

The Sweet Spirit

Olive Branch United Methodist Church

November 2017

From the pastor's pen



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is my hope that you had a blessed month and enjoyable fall. It just does not seem possible that it is soon time for another year in the service to our Lord.

As we go head-on into the upcoming new year I pray that you will find prosperity, good health and love and grace from God. In addition to those blessings I hope also that you will find Olive Branch United Methodist Church to be a place where you can worship, you can share in the love of Christ with our brothers and sisters and be a part of making OBUMC a more vital congregation in 2018.

As we endeavor to serve God and to seek his vision for our church, the most important thing that we can do is to bathe our church, your pastor, and your sisters and brothers in Christ in prayer and love. I look forward to wrapping up 2017 and bring in 2018 with exciting new ministry but along with that will be new challenges. In facing those challenges I ask that you continue to pray for our ministries, as prayer is the most vital element of our worship and of our successes.

As we are putting together the new leadership team for OB for the coming year, we ask for your support, your prayers and your involvement with the ministries before us and ahead of us. May God truly bless each of you and shower you with His love mercy and grace, but most of all may you sense his presence in all that you do.

Nancy and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support, for your prayers, for your gifts of love, and for very generous love offerings. It is our promise to you that we will work harder, will spend more time in prayer for our church and her ministry and be the disciples that Jesus Christ called us to be.

In His service,
Pastor Randy

Did You Know?

This month we will introduce you to Pvt. John S. Hardy, born in 1829 in North Carolina. John was an illiterate farmer all his life. He married Malissa in 1862, while on leave, in Brunswick, Virginia. They had one child, a daughter born later that year of 1862, named Mary. In June of 1861 John enlisted in Capt. Coleman's Company of Neblitt's Heavy Artillery. The unit became part of the CSA army in August 1861. John left his newly married wife to go to war.

Neblett/Coleman Heavy Artillery was posted to Drewry's Bluff on the James River east of Richmond. Their task was to provide protection for Richmond against Union gun boats. This they did with distinction during the Seven Days Battles. They stopped the Union Gun Boats from bombarding Richmond and forced them to retreat back down the James River. In the spring of 1863 the unit was merged as Co. I into the 12th Virginia Infantry. They joined the troops of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia on May 16th. They joined this army in time to take part on the defensive side in General Grants Overland Campaign. The 12th fought in the

Battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna, Cold Harbor, the Siege of Petersburg, the Appomattox Campaign. These battles were some of the most deadly in the war. When General Lee decided that it was time to surrender he did it at Appomattox Court House. Pvt. John S. Hardy, along with the 12th VA Infantry, stacked their weapons and went home. John led a life as a farmer after the war and in 1908 he received his heavenly reward. He saw a great deal during the war and he led a full life till his death in 1980. John joins other CSA veterans who served with pride during those four difficult years.

Message from the Council Chair – Jane DiStefano

The Church Administrative Council meets every other month on the second Monday at 7:00 PM. The next meeting date has been changed to November 27 at 7:00 PM to allow for last minute information for Charge Conference. With Charge Conference coming on the 3rd of December at Rock there will be many things to be voted on.

Anyone interested in the business of the church is invited to attend. If you have any suggestions for our church or problems, please join us. It is always an open meeting, although voting is limited to committee members.

Ladies of Olive Branch UMC Honored

On Wednesday, November 1, 2017 the ladies of Olive Branch held a luncheon at the Kitchen Table to honor four ladies of Olive Branch. The honored ladies were Mabel King, Mattie Bersch, Thelma Smart and Polly Clary. Unfortunately Polly was unable to attend. We had about twelve ladies in attendance and a great time was had by all. Peggy Moore provided dessert for all of us; chocolate chess pie and ice cream. Both lunch and dessert were delicious.

Everyone had such a great time that we have agreed that we want to come together again in January 2018 just to celebrate life. It's great to get everyone together just for fun and fellowship. Here are a few pictures of this event:





Homecoming 2017

We celebrated Homecoming on October 8, 2017. It took a lot of planning and work, but with everyone chipping in and helping, we had a successful day.

The Church was beautifully decorated with many floral arrangements given in honor and memory of loved ones. The choir sang two special musical pieces and John sang a solo. Rev. Randy Williams was our special speaker and he did a sermon in song entitled "That's Him!" It was truly beautiful. John Medlin performed a solo singing "Unclouded Day." He did a great job.

After our service, we had a delicious covered dish luncheon. The church provided fried chicken and barbecue, while members and guests brought side dishes and desserts. Everything was delicious and there was plenty of food. We were even able to share with some of those in our neighborhood who were unable to attend.

All in all, a great time was had by all.





Olive Branch UMW

The Olive Branch UMW met on Wednesday, November 8th at 1:00 PM. They made their final plans for the end of the year, deciding where their monies would be allocated. It was a great meeting. Nancy Maguire provided a nice program based on Jesus commanding us to feed his sheep. The Women will not meet in December.

United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men met on Friday, October 27th. This was the beginning of the prep for our Fall Stew. After a day cleaning utensils, and boiling and picking chicken we went home for a nice quiet evening. Saturday was an early day as we started cooking the stew at 5:30 AM. Stirring continually, we chopping onions, opened large cans of lima beans, and tomatoes, and added sweet corn. The results was another wonderful Brunswick Stew. There is still some stew left. If you would like a quart or three see any of the men. The cost is \$7.00 per quart. The men are taking a short break and will not meet in November and possibly December according to Monte Evans. So "Happy Holidays" to all and we will meet again in January.

