incredible amount of time, effort, and talent that went into creating and implementing this year's Christmas Cantata and Christmas Eve Service. Every person passing by our church received a special gift this Christmas, a gift that points to the one who should be at the center: Christ our Lord. Thank you for sharing your gifts!

Special thanks go to Emilio Pesante, Steve Hall, Richard Bradshaw for narrating, and the OBCC Choir for providing us with a beautiful Christmas Cantata. Thank you to everyone who helped make this Christmas so special!



**WORLD OUTREACH NEWS:  
CHRISTMAS GIVING**

Your generosity is so much appreciated. Thank you for sending blessings to many who need it.

**ANGEL TREE**

Tags disappeared and bags full of gifts returned. Kids and adults will have a merrier Christmas because of all of you. Thank you!

*~Sheila Yeatts, World Outreach Coordinator*



**OBCC LEADERS FOR 2024**

**ELDERS:**

- Ann Bradshaw (HEAD)
- Joyce Allen
- Andy Bradshaw
- Richard Bradshaw
- Will Hatcher
- Abby Matschke
- Andrew Pfister
- Kim Riffle
- Teri Tench
- Donald White
- Linda Williams
- Sheila Yeatts

**DEACONS:**

- Elizabeth Ripley (HEAD)
- Karen Barrow
- Ann Bradshaw
- Maralyn Carr
- Dennis Cotner
- Tracy Creech

- Anita Dasher
- Jeremy Dill
- Judy Eley
- Amy Ferguson
- Joshua Fulgham
- Missy Harbour
- Jane Hatcher
- Will Hatcher
- Bob Herndon
- Sharon Herndon
- Jim Holland
- David Love
- Lois Marshall
- Ryan Matschke
- Joann Mitchell
- Janet Neal
- Danny Pitts
- Jason Teagle
- Chuck Walker
- Tyler Watson

**DEACONESSES:**

- Linda Hutchens (HEAD)
- Karen Barrow
- Linda Brown
- Jeremy Dill
- Edie Larkin
- Teri Tench



**OLIVE BRANCH CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
MEMORIAL TRUST FUND REPORT  
DECEMBER, 2023**

The Olive Branch Memorial Trust Fund, as of September 30, 2023, has a market value of \$64,175.25. These funds are invested in the Christian Church Foundation.

The investment payout this year is \$2618.51. The specified purpose of the fund (set up in 1983 by Mrs. Ethelyn McSherry) is to perpetually support the work of Olive Branch Christian Church and support programs which alleviate hunger throughout the world.

The Trustees will distribute \$2600.00 as follows:

Olive Branch Christian Church	\$1500.00
The recommendations for OBCC:	
\$500.00 Christmas offering	
\$500.00 Week of Compassion	
\$500.00 New black chairs for Branch Hall	
Salvation Army	\$300.00
St. Olaf Food Pantry	\$400.00
St. Andrews Society	\$200.00

Meals on Wheels

\$200.00

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Ainsworth, Trustee  
Lorraine Beasley, Trustee



### FAMILY NIGHTS WILL RETURN IN 2024

Watch for announcements and messages so you can join in the fun & fellowship.



### CEMETERY CLEAN UP

The semi-annual clean-up will occur between February 1 & 10, 2024. If you would like to save anything, please remove it before then. Non-perishable items left in place will be moved near the shed area next to the parking lot. Thanks for helping the committee to keep our cemetery one of the most beautiful in the county.

~Cemetery Committee



### VA REGION MISSION TRIP 2024

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Virginia Region Mission Trip will be Monday, 6/17/24- Saturday, 6/22/24 in Charleston, SC.

Cost per individual \$175 if you provide your own transportation.

\$225.00 if you ride in the regional van

\$125.00 if you secure your own lodging

Lodging and meals provided by James Island Presbyterian Church Mission house (beds and cots)

Work: Building homes with Habitat for Humanity and home repair. Work with James Island outreach including minor home repair and food bank, serving meals, and working in homeless shelters. Hurricane Ian recovery work will also be included.

Each team will have 8 people:

Team 1: 16 and older, work on habitat homes and other construction projects.

