

Senior Pastor Opportunity

Olivet Community Church
Evansville, Indiana



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COMMUNITY CHURCH

The Olivet Opportunity

The congregation of Olivet Community Church in Evansville Indiana is seeking a Senior Pastor who is equipped and motivated to help lead us into a future to impact our local community and the world with the Gospel. We are committed to fulfilling our mission of 'Making Disciples Who Make Disciples' in all the places we live and work, especially our immediate neighborhood.



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Our Congregation

Olivet was planted by visionary followers of Jesus on a street corner on the edge of the growing city of Evansville over 120 year ago. It was then and is now strongly reformed in theology and practice. We are deeply committed to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and living out our life of faith in service to our families, our city and our world.

From center city and prison ministries to international missions, our small congregation of about 100 members believes we are called to impact our world for Christ and live out that belief in every area of our lives. We are thoroughly committed to the worship of God and to staying connected with one another by engaging in and planting new small groups that gather throughout the week. Our ministries range from children, to students, to adults, to senior friends, and are led by teams from the congregation.

Our Congregation Speaks

The Olivet congregation is a thriving community of people from various backgrounds and age groups. When thinking about why Olivet holds such an important place in their life, members were asked to complete the following sentence: ***“Olivet is a place where...”***

“...I always feel welcome.” *Middle school student*

“...we became part of a family of believers who not only worship Jesus together but spread the message to other communities in Evansville.” *Young couple with newborn*

“...I can always feel grounded and find the support needed whether learning the word of God or raising our kids!” *Mom of 4 young adults (all graduates of Olivet youth ministries)*

“...we discovered, after many job transfers and church denomination changes, ... the most warm, kind and loving church family we have encountered.” *Mid-life empty nesters*

“...I love taking part in my Sunday School class and women’s bible study group. Olivet really encourages us to dig deep into God’s Word and use our time and talents to serve others.” *New member*

“...I feel loved and comfortable, and have close ties with people who share my beliefs.” *Widowed retiree*

Olivet In Action



Our Story

Over the past 100 years, Olivet has ministered in three different locations in the Evansville area. In the late 1960's, the congregation moved from an urban location to new suburban property. Members worked hard and gave generously to fund the development of a new facility at 5600 Oak Hill Road and ministered from that location for the next 50 years. In 2020, the congregation felt the call to move toward the vulnerable and sold its property to relocate to shared space with Oak Hill Bible Fellowship at 1026 Oak Hill Road.



Our Story Continues

Pastor Dave Mills was called as pastor in 1994 to lead the then small, aging congregation into the future. Pastor Dave brought fresh, new, energetic leadership that was solidly rooted in a high view of Scripture and love for people. His winsome ways and young family drew others to join the Olivet community. Under his leadership, the congregation grew in spiritual depth, vitality and membership. Many opportunities to grow in an understanding of Scripture were offered, small groups encouraged, and discipleship programs implemented. Worship services and ministries were reinvigorated, and many new areas of outreach were pursued including mission trips to places like Tijuana, Appalachia and areas affected by natural disasters. The focus of the congregation shifted from inward to external and we began looking far beyond our own walls to carry the Gospel and to serve the vulnerable.

Three Significant Events

As time went on, Olivet's affiliation with the PCUSA raised concerns due to what appeared to be a denominational drift from orthodox Presbyterian belief. Our congregation and leadership entered into a lengthy season of prayer and study to discern the Lord's direction. Three significant events then helped move us to our current vision of God's purpose for us: to transplant ourselves back in the heart of the city!



Milestones

Transition to EPC

In 2006, after much prayer, deliberation, and many town hall meetings with the congregation, the Session recommended Olivet leave the PCUSA and affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The EPC's Essentials and core beliefs were far more in line with those of Olivet. The recommendation to transfer affiliation was approved by a 98% vote in favor by the congregation. In December 2006, Olivet became an EPC congregation.

Lawsuit

In 2007, the Presbytery of Ohio Valley of the PCUSA filed suit against Olivet claiming property ownership under the trust clause of the PCUSA Book of Order. The Session again entered into a time of intense prayer and discernment to determine whether we should engage with litigation and all that might mean. After much prayer and consideration, the Session recommended opposing the lawsuit and the congregation affirmed the recommendation. After 7+ years, and several hearings within the Indiana court system up to the Indiana Supreme Court, the matter was settled largely in favor of Olivet after paying a small settlement fee to the POV. Within another few years, the congregation celebrated the pay-off of all legal fees and held their property free and clear.

