The Culture of the Church
April 2013

Last month a member of the church shared with me an article from the *Pacific Standard*, entitled “We Aren’t The World.” Written by Ethan Watters, it focused upon research done by Joe Henrich that challenged the idea that regardless of a person’s cultural background; human behavior, perception, and cognition are universal. Being neither an anthropologist or research psychologist, I cannot vouch for the validity of his work. But I did appreciate learning more about the importance of the relationship between culture and behavior, and how there is a major difference between Western and Eastern concepts of self. In Eastern cultures the interdependent self is dominant, with a value on connections with others in a social group and social harmony over self-expression. In Western cultures, the independent self is the norm, which focuses on individual attributes and preferences and tends to view the self as existing apart from the group.

If you have stayed with me this far, I know you are asking: “So what?” Well, perhaps there is a cultural norm for churches as well. I grew up in a church where the culture was, dare I say it, more Eastern in practice. We talked about being a church family, about supporting and praying for each other, about seeking harmony and not division. I believe this is the way churches should be. Unfortunately, there are some churches where other cultural values are played out, where people will do whatever they can to make sure they get their way, where their desires are of the highest priority, and conflict is the norm.

All this makes us even more thankful to be part of Olive Branch! Here we see ourselves as being, first of all, family. We really do care about each other, we pray for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we do so without reservation. Our culture is one that allows each of us to grow within the framework of being part of a community. Over the last two weeks I have seen our church culture at its best, as we have prayed for healing and support for our church members in need. And in the midst of crisis, as we realize that we do need each other, we better understand the saying that our Disciple founders took from Augustine: ‘In essentials unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” This is the true culture of the church, as we walk together and comprehend the incredible love God has for all people, as we seek to practice what we confess to believe.

To whatever degree any church oppresses and seeks to exclude, it cannot honestly preach a message of salvation and grace. To whatever extent any church serves, with charity and mercy, it demonstrates the power of God’s love and grace, and makes faith whole.

Blessings,

Richard
Two out of the ordinary things have spoken to me spiritually in recent weeks. One was the symbolic acts of newly elected Pope Francis, which were in keeping with words attributed to St. Francis of Assisi from whom he took his papal name, “Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary”. The Pope’s guest at his inauguration was the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, a first in over a thousand years. Pope Francis greeted his fellow Cardinals standing among them, rather than seated on the papal throne. Pope Francis has celebrated Mass with the Vatican gardeners and janitors. He celebrated Holy Thursday Mass at a juvenile detention center, rather than the customary St. Peter’s Basilica. In acts, rather than words, he was preaching the Gospel of God’s love for the poor and outcast. He was preaching the Christian message of the unity of the church, the humility of true disciples, and the equality of all humanity before God.

When he finally used words, he said that he “longed for a poor church for the poor.” I am anxiously awaiting more words or acts to reveal the meaning of those words more fully. I suspect, but do not know, that he is not seeking an impoverished church, but one poor in the manner Jesus preached in the Beatitudes, one that cares for and serves the poor in spirit and the poor in body.

The second thing that spoke to me was the generosity and abundance with which Olive Branch showed hospitality to Emilio’s choral group from Woodside H.S. where he teaches in Newport News. Even after first, seconds and take-home dinners for the twenty-five students, and all-you-can-eat for the more than 100 others in attendance, there were still the proverbial 12 baskets of leftovers, some of which were used to feed our friends at Burnt Ordinary the next evening. The offering amounted to over $1,500 to help meet the travel budget for the choral group.

That dinner was also preaching the Gospel, but without words. To our guests, I hope it preached a message of love. To me, it preached the good news that God’s abundance is not to make us a wealthy church; God’s abundance is so that we can be generous, show hospitality, and serve those in need.

If you are interested in learning more of what the Bible says about abundance and the church, make plans to attend the Family Night Dinner in mid-April when that will be the evening’s topic.

