

# The Olive Branch

November 29, 2017

## Accent on Worship

*Pastor Joseph Crippen*

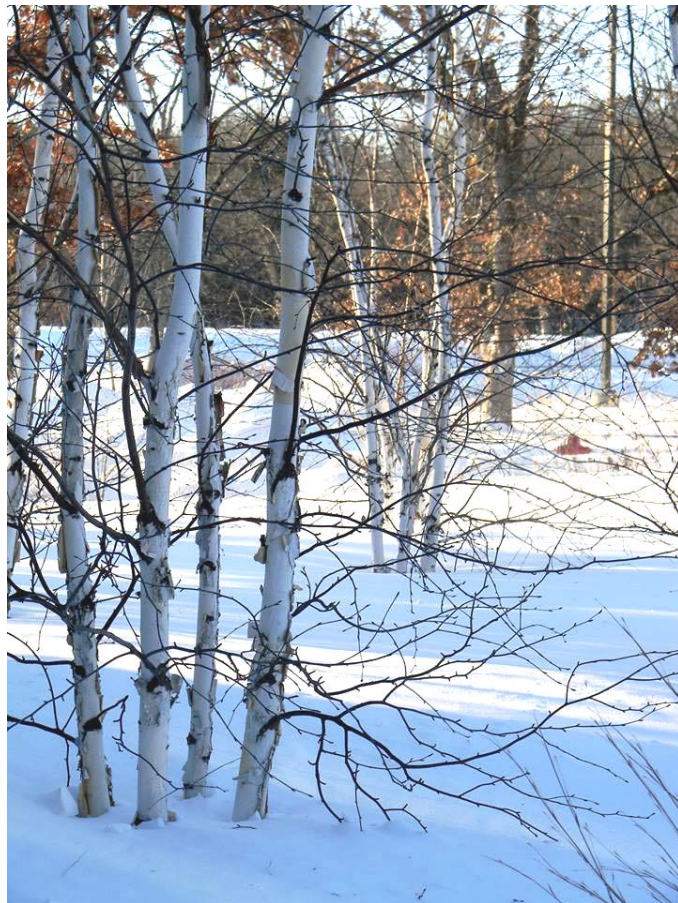
### *Pregnant Waiting*

This year we hear the story of the angel Gabriel and a young woman named Mary on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We have three Sundays before we get there. This Sunday we'll be told by Jesus to stay awake, be ready for his coming. The next two Sundays we'll hear more calls to be ready from John the Baptist. But as we hope for God's coming into our world even now, not just 2,000 years ago, on this eve of another Advent season I find great hope in the image of pregnancy.

Think about human gestation for a moment. Nine months of waiting for a birth, and then a life that still is as yet unfolded, even at birth. There's joy at all the stages, including the nine months. But the birth doesn't answer everything. As I have watched our children grow, every day is a new day of discovery, of vision of what they will become, of living with who they are. They are gifts of God and through them God will do good things in the world. But what that will fully look like will not be known for a very long time. Now, as with each of us, all we see are glimpses of the impact each of us makes.

And so it is with God's coming. It's not only significant that God chose to come as a helpless infant, risking everything on human kindness and compassion, and on the idea that someone would care for this baby until he grew up. It's deeper than that: God's salvation of the world in Jesus is very much like a pregnancy, birth, and growing up: we know that Christ is the life of the world, but we're still waiting to see the fullness of that reality, the completion of that gift. Mary's song speaks of God transforming the world order, casting down the proud, feeding the hungry, changing everything. And as in pregnancy and childhood, we've passed a lot of stages in this plan of God, but there's still more to come, more to see, more to have done. In part because it's God's chosen way, not to come in power but to come among us and to effect this salvation from the ground up. But also in part because God is also doing this salvation in and through us, and that takes time. Lifetimes of time, lifetimes of love and grace, lifetimes of working for justice and peace on God's behalf. We cannot see the full picture, only glimpses. But the glimpses give us hope.

And so we wait, now, but with hope. We wait for the fulfilling of God's promise of life for the world. For Christ is even now coming into our world, a light that darkness cannot overcome.



## Sunday Readings

### **December 3, 2017** **First Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 64:1-9  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
I Corinthians 1:3-9  
Mark 13:24-37

---

### **December 10, 2017** **Second Sunday** **of Advent**

Isaiah 40:1-11  
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13  
2 Peter 3:8-15a  
Mark 1:1-8



## Sunday's Adult Forum

**Sundays, December 3 & 10:** "A Liturgical Reading of Mark," a 2-part series, presented by Dr. Charles Bobertz

Long before the Gospel writers put pen to papyrus, the earliest Christians participated in the powerful rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which fundamentally shaped their understanding of God, Christ, and the world in which they lived. In these forums, a respected biblical scholar and teacher explores how cultural anthropology and ritual studies elucidate ancient texts.

