



The Olive Branch

February 19, 2020

A publication of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Accent on Worship

Vicar Bristol Reading

Last month I wrote a reflection about the Gospel reading and water. This week's lectionary readings, however, are about mountains.

Exodus 24 tells of Moses' encounter with the glory of the LORD atop Mount Sinai. To the Israelite people watching from the foothills below, it looks like the mountaintop is engulfed in flames. Then Matthew's Gospel presents us with the story of Jesus' mysterious transfiguration at the peak of a high mountain. Jesus' disciples are stunned to see his face and clothes radiate like the sun and to hear the voice of God speak directly from a shining cloud. What is it about mountains that make them such perfect settings for divine revelation? What spiritual lessons can we learn from rocks?

You may be familiar with ecologist Aldo Leopold's idea of "thinking like a mountain." Leopold used this phrase to describe a perspective that is wide enough to understand the holistic interconnectedness of complex ecosystems over time. Mountains, whose lifetimes can stretch millions of years, exist on a different time scale than the creatures and plants around them. As bearers of such ancient wisdom and stories, it's no wonder the scripture writers saw mountains as profoundly mystical places!

It may be a challenge for us mere humans to try to think like mountains, but scientist Marcia Bjornerud encourages us to at least try thinking like geologists. I recently finished her book *Timefulness: How Thinking Like a Geologist Can Help Save the World*, in which she writes about the ways geology can help us "witness time in a way that transcends the limits of our human experiences" (16).

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Sunday Readings

February 23, 2020

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalm 2

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-7

March 1, 2020

First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

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She writes:

For me, geology points to a middle way between the sins of narcissistic pride in our importance and existential despair at our insignificance. It affirms a teaching attributed to the eighteenth-century Polish Rabbi Simcha Bunim that we should all carry two slips of paper in our pockets: one that says "I am ashes and dust," and one that reads "The world was made for me." The earth itself, with its immensely deep history, is a communal heritage and universal mentor that may help us find a set of shared values. Studying its past may cause us to reconceive ourselves as fellow citizens of a profoundly mysterious planet that we urgently need to know better. (177)

In the rhythms of church time, we're entering Lent, a season in which we emphasize the idea that we are ashes and dust. This means we are finite and mortal, but it also means we are made of earth and we belong to this world with all its wonder. As beloved creations of God, it is important to remember both.

- Vicar Bristol Reading

Ushers Needed - Can You Help?

Might you be interested in greeting newcomers and old members alike? Might you enjoy serving in a new capacity? Might you enjoy ushering the members to the Eucharist? Might you be interested in learning the names of members as they come and go? Might you be interested in monitoring the building entrances to ensure security during the services? Might you enjoy carrying the gifts to the altar? If any of these things sound appealing to you, then you might just wish to become a Mount Olive Usher!!

Volunteers are needed! If you can help, please let Brian Jacobs know at 612-251-5942 by text or voice mail, or at brianjac1@aol.com. Currently, there is a need for ushers at both the early and late services as well as special services mid-week at noon and in the evenings. We'd love to welcome you to the usher corps and will be happy to get you trained and ready for the 2nd quarter schedule!

Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: February Walk-In Counseling Center

See complete information about the Walk-In Counseling Center in the February 5 issue of *The Olive Branch*, posted on the kiosk in the West Assembly Area, or by visiting <https://walkin.org/>.

Lent Begins Soon!

Ash Wednesday
February 26, 2020

Holy Eucharist at
Noon and 7:00 pm

All are welcome.

Calendar

Wednesday, February 19

10:00 am Staff meeting
5:30 pm Children's Choir supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
7:00 pm Y2 Confirmation
7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal
8:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Sunday, February 23 - Transfiguration of Our Lord

8:00 am Holy Eucharist
9:30 am Sunday Church School / Adult Forum
10:45 am Holy Eucharist

Monday, February 24

7:00 pm Vicar committee meeting
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesday, February 25

Noon Bible Study
4-8 pm Diaper Depot
6:00 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Wednesday, February 26 - Ash Wednesday

9:00 am Staff meeting
Noon Ash Wednesday Eucharist
7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Eucharist
8:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

It's Time.

If you have palm branches from last year's Eucharist on Palm/Passion Sunday, please bring them to church and place them in the designated basket in the narthex.

These branches will be burned on Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 25, after the Pancake Supper, and the ashes from the burning will be used at Ash Wednesday Eucharists on February 26.

Book Discussion

On March 14, the Book Discussion group will discuss, *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout. For April 11, they will read *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry*, by Fredrik Backman.

This group meets every second Saturday of the month at 10:00 am. All readers welcome!

Caucus for Climate February 25

Yes, Minnesota is having a presidential primary, but we are still having party caucuses, and it is important that you go! Our climate justice partner, Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, is challenging all of us to go to our caucus and present and/or support a resolution for climate action. This resolution supports the earlier petition many of you signed calling for Minnesota to become a 100% clean energy economy by 2050.

