

THE OLIVE PRESS

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Friends of Mount Olive

Featuring

Alisa Guo

I was born in Shaanxi, China and moved to California in 2019. I'm blessed to have a supportive family that includes my husband Bo, my daughter **Amelie** (9) and my son **Brooks** (5). I feel very grateful for their constant love and encouragement. My family has been a big part of my faith journey.



Alisa amongst Mount Olive friends

I now live in Palos Verdes. Currently, I am helping my husband operate an international Trade Company. In my free time, I enjoy playing golf, tennis, reading, and spending time with my kids.

I first found Mount Olive when we were looking for a preschool for my daughter. We learned about the church soon after enrolling. I was immediately drawn to the warm spirit and community I found here. The atmosphere was also part of what attracted me to Mount Olive. It's been about 5 years since I joined, and I've felt at home ever since.

One of my favorite memories at Mount Olive was the warm feeling when I first entered the church and the friendliness of the people around me. It really showed me what it means to be part of a loving, supportive community. I always feel uplifted and inspired after attending.

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Legend has it that Martin Luther began the tradition of decorating trees to celebrate Christmas. One crisp Christmas Eve, about the year 1500, he was walking through snow-covered woods and was struck by the beauty of a group of small evergreens. Their branches dusted with snow shimmered in the moonlight. When he got home, he set up a little fir tree indoors so he could share this story with his children. He decorated it with candles, which he lighted in honor of Christ's birth. The Christmas tree tradition most likely came to the United States with Hessian (German) troops during the American Revolution and with German immigrants to Ohio and Pennsylvania. The Christmas tree market was born in 1851 when Catskill farmer, Mark Carr, hauled two ox sleds of evergreens into New York City and sold them all. By 1900, one in five American families had a Christmas tree.



THE DATE OF CHRISTMAS

The idea to celebrate Christmas on December 25 originated in the 4th century. The Catholic Church wanted to eclipse the festivities of a rival pagan religion that threatened Christianity's existence. The Romans celebrated the birthday of their sun god, Mithras during this time of year. Although it was not popular, or even proper, to celebrate people's birthdays in those times, church leaders decided that in order to compete with the pagan celebration they would themselves order a festival in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Although the actual season of Jesus' birth is thought to be in the spring, the date of December 25 was chosen as the official birthday celebration as Christ's Mass so that it would compete head on with the rival pagan celebration. Christmas was slow to catch on in America. The early colonists considered it a pagan ritual. The celebration of Christmas was even banned by law in Massachusetts in colonial days.



MISTLETOE AND HOLLY

Two hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Druids used mistletoe to celebrate the coming of winter. They would gather this evergreen plant that is parasitic upon other trees and used it to decorate their homes. They believed the plant had special healing powers for everything from female infertility to poison ingestion.

Scandinavians also thought of mistletoe as a plant of peace and harmony. They associated mistletoe with their goddess of love, Frigga. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe probably derived from this belief. The early church banned the use of mistletoe in Christmas celebrations because of its pagan origins. Instead, church fathers suggested the use of holly as an appropriate substitute for Christmas greenery.

THE CANDY CANE

Candy canes have been around for centuries, but it wasn't until around 1900 that they were decorated with red stripes and bent into the shape of a cane. They were sometimes handed out during church services to keep the children quiet. One story (almost certainly false) that is often told about the origin of the candy cane is as follows:

In the late 1800's a candy maker in Indiana wanted to express the meaning of Christmas through a symbol made of candy. He came up with the idea of bending one of his white candy sticks into the shape of a candy cane. He incorporated several symbols of Christ's love and sacrifice thought the candy cane.

First, he used a plain white peppermint stick. The color white symbolizes the purity and sinless nature of Jesus. Next, he added three small stripes to symbolize the pain inflicted upon Jesus before His death on the cross. There are three of them to represent the Holy Trinity. He added a bold stripe to represent the blood Jesus shed for mankind. When looked at with the crook on top, it looks like a shepherd's staff because Jesus is the shepherd of man. If you turn it upside down it becomes the letter J symbolizing the first letter Jesus' name. The candy maker made these candy canes for Christmas, so everyone would remember what Christmas is all about.