Andy Bradshaw
Board Chair

Scripture Selections
For the Month of April

The following scriptures will be used during the Sunday worship in April. The bold/underlined passages are the primary passages for Pastor Richard’s sermons.

April 7: Acts 5:27-32; Revelation 1:4-8
April 14: Acts 9:1-20; Revelation 5:11-14
April 21: Revelation 21:1-6; Psalm 23
April 28: John 13:31-35; Psalm 148:1-6, 13-14

New-and-Improved WEBSITE

HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT OUR WEBSITE ?

Our webmaster has done an excellent job upgrading and revising the Olive Branch Website! He goes above and beyond what is expected and is a big help to me in preparing both the newsletter and calendar.

If you are interested in checking it out and are having difficulty navigating the site, stop by the office and I’ll “give you a tour”. Or...you may call me and I can assist you with “the tour” over the phone. In addition to the newsletter and the calendar, you’ll find information about Olive Branch and our activities, and you can listen to Richard’s sermons...YEAH!

Our website is a wonderful tool for keeping up-to-date on everything happening here at OBCC.

Pat Dressler
SERVING IN APRIL

Elders
April 7  Sheila Yeatts, Doug Dill
April 14  Bob Schmidt, Donna Perger
April 21  Hunter Creech, Fred Rothermel
April 28  Marney Brickhouse, Ralph Hutton

Deacons
April 7  Elna Pitts, Val Mason
        Emily Friend, Danny Pitts
April 14  Arnold Cooper, Denise Cooper
        Barbara Schmidt, Abby Matschke
April 21  Dale Teagle, Skip Jensen
        Tracey Creech, Lucy Hall
April 28  Mike Ayers, Maralyn Carr
        Harold McKeel, Don Morse

Acolytes
April 7  Maggie Sheppard/Emily Lang
April 14  Justin Cooper/Sam Lang
April 21  Kelsey Creech/Haley Creech
April 28  Curtis Morse/Lauren Morse

Deaconess
Linda Hutton

Kid’s Club
April 7  Marney Brickhouse
April 14  Tracey Hutton
April 21  Tracie Heslink
April 28  Edie Larkin

HOMEBOUND
Tommy Hoar, Audrey White


Family and Friends: The women and men of our Armed Forces, Cathy Blackwell (friend of Dawn Gormus), Betty Mae Nixon (Phyllis Taylor’s sister), William Phares, Jr. (Debbie Johns’ son), Kathleen Schumann (Jeanne Bell’s mother), and, Norma Senediak.

(Underlined bold print indicates new person on the Prayer List.)

NOTE: To add or remove a person’s name from the Prayer List, please contact the church office: 757-566-8077.

A current Prayer List is posted on the Bulletin Board in the Educational Building. Please feel free to add someone who needs prayer. A new list will be posted as persons are added/deleted. Be sure to notify the church office if someone can be removed from the list.

On Sunday, March 31, 2013 (Easter Sunday), we welcomed Mr. Boyce Mason into our Olive Branch Family.
• Family Night begins on Wednesday, April 10th at 6:30. Bring a dish to share.

• Naomi Marrow’s Backstage Productions presents GODSPELL on Saturday, April 13th at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fellowship Hall.

I hope you all enjoyed hearing the bells play on Sunday, the 10th of March. We gave these two pieces a try when we first started practicing in September and felt the level of difficulty was a little too high. Well, we went back to them last month, and as you heard the difficulty level was now do-able. I am so proud of the dedication of this group and thank all of them.

On Easter Sunday, a very elite group, the Easter Ringers joined the Vocal Choir and Steve for the anthem. It is really beautiful and I am sure you were blessed.

Bob Schmidt
Director

I am so grateful to have such a wonderful Church Family. Being there at the right time when you call on them is comforting. I am so grateful for the visits, phone calls, and being kept on the prayer list. I just love all my Church Family, and when I get my health back I’m going to start attending more of the Bible studies.

God Bless you and your family.

