

## Background Information – Peoria Area & Mt. Olive Missionary Church

From our humble start in 1904, the congregation of Mt. Olive Missionary Church has called several addresses home, including the current site established in 1978. This prime and fully paid for location on the north side of Peoria, Illinois combines contemporary looks and amenities with inviting character not usually found in construction from this period. Our sanctuary includes seating for 250-300 people, professional sound and par can lighting systems, along with video equipment for modern presentation of worship services. Capability for live-streaming services was added in 2020 to enable older congregants and people with health concerns to attend services from their homes. Other strong attributes include a large multi-purpose fellowship hall in the lower level with adjacent kitchen. This expansive area includes sound and video projection systems functioning effectively for lectures and teaching, conferences, and has hosted many memorable celebrations for our church family and community. Within the past seven years we have refreshed our sanctuary by replacing pews with new chairs and carpeting, as well as replaced our parking lot. We are currently debt free.



Mt. Olive Missionary Church is a microcosm of the city we call home, blending the warmth of a small community with the amenities of a large metropolis. Situated midway between Chicago and St. Louis, Peoria's immediate population of 110,417



(latest Census) anchors a three county metropolitan region (349,682 pop.) encompassing the scenic Illinois River and its surrounding basin, hills and prairie lands. Peoria is home to the Peoria Chiefs (St. Louis Cardinals affiliated), who play at state-of-the-art Dozer Park in downtown Peoria. The Peoria Rivermen host Southern Professional Hockey League (SPHL) opponents at the Civic Center Arena. Local sports fans also enjoy baseball and basketball teams from Bradley University competing in these facilities. A \$22M Louisville Slugger Sports Complex

opened in northwest Peoria in 2016. The complex features a 125,000 square foot dome and 10 synthetic turf bat & ball fields, including a 1,300 seat stadium. It is available for tournaments, leagues, clinics, showcases and events across multiple sports. In addition to a strong collegiate system of Bradley University and Illinois Central College, Caterpillar, and three regional medical centers mesh with a broad employment base to contribute to the Peoria area's ethnically diverse population. The oldest and largest park district in Illinois, the Peoria Park District encompasses nearly 60 square miles with 50 miles of trails and bike paths. Glen Oak Park is home to Peoria Zoo, Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum and Luthy Botanical Garden. Throughout the District, we host all kinds of sports including softball, soccer, volleyball, tennis and more while Owens Center offers ice skating year-round! Annually, hundreds of concerts, festivals and special events are featured on the Peoria RiverFront and in our parks. And, of course, the RiverPlex, our state of the art, medically-based fitness center focuses on healthy and active lifestyles. The PPD is just one of many community organizations that make Peoria a great base camp for raising a family.

Interwoven through Peoria's fabric for over 116 years is Mt. Olive's legacy of providing ministry throughout the Peoria area. Instrumental in creating the Peoria Rescue Mission, Southside Mission, church plants and the Peoria Christian Center, our members maintain ties to these organizations and further impact our community. Our current Senior Pastor, Rev. Mark Douras and his wife Sheryl have been led by God to start a Refreshing Mercies Ministry (RMM) in the Peoria area for the purpose of ministering to hurting people and giving guidance on their journey of loss, tragedy, or transition. Programs and resources have been developed to help individuals, couples, families, groups and those in ministry receive healing and encouragement through prayer and counsel. Since Pastor Mark and Sheryl will begin focusing nearly 100% of their time on RMM beginning July 1, 2021, we are in need of a senior pastor at that time.

Mt Olive's purpose for existing is to develop a healthy community of believers in the Peoria area that attracts the un-reached to Jesus. We do this by providing a clear view to the greater Peoria area of who Jesus is by reflecting Him in the way we Love, Live, and Serve, resulting in new followers of Jesus Christ. Even during Covid-19 restrictions, we have continued small group bible studies (LIFE groups) using Zoom. We are looking for our next senior pastor to continue to lead us as we reflect Jesus to those in the Peoria area who are not yet saved. Sixty-eight percent of our congregation is greater than 39 years old.