Stop at the table in the west assembly room to pick up your copy of the resolution and your Caucus for Climate button. Add your name to the "I Will Caucus for Climate" to let others know of your commitment.

Upcoming Adult Forums

February 23: "Effective Citizenship," presented by State Senator John Marty

The most important role in our democracy is that of citizen. How can we be more effective citizens in building a better society?

March 1: "The Art of Space," presented by Aaron Hodge Greenberg Silver

Artist Aaron Hodge Greenberg Silver shares the craft and art of his creative process relating to his current exhibit of paper cuttings at Mount Olive.

A Message on Immigration and Travel Ban from Bishop Eaton

Last Wednesday, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton shared a pastoral letter with the ELCA in response to the announced expansion of the federal travel ban. As we consider being salt and light in the world, as Jesus has declared we are (last Sunday's Gospel), this is worthy of our attention. Here is a link to a pdf of Bishop Eaton's statement.

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Bishop_Response_to_Expanded_Travel_Ban.pdf

Lent Procession Service

March 1, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.

Mount Olive Music & Fine Arts will present Lent Procession, a contemplative service of lessons and carols for Lent.

Designed as an opportunity to withdraw from the busyness of life; a time to sing, pray, listen, smell – a time to fully enter into the season of Lent, renewing our lives as children of God.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

The Mount Olive Youth & Family Committee invites everyone to come to the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 25, beginning at 6 pm.

After supper, we will gather to burn palms for our Ash Wednesday liturgies.

Lenten Devotional

A number of people have requested the return of the devotional booklet for the season of Lent, and so Susan Cherwien has updated and revised the devotional from the last time we were in Year A of the lectionary, the year of Matthew. The devotional contains brief rites of Morning and Evening Prayer with daily reflections, prayers, and practices based on the week's pericopes (assigned scripture readings). It is available in print form in various locations around Mount Olive, as well as in blog form, accessible through the home page of the church website (www.mountolivechurch.org) beginning Ash Wednesday.

Taste of India Thanks and Photos

Many thanks to all of the cooks who made our Taste of India-- Redux a wonderful feast. Over 100 of you braved the fast and furious snow storm to learn about and support Bethania Kids, share the excitement of the Bethania Partnership Travel Team, and add the support of another child above and beyond the budgeted support we give to Bethania Kids. Check out Louise Lystig Fritchie's photo essay of the day:

<https://photos.1lfritchie.com/US/MN/Mount-Olive-Lutheran-Church/2020-02-Taste-of-India/n-Dp4pq3/> .



The orphans don't look like orphans, observed a member of the group, said Walter Hinck. They look well fed, well dressed, and healthy – that's because they are so well taken care of at Bethania. The trauma of abandonment, poverty, and other crises resides inside.

Planning Ahead: March is Minnesota Food Share Month

During the week at Mount Olive, we commonly have neighbors coming in to see if we have food. Thanks to many of you, we often do have some pantry items or ready-to-eat options that we can offer to people to tide them over. The grocery cart in the coat room keeps re-filling with food as does the corner of hygiene supplies. This is a small but meaningful way that we can provide needed and appreciated items for those in a hardship situation, but we also recommend our partners at Community Emergency Services to provide the rest.

March is Minnesota Foodshare Month and CES is asking for our support. They want to gather a total of 40,000 pounds of food and raise \$125,000 during March. We can help! Bring food pantry items or hygiene supplies to drop off in our grocery cart and/or give a financial gift to help CES make purchases.

*Items suggested: Cooking oils, sugar and flour, toilet paper, hygiene products (deodorant, toothbrushes and paste), canned chicken, tuna & chili.

Nearly one in ten Minnesotans experience food insecurity (*US Dept. of Agriculture*) 13.8% of children in Minnesota are food insecure (*Feeding America*). Food security is "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle." Food insecurity means access to adequate food is inconsistent and limited by a lack of money and other resources through the year. Food insecure households report their diets to be of reduced quality, variety, or desirability and/or experience disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.



Nigeria's Persecuted Christians

In November Brad Holt and his daughter Karin visited our companion church in West Africa.

During the two-week visit to the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) one theme was repeated by the people: we are living in an atmosphere of persecution! At Mount Olive we are well aware of the name Boko Haram, because we know the name of one of the original Chibok girls who was kidnapped, Naomi Bitrus. I was able to send her one of our church bulletins by hand, although I was not able to meet her. Boko Haram, although it does kill Muslims that it disapproves of,

recently chose eleven Christians for execution. This underlines its animus against Christians, which it has demonstrated by church burnings and even assassination of priests and ministers.