Dr. Charles Bobertz is Professor of Theology and the College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota.

---

## New Member Welcome

Mount Olive will welcome new members (or associate members) into membership on **Sunday, December 10, at the 10:45 liturgy**. A welcome brunch for the whole congregation will follow the service at 12:15 pm.

If you would like to be included in this new member group, or if you know someone who would like an invitation to join, please contact Cha at the church office ([welcome@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:welcome@mountolivechurch.org) or 612/827-5919) or speak with Pastor Crippen. Thanks!

---

## Seniors' Advent Luncheon to be Held Next Wednesday, December 6

Attention Seniors (65 and over)! Have you received your invitation to the annual Advent Luncheon for Seniors?

If you are age 65 or over and have not received your invitation, it's likely because we do not have your birthdate (or correct birthdate) on file. If that's the case, please call the church office and let us know so that we can update your membership information. All members of the Mount Olive community age 65 and over are cordially invited!

Please call the church office **by this Friday** to let us know you are coming (612-827-5919).

## Book Discussion

For the December 9 meeting, the Book Discussion Group will read *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston. For January 13, they will read the Regeneration Trilogy by Pat Barker. The three novels in the series are: *Regeneration*, *The Eye in the Door*, and *The Ghost Road*.

The Book Discussion Group meets on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the West Assembly area. All readers welcome!

---

## Music & Fine Arts' Advent Procession Service

**Sunday, December 3, 2017 -  
4:00 pm**

Mark the season with a solemn procession and a series of lessons and carols for Advent. Candles, incense, and beautiful music help draw all into this season of hope in the darkest time of the year.

All are welcome.





## ***Calendar***

### **Wednesday, November 29**

- 10:00 am Staff Meeting
- 5:30 pm Neighborhood Ministries Committee meeting
- 5:30 pm Children's Choir supper
- 6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsal
- 6:00 pm Internship Committee meeting
- 7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal
- 8:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### **Thursday, November 30**

- 6:00 pm Bible Study

### **Saturday, December 2**

- 9:30 am Confirmation
- 11:00 am Diaper Depot open
- Noon Community Meal
- 1-3 pm Prayer Shawl group meets at Blackeye Roasting

### **Sunday, December 3 - First Sunday of Advent**

- 8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and fellowship
- 9:30 am Sunday Church School / Adult Forum
- 10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and fellowship
- Noon Theological Discussion group
- 4:00 pm *MFA Event: Advent Procession*

### **Monday, December 4**

- 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### **Tuesday, December 5**

- Noon Bible Study
- 4:00 pm Diaper Depot open
- 7:00 pm Missions Committee meeting

## **Storytelling for Survivors: Exile, Empire, and the Shape of Scripture**

The second Thursday Bible study series of this year is under way, meeting in the Chapel Lounge from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Vicar Christy is leading this exploration of texts related to the Babylonian Exile (597-539 B.C.E.), with an emphasis on understanding the writers as survivors making sense of crises. How did the experience of conquest and displacement shape how the ancient faith community told its story, and how do the questions they asked about God still live with us today? Over the five weeks, we will read selections from Kings, various prophets, the Psalms, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Esther.

We begin at 6 pm with a light supper. All are welcome.

# HELP WANTED!



- A volunteer or two are needed videotape the sermon one Sunday every 4-6 weeks. Can be done for either liturgy. Training and all equipment are provided. Call Paul at 612-296-0055 for more information.

## **Messiah**

### **Sing-A-Long**

*Sunday, December 17, 2017*

*3:00 - 5:00 pm*

Como Park Lutheran (1376 Hoyt Ave W, St Paul, MN 55108)

Come celebrate the season by singing Handel's *Messiah!*

Soloists will provide the recitatives and arias and you are the chorus. Accompaniment will be provided by chamber orchestra. This event is free! Bring your own score or purchase one at the door. Listeners are welcome too.

An Advent Dinner will follow at 5pm. Swedish Meatballs and Lefse will be served. Adults \$8, children \$4 - family max. is \$25.

## Alternative Gift Giving

Are you looking for something different to do this year for Christmas gifts? The Missions Committee is promoting the idea of alternative gift giving this Christmas. For example, for \$40, you can buy rice for a week for one of the Bethania Kids homes in India. We have catalogues from different charitable organizations that you can use or you can order from the organizations' websites. Some of these organizations are:

- Lutheran World Relief: <https://lwr.org/giving-category/gifts>
- Heifer Project International: <http://www.heifer.org>
- Common Hope: <http://commonhopecatalog.myshopify.com/>
- Bethania Kids: <http://bethaniakids.org/creative-giving-catalog/>
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (we will have ornaments of animals to "buy" during the fair trade sale that you can use to make a donation):  
[www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts).

