



MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

January 2023
Church News



Upcoming Events

- 1/04: Youth Pastor Search Committee Meeting, 6:30
- 1/20: Brown Bag Lunch and Bible Study, Noon
- 1/22: Deacons Meeting, 4:30
- 2/11: Ham and Egg Supper, 6:30



Mt. Olive,

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) I know it may sound a little strange, but as I considered all the possibilities that a new year brings, I immediately thought of this verse. First, I thought of the newness of life. Newness by its very nature is an integral part of each new year. Indeed, each successive year is another opportunity for a new start. And boy do we take ourselves up on that new start. . .or at least say we are starting something new. We start new diets and exercise routines. We set new financial and personal goals. Each goal provides us with the chance at a new year, a new us, a new success story. Yet many of us fail to achieve even a fraction of our goals. However, we should never let past failure be an automatic indicator of future success. In the end, our new life is based not around our own willpower or our own discipline, but rather the Spirit of God dwelling within us.

Second, I thought of the old life being put to death. Some of my favorite verses in the Bible deal with this concept. “Therefore, put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature.” (Colossians 3:5) Clearly the idea is that our fleshly desires and old natured ways should be destroyed. Paul goes on to provide a list of those types of sins, but we must look elsewhere for a more in-depth discussion of what he means by the old sin nature. In Ephesians, Chapter 2, Paul defines the old life as the passions of our flesh, the sinful desires of the body and mind. That old way of thinking needs to be challenged and changed or destroyed. But we can’t do it all by ourselves.

Third, how does all this highfalutin, high concept stuff start happening? It’s by the power of the Holy Spirit and for the glory of God. That’s it. That’s the answer to why so many of our New Year’s plans fail. It’s because we are doing them out of our own strength and for our own glory. When we start including God by praying to achieve our dreams, fasting for spiritual wisdom, and studying His word for discernment, we find an inner strength we never knew before. Even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God saved us. That means no matter how difficult our goals are for the new year, and no matter how heavy the burden of achieving them may feel, God stands ready to help. By focusing on God, praying over His word, and seeking to glorify His Holy Spirit, God enables and empowers us as we pursue our dreams. May God richly bless and help you as you seek Him in 2023.

Let’s pray: Father, you see the dreams in each of our hearts. You know the struggles and adversities we must work to overcome, and you know that it is only through your power that we might achieve some of them. Can you please help us? Can you please meet us where we are and enable us to do far more than we could ever ask or imagine we could do in our own strength? Jesus will you please bless each person who reads this prayer? Give them the clarity and the strength they are looking for. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

Dr. Josh Peeler



This January, as we begin the new year, I would like to turn our attention to Christ. He is the focus of our lives as we live a life of worship. It says in Malachi chapter 3,

Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.

According to this text, God is going to send a messenger to prepare for his arrival. The messenger he sent was John the Baptist. Then God came. He came as the man Jesus. This text goes on to say that when the Lord comes, he will be like a washer and like a fire. Jesus came and washed us and made us clean when he died on the cross. God’s story here is the focus of the Christian life. Each day we must remind ourselves of this reality and renew our minds in the gospel. Jesus’ blood washes away our sins, and without it we would have no other soap and no other cleansing from our iniquities and transgressions. He died once and for all to forgive our sins. If we have not been washed in this fountain, then we must go to it right now to be saved. If we are certain we have been cleansed, we can continuously go back to Jesus and confess our sins to him, and simultaneously other trusted brothers and sisters, so that we may continue to walk in the light and freedom of God.

In the year of our Lord 2023, let us renew our commitment to the Lord, not only by resolving to read his word regularly and by meeting with the saints daily for worship and fellowship, but to be transformed by God. We can take delight in Jesus, the messenger of the covenant, when we meditate on what it means that he brought “a new covenant in [his] blood.” How can we remind ourselves daily about this good news? We can by training ourselves to stop what we are doing, sit back, and remember: it is not our religion, our social standing, our bank account, our earthly citizenship, or even our commitment to New Year’s resolutions that brings us even an inch closer to God’s heart, but it is his love for us which draws us to him. God demonstrates his love for us that even while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

When you are studying God’s word on your own, see if you can find this central theme. Ask yourself when reading the scriptures, “How does this text point us to Jesus’ work?” Not only will you find that this is the point of the Bible, but you will see how the book is a supernatural one, with impossible intricacy, drawing an arrow which points to the cross.