Joann & Dallas Mitchell

Please make these changes to your church directory:

- BELL, Andy & Jeanne: Delete: home phone number and add: C: (757) 903-6621 (Jeanne)
- ELEY, Judy: Change her email to: rascalsrun@cox.net
- HODSON, Carita: Change her email to: zorrolives@cox.net
- MORSE, Donald & Jessica: Add Eliza to list of children’s names; Change email addresses to: donald.c.morse4.civ@mail.mil (Don); morsejessm@gmail.com (Jessica)
- WALKER, Chuck & Beverly: Add (Bryant, Kayla)
- GRIMSLEY, Jane: Change address to: P. O. Box 292, Lanexa, VA 23089
- ADD: 1) BARBER, Dick & Betty
  106 N. Trace, Williamsburg, VA 23188
  H: (757) 565-0388
  2) HATCHER, Will & Jane
  9336 Stonehouse Glen, Toano, VA 23168
  3) JONES, Chris
  97 Teal Way, Williamsburg, VA 23188
  H: (757) 229-7621
  4) MASON, Boyce
  104 Cardinal Acres Dr., Williamsburg, VA 23185
  H: (757) 206-9633
  5) STEFANCIC, Stanley & Kay
  3216 Oak Branch Lane, Toano, VA 23168
  H: (757) 741-2545

Dear Friends,

GOD IS GOOD ... ALL THE TIME! To say that the last year has been a bit challenging would be quite the understatement. Without God I would never have had the strength nor the courage to deal with everything. How do people who do not believe make it? I thank God for all he has done and especially for giving me friends like you to see me through. Thank you for all of the prayers, counseling, staying with me, cards, phone calls, delicious food, taking care of the animals, taking trash to the dump, taking me to doctor appointments, and ... did I mention prayer? I am so thankful to be a member of Olive Branch and for all of you.

ALL THE TIME ... GOD IS GOOD!

Judy

Richard and I would like to thank those who helped out with the many Lenten and Easter Season services and events. There were several that you saw and noticed... but much of the help was behind the scenes. We thank you all for the team work which is what makes Olive Branch such a success!

Susan Kohlman
Worship Advocate
Christian Women’s Fellowship

NEWS FROM CWF: Thanks to all for making our first dinner meeting most enjoyable. We celebrated St Patrick's Day with beautiful "Green" decor and delicious "Irish" fare. The luck of the Irish rewarded some when their fortune cookie numbers matched the number of guests. But the high light of the evening was our wonderful speaker, Anne Hampton. Her faith journey touched us all, and we are deeply grateful for sharing it with us.

SPA (Self-care, Prayer, and Action) Days will be at Slash Christian Church in Ashland, VA, Saturday, April 13th from 10:00 to 2:00. Coffee and danish will be served in the morning and lunch will be provided. The cost is $7.00. The theme this year is GPS to faith as they are trying to combine the new technology with the tried and true journey. We plan to meet at OBCC around 8:15 that morning so we can car pool and leave by 8:30. Part of the enjoyment of the day is the laughter and sharing done while riding to and from our destination. Please let me know if you would like to join us. All are welcome.

May God’s presence be with you always and give you peace.

Marney Brickhouse
CWF President

Update from the Program Planning Team Advocates

Year of the Youth
The Year of the Youth is off to a great start. Our high school youth, Ryan Matschke, Kelsey Creech and Kayla Walker led us in Praise Music before the worship services on Palm Sunday and Zachary and Justin Cooper, Kayla Walker and Maggie Shep pard read a beautiful poem by Clay Harrison about our Youth. Youth participation in the worship services was a suggestion by our youth. Look for more new youth activities in the coming months.

Website Has a Face Lift
The OBCC website has been redesigned. Our web designer has redesigned the site and gave it a new look and feel. He retained the user friendliness of the old site while adding the new look. One of the strengths of the site is the ease of navigation. What we can do to improve it further is provide pictures immediately after an event. Current information is key to web sites. Look for opportunities to capture one of the events and get the word out through the website. Please submit any items or suggestions to Pat Dressler.

