

*The Sweet Spirit*  
*Olive Branch United Methodist Church*  
*May 2016*



**Is there anything too hard for me?**

Do you believe in miracles? Things that happen but seem to be too impossible? Well, isn't that what miracles are all about? Aren't they SUPPOSED to be impossible things that are really happening?

Of course, it sometimes seems that we are battling along from day to day, just wishing that a miracle would really happen to us, that our problems would disappear! Well, did you know that the power of miracles resides in all of us? Yes, it's true! With God at our side we can achieve ANYTHING! Isn't that just the most amazing message? WE CAN DO IT! All we need to have is faith in God, and faith in ourselves. When you are facing something that seems truly impossible for you to resolve, take your problem to God and have faith! Have faith that God can do - and does do - miracles!

Jesus himself also said this:

*"Have faith in God. For, assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain 'be removed and be cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he has said will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you. Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them".*

Jesus understood God's promise. God's promise that with Him, ALL things are possible with faith and belief. Jesus understood that God had not only empowered him to perform wonderful things, but all of us. Each one, with God, is capable of anything!

**Be blessed today, take your problems to God in prayer, and have faith that with Him at your side you can perform miracles.**

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## **From The Pastor's Pen,**

**Greetings and Peace in the name of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!**

**Everyone plays a significant role in the life of our church. It takes each individual to compliment the Body of Christ at Olive Branch UMC each and every Sunday. As we approach the summer season bringing vacations, picnics, trips, etc., please remember that OBUMC is open every Sunday during the summer and your presence is important to our congregation.**

**You may say, "They won't miss me; one person's absence isn't significant." Read the following story about one member of a number of others: (This is not my original story, and I could not find the author or this story, but it's a good one!)"**

**As the story goes, they built a new church building and people came from far and wide to see it. They admired its beauty! Up on the roof, a little nail heard the people praising everything about the lovely structure-except the nail! No one even knew he was there, and he became angry and jealous.**

**"If I am that insignificant, nobody will miss me if I quit!" So the nail then released its hold, slid down the roof, and fell in the mud. That night it rained and rained. Soon, the shingle that had no nail blew away, and the roof began to leak. The water streaked the walls and the beautiful murals. The plaster began to fall, the carpet was stained, and the pulpit Bible was ruined by water. All this because a little nail decided to quit!**

**But what of the nail? While holding the shingle, it was obscure but it was also useful. Buried in the mud it was just as obscure, but now it was useless and would soon be eaten up by rust!**

**The moral of the story – every member is important to the church! You may, like the nail, feel obscure at times, but just like the nail, your absence is felt. When you are not present for worship, in some way the body of Christ hurts. We are ALL a part of the Lord’s ministry. The importance of that one nail cannot be emphasized enough. A small nail holding one shingle on the church roof has a very important part to do in the body of Christ. And if that nail has an important work to do, imagine what you and I have to do in the body of Christ. Jesus is telling us that we are like that nail, we need to hold the body of Christ together by loving each other.**

**Billy Graham says "Church-goers are like coals in a fire. When they cling together, they keep the flame aglow; when they separate, they die out." We need each other in the body of Christ. Though we might think of ourselves, like that nail, we are indeed important in the body of Christ. When we cling together the body grows and the light shines. Let your light shine throughout the week and let the Light of Christ shine upon you as you attend worship services on Sunday.**

**Blessings and Peace, Pastor Randy**

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**Olive Branch UMC Library**

**Nancy Maguire.**

**At all ages we can benefit from the church library. Learning should never stop. We can learn about something we never were exposed to or learn more about a subject we are interested in.**

**Have you attended Olive Branch church services or 2nd Sunday lunch and wonder- Where is there a Library? If you exit the sanctuary at the rear that goes thru a room about 12 feet wide exiting into the social hall, you have just passed the library. It is on the left. The book shelf is the library. It has many wonderful books. Here are just a few of the titles: In Defense of Food, Weight of Mercy, White Umbrella, Miss Brenda and the Lovely Ladies, or If I live to be 100.**

**The United Methodist Women have donated many books over the years. The UMW members are encouraged to read books in various categories such as social action and leadership. I have recently joined the UMW which meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2 PM. I invite all women to attend. You do not need to be a member of our church or to join just come and share.**