---

## Fair Trade Sale

The Missions Committee is hosting a fair trade sale. Purchase beautiful and unique fair trade items made by artisans in developing regions around the world. These items are available from SERRV, a nonprofit fair trade organization whose mission is to eradicate poverty wherever it resides by providing opportunity and support to artisans and farmers worldwide.

These handcrafted items will be available for purchase after both liturgies on December 3, 10, and 17 (cash and check only, although we hope to have a credit card option by Dec. 10). See the insert /page 9 to view some of the items that will be for sale. Fair trade coffee, chocolate, and cocoa from Equal Exchange will also be available. We encourage you to bring your own reusable bag for your purchases. This is not a fund-raiser, just an opportunity to buy good products for a good cause.

## Staff Christmas Gifts

As is our tradition, this is the time of year that we gather monetary gifts for our terrific church staff. If you would like to contribute, please either use the offering envelope provided especially for this, or simply note "staff gifts" on your check and deposit it in the offering plate on Sunday morning or send it to the church office. Please have the gifts in by Sunday, December 17.

Thanks for your generosity!

---

## Gifts of Securities

If you are considering making a gift of securities as a donation to the General Fund or Bold Step Forward Fund, please let us know this gift is coming and the approximate amount of your gift.

These gifts often come to the church without a name attached, and knowing who has made these donations helps us to ensure proper credit is given for annual contribution statements.

If you are making a gift of securities, you can either call the church office or drop a note via email to let us know.



## National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival: “No Room?”

This cherished annual event creates a holy experience for audiences in the awe-inspiring Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis. In 2017, the birth of Christ as a refugee story is more poignant and relevant than ever. In this time of unwelcome, discord, and deepening division, is there room for Christ to be born today?

Friday, December 8, 4:30 & 8:00pm

Saturday, December 9, 8:00pm

Basilica of Saint Mary, Minneapolis

Tickets are available by calling Brown Paper Tickets 1-800-838-3006, or order online at NLCA.com.

---

## Poet Malcolm Guite

On Sunday, November 26, in the third adult forum presentation of “Where Your Heart Is,” Pastor Crippen read a sonnet for Christ the King Sunday by Anglican priest-poet Malcolm Guite. Several people have asked where to find Father Guite's poems. They are in several books: *Waiting on the Word: a poem a day for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany*; *Sounding the Seasons*; *The Word in the Wilderness: a poem a day for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter*; and *Parable and Paradox: Sonnets on the Sayings of Jesus*. His blog can be found at: <https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/>.

---

## Keeping Advent in the Home

Advent is from the Latin word *adventus*, which means “coming.” What is the coming we are preparing for? For children, it is the coming birth of the Christ child on Christmas. But Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (a favorite theologian of Martin Luther) in the 12<sup>th</sup> century wrote that there are three Advents: first, the coming of God's embodied Love in the person of Jesus Christ; third, the final fulfillment of all things, when all things will be united in Christ; and in between is the second, the Transit of Christ in our lives, transforming us, our hearts, and our deeds. For adults, the season of Advent includes an awareness of and preparation toward all these comings.

Christmas then finally arrives on Christmas Eve and lasts the full twelve days - until Twelfth Night. Keeping Advent Advent and Christmas Christmas is one of the most challenging disciplines of the church year. And it is indeed a discipline: to keep the mindset of preparing and not yet celebrating, to keep the prayerful holiness of a quiet place where Christ can enter, to keep the anticipation of the fulfillment of promise, the “not yet”.

The Advent wreath has become a primary way of keeping Advent in the home. Light one candle the first Sunday, then two, then three. They can be on an actual wreath or four votives surrounded by greens. There are no names for the candles. There is no Christ candle in the center. They are a sacred marking of days. Perhaps use the Prayer of the Day as you light the candles each Sunday. This year we will light the fourth, the last, candle on Christmas Eve. Then the wreath can be set aside and finally replaced by the green and red and white and gold of springtime in winter.

For more Advent observances, including making a Jesse Tree, take a look at “Full Homely Divinity,” an Anglican website: <http://fullhomelydivinity.org/>





## mer · ry

*adjective*

1. **cheerful and lively.**

*synonyms:* cheerful, cheery, in high spirits, high-spirited, bright, sunny, smiling, lighthearted (of an occasion or season) **characterized by festivity and rejoicing.**

“he wished me a merry Christmas.”

Make “merry” more meaningful this year for a neighbor who may need a bit of extra rejoicing in their life. There are many ways to serve, give, and uplift someone in our community this Christmas.

Pick one (or many!) to share your merriment with and make it more festive for you and them!

### **Angel Tree partnering with Pillsbury House + Theater**

- Pillsbury’s social workers have referred families in serious need this season and we’ve connected with them to ease their burden and show them a blessing. Read their stories and pick an ornament (or two!) to provide real hope for these neighbors. Gifts include essentials like rent and gas cards to family outings and a tree.

