

# The Olive Branch

March 25, 2020

A publication of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

*At this time and until further notice, all worship services and activities are suspended, in the interests of the health of our members, our neighborhood, and the world around us.*

## Accent on Worship

*Pastor Joseph Crippen*

### Not suspended

We're only suspending our liturgies together. That's important to know. We're not suspending our worship in the least.

This front page article is always titled "Accent on Worship." We who write generally focus on something from next Sunday's readings, or thoughts about our liturgical life together. Though we're not gathering for liturgy right now, I've been thinking a lot about worship.

Paul told his Roman churches that offering themselves as living sacrifices to God is their spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1) When we sacrifice our comfort, our preferences for moving around, our convenience, even our joyful gathering, for the sake of each other and our neighbor, we are worshipping God. Without question. When we sing Psalm 96 and sing "worship God in the beauty of holiness," we're not just talking about shared liturgies together. "Holiness" is being set apart, made separate for God's work. In many ways we are finding that separation for God's work in this quarantine. And perhaps we're finding a beauty in it, too, a Sabbath that we haven't always made the time for in our regular busy-ness. And we are worshipping God in this separation. Without question.

But to say we are "only" suspending our liturgies together is a painful use of the word "only." We miss it deeply, our time together. I miss you deeply. When we are able to gather again and worship in our shared liturgy, there will be a deep and profound rejoicing for us all.

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### Sunday Readings

**March 29, 2020**

**Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

**April 5, 2020**

**Sunday of the Passion**

**Palm Sunday**

*Processional Gospel:*

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

## Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

What we are sending via email on Wednesdays and Sundays is meant to keep us connected in our separated worshipping. If you have someone sharing your home, consider praying the Sunday prayers together, listening to the singing and the preaching together. I strongly encourage that. If you do not live with someone, please remember that we're all worshipping with you, but at a distance.

I am concerned for that small number of our members who are not connected online. Right now phone calls and regular mail are the only way to connect. We're doing that. But if you are someone at Mount Olive who doesn't have email, and therefore isn't connected to the Internet, could you let us know of a trusted family member we could add to our email list, someone who could come over and play you the sound of Mount Olive singing and the videos of readings and preaching? It's not the same as having liturgy together, but it's a way we can still stay connected. **Please let me know if you have someone we can connect, so you can be connected.** Call me on my cell phone, 612-280-4593. I'd love to chat, anyway, and you can give me the name of a person you think could help you.

Last Friday, when I wrote this, I took our little Maggie out for a long 2 mile walk in the cold sun. She gets less exercise in winter and pulled like a sled dog most of the way (albeit a ten-pound sled dog.) In between chiding her for barking at other walkers, I worshipped. I spoke with God, listened. I thought about you, about this writing. It wasn't our liturgy we do together. But it was liturgy. It certainly was worship.

Because God is with you, with me, with this world. Always. In the Triune God we live and move and have our being, Paul says. That is our truth now. It always has been.

God love and keep you all safe, and us all together in Christ's love,

- Joseph

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## Contacting the Church Office During This Time

The best way to contact Cha at the church office during regular office hours (M-F, 8am-3pm) is via email. She leaves her church email open all day long while working from home and will quickly see a message from you and be able to respond quickly, too.

If you don't have email or if you need to contact the church office right away for any reason, you may also call the church and leave a message in Cha's voice mail. **Be sure to leave a message!** Our voice mail system has an outcalling feature which notifies her when a voice mail has been left. During office hours, she will call in, get your message, and return your call shortly.

Cha is hoping to be in the church office on Wednesdays as long as we are not in shutdown/shelter in place status.

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## **A Word About Your Email ... Please check it frequently!**

This is important! During this time, **email will be our primary method of contacting Mount Olive members who have email, and it will be the easiest way to contact us.** (Those who don't have email will be kept informed via snail mail or, if necessary, a phone call, if urgent). Please, if you have email, check it at least daily (even if you don't like to). If you are on the paper copy mailing list but have email, please let us know so we can save a bit of time and postage.

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## **GoToMeeting – Virtual Meetings**

While there will be no group gatherings at Mount Olive until further notice, we have some online meeting tools that will allow your group or committee to continue to meet “virtually.” If you have a regular gathering at Mount Olive that you would like to continue in a virtual meeting room, please contact Cha and she can provide you with our Mount Olive GoToMeeting information.

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## **Mount Olive Responds to the COVID-19 Crisis in the Homeless Community**

On the evening of March 18, the word went out that Hennepin County was taking action to move the most vulnerable within our homeless population to a hotel in Bloomington. It has been one of my greatest fears from the beginning that COVID-19 would get a foothold in the homeless population. With inadequate health care resources, communal living, often compromised immune systems, those with lived experience with homelessness are particularly vulnerable to the spread of this disease. This was a very important step.

When the county made the decision to move these shelter residents, they were able to work with the Salvation Army to provide meals to those individuals staying at the hotel. However, the move happened in the afternoon on Wednesday, March 18; the Salvation Army was not able to get a remote meal operation up and running until the morning of Monday, March 23. Hennepin County turned to the congregations of Align Mpls (of which Mount Olive is a member) to fill the gap. Pastor Melissa Pohlman from Central Lutheran coordinated the scheduling of organizations and individuals to provide these 13 meals for some of our most vulnerable community members.

Mount Olive was able to use some of our up-to-this-point unused Neighborhood Ministry funds to help in this effort. We purchased and delivered Sunday lunch for 150 former shelter residents. In addition, we were able to give this business to an otherwise struggling local sandwich shop and help an area small business through a difficult time.

