

Guiding Principles for Worship at Mount Olive Lutheran Church

The people of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, believing that liturgy in worship of God not only expresses faith, but also shapes faith, strive to embody in worship the belief in a loving and present God, who desires the coming to fullness of all creation.

The people of Mount Olive fully expect to encounter the Triune God in the liturgy.

Therefore,

Because *God is Three-In-One*, we gather to worship God as a community, as a body of related and connected parts, united by the overarching story of God's love, revealed in creation, revealed in holy scripture, revealed in the person Jesus Christ, and revealed in the workings of the Holy Spirit in individual lives and in the life of the Church.

Because *God is the source of all that is good and honorable, beautiful and true*, the people of Mount Olive strive to honor God with music, word, and ritual that is true, to honor God with the most excellent we can offer, to honor God with beauty, and to place God at the center of all we do: in proclamation, in song, in rite, in speech, and, transformed by encounter with the Holy One, in life outside these walls. Because *God is merciful and forgiving*, we strive to approach our tasks in worship with reverence toward God and with grace, benevolence, and lovingkindness toward each other.

Because *God created all things, blessed them, and called them good, beautiful – tov*; and because God loves creation so much that God entered fully into it in the person Jesus Christ, the people of Mount Olive honor and use basic elements of earth in worship: water, fire, smoke, oil, bread, wine, as well as our bodies and all five senses – through ritual, gesture, posture, movement, silence, touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing.

Because *God is ultimately Mystery*, because God cannot be totally known, the people of Mount Olive use the gifts of silence, darkness, symbol, ritual, metaphor, sacred story, incense, chant, reverence, and a keeping of sacred space in worshiping God.

Because *God is God through all space and through all time*, in worship the people of Mount Olive honor and use the historic Mass form – ordo – of the Lutheran Church and its antecedents in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christian liturgy, where they are discerned to be true, excellent, beautiful, God-centered, and appropriate. We honor our ancestors in the Church by the singing of hymns and chants from across history and the globe, and acknowledge the ongoing work of the Spirit of God by using newly composed hymns, rites and texts, under the same criteria: that they are true, excellent, beautiful, God-centered, appropriate, and able to bear the weight of mystery.

Because the dance of the Trinity teaches us that *God is relational*, the people of Mount Olive desire to welcome all who come here to worship - in part, by enthusiastic participation in and practiced knowledge of the liturgy, as well as by the ongoing reevaluation for truth and

beauty of texts, music and ritual used in the worship of God, and by a continual assessment and discernment of what is being signified by the words, actions, song, and shape of the liturgy. This underlying ritual welcoming does not preclude or replace the personal encounter outside of worship with all who come to gather here.

Because *worship of God is autotelic*, an end in itself, the people of Mount Olive strive to ensure that the liturgy is designed and intended for worship of God, and worship of God alone, and not intended for any other goal or purpose, although that is not to say that God through the Risen Christ and the Spirit can in any way be limited in the transformation possible in the liturgical actions of the community.

Therefore,
may all efforts to worship God at Mount Olive be guided by a desire for

truth
beauty
excellence
God-centeredness
appropriateness
acknowledgement of mystery
and
community.

Adopted by the Worship Committee,
Mount Olive Lutheran Church
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