

The Olive Branch

December 13, 2017

Accent on Worship

Vicar Jessica Christy

When we meet John the Baptist in the Gospel of John, he is introduced with a series of things that he is not. Curious people want to know the identity of this exciting new preacher, and so they ask him: Are you the Messiah? Are you Elijah? Are you the prophet? And John answers all these questions: No. He is none of the things that people want him to be. I imagine it must have been frustrating for John to have so many people thinking he was someone and something he couldn't be. Did he ever get sick of disappointing those around him with the confession that he wasn't the person they were hoping for? Was he ever tempted to pretend to be someone he wasn't?

When I ask myself these questions, I'm inspired by John's confidence. We see him secure in the knowledge of who he is and who he is not. It's all right that he isn't the promised Messiah, or Elijah reborn, or some other great prophet; he's the Baptist, and as the Baptist, he knows his mission. He is not the light, but he can testify to the light. He is not the king, but he can prepare the king's way.

This is a comforting thought for all of us as we go about our life and work. All of us face expectations – internal and external – about who we should be. We're constantly pushed to be better family members, better workers, better citizens, better Christians. It's easy to feel like we can never measure up. But like John, each of us can find our purpose in our own identity. We don't need to be a savior or prophet to witness to what God is doing in the world. We don't need to be the light to testify to the light. God has made each of us to be who we are, and who we are is enough.

Advent Evening Prayer

Wednesdays, December 13 and 20

7:00 pm



Sunday Readings

December 17, 2017

**Third Sunday
of Advent**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24, 2017

**Fourth Sunday
of Advent**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Luke 1:46b-55

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

***Full Christmas and
Epiphany worship
schedule on page 6.***

Sunday's Adult Forum

Sunday, December 17: "Report from Nigeria," presented by Brad Holt, recently returned from a teaching trip to Nigeria.

Sunday, December 24: No Adult Forum.

Transitions Support Group to Meet Saturday, January 6, 2018

This group will hold its next get together at the home of Grace Wiechman at 10:00 am on Saturday, January 6.

For more information, please contact Cathy Bosworth, 612-708-1144 , marcat8447@yahoo.com or Heather Halen 612-822-0953, hjoyhalen@hotmail.com.

Thanks and Welcome!

Thanks to all who assisted with the festive Scandinavian brunch and new member reception on Sunday. Special thanks to the Pipkorn and Crosby families and crew, as well as Andrew Andersen, Gretchen Campbell-Johnson, Paul Nixdorf, and Harry and Jeanette Eklund.

We offer a special welcome to our new members: *Ruth Birch; Emily Boldischar, with Ingrid and Vincent; Kay Else; Jonathan Holtmeier & Holly Wiedenhoeft, with Calvin and Frederick; John Kronen; J.P. & Paide Severson; and Darrell & Mary Golnitz* (received in October). We are glad to have you in our family of faith.

Olive Branch Publication Schedule

There is no *Olive Branch* published during the week between Christmas and New Year. Regular weekly publication resumes with the January 3, 2018 issue. Information for that issue is due on Tuesday, January 2.

Book Discussion

For January 13 meeting, the Book Discussion Group 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!

Understanding Implicit Bias: Breaking the Cycle

**facilitated by Dr. Raj,
supported by RJCA*

Saturday, Dec 16, 9am-12pm
Minnetonka United
Methodist Church
17611 Lake St. Extension,
Minnetonka

Please RSVP to: info@rjca-inc.org

Take part in a meaningful, challenging conversation about the implicit biases we all carry and how to move beyond them.



Calendar

Wednesday, December 13

10:00 am Staff Meeting
 7:00 pm *Midweek Advent Vespers*
 7:30 pm Cantorei rehearsal
 8:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Thursday, December 14

6:00 pm Bible Study

Saturday, December 16

9:30 am Confirmation
 11:00 am Diaper Depot open
 Noon Community Meal

Sunday, December 17 - Third 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

Monday, December 18

6:30 pm Reconciling Works committee meeting
 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesday, December 19

Noon Bible Study
 4:00 pm Diaper Depot open

• 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.

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

The current Thursday Bible study series of this year continues through Dec. 21, 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.

Watch for the Birds

As we wait and watch for Christ's Advent and dwelling among us, watch the bare birches in the sanctuary for signs of hope: "Thus says God: I will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and set it out...On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit... and birds of every kind will nest under it. They will find shelter in the shade of its branches. (Ezekiel 17:23)



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.

Fair Trade Sale

The Missions Committee will continue to host the fair trade sale for one more week. 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. Check out this story about one of the artisans:

https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.serrv.org/downloads/ArtisanStories/Peru_Rafael_Campo.pdf

The handcrafted fair trade items will be available for purchase after both services on December 17. Fair trade coffee, chocolate and other food products from Equal Exchange through Lutheran World Relief's Coffee Project will also be available. 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 this 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.



Christmas and Epiphany Worship at Mount Olive

Christmas Eve: Sunday, December 24, 2017

Holy Eucharist for the 4th Sunday of Advent at 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Choral Prelude at 9:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Eucharist at 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day: Monday, December 25, 2017

Festival Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

(Christmas Carry-in Brunch at 9:30 a.m.)

The Name of Jesus: Monday, January 1, 2018

Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

The Epiphany of Our Lord: Saturday, January 6, 2018

Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

The Baptism of Our Lord: Sunday, January 7, 2018

Holy Eucharist at 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Share a Smile

Brighten the day of a senior citizen and have some fun. Hang out with an older adult on an ongoing basis and do things that you both enjoy. Elders reside in Minneapolis or suburban Hennepin County. Small groups and families welcome; youth must be age 12 or older and supervised by an adult. Please contact Jeanne the HOME Program, Volunteer Coordinator at scsvolunteer@seniorcommunity.org or call 952-767-7894 for more information about a variety of unpaid volunteer options.

The HOME Program number is 952-746-4046, if an elder seeks a Friendly Visitor or other services in Hennepin County. Senior Community Services is a nonprofit organization with four programs serving elders age 60+ and caregivers statewide. For more information please visit www.seniorcommunity.org or call 952-541-1019.

Seniors outside of Hennepin County should contact the Senior Linkage Line at 1-800-333-2433 for information about services in their area. Thank you!



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.

Kytonia has three children 9, 7, and 5 years old. Her 7 year old daughter is battling cancer which demands almost daily treatment, meaning Kytonia is unable to work and must care for her sick child along with her others as well.

Ebony and her partner Quintin have two kids ages 5 and 2 and another girl on the way. Recently homeless this summer, Ebony is fighting to stay in her housing after Quintin fractured his vertebrae at work and she is only able to manage part time work.

If you're able, please pick an ornament with a request from either of these families and fulfill it by Sunday Dec 31st. They are both needing help with rent, so if giving a cash/check donation, please either 1) use an offering envelope and designate it to "Angel tree" 2) Slide it under my door in an envelope! 3) You can give cash or check to the fair trade sale and ask for it to go to "Angel Tree"

Thank you for your prayers for these families and for your generosity.

More information about each program can be found in the West Assembly area or 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

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.*

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