VBS 2013
VBS is scheduled June 24-28. Jess Morse and Christy Jensen have begun the initial planning and will be seeking volunteers to assist with this very important event on our church calendar.

Jim Hunt
PPT Chair

“The Necessity of Evangelism”

Just as I have been reminded once again as Easter approaches, how thankful I am that Jesus paid the price for my sins by laying down His very life, there are other things and people I am thankful for as Evangelism Advocate.

"Thank you", Cheryl and Gene Johnson, for taking bread and warm greetings to those who visit with us. People often do things behind the scenes and others of us are unaware that those "tasks for the Master" are being carried out.
"Thank you", Monday Morning Prayer Group, who meet faithfully to pray for the needs of all of you in the fold, as we learn of them or you share your particular need with us. What a blessing it is to pour out our hearts together before our Father's throne of grace.

"Thank you", Janice Floyd and Pam Williams, for signing on to be "Care Givers" to our shut-ins and lonely. And for the encouragement you extend to me.

I am so blessed as I try to reach out to all our visitors, welcoming them to our midst on your behalf. So I say, "Thank you", for giving me the opportunity to hold this position for over 3 years. I love to share Jesus wherever I can and this has been a wonderful "vehicle" for me.

Another means for sharing Jesus is handing out "calling cards" with our church's information. We have a box of those in the office if you would like to post some around town or hand out to people you see who may be looking for a church home.

In John 4:34-35 Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest..."

I love you, in Jesus' name,
Louise Smith
PPT Evangelism Advocate

Outreach

Pentecost Offering: The Pentecost Offering supports Disciples new church development. Planning, nurturing and sustaining new congregations are part of the disciples’ vision. This offering supports the specialized ministry of new church development through both regional and general programs - with gifts for this offering divided between each. Fifty percent of gifts received by a region remain in that region; the balance supports the work of general, new church efforts. We will receive the Pentecost offering on May 20th and 27th.

Outreach Payments: The Olive Branch 2013 budget supports eleven local agencies that assist those in need. Historically we have spread these payments over the 12 month period at about one a month. In addition, we have budgeted $18,000 for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Disciples Mission Fund (DMF). We pay the DMF payment monthly. Because the church had a surplus at the beginning of 2013, the OBCC Board approved the payment to the eleven agencies and the DMF in April. This demonstrates our commitment to helping others first.

Carolyn Hunt
PPT Outreach Advocate

Notes from the Wild Side...

This year our youth mission trip is to Niagara Falls, NY. We will be partnering with many different community organizations and individuals to provide hands and feet for work projects, kids’ ministries, and other ways to serve the community. One of the ministries is called Mentorship Alive. This is a day camp for kids based at a local community center. Another ministry is different work projects, such as local beautification projects. This could include gardening and street cleanup, as well as painting of homes and conducting minor repair projects.

Sustainable Sandals Project is an organization that brings community resources, like Sandals, together and re-purposes them for reuse. There are a few other organizations we might partner with, such as Heart and Soul, Meals on Wheels, and Community Mission, and Senior Centers. Some of our nightly activities may include going to the Falls, going to Murphy Orchards, going to a Church Service, and a community cook-out at Whirlpool Park. We will be away from 6/30 to 7/5. Our teens are excited to be going on a trip this year.

Due to the many activities going on at the Church we are postponing the yard sale until August 3rd.

We went and saw the Living Passover. What a fantastic show. If you have not seen it, make sure you go next year.
Backstage Productions is putting on Godspell on Saturday, April 13th. Cost is $5.00 and goes towards our youth group for our mission trip. We hope you can come out and support the kids and be entertained. Also, if you can help by making a dessert for intermission, it would be appreciated.

We currently meet every other Sunday at 12:15 p.m.; our upcoming dates are 4/07 and 4/21.