But Boko Haram is only one element of the persecution experienced by Christians. More violent in recent years have been the Fulani herdsmen armed with AK47s who have slain whole villages of Christians. They lead their cattle into farm fields and thus destroy a whole year's crop in a few minutes.

The most pervasive persecution, however, is neither of these violent abusers, but the daily discrimination by Muslims in positions of authority. Whether you wish to get a driver's license, purchase a field, enter a university, or defend from sexual assault, you cannot have confidence that your rightful request will be handled with justice. This has been the case ever since the great Jihad of Usman dan Fodio about the year 1800. In the so-called Middle Belt of Nigeria, the band of land between the South and the North, populations have lived under Muslim dominance since that Jihad. Nowadays they are acutely aware that their rights are not being honored.

The police in Nigeria are not prepared to do the sorts of things they rightly do in our country. They do not have sophisticated instruments nor well-educated detectives to solve property crimes, nor do they always honor the dignity of the complainant. So-called white-collar crimes, such as those referred to above, seems to be beyond their purview. Since the enforcement of the laws is weak and selective, it can be argued that Nigerians live in a society where the laws are tentative and protection under the law is unsure.

Nevertheless, the Christian church is thriving in Nigeria. Most have not experienced the persecution first-hand, but only have read or heard of it. The churches are bursting with people, the worship services are full of joy, and the number of pastors in the LCCN increases apace to meet the needs of over two million members. The archbishop is respected by all, including myself, and is working hard to reconcile enemies, to expand the church through Nigerian missionaries, and to enhance the education and the liturgical practice of the whole church. (By the way, I was able to give two sections of our paschal candle from last year to two Lutheran cathedrals as a sign of friendship.)

If only our friendship with these Lutheran Christians far away could lead their commitment and joy to "infect" us, who do not experience the same persecution that they do!

- Brad Holt

Affordable Housing and Homelessness Resources

On Sunday, February 16, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry Jim Bargmann presented information about homelessness and affordable housing in our Adult Forum. Participants in that forum requested further information about ways to engage in the material presented. They were interested in ways to learn more about the issue and ways they could have a positive impact on the availability of affordable housing and help those experiencing homelessness.

Here is a resource list of sorts, both for more information and ways you can engage in this important issue.

Information on Housing and Homelessness

State of Minnesota Housing Website

www.mnhousing.gov

Minneapolis Housing Partnership

www.mhponline.org

Statewide Homelessness Statistics (Wilder Research)

www.mnhomeless.org

Customizable Statistics on Demographics, Income, and More

www.factfinder.census.gov

www.mncompass.org

Surveys of Those Experiencing Homelessness in Minnesota

Wilder Survey Instrument:

tinyurl.com/tl42lp8

For those in shelters

tinyurl.com/tl2aax6

For those not in shelter

tinyurl.com/vqlv3s2

Observation Based Survey (no interview)

tinyurl.com/w2pzmvc

Jim Crow of the North

An excellent documentary on historic racial discrimination in the Twin Cities in general, including the systemic and legal process commonly referred to as “red lining” that prevented numerous African-American families from purchasing homes in a number of neighborhoods across the country, including the Twin Cities.

tinyurl.com/yy3zvzhp



Ways You Can Help

ADVOCATE for funding, policy, legislative, and other legal changes that can have a positive impact on housing and homelessness.

Organizations where you can **VOLUNTEER** and have a direct impact affordable housing and interact with those with lived experience with homelessness.

DONATE to organizations that are doing work in the area of affordable housing and homelessness.

Aeon (V, D)

www.aeon.org

Align Mpls (A, V, D)

www.alignmpls.org

Alliance Housing (V, D)

www.alliancehousinginc.org

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation (V, D)

www.wilder.org

Beacon Interfaith (A, V, D)

www.beaconinterfaith.org

First Covenant Church (V, D)

www.1stcov.org

Lutheran Social Services (A, V, D)

www.lssmn.org

Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless (A, D)

www.mnhomelesscoalition.org

Our Saviour's Housing (V, D)

www.oscs-mn.org/our-saviours-housing

Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (A, V, D)

www.ppna.org

Saint Olaf Catholic Church (V, D)

www.saintolaf.org/charity

Saint Stephen's Human Services (A, V, D)

www.ststephensmpls.org

Simpson Housing (A, V, D)

www.simpsonhousing.org

Using this List

Since many of these organizations work in multiple facets of this issue, the letter after each organization name indicates the ways in which you can get involved in their work:

A = Advocate

V = Volunteer

D = Donate

If you have any further questions about engaging with our partners and other organizations working in the area of affordable housing or ideas of how to help, please contact Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry, Jim Bargmann.

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Sunday Eucharist:

8:00 & 10:45 am

Contact Us

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Staff

Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*

Cantor – *David Cherwien*

Vicar – *Bristol Reading*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry

– *Jim Bargmann*

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

Sexton – *James Wilkes*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ
congregation.*

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