Team 2: 11-15 year-olds and chaperones work on home repair and other outdoor projects.

Team 3: Inside projects including food banks, feeding lunch to homeless, etc.

Cost included in full registration: transportation, lodging, most meals, t-shirt, miscellaneous.

Additional cost: lunch on your way, additional snacks/drinks, supper Thursday evening if you want to eat out, lunch on your way home.

Jonathan Webster's goal is to have 27 participants.

There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Education Building. We will have an informational meeting in the new year.

~Abby Matschke



### BETHLEHEM COMES TO TOANO

On the Saturday before Christmas Eve, the church grounds of Olive Branch were transformed into our Virginia interpretation of Bethlehem in preparation for our live nativity. Special visitors such as a donkey, goat, sheep, calf, and Alpaca arrived, soon followed by shepherds, angels, magi, and of course, Mary, Joseph, and the babe. The star above the manger shined bright, inviting the community to come and worship the newborn king. The smell of hot apple cider, delicious soup, and cookies galore were special treats to all who stopped to hear the Christmas story read.

None of this happened without planning, and the support of numerous volunteers. Thank you one and all! A special word of thanks goes to Ann Bradshaw for her planning, organizing, and direction. Equally deserving of thanks are Steve White and Dennis Dasher, who built our structures and prepared the lighting, and to Teri Tench for securing our special animal visitors!

All the hard work and preparation was paid off in the number of travelers who paused for a few minutes and ponder who is at the center of all we do: Jesus the Christ. So many words of appreciation were heard for Olive Branch presenting such a special night. Thank you, Church, for being the Church, and showing Christ!





**NOTES FROM CHURCH FAMILY**

To all my friends at Olive Branch, wishing you peace and joy throughout the season.

*~With love, Betty Barber*

Heartfelt greetings and best wishes at Christmas and throughout the new year, 2024.

*~Bonnie Willard*



**SPECIAL THANKS**

Thank you to the Olive Branch Christian Church Disciples Women for their generous contribution in honor of Pastor Richard Cline. This gift will support the work of our Global Ministries partner the Christian Hospital Mungeli, in the poor, rural state of Chhattisgarh. Founded in 1896 by a woman doctor, Dr. Anna Gordon, and her missionary husband, the hospital has served the people in this area of India without regard to creed, caste, or ability to pay for over 125 years. The hospital's nursing school has 90 students enrolled in its three year General Nurse Midwifery program. Thanks be to God for your generous support!



**SPECIAL THANKS FROM STAFF**

Thank you for all your cards, delicious goodies, generous gifts, and support throughout this Christmas season! Your thoughtfulness and generosity are so greatly appreciated, and your love and kindness are inspiring. I thank each and every one of you for sharing the joy and light of Christ with me as you do with all you meet. Many blessings to you throughout this new year and Epiphany season!

*~Sara Scungio*

Ann and I have been overwhelmed by the cards, gifts, treats, and special presents we have received this Christmas from our church family! And then to receive the love gift last Sunday! I know any words we could write or say would fail to capture our deep thanks for all this church means to us – so all I can say is "Thank You!" Thank you for the privilege of serving as your pastor!

*~Ann and Richard*



**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Irma Gustafson has a new address that has been updated in the Directory. Her new address is:

1550 Wellness Dr Apt 2  
Marion, OH 43302-6591



**CHRISTMAS GIFT**

In lieu of Christmas cards to our Church family, we have purchased 6 Gideon Bibles in your honor.