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK SITE!!

Abby Matschke and Courtney Holt

The Olive Branch Youth Group is sponsoring this production and the profits will go to help fund their mission trip to Niagara Falls, the week of June 30th – July 5th. Cost is $5.00, payable at the door. The Backstage Productions cast, directed by Naomi Marrow, is awesome...if you have not yet seen one of their performances, now is the time to attend. Plan to bring your family and enjoy a wonderful musical offering by this outstanding & talented group of children.

The 2013 Flower Chart is posted on the Narthex Bulletin Board. If you wish to donate flowers for the Sanctuary sign up by the appropriate week (PLEASE PRINT). You are asked to bring your flowers and place them on the floor in front of the communion table by 8:00 a.m. on your Sunday.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1  Jeanne Bell
   Derrick Trexler
2  Jonathan Griffin
6  Larry Smith
8  Judy Wanner
11 Ann Bradshaw
16 Nancy Sheppard
17 Chuck Sheppard
19 John Speegle
20 Marney Brickhouse
21 Brett Matschke
22 Kathy Kirby
24 Donna Perger
25 Jack Heslink
26 Tyler Hutton
   Maggie Sheppard
20 Christy Jensen

NOTE: If your birthday is not listed, and you would like it included, please contact the church office.
A visit to the St. Olaf food pantry really helped Devon and I connect to this ministry Olive Branch has been a part of for the last several years. I met several volunteers and learned that a three day emergency supply of food is provided to members of the community who call and make an appointment. There is no prequalification process and people can come once a month to receive the food supply. More than 100 families are served each month from this pantry. Thank you for your continued support.

Devon and Beth Nease
Special Family Night at OBCC

We were treated to a very special Wednesday Family Night on March 20! Our OBCC Music Director, Emilio Pesante, brought his Jubilee Choral Group from Woodside High School to sing, and sing they did! These young men and women with their incredible voices had our hearts rejoicing! Thank you Emilio and the Jubilee Choral Group! And a special thank you to each person who attended, who brought items for the 36 feet of “food table”, and contributed to the love gift to help the Choral Group attend competition in New York City! Over $1,560.00 was raised Wednesday night, which enabled the group to finish paying the cost of their trip.

Here are pictures from that night.
Vacation Bible School is just a few months away!

NEW DATES!!!

This summer we are going to take our children on a global celebration with the look and feel of a world's fair. Children will make friends with neighbors around the world and discover that God’s love can be found everywhere, including their own neighborhoods. Children will be introduced to special places from all over the world and discover that we are all neighbors and all children of God.

KIDS, be sure to ask your parents or grandparents to SAVE THE NEW DATE: June 24th-28th, 5:30-8pm. Registration will start in late April and, like last year, will take place online through our OBCC website: www.ob-cc.org (and we will have options to handle offline registrations, too).

For the TEENS, there will be a class for you again this year as well.

Volunteers are encouraged to contact Jessica Morse or Christy Jensen, VBS Coordinators, at morsejessm@gmail.com, or christyjensen@cox.net, for more information.

- Jessica: morsejessm@gmail.com
- Christy: christyjensen@cox.net
**SCRIPTURE:** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. James 5:15

**The Five W’s of Prayer**

Do you ever read the newspaper? Do you know that the people who write the stories for the newspaper have a way of deciding how to write their story? Here is what the reporter does. To make sure the facts of the story are complete, a reporter makes sure the story answers 5 important questions. Those 5 questions are: **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY**. When we read a story, it is good for us to ask ourselves those same questions to help us understand the story.

Our scripture verses (James 5:13-16) are from the book of James and tell us about prayer. Can you answer the five questions about prayer?