Relocation

With clear title to its property, the Session then reckoned with the practical reality of maintaining 13 acres of property and a facility that was in need of much repair. After many years of deferred maintenance, it became clear that divesting of the property and associated costs would open pathways for investment in ministry rather than spending large sums on roof and parking lot repairs. In 2019, the congregation of Olivet voted to sell its property and look for a location where space could be shared, and local outreach could be carried out. Soon, a potential partner congregation was identified—Oak Hill Bible Fellowship whose facility was not far from Olivet's location. Within days of listing its property in 2020, Olivet had an offer and sold its property to another local congregation just as COVID was leading to shutdowns. The challenge then became moving to the new, shared facility as COVID restrictions were imposed.

Recent Challenges

Without a doubt, the sale of Olivet's property in early 2020, coinciding with the start of COVID shut down, posed a major challenge to the congregation and staff. Sale of the property closed in March 2020. Relocation to shared space with Oak Hill Bible Fellowship was slated to occur in over the next 2 months just as COVID shutdowns were being imposed. The relocation put a tremendous strain on staff and church volunteers who handled the physical move. In addition, Olivet staff and worship team were challenged to determine how worship services could be offered via streaming technology which had not been previously utilized. So much had to be 'figured out'. With thanks to God, the capability to stream weekly worship services and keep members engaged during COVID restrictions was quickly developed. Like many congregations during the restricted period, we were able to maintain relationships with members and engage some nonmembers thanks to streaming and Zoom technology.

Our Story Continues

After nearly 4 years of sharing a facility, the congregations of Olivet and Oak Hill Bible Fellowship have settled into a pattern of space utilization and schedules that work well for both. Space is more than adequate and relationships between the congregations are very positive. The two congregations collaborate in several areas of ministry, most notably in outreach to nearby Vogel Elementary School.



Our Story Continues




As we had hoped and prayed, the relocation has enabled Olivet to focus its resources and attention on mission and ministries rather than property upkeep. Now settled and worshipping in new space, we are active in the community and engaged with our new neighbors.

Our Vision

We believe that our congregation, our community, and our nation will only be as strong as the families and individuals who live in them. We dream of a future where the gospel permeates our community and inspires people to a life of faith in Jesus. We dream of being a congregation of strong, flourishing families who help transform our local community.

We will be a church where children, students, singles, single parents, young marrieds, empty-nesters, blended families, widows and widowers all have a place at the Olivet table...a table set by God where all labels are forgotten except for that of brothers and sisters. We dream of being a church that leaves no doubt who its loving Father is.

Our Mission

A background image showing several hands of different skin tones gently holding small green seedlings with soil, symbolizing growth and care.

We commit to being a church that invests in ***making disciples who make disciples***, especially in our surrounding community. We strive to equip men and women to love and care for their families as servant leaders. We will be a place where parents find support to build stable households within which children can be nurtured into maturity and become the next generation to carry the light of the gospel. We will be a church full of mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, grandmas and grandpas who see themselves playing a critical role in growing a flourishing Evansville community one disciple at a time.

Our Strengths

Faithfulness to the Word

Throughout the past 30 years our congregation has grown in love with the Word of God. Sermon series emphasize personal study including weekly memory verses and encourage discipleship. Small groups make the Word central to their gatherings. Many of our members are faithful in personal study and place a high value on daily quiet times in their lives.

Pastoral Care

Our Olivet congregation has a love for one another which goes beyond Sunday morning ties. Whether we grieve, receive a staggering diagnosis, undergo family turmoil or celebrate a birth, adoption or marriage, our congregation gathers round to halve our burden and double our joy. Pastoral care extends not only from ordained leadership but comes through personal interaction and small group relationships where extraordinary prayer and fellowship are shared.

Our Strengths (Continued)

We Are Great Commission Focused

At Olivet, we understand the command to “Go!” to mean “in your going”—in whatever you do and wherever you go. We want to live life ‘on mission’—offering our time, talents and treasure to serve outside our walls. A good example is our strategic priority of neighboring Vogel Elementary School where relationships with the school principal and teachers are being developed and doors to love and serve students and their families are being opened.