SANTA CLAUS

The original Santa Clause, St. Nicholas, was born in Turkey in the 4th century. He was very pious from an early age, devoting his life to Christianity. He became widely known for his generosity for the poor. But the Romans held him in contempt. He was imprisoned and tortured. But when Constantine allowed Nicholas to go free, Constantine became a Christian and convened the council of Nicaea in 325. Nicholas was a delegate to the council. He is especially noted for his love of children and for his generosity. He is the patron saint of sailors, Sicily, Greece, and Russia. He is also, of course, the patron saint of children. The Dutch kept the legend of St. Nicholas alive. In 16th century Holland, Dutch children would place their wooden shoes by the hearth in hopes that they would be filled with a treat.

The Dutch spelled St. Nicholas as Snit Nicolas, which became corrupted to Interclass, and finally in Anglican, to Santa Clause. In 1822, Clement C. Moore composed his famous poem, "A visit from St. Nick," which was later published as The Night Before Christmas.



Moore is credited with creating the modern image of Santa Clauses as a Jolly fat man in red suit. Christmas

Traditions are wonderful but the most wonderful Christmas tradition is candlelight service at Mt. Olive on Christmas Eve and then on Christmas Day enjoying dinner with my family. The greatest Christmas gift is eternal life with Jesus. All the elders wish you a very merry and blessed Christmas. Jesus is the reason for the season.

BILL DAHLGREN, JOE STEWERT, CASE DAHLEN & JOHN GRAGG



ANOTHER CHRISTMAS IS COMING

WHEN I WAS A SMALL CHILD,

Christmas was by far the happiest time of the year for me. My Mom really went all out to help our family focus on the coming of the Savior and the joy that He brings. Christmas carols echoed throughout our house for about a month – either sung by angelic choirs or by Alvin and the Chipmunks! Christmas cards were displayed, the tree went up early, and news about the birth of the Savior was everywhere!

My Mom had a pretty good singing voice (and a good yelling voice too for that matter!) and so at Christmas time she volunteered to lead a children's choir for the kids on our street.

As the big day was approaching, she would gather us all at our house to practice the carols for a week or two, and then take us around door to door in the neighborhood to share some Christmas spirit. And imagine that, I remember it always being pretty cold in Buffalo, New York in mid-December! Finally we would all end up at our house for hot chocolate and cookies after the caroling.

Christmas Memories!

I hope and pray that you are blessed with great Christmas memories from your childhood. Memories that are Christ centered, family based, and filled with a sense of love and peace from the Babe of Bethlehem.

We will be celebrating the Savior's birth as a congregation again this

year in a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service here in the sanctuary. The service begins at 5:00pm as the darkness of the evening is just starting to settle in, and it ends with the singing of "Silent Night" to the glow of the candles. Please plan to worship with us on that holy night, and if possible, invite some new friends to come along and celebrate with us. Hopefully we will have families from our Preschool, from Awana, and from our English as a Second Language class worshiping with us too.

“ Let's all share the news together: Christ the Savior is born.

Pastor Craig



A close-up photograph of a young child, Ellie, with dark hair and brown eyes. She is wearing a blue, long-sleeved, ribbed top. She is sitting on a red metal seesaw, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blurred, showing the wooden structure of a playground.

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Ellie & Teddy share the bike.

PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Trunk or Treat was a fabulous event, and over 50 families attended.

Our Tree Trimming event will be held on Friday, December 6th, at 6 p.m. for those who are interested. At the tree trimming event, parents and children are invited to decorate ornaments and enjoy refreshments in several of the preschool's classrooms.

A caregiver's emotional and physical presence supports young children's motivation to learn and accomplish new milestones. Please consider joining us for any event this Christmas season



**by Preschool Director
David Welch**





HENRY



ZEN



KAZARI



Our monthly Christian curriculum consists of the stories Hannah Prays, Samuel, David and Jonathan, and Elisha's Home. Our discovery point is that God blesses our homes and is with us to help us with our problems, especially our sins. He gives us victory over sin through Jesus.

CHURCH YEAR REFLECTION FROM THE PRESIDENT



Today is the first Sunday of Advent. This marks the beginning of a new Church Year. As president of the Mt. Olive Lutheran Church Council, I extend my gratitude to the many volunteers who contributed to our church this past year. I especially want to honor the Church Council members who contributed their brilliant ideas and donated countless hours of their time to provide a safe and peaceful retreat for our worshippers.