Outreach

The Committee will meet at 6:00 pm on November 13th. Ed DiStefano and Nancy Maguire, co-chairs of the Outreach Committee would like the church to please give them some insight as to the needs of our community that we see as we approach the Holiday Season. It is our responsibility, as a church, to help those in need. Please join us with your ideas!

Outreach is currently collecting food items for our Thanksgiving Dinner for our food pantry families. We still need stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce and pies and rolls. Anything you can help with would be greatly appreciated.

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 some meats, vegetables, fruits, and baked goods but, it is up to us to fill out the dietary needs of the families we serve. We currently service 11 families with food donations. Please help keep our pantry stocked with your donations as we have a shortage of canned vegetables. 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. We are in need of help with the deliveries to our families. Cathy and Robert Moore are doing a great job, but if you can take 2-4 hours out of your busy day, one day a month please contact Ed DiStefano, or Cathy Moore. The help will be appreciated.



John Medlin and Carol Abernathy performed the song “I Ask the Lord” on October 31, 2017. It was a beautiful duet.

What Does Olive Branch UMC Mean to you?

This question was recently asked of our members. Here are a few of the responses:

“Friendliness” : Marti Flinn

“Friendship” : Margaret Lodado

“Love – Fellowship & Praising Our Lord!” : Judy Kibler

“We have met so many cherished friends at Olive Branch. Not only friends, but our love for this church has made us feel so loved and welcomed and in that – has grown our love for Jesus Christ.

The times for worship, prayer, quiet time, along with times for fun and laughter have all come together in a unique way to make us feel whole in this community and in this church.” : Catherine & Robert Moore

The hymn, “Sweet, Sweet Spirit,” sums up what Olive Branch UMC means to me. “There’s sweet, sweet spirit in this place and I know it is the spirit of the Lord. There are sweet expressions on each face and I know it is the presence of the Lord.” : Peggy Moore

What does Olive Branch mean to you? Let us know!

Virginia Conference UMW

On October 28, 2017, four members of our UMW attended the 45th Annual Meeting of the Virginia Conference United Methodist Women. The Conference took place at Trinity United Methodist Church in Henrico, VA. Vickie Evans, Nancy Williams, Alice Johnson and Jane DiStefano departed from Olive Branch to travel together to Henrico. We had a wonderful boxed lunch of chicken salad croissant sandwiches, with a delicious chocolate chip cookie. As we were eating, Bishop Sharma D. Lewis joined us at our table for a few minutes. Quite a thrill for us!

The highlight of the business meeting was the guest speaker, Bishop Lewis. Bishop Lewis spoke on Walking in Faith and she gave us three points to continue walking in our faith: Believing when you don’t see; Obeying when you don’t understand; and Persisting when you feel like giving up. And she told us that Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. The Bishop encouraged all people to continue on our faith walk and said the UM Women are certainly an example of the faith walk because just a few women make a huge difference in our churches and our communities.

During the business meeting we learned that our small (population) district, Farmville District, fared very well compared with much larger populated Districts. In the category of Living Into Our Purpose the Farmville District was Level 3; in the category of 5 & 6 Star Units within the district, Farmville District came in at number one; in the category of Candle Burning (based on donations) Farmville District was number three; and

in the category of the number of Rainbow Givers, Farmville District was tied at number 3. In each of these categories, our local unit at Olive Branch did very well.

Prayer Gram

Each Sunday, in the Narthex, there is a sheet that looks like a sign-up sheet. The sheet is what we call a Prayer Gram. Each person in attendance is asked to sign it. You are also invited to give us the name and address of persons who would benefit from receiving the Prayer Gram (on the yellow legal pad) The purpose is to bring a prayer to those who are homebound and unable to attend church due to illness. During the service Rev. Randy will ask for the name of those in need of prayer. Each person on the list in the Narthex will receive a copy of the signatures of those who prayed for them during worship services.

Teddy Bear Prayer Program

In the sanctuary we have a collection of teddy bears. These are special teddy bears. Each bear has been prayed over and hugged by the congregation during worship. If someone is in need of a teddy bear kind of love, be they members, family, or friends, a member can sign out a teddy bear and take it to that person. Many bears have left our church to bring God's love to those who are in the hospital or ill. It's just another way to bring God's love and our love to those we care about.

Advent

As we approach the Advent Season, we will begin decorating our church. During the week of November 27, 2017, Jane DiStefano will be working at the church to put up the Chrismon tree and other decorations for the season. Please save a morning to help with this task. It takes many hands. We will meet each morning at 10:00 AM. Thanks in advance.

Upcoming Events:

Wed. – Nov 8 – United Methodist Women- Meeting 1:00 PM
Wed. – Nov 8, 15, 22, 29 - Choir Practice at 7:00 PM Each Wednesday
Fri – Nov 10th – Family Food Delivery at 9:00AM at Food Lion
Sun – Nov 12 – 2nd Sunday Lunch. Potluck after services
Mon – Nov 13 – Outreach Committee Meeting 6:00 PM
Wed – Nov 22 – Thanksgiving Food Delivery 9:00 AM at Church
Mon – Nov 27 – Administrative Council Meeting

This is your 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) and we will see that it gets published. We need all information by the 24th 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 to all! Ed DiStefano