Let us surround ourselves with people who are going to encourage us and remind us of the truth. Let us become those people ourselves. Let us avoid those who will dissuade us from

renewing our minds. Let us encourage others and speak the word of God, specifically its main point: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and what this implies for our lives.

Let us also this year take more delight in Jesus. The text says he is the Lord “whom you seek.” Jesus is the one we are actually looking for. We may have difficulty believing it at first, after all, our experiences with religion may have left us wanting in the past. The reality is the fulfillment of our deepest hopes and dreams is found in the face of God, not in going to the gym more, meeting the boy or girl of our dreams, or making a higher income.

May the truth of this passage guide you this year, and may you meet success in these things.

N.L.M.

MINISTRY IN ACTION

(Senior Luncheon, Christmas Party, and Christmas Caroling)

Thank you, Dawn Lloyd and Lisa White, for providing our pictures!





January

BIRTHDAYS		ANNIVERSARIES	
Nicki Vaughn	1		
	2		
Oscar Majors	3		
Hannah Foushee	4		
	5		
Payton Wilkins	6		
Jill Morris	7		
	8		
	9		
	10		
Jackson Batchelor	11		
	12		
Jimmy White	13		
Debbie Henry	14		
	15		
Lizzie Foushee	16		
Brad Palone			
Joyce Tarrant			
John C. Marshall	17	Jeff & Joan Snyder	
	18		
Layton Curl	19		
Sarah Lindley	20	Willie & Rhonda Thomas	
Lisa Scott	21		
Christina Wilkins			
Hannah Jones Black	22		
Austin Foushee			
Elizabeth Jones	23		
Robbie Morris			
Alice Cheek	24		
Amber Vaughn			
Ashley Walker			
Hayden Morris	25		
Titus Connor			
Cassie Moore	26		
Holly Connor			
	27		
Chelsea Gaudette	28		
Preston Andrews	29	Preston & Kim Andrews	
Michael Skarbinski			
	30		

If you have any corrections/additions to this listing, please email christina@mtolivebaptist.com.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

"Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." (1 Timothy 6:12)

"Resolutions of Faith"

It is hard to believe January 2023 is here. At the end of every year, I like to look forward instead of looking back. We cannot change the past, but we can make changes in our lives that will affect our present and future. Recently, I was reading an online article about New Year's resolutions for Christians. The article was written by Dr. Bruce Hartman. In it, Dr. Hartman listed seven resolutions that could enhance our lives during 2023. These resolutions made me realize that I can improve on every aspect of my Christian life. They are listed below.

- 1) Read your Bible every day.
- 2) Go to church more frequently.
- 3) Pray daily.
- 4) Read the verse of the day on your Bible app.
- 5) Join a Bible study group.
- 6) Join a helping-based organization.
- 7) Make a difference in someone's life each day.

After reading these resolutions, I realize that I am not doing such a good job trying to live up to being a strong Christian. "Life" gets in the way many days. I generally think I will have time to do some of the above things, but like most people, something invariably comes up to derail my day. Work becomes stressful, power goes out, kids or animals get sick, ballgames and practices happen, school and homework pile on, etc. How do we get through the daily routine and still grow spiritually?

First, we need to pick a specific time each day to talk to God. That can be anytime, but mornings probably work best. Before work, school, or jobs get in the way, a morning devotion time is essential to starting your day on a positive note. Second, make sure your devotion time includes reading the Bible. Your reading doesn't have to be a long passage; reading any passage will allow you to see God's word in a different way. Third, pray. Pray for others, but also make sure to pray for yourself. Pray that God will help you and strengthen your faith. Fourth, be positive. That could be difficult for some, but you never know how your attitude may encourage other people. Fifth, come to church. It is very easy to get out of the habit of coming to church on a regular basis but find a reason to come. Get involved in Sunday School. I can't tell you how many times I have learned something from someone else when in

small group study. Sixth, get involved...help. Find something to do which helps others. It encourages those people but will also make you feel better. Lastly, quit making excuses. God doesn't accept excuses, and human beings use too many. There will be no excuse accepted when we meet our savior Jesus Christ. He expects his Christian people to talk and act like Christians, and we can't do it if we aren't involved.

I hope you have a great New Year! May God bless you in 2023! Love God and each other!

Sincerely,

Joe Godfrey