

The Olive Branch

January 17, 2018

Vicar Jessica Christy

"Follow me and I will make you fish for people."

"Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

They're not exactly compelling sales pitches. This week, Jesus and Jonah show up and tell people to drastically change their lives. You might think they'd try to craft compelling arguments to persuade their listeners, but instead they give simple statements. What they say shouldn't have the power to convince anybody. But somehow, it works! Simon and Andrew immediately leave their nets; the Ninevites repent and declare a fast. Jesus and Jonah might speak simply, but God's word has a power beyond the words that leave their mouths.

When we have a chance to witness, we might worry about finding the exact right words. We might fear saying the wrong thing, falling short of what we could accomplish, or being unprepared to share the good news. Like Moses, we might object that we're not eloquent enough to share God's word. It feels like such a huge responsibility for God to entrust to us. But we can let go of some of that worry, because the power of God's word doesn't depend on us. In Isaiah 55:11, God promises that "my word ... shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." God's word will do what God intends it to do. Jonah doesn't even want the people of Nineveh to repent! He puts in the minimum possible effort into his message, and still it takes root in the hearts of the Ninevites.

In these two stories, we see that anyone is capable of sharing God's word. It's not a privilege reserved for the most eloquent or learned among us. If God has given you something to say – say it! Testify, comfort, speak out against injustice, share words of hope. What you say will have a power to change lives beyond the mere sentences that leave your mouth. God will accomplish what God wants. You don't need to worry if you are good enough, you just need to speak.

Sunday Readings

January 21, 2018

Third Sunday

after Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 62:5-12

I Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

January 28, 2018

Fourth Sunday

after Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

I Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

Sunday Adult Forum

This Sunday, January 21: "Community and Trinity in Africa" - Dr. Ibrahim Bitrus

The Trinity is not a mathematical mystery nor is it a model community. Ibrahim Bitrus will present his position that the Trinity is a gift of God's trinitarian communion with us and our world. This gift correlates with and recasts the African understanding of community.

Dr. Ibrahim Bitrus was born and raised in northeast Nigeria. He received his Bachelor's degree and Masters of Theology from the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, followed by his PhD in systematic theology from Luther Seminary. Previously he was a lecturer at the Bronnum Lutheran Seminary in Yola, Nigeria.

Next Sunday, January 28: "Etty Hillesum: An Introduction" - Nancy JP Anderson

Elie Wiesel, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Anne Frank are familiar authors from the holocaust. Let's meet another, lesser known author: Etty Hillesum. A woman in her late twenties during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, she began keeping daily journals in 1941. By the time she was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in September 1943, she had filled 11 journals with the mundane, as well as the mystery surrounding her developing relationship with "her" God. Enlivening, enlightening, and hopeful, she treats her readers to undeniable internal positivity while her external world shrinks into negativity and despair.

Nancy JP Anderson just completed her Master's Degree in Theology at St. Catherine's University, St. Paul. Her thesis is titled: *The Undercurrent of Music in the Burgeoning Spirituality of Etty Hillesum*.

A Journey Through Judges:

Thursday Bible Study

This year's third Thursday Bible study series begins January 18 (tomorrow evening!). It will focus on the exciting, colorful, and violent leaders in the book of Judges, trying to explore the question of where we see God in their stories. Special attention will be paid to the role of women in the book.

The 90-minute sessions begin at 6:00 p.m. with a light supper. Please contact Vicar Christy if you can provide the meal for our first meeting.

We Can Do Better Campaign

Throughout January you have the opportunity to join with faith communities throughout the state, adding your name and voice as together we call for our Minnesota Legislature to take a challenge and increase Minnesota's renewable energy to 50% by 2030.

Ten years ago the Legislature adopted landmark legislation with 97 percent bipartisan support to make Minnesota's energy standard 25 percent renewable by 2025. That was great! And we will certainly meet that goal, since we are already at 21%. But we need to, and can, do more. We, together with Governor Dayton, the Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL), and many others, call on our Legislature to be a leader in Climate Justice. Everyone in our community can get their name on this petition. Check the petition table in the hallway. We already have over 60 Mount Olive names on our petition. Can we get to over 200 before the Legislature convenes in February?

The Olive Branch

Calendar

Wednesday, January 17

10:00 am Staff Meeting
5:30 pm Children's Choir supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsal
7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal
8:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Thursday, January 18

6:00 pm Bible Study

Saturday, January 20

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

Sunday, January 21 - Third Sunday after Epiphany

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, January 22

4-6 pm National Lutheran Choir Board meeting
7:00 pm Worship Committee meeting
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesday, January 23

Noon Bible Study
4:00 pm Diaper Depot open
7:00 pm National Lutheran Choir rehearsal



- 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.

Sign Up for Altar Flowers

The 2018 Altar Flowers chart is posted near the church office, awaiting your names! Providing Altar Flowers is a great way to remember a loved one or honor a special occasion.

The cost of each bouquet is \$25. You may sign up to provide one bouquet by writing on one line of the sign up, or to provide both bouquets by signing on both lines.

Checks for Altar Flowers may be made payable to the Mount Olive Women, placed in the envelope provided, and submitted to the church office.

First Phase of Construction Is Nearly Complete. It's Time to Celebrate!

The first phase of our capital project is nearing an end. We are enjoying even, warm temperatures provided by Mother Earth – with a little help! Our Undercroft has been repainted and relit to be an even more enjoyable space. All of this furthers our commitment to care for the earth and be mindful of climate justice.