Olivet and Oak Hill Bible Fellowship welcome over 40 Vogel students to Kids Klub after school on Wednesdays where activities and a bible lesson are offered. Afterward, a kid-friendly meal is served and parents who are picking up their children can enjoy a meal and fellowship. In this setting, relationships are developing with families and opportunities to share the gospel are opening. We desire to carry the light of Christ and build relationships of integrity wherever we go – in our workplaces, with inmates in our local jail, with the people we live near, with our families and extended families.

Our Strengths (Continued)

Leadership Development

At Olivet, we serve Jesus through ministry teams that involve staff, elders and congregation members. This approach has led to broader member engagement and offers a pathway for leadership development. For example, our Worship Team includes a team leader (elder), staff member and four congregation members who meet monthly. The team leader and staff member work with the Senior Pastor to develop weekly worship services to complement the current sermon series. The head worship leaders then determine and schedule the musicians, vocalists and support team required for each week's service. Team members determine music selections, conduct weekly rehearsals, prepare bulletins and create slides for lyrics and sermon notes. During services, the team ensures AV equipment and streaming run smoothly. As experience was gained, several team members have progressed from support to lead roles in worship and eventually into congregational leadership as elders and deacons.

Our Strengths (Continued)

Community Involvement

Olivet has had long involvement with various ecumenical ministries and Christian movements in our area. Over 75 members have taken part in Tres Dias, Kairos, and Chrysalis weekends and then later served on teams. Many men and women in the congregation are active in prison ministries in addition to Kairos. This includes Kairos Outside, The Urban Ministries Institute (a current elder leads a seminary level four-year class at Wabash Correctional Prison) and Thinking for a Change (a current elder leads six-month program also at Wabash Correctional Prison). A team from Olivet, in rotation with other congregations, prepare and serve a hot breakfast at the Potter's Wheel in inner city Evansville. Olivet, along with several other churches, are engaged with nearby Vogel Elementary School to support teachers and disadvantaged students and families.

Our Strengths (Continued)

A Heart for Mission

In the past 10 years, Olivet has rejoiced as many young adults who grew up in our children and student ministries now serve in many ways including campus ministries and international missions. Their exposure to teaching and trainings while at Olivet cultivated in them a heart for mission. Many of our members serve in a wide range of local, regional and global ministries that feed the poor, minister to the incarcerated, care for the elderly and provide compassion to the last, the least and the lost. We have a long history of sending rescue, relief and recovery teams following hurricanes, tornados and other natural disasters. Our heart for mission has led us to send and support short-term and long-term missionaries to Columbia, France, Tunisia and Mexico.

Our Struggles

Like many churches, our congregation is experiencing the cultural tsunami of increasing disengagement from churches and other traditional communities. The rapid change in cultural values, mores and methods of communication have at the same time highlighted our difference in values and made the light of the gospel shine brighter. Young families will often participate for a season—fond of our commitment to biblical justice or intimate community—but are reluctant to pursue or maintain long term involvement. Many member families whose adult children grew up at Olivet have seen those young adults drift away from church connections entirely or choose to join other larger congregations that offer young adult ministries. As our congregation ages—and if new and younger families do not engage—a decline in giving will potentially put a strain on future finances.

Our Goals and Aspirations

The COVID crisis and mandatory shut-downs have reinforced a cultural shift that we have been observing for some time. In North America, the days of families 'going to church' as a normative way of life are in the rearview mirror. In our experience, the traditional 'attractional' model of church life is no longer effective. We have been moving to a model of church life that encourages members to live out our mission throughout the week in the environments where we live and work....where disciple-making is done in the world we live in and not necessarily the building we go to on Sunday.

Our Goals and Aspirations (Continued)

Looking to the future, we see outreach to and relationship building with young adults and their families essential to a healthy, vibrant congregation in the future and we are seeking next generation leadership to move into that future. We dream of becoming a flourishing congregation where people experience growth as disciples, share their love for God's Word with others, and enjoy warm fellowship with one another.



Our Context

Evansville is Indiana's third largest city after Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, and the largest city in Southern Indiana. Evansville is the social, medical, and cultural hub of activity in southwestern Indiana and the Illinois-Indiana-Kentucky tri-state area. This region is home to over 300,000 people. There are some key initiatives underway in our community that we believe reflect the movement of the Spirit of God in our midst.