*~Doug & Emily Dill*

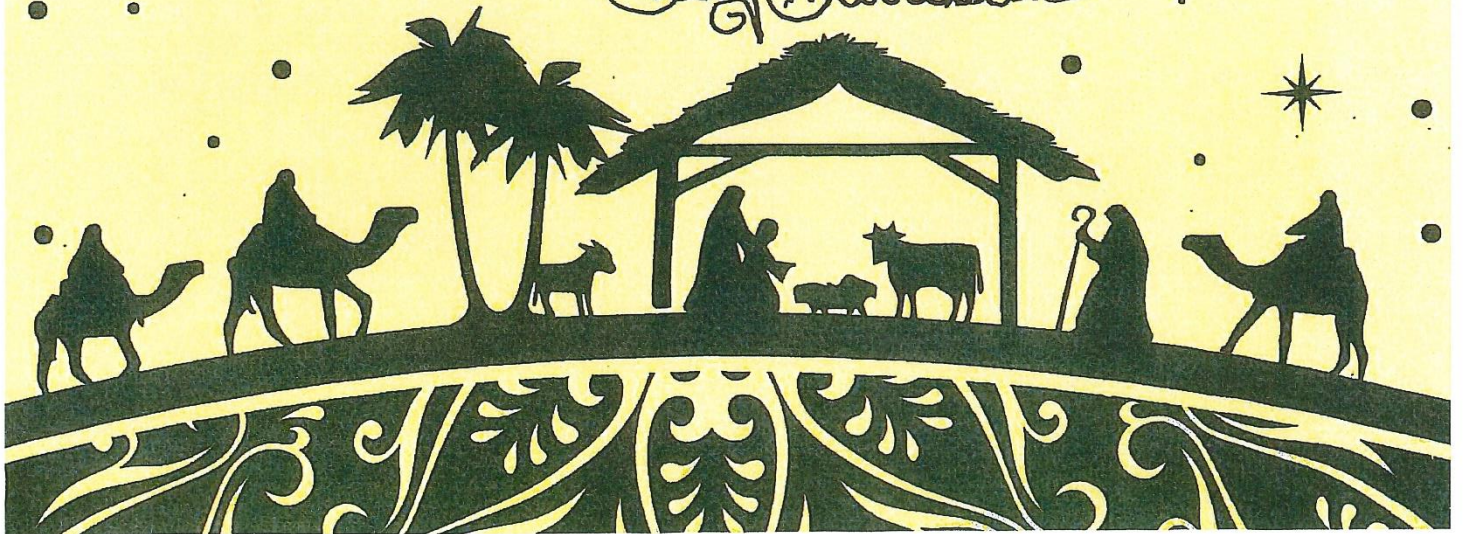
## FOCUS ON THE CHRIST-CHILD.

EVEN IN TROUBLED TIMES LIKE THESE  
WHEN PEACE IS HARD TO FIND,  
AS WE PREPARE OUR HOMES FOR CHRISTMAS  
WE CAN FIND PEACE OF MIND.  
THE WORLD WAS IN A STATE OF TURMOIL  
WHEN JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN,  
BUT HE CHANGED OUR EARTH FOREVER  
THAT HOLY, STAR-LIT MORN!

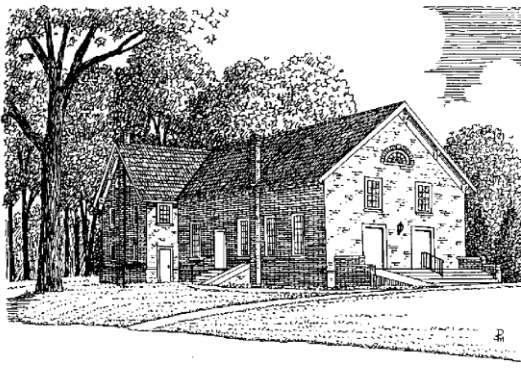
MANY CENTURIES HAVE COME AND GONE  
SINCE THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY.  
WE HAVE ENDURED WARS AND TRAGEDIES  
THAT TOOK OUR BREATH AWAY.  
CHRISTMAS GIFTS WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY  
BUT WE HAD LOVE TO SPARE  
AS WE EXCHANGED OUR HOME MADE GIFTS  
AND BOWED OUR HEADS IN PRAYER.

THE WORLD IS FACING HARD TIMES THIS YEAR  
BUT THERE ARE BLESSINGS TOO.  
CHRISTMAS IS A MAGICAL TIME  
WHEN DREAMS REALLY CAN COME TRUE.  
PEACE ON EARTH ALMOST SEEMS POSSIBLE  
ON THAT HOLY, SILENT NIGHT.  
WHEN WE FOCUS ON THE CHRIST-CHILD,  
ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT!

Way Harrison







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## The Olive Branch

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