This First Phase will be dedicated after the second liturgy on Sunday, January 28, and then we will celebrate with a dinner in the Undercroft and some peeks at the high-tech heating and cooling solution in our sub-basement.

These have been truly remarkable months of a Bold Step Forward. We have shared a vision of both climate justice and making our sanctuary more comfortable. We have responded with sacrificial giving and support. We have endured a few cold Sundays and some Sundays without hot water for coffee hour – and survived! We have been blessed with construction workers who have worked with speed and care to ensure these winter months are warm inside. We have had faithful members who have envisioned, advised, and held up our faith, values, and concerns along the way. There is so much here to celebrate!

Save the Date!

Get ready for a grand celebration! Your Missions Committee will host **Taste of India on Sunday, February 11**.

We will build on what we learned in October about Bethania Kids, celebrate growth and plans, relish wonderful Indian cuisine, and consider how we can expand our partnership with our Indian Christian friends.

Fun Facts to Know and Tell

You likely have noticed the unusual star hanging over Mount Olive's chancel (pictured on page 1). There has been one there for many years during Epiphany. A friend of mine saw it in 1983 and said it looked like a Sputnik - the Russian-made earth satellite. It's known as a "Moravian star" and the design dates back to 1830, when it was first created to help students in the Moravian schools with geometry. There are many of them around the world including one in the church where Bach is buried.

- Ken Siess

Book Discussion

For the February 10, meeting, the Book Discussion group will read *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, by Edgar Allan Poe.

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!

The Olive Branch

News From the Neighborhood

Volunteers Needed!

Our Sheridan Story partner Jefferson Community School is looking for afterschool teachers for next semester. Afterschool classes are 4:10-5:20pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. If you are interested in teaching an after school class, based on a special hobby or skill contact Steve Schriver (Community Education Coordinator) at Stephan.Schriver@mpls.k12.mn.us.

Bold Hope in the North

Sunday, January 28 - 2:00 pm

Westminster Presbyterian Church at Nicollet Mall and 12th Street, Minneapolis

You are invited to an Interfaith Gathering to Celebrate Unity and Shared Purpose January 28, 2018, at 2:00p.m.

In partnership with the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee, this celebration will showcase Minnesota's national leadership in multi-faith dialogue and cooperation, and will raise money to prevent homelessness through the Interfaith Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The celebration will feature music, testimonies from people helped by the Emergency Rental Assistance Program...and a few surprises!

Every Church a Peace Church Potluck

Monday, January 22 - 6:30 pm

St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, Minneapolis

(4537 3rd Ave. S.; Minneapolis 55409 (*access to parking lot)*

The presenter for this forum will be Leah Jaslow, and her topic is "The Refugee Crisis - Putting Refugees First."

Leah Jaslow is the Donor Services/Engagement Assistant at the American Refugee Committee. As part of the Development & Communications Team at ARC, she enjoys being a resource to ARC supporters and having opportunities to spread the word about the amazing people ARC serves. She also spent time studying in Jordan – an experience that inspired her to work with refugees.

2017 Statements Available Now!

Year-end contribution statements are available for pickup at church (next to the coat room). Those statements not picked up at church by January 28 will be mailed on Jan. 29.

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!

From the Church Library

January is the traditional time to make a wide variety of New Year's resolutions, although from what you read or hear later, most people struggle to keep those resolutions beyond the first month or two. We would like to recommend two special resolutions for you, as individuals, or as a family, to adopt for the year 2018 and then strive diligently and prayerfully to help those resolutions to become real and remain true for the rest of your life/lives.

First, consider registering your small child for a public library card, almost as soon as he/she can walk. It is critical that you help your child (or children) become aware of and appreciate the wonderful opportunities that are found as a privilege with the use of that library card throughout their coming years at a nearby library facility (and let us include our own church library here as well), so that each visit denotes an optimistic and delightful time for that child's learning and intellectual progress. Your effort and time given to them freely at an early age will pay dividends as they go throughout their growing years in particular!

From Vintage Books and Anchor Books comes an article written in the summer of 2016 that reveals these rather sad and shocking observations:

- 80% of U.S. families did not buy or read a single book last year;
- 33% of high school graduates never read another book the rest of their lives;
- 42% of college grads never read another book after they leave college;
- 79% of U.S. adults have not been in a book store during the last five years; and
- 59% of new books are not read to completion!

Becca Levy, a professor of epidemiology at Yale, through an article in the Star Tribune last summer, says "reading books is tied to a longer life. Research has found book readers live an average of almost two years longer than those who did not read." My guess is that for some who are readers in the latter part of their lives now, that average would actually be much longer than that quoted by the research mentioned above.

The second part of a resolution you are making this year should encourage you to remain a faithful reader, as you have found books that are part of your devotional life and that give you inspiration and support as you aspire to live your life as a Christian in an often confusing world. For those who haven't been in the "reading habit" we invite you to come into our church library often, but especially when you have time to peruse our wide variety of resources thoroughly. Throughout the winter months (weather permitting) our church library is open and available to you in between each of the two liturgies on Sundays.

You can be assured that we are looking for you and want to welcome you warmly!

- Leanna Kloempken

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.*

In This Issue:

- Accent on Worship: Vicar Jessica Christy
- Seeking Donations of Cold Weather Gear
- Thursday Evening Bible Study Resumes January 18
(tomorrow!)
- Sign Up for Altar Flowers
- The We Can Do Better Campaign
- Church Library News
- Taste of India Announced
- 2017 Contribution Statements Available for Pick Up