It has been a very busy year at Mount Olive, and we were blessed with many good changes at our Church:

Welcome New Employees:

- **Avery Hjulberg**, Pastor
- **Emma Carter**, Administrative Business Manager
- **Linda Westhead** and **Diana Saucedo**, Preschool Teachers

Security Improvements:

Our trustee, Richard Xie, nominated a Security Committee which completed a professional security evaluation of all three buildings, fixed leaking gas lines, waterproofed the foundation and side windows of the sanctuary, installed Ring doorbells at the church office and

preschool, replaced and fortified doors at the preschool, installed shatter-proof windows, upgraded the phone system and internet, and closed the North side of property with a chain link fence. Re-fencing the preschool grounds and installing security cameras are currently in progress.



General Improvements

- Replaced carpet in the administrative offices
- Improved the audio/video system--worship can now be watched live on YouTube, thank you, **James Kringle!**
- Handed the financial management over from **Jim Drexler**--thank you for your many years of service at the church, Jim! --to **Julie Reynolds**, who was appointed by the Church Council as new Treasurer for a seamless continuity of all business aspects
- Updated to the newest version of QuickBooks-- Thank you again, Julie!
- Revised the Human Resources handbook to meet the standards of CA labor law-- Huge thank you to **Emma Carter** and **Julie Reynolds**!

Attracting New Members:

A committee was nominated by **Chief Elder Bill Dahlgren** to improve the Youth Ministry. Invitation Postcards for worship at Mount Olive will be sent to local neighborhood homes at the end of November.

May God bless you all, our church and the USA!

Have a peaceful Advent time,

Ulrike Ziegner Hokanson

Please Stay Tuned

Our next **Voters' Meeting** will be **December 14 at 10 AM**. Reports from Pastor, Council, and Elders will be presented and new Church officers will be voted in.

Pastor Craig Molitoris' retirement party will be held on **December 15th**, following the 10:00 AM service. Please join us for food, drinks, and blessings for Pastor Craig's next adventure!



Editor's Message



★SAVE THE DATE★

Champagne Christmas Luncheon

December 7th at 12 PM

Voters Meeting

December 14th at 10 AM

Pastor Craig's Retirement Party

December 15th at 11 AM



Interested in Participating?

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are provided through individual's \$80 donations, which cover two beautiful arraignments. Sign up anytime in the church entry way!

Coffee Fellowship

Coffee Fellowship is provided through individuals donating food, setting up, and hosting the coffee fellowship after service on Sunday. Sign up to host one Sunday in anytime in the church entry way!

Writing in the Press

If you love to write, are passionate about ministry, or simply have a unique story to share, we want to hear you!

*Contact
mtolive.ecarter@gmail.com
with any questions*

Emma Carter

CALENDAR



DECEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	2 9:30am ESL Class	3	4 2pm Zoom Bible Class 7pm Advent Worship 7:30pm 祷告会	5 9:30am Chapel 7pm Council	6 6:30pm Awana	7 12pm Champagne Christmas Luncheon
8 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	9 9:30am ESL Class	10	11 2pm Zoom Bible Class 7pm Advent Worship 7:30pm 祷告会	12 9:30am Chapel 6pm Movie Night	13 6:30pm Awana 7pm Chinese Bible Study	14 10am Voters Meeting 7pm Youth Group
15 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship 11am Craig's Party	16 9:30am ESL Class	17	18 2pm Zoom Bible Class 7pm Advent Worship 7:30pm 祷告会	19 9:30am Chapel 10am Preschool Board 7pm Elders	20 9:15 am Parents Chapel 7pm Chinese Bible Study	21
22 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	23	24 Candlelight Service 7pm Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27 7pm Chinese Bible Study 7pm Youth Group	28
29 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	30	31 New Year's Eve	New Year's Day	1	2	3
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Holidays and Observances: 24: Christmas Eve, 25: Christmas Day, 31: New Year's Eve

*For further calendar updates, please visit www.mtoliverpv.com

Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY

COUNCIL CONTACTS

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