### **Home Care Baskets for Our Saviour’s Housing**

- Take a list of needed items and fill a basket for someone experiencing home insecurity. Not able to do a whole basket? Anything from the list will be appreciated!

### **Diaper Depot family gift bags**

- Each December we give the families who use the diaper depot a bag with some extra goodies like wipes, toothbrushes, baby items, and a treat. Please help us wish them a Merry Christmas by decorating a gift bag after the Sunday services in the West Assembly area.

More information about each program can be found in the West Assembly area of contact Anna Scott or a member of the Neighborhood Ministries Committee

### **Cold Weather Gear**

Stay warm and keep others cozy!  
Neighborhood Ministries is collecting coats, hats, scarves, and mittens to be given away during Community Meals this winter. Please drop new or gently used donations in the box by the coat area. Thank you!



## Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

**Sunday Eucharist: 8:00 & 10:45 am**

### **Contact Us**

Phone: 612/827-5919

On the Web: [mountolivechurch.org](http://mountolivechurch.org)

### **Staff**

Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*

Cantor – *David Cherwien*

Vicar – *Jessica Christy*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Outreach  
and Ministry – *Anna Scott*

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

Sexton – *James Wilkes*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ  
congregation.*

### **In This Issue:**

- **Accent on Worship: Pastor Joseph Crippen**
- **New Members to be Received December 10**
- **Advent Procession: December 3, 4 pm**
- **Fair Trade Gift Sale is On!**
- **Seniors Advent Luncheon to be Held Wed., Dec. 6**
- **Cold Weather Gear Needed!**

## FAIR TRADE SALE: December 3, 10 and 17

Purchase beautiful and unique fair trade items made by artisans in developing regions around the world. These items are available from SERRV, a nonprofit fair trade organization. Below are some of the items that will be for sale.



“I am now a self-reliant woman because of my work weaving baskets. I am not alone--there are many other women who are now independent and lead their households with prosperity.”

*-Fatema, Basket Weaver, Bangladesh*



Ring of Fire baskets \$30



West Bank ceramic dish \$18



Ipil-Ipil birdhouse \$20



Quilled snowflake ornaments \$15



Tranquil teal nativity \$22



Trumpeting angel \$24



Soapstone elephant \$12



Love buzz coffee \$6.50



Olive oil \$7.50



Multi column earrings \$18





## Action Needed Now! Call or Write Today

### #1 From ELCA Advocacy.

“Before Thanksgiving, the House of Representatives passed HR 1, The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, legislation that would cut taxes for corporations and wealthy individuals. This legislation, with bipartisan opposition, benefits corporations and the wealthy over lower and middle-income families. Similar legislation now heads to the Senate floor for debate this week. As Lutherans evaluate these tax proposals, our social teachings encourage us to ask, ‘Does this tax legislation help the poor, hungry and vulnerable populations?’ Sadly, the answer is no. Corporations and wealthy individuals will receive far more benefits in these tax plans than those living and working in poverty. Your voice is needed today to oppose the current tax legislation and urge senators to prioritize “the common good over narrow economic interests.”

### #2 More specifically. From Alliance Housing, a recipient of a major grant from our 2011 campaign tithes.

The House Tax Reform bill is slated to cut tax exempt bonds that fund affordable housing. Alliance was awarded such a bond to build 43 studio apartments in south Minneapolis for older adults with a history of homelessness, but would lose this award and be unable to build the housing should the House bill pass in its current form. Call or write and ask to "safeguard tax exempt private activity bonds."

---

## Summer of '17. . . Oops!

Sunday, November 19. How many times that day, in response to the gentle query, “Art, when will we have heat in church?” did I foolishly respond, “Barring some major failure, by Thanksgiving Day – for sure!”

Ah, the *hubris* of such confidence. Definition: *Hubris* (in Greek Tragedy) excessive pride or defiance of the gods leading to nemesis. Sure enough, “major” happened.

Recall that two weeks ago, the wells in the parking lot were filled with glycol solution. Tuesday, November 21, saw the arrival of six barrels of glycol solution for filling the building system, so valves could be opened, and there would be heat. Despite the precaution of ordering from the very same supplier that filled the wells, despite the description on the barrels, the six barrels were not the same product. Mixing the two would have caused a major problem.

So, last weekend, only two heat pumps were activated, running on plain water. Fortunately, it was a mild weekend.

Good news: six barrels of the right product will arrive today (Tuesday). The building system will be filled and activated Wednesday. By Sunday, (Sshh! speaking very quietly now) the system will be working, there will be heat. Remember *hubris*.

Watch this spot in the coming weeks. I will be reporting to you about something other than heat, happenstance, and *hubris*!

- Art Halbardier, Property Director