**Several books were recently purchased and passed around the table at the meeting. I chose to read "The White Umbrella". It fell in the category of social action. The story is about walking with survivors of sex trafficking and sexual abuse. You might think this happens only in other countries or other places. It is everywhere. The final paragraph of the book sums it up- As you can see through each of the girls' unique stories, walking with survivors of sexual abuse and trafficking is a messy and complicated opportunity. But how beautiful it is that God has given us His white umbrella of love so that we can spread it over someone in the storm. When we do that, they too can experience the love, protection and care that Christ longs to give us all.**

**We all can do something. The smallest thing can make a difference in someone's life. Prayer is a powerful tool. Please pray for these girls.**

**The Library is for everyone. There is no "check out" system. Enjoy a book and return it for the next person. If you find a book you think others should read. Let me know and we will feature it in a newsletter.**

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### **Message from the Council Chair – Jane DiStefano**

**The Church Administrative Council meets every other month on the second Monday at 7:00 PM. Our next meeting will be on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Anyone interested in the running of the church is invited to attend. It is always an open meeting, although voting is limited to committee members.**

**Each month we review the happenings and daily operation of the church. We review the finances, the building needs and hear reports from all committee members. Any monies to be spent are approved by the Church Council.**

**In April we approved the repair of the Cross & Flame sign that hangs on the bell tower. The sign's lights have not worked in a while and we approved the monies to have it repaired. We also discuss upcoming events and any issues or problems that have been brought up.**

**If you have any items that need to be discussed at council, please feel free to come to a meeting or contact me or Pastor Randy. Remember that this is everyone's church and what is important to you, is important to us.**

## **Outreach**

**Backpack program:** We are participating with other area churches to provide meals for the weekends for school children at Meherrin-Powellton Elementary. This month we were involved in the purchasing, picking up and packaging of 65 meals a week. The food is stored at our sister church, Rock UMC. Once a week we will gather to pack backpacks with enough food to get the children thru the weekend. Please plan on joining us one Saturday this month to fill the packs. Volunteers for this program may talk with Pastor.

Please don't forget our Church pantry! Our brothers and sisters in the greater community are suffering and need help. We are blessed that Food Lion is willing to provide us with meats, vegetables, fruits, and baked goods but, it is up to us to fill out the dietary needs of the families we serve. Help keep our pantry stocked with your donations. I know you will open your hearts. Also, one of our biggest needs is meat. So if you are able, pick up an extra package of meat to help out one of our families. A big "thank you!" to those who take the time to help with the deliveries and each of you who donate to the Food Bank. Thanks again for all you do.

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## **Prayer Bear Ministry**

Nancy Maguire forwarded this note to us recently. It is a great way to see how our mission of helping does work with God's help. ED

### **Prayer Bear Journey's**

You might notice when a Prayer Bear is not in its regular seat on a Sunday. It is still in our prayers, but do you wonder where God has led it? There are as many stories as Prayer Bears, but here are two that I learned just in a week's time.

A visitor who had breakfast at the Yellow House was looking for a place to worship. Olive Branch was suggested. This man's daughter was recently diagnosed with cancer and was very sick. Our members made him welcome and sent a Prayer Bear with him to his daughter, Beth. Her name was put on our prayer list. Tues. 4/26 I saw her. She told me how much the Prayer Bear and the many prayers had meant to her. She is just starting to get out a little. One report shows the cancer under control, but she is very weak and still needs prayers as she continues to recover.

While walking with a friend this week, Trish told me about a visit to her 95 year old Aunt. Trish was moving the bear that was on a chest and her Aunt admonished her. "Be careful with that, it is very special". Trish had visited our church when the Ladies Club held a card making event here. I had taken Trish and a few others on a tour of the church. Of course no tour is complete without a stop at the Prayer Bear corner. Trish loved the idea for her Aunt who was facing health issues and a move from Wilmington, NC to be near

her family in the Raleigh area. Trish's sister shared a story that their Aunt was very attached to the Prayer Bear when she visited also. That Prayer Bear made a positive difference.