- **WHO** should pray? Anyone! These verses tell us that anyone who needs God’s help should pray – and that is all of us.
- **WHAT** should we pray about? Anything! We should pray for healing when we are sick and for forgiveness from sin. We should give thanks when we are happy, and ask for help in times of trouble.
- **WHEN & WHERE** should we pray? Anywhere! If we should pray any time we need God’s help, then we should pray anywhere we are, because wherever we are, God is there!
- **WHY** should we pray? Because God answers prayer! These verses tell us that prayer is very powerful and effective, and that if we will pray, God will hear our prayers, heal the sick, and forgive our sins.

"Give all your worries to Him, because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7
BIRDS AND BLOOMS

The serenity of a garden is healing to the soul for one finds peace and solace there when sorrows take a toll.
The simple joy of singing birds can brighten any day, and the beauty found in flowers will chase the blues away.

Birds and blooms work wonders for the stressed or lonely heart. There's a sense of pride and gratitude that's found in nature's art.

Every garden is a showplace however great or small, and those who spend some time there are blessed from wall to wall.

Backyard gardens are a refuge from our hectic lives' routine. With the changing of each season, small miracles are seen. The sights and sounds of nature create daily works of art.

Birds and blooms work wonders within the soul and heart!

Mary Harrison
# April 2013

**Monthly Planner**

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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>10:00 AM Mom’s Day Out</td>
<td>5:00 PM Backstage Productions (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
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<td>10:00 AM Prayer Group</td>
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<td>6:30 PM Exercise Class (New Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>11:45 AM CWF Tuesday Morning Circle (Interlude)</td>
<td>3:00 PM Backstage Productions (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
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<td>9:45 AM Sunday School</td>
<td>10:00 AM Prayer Group</td>
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<td>11:45 AM CWF Tuesday Morning Circle (Interlude)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>1:00 PM Backstage Productions Rehearsal for Gospel (New Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>11:45 AM CWF Tuesday Morning Circle (Interlude)</td>
<td>6:30 PM Family Night (New Fellowship Hall)</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>7:00 PM Backstage Productions Presents “GODSPELL” in the New Fellowship Hall</td>
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<td>9:30 AM Dominion Village</td>
<td>2:00 PM CWF Monday Afternoon Circle (Interlude)</td>
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<td>10:00 AM Prayer Group</td>
<td>10:00 AM TOPS (Old Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>10:00 AM Prayer Group</td>
<td>9:00 AM PPT Worship Meeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:00 AM Worship</td>
<td>6:30 PM Exercise Class (New Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>10:00 AM TOPS (Old Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>9:00 AM PPT Worship Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 PM Exercise Class (New Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>10:00 AM Prayer Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>12:15 PM Youth Group</td>
<td>6:30 PM Girl Scouts (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
<td>10:00 AM TOPS (Old Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>6:30 PM Girl Scouts (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
<td>9:00 AM PPT Worship Meeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>6:30 PM Girl Scouts (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
<td>6:30 PM Girl Scouts (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
<td>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>6:30 PM Girl Scouts (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>7:00 PM Deacons Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>7:00 PM Deacons Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:30 AM Disciples Men Bible Study</td>
<td>7:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>10:00 AM Mom’s Day Out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 AM Mom’s Day Out</td>
<td>5:00 PM Backstage Productions (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>8:30 AM Worship</td>
<td>10:00 AM Prayer Group</td>
<td>9:00 AM PPT Worship Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 PM Exercise Class (New Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>7:00 PM Deacons Meeting</td>
<td>7:00 PM Deacons Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>9:45 AM Sunday School</td>
<td>11:00 AM Worship</td>
<td>10:00 AM TOPS (Old Fellowship Hall)</td>
<td>12:15 PM Youth Group</td>
<td>9:00 AM PPT Worship Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 PM Girl Scouts (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>11:00 AM Worship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 AM PPT Worship Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 PM Girl Scouts (Ed. Bldg.)</td>
<td>9:00 AM PPT Worship Meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Printed by Calendar Creator for Windows on 4/2/2013**
The Olive Branch

published by
Olive Branch Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
7643 Richmond Road
Williamsburg, VA 23188
(757) 566-8077

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