Evansville Living (<https://www.evansvilleliving.com/>)



There is a concerted, community-wide economic and community development effort to attract business and young adults who can help shape and grow Evansville as a vibrant, economically healthy, family-friendly community. The ***Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (eRep)*** is committed to this vision for our area and exciting progress is being made. (<https://www.evansvilleregion.com/>)

Our Context (Continued)



In recent years, *For Evansville* has emerged as a transformative movement in the Evansville area committed to linking the Church to local efforts that address significant community needs (<https://www.forevansville.org/aboutus>). Many church leaders in our community have been working together as the 'Church United' to bring positive change that can lead to a flourishing Evansville for all who live here.

For many years, one of our community's leading influencers has been the ***Welborn Baptist Foundation***. Through their work as a funder/advocate for nonprofit and faith-based organizations, they have helped lead and support an effort to unite the Church and other community sectors to cultivate a community that flourishes with well-being, abundance and peace that God desires-- *Is 65:17-25*.



Welborn Baptist Foundation

<https://www.welbornfdn.org/vision/>

For Such A Time As This

At this time, there is growing momentum to expand and strengthen the Kingdom of God in our community through these movements. The Olivet congregation is engaged with these efforts and looks to a future when our collective efforts further transform our community for Christ. We are extremely excited about the possibility of **YOU** being a part of that future with us!



Position Description: Senior Pastor

(See position description for details)

The Senior Pastor visibly models a Christian lifestyle worth emulating to Olivet Community Church (EPC) and the Evansville community. He or she is emotionally and spiritually healthy, demonstrating joy and hope. The Senior Pastor glorifies God by providing Biblical leadership through focusing on God's word and prayer, shepherding the Olivet congregation, equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry. The Senior Pastor works closely with church leadership in formulating vision and strategy based on God's leading for Olivet. He or she serves as head of staff by managing, overseeing, directing and supporting staff. The Senior Pastor has the primary preaching responsibility and is engaged in the oversight of teaching, evangelism, pastoral care and prayer ministry of the church.

Onboarding Support

Our desire is for your family to experience a seamless transition to the Evansville area. We will stand ready to assist in the following areas:

- **Schools**: Support in getting children enrolled in the school systems (public or non-public) from several current or retired teachers, staff members and principals.
- **Housing**: Access to a local realtor for a read on neighborhoods within the area.
- **Spouse Employment**: Access to an employment resource should your spouse be seeking employment in the area.
- **Health Care**: An introduction to the two hospital systems in our city and connections to healthcare professionals.
- **Social Connections**: A welcoming church family for outings, play dates, dinners, shopping, and movie nights.

Onboarding Support (Continued)

Your transition will be navigated with close support from our retiring Senior Pastor, Elders, and Deacons who have key responsibilities in our congregation.

The Retiring Pastor will be available to provide background and support in the following areas:

- Worship service and sermon planning/preparation.
- Pastoral care for in-home and hospital visits, weddings and funerals.
- Counseling practices, including pre-marital.
- Building and leading community across multiple generations.
- Moderating the Session and ensuring a smooth handoff of leadership responsibilities.
- Making connections with other pastors/leaders in the Evansville Christian community

Onboarding Support (Continued)

The Elders, Deacons and Administrative Pastor can provide:

- Near and long-term vision and direction of the church.
- Overview of church administrative practices.
- Overview of church finances.
- Introduction to pastoral and spiritual needs of members.
- Various avenues to get acquainted with the congregation in small, informal settings.

Your Next Steps

If you believe God is leading you to pursue our Senior Pastor position, please provide the following:

- **A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION THAT INCLUDES A DESCRIPTION OF WHY YOU BELIEVE YOUR GIFTS, EXPERIENCE AND CALLING ARE A GOOD FIT FOR THE POSITION.**
- **A RESUME AND PIF**
- **THREE REFERENCES** (Your references will not be contacted without giving you prior notice.)
- **LINKS TO VIEW THREE SERMONS OR OTHER TEACHINGS YOU HAVE PRESENTED**

PLEASE EMAIL ALL MATERIALS IN PDF FORMAT TO olivetsearchteam@gmail.com

WE WILL CONFIRM RECEIPT OF DOCUMENTS AND CONTACT YOU TO DETERMINE NEXT STEPS.