Just wanted you to know your love, hugs, and prayers are working to share God's Love thru the Prayer Bear ministry.

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### **United Methodist Men**

A Stew was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16th of April. After spending many hours over the two days picking stirring it was complete and delicious. A big thank you to all the men of the church who joined us in preparing the stew and all the members of the church to help us sell it and buy it.

The men are planning on a weekly golf event. As we get more information we will post it and invite all those who would like to join us to do so. You don't have be good to join this group! We are a bunch of duffers!

A note to all the men of the church: the UMM meets on the third Saturday of each month.. We invite all men of the church to join us for a time of fellowship, breakfast, and devotion. We welcome our sister church, Rock, as we would gladly have them join us for breakfast.

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### **United Methodist Women**

All women of the church are invited to take part in the meeting and missional activities of the UMW. The United Methodist Women have chosen for their Mission Project; school supply kits for Annual Conference. They will be collected by the Conference and distributed to children all over the world through UMCOR. We will be collecting: Paper; loose leaf, spiral or legal pads, Scissors; blunt tip only, pointed scissors will not be accepted by UMCOR, Rulers; wood or plastic, 12 inch, Erasers; 2 inch pink type. Pencil Sharpeners, Crayons (24 pack), and six Pencils. We are looking to collect enough for 100 kits. We know you all will join in this effort.

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### **Worship Committee**

Nancy Williams, Chairperson

**Upcoming worship activities and ministries:**

The "Prayer Square" ministry is well underway and being graciously received by the recipients of the squares. A big thank you to everyone who has made this ministry possible.

On Mother's Day, May 8<sup>th</sup>, there will be special music and each woman of the church will be recognized during the worship service. A special time of recognition for women in our lives, will be held during our worship service on Mother's Day.

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Everyone is asked to wear red or white on Pentecost Sunday, May 15th. As we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. **LET'S MAKE OUR SANCTUARY A SEA OF RED AND WHITE!**

Memorial Day, 2016 will be celebrated on May 22<sup>nd</sup> during worship. Please get names of deceased veterans' (former members of OBUMC) to Nancy Williams as soon as possible, but no later than May 15.

On Father's Day, June 19th, there will be a special time of recognition during the worship service for the men in our lives.

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### Save Your Empty Ink Cartridges

A continuing mission project headed by Catherine and Robert Moore is to gather empty ink cartridges and send them away. The company that they are sent to then sends the church a check. Sooo, please save them and put them in the box in the fellowship hall. All funds go to continuing our outreach. Thank you Catherine and Robert for your helping.

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### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Celebrating birthdays this month:

Suzette Smith - 16 Pat Morrissey - 23 Madalynn Writtenberry - 23 Diane Clary - 25

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### Choir Makes a Joyful Noise

And our choir does just that. We practice on Wednesday's at 7:00 PM. We are 14 strong at this time. If you feel that you would like to make a joyful noise, please come join us. It should be an exciting time for us and the church! Let us all come together to praise the Lord in song at our worship services.

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(See John 2:1-11)

05-25-2015

WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO TURN WINE  
BACK TO WATER?

### **Upcoming Events:**

**Thu. May 5<sup>th</sup> – 11am - Back Pack Food Delivery**

**Wed May 11<sup>th</sup> – 2pm – UMW Meeting**

**Fri May 13<sup>th</sup> – 9am - Food Distribution**

**Sat May 21 – 8:30 am – UMM Breakfast and Meeting**

**This is our newsletter. It is meant to be a way to communicate what your church is doing and what all the organizations are doing both in the congregation and the community. I am sending this electronically via email and copies will be made available for those who need a printed copy.**

**There are many organizations within our church and I hope they would like to have their achievements, plans, and meetings made known to the entire church. It is my hope that they will ask one of their members to drop a short note as to what they doing each month. The line of communication in the church needs to be open and full of what we are doing at Olive Branch to make disciples in our area. If you would like to send us something, please bring it to church or send me an email ([revedumc@yahoo.com](mailto:revedumc@yahoo.com)) and we will see that it gets published. We need all information by the 24<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month. Please, let's keep our church informed on what we are doing. See you at church and all our activities! God bless. Ed DiStefano**