*- Jim Bargmann*

## Neighborhood Ministry in a Time of COVID-19

Like all Mount Olive programs and many community organizations, Neighborhood Ministry is adapting our work in an attempt to serve the most vulnerable in our community and keep everyone involved safe. Here are some of the ways we are adapting our programs and services in this time:

### *Diaper Depot*

I had developed a system for keeping the Diaper Depot open while reducing personal contact between customers and workers, however, our major diaper suppliers were unable to fulfill our recent orders in a timely manner due to diaper shortages in their warehouses. When we receive more stock, the Diaper Depot will reopen with an adapted system for distribution as able.

### *Bus Cards, Rent Assistance, and Utility Assistance*

I have developed a system for handling these requests electronically. While not ideal, since face-to-face conversation is a vital part of our ministry, this system will at least allow us to help people financially while keeping everyone safe. This system also allows me to handle these requests remotely, so if needed, I can handle them without being physically present in the Mount Olive building.

### *Other Direct Care Programs*

I was unable to develop a safe and secure way to continue providing help with laundry vouchers, identification cards, or birth certificates. Those programs are currently on hold.

Referrals for other services will be available, though the same process as our financial assistance programs, as written about above. I am doing the best I can to stay on top of which area organizations are open, closed, or working in a modified form so I can best serve our neighbors.

- Jim Bargmann, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry

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## Olive Branch Deadline

During this time of suspended activity at Mount Olive, we plan to continue to publish the weekly newsletter on the same schedule. Please note that the deadline for articles is the same as it's always been: Mondays.

If you have information to be published, please send it via email to the church office at [welcome@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:welcome@mountolivechurch.org) no later than Monday, and it will run in that week's issue.

Thanks!



## ELCA Missionaries Called Home

In light of the spread of the COVID-19 virus across the world this past week, the ELCA called back to the United States all of our missionaries across the globe. As you can imagine, this has been an especially difficult decision and choice for these partners. As our partner Karen Anderson in Chile said, she didn't leave the country even in the midst of the worst times of the dictatorship in Chile. After much thought, Karen decided to come home, recognizing that EPES has a structure that will allow them to continue their increasingly important work of health care in the communities. She is home and in quarantine. Her message to you: "Thanks so much for your kind words of support - they mean a lot at this difficult time. Such an uncertain and unprecedented time for everyone. Please give my greetings to the congregation. More than ever, we need to be a strong community of faith." We have not yet heard from Philip Knutson, our partner in southern Africa. We will keep you updated as you keep these people and their work in your prayers.

If you would like to send Karen Anderson a note of encouragement, her email address is [karenleea@aol.com](mailto:karenleea@aol.com).

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## Regular link to the Tuesday Noon Bible Study: Copy and Keep

The link for the Tuesday noon Bible study will be the same every week. Copy this text and print it off, or keep it on your desk for easy reference each week.

To join from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/179693565>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: +1 (646) 749-3112

Access Code: 179-693-565

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/179693565>

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## National Lutheran Choir Cancels Spring Concerts

Please note that the National Lutheran Choir has made the difficult decision to cancel their concerts scheduled for May 1 and 2.

## Alternative Methods for Regular Offering

No one is outside of God's care during this challenging time. We are called now more than ever to practice stewardship in its many forms and be the hands and feet of Christ.

Stewardship as we know is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. This is something we do exceptionally well at Mount Olive. It is about sustaining the community of care that we Mount Olive so carefully and intentionally cultivate. We come together as a community when we are physically present together as well as when we are unable to do so. As stewards, these times call for the sharing of our gifts of time and talent as well as our treasure. Extending that care, might be as simple as picking up the phone and giving a Mount Olive friend a call, sending a text, or mailing a handwritten note.

We appreciate our community's response and commitment to ensure our staff are paid, our work carried out and budget being met. Many have called and emailed to ask how to make your weekly contributions that you would have placed in the offering plate. Thank you!

We receive approximately 70% of our weekly gifts in the form of checks in the offering plate or mailed directly to the church office. This is an important part of our ability to carry out our ministry. Here are ways to continue your giving:

The simplest way is to mail your contribution to the church office via first-class mail (3045 Chicago Ave., Mpls., MN 55407). We are picking up the mail at the post office during this time. Set up a regular offering through your bank via bank "bill pay" system. You tell your bank how much to send and how often, and they mail a check from your account to the church for you. This service is most often free of charge and already used by many at Mount Olive. Set up a regular deduction from your bank account via electronic funds transfer (EFT) through the church's existing account with Vanco Services. Contact the church office to set this up and a form will be mailed or emailed to you. Complete the form and send it back to the church office. Finally, you can donate by credit card through the church website. Visit [www.mountolivechurch.org](http://www.mountolivechurch.org), go the very bottom of the home page and a "Donate" link is on the left.

The Vestry and staff are committed to continuing to serve Mount Olive and are actively working to engage our community. There will be more information forthcoming in *The Olive Branch* and TWIG on ways you can continue to share your gifts, talents and resources. We are grateful for the generosity that is shown daily from our Mount Olive community.

With Gratitude,  
Consuelo Gutierrez-Crosby  
Stewardship Director

**Dear Church Partner, in this Lenten season we thank God for you and for your prayers and support on behalf of the children at Bethania Kids!**

**Have you ever considered visiting Bethania Kids children in India with friends from your church to see for yourself how God works in their lives? It is truly a life-changing experience! Several groups from partner churches have gone in recent months. Below are some wonderful photos and stories they have shared.**



Twelve friends from **Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis** were given a true "Bethania Kids welcome" from the boys at **Dayavu Home** in Kannivadi. This lovely display included pink flower petals from trees the boys tend on the beautiful grounds around their home.

**The guests shared dinner with the staff at Dayavu Home**, including director Isaac Eduman. They learned to eat with their hands, the customary way to eat in India. Some say Indian food doesn't taste the same when eaten with a fork!



**The girls from Shalom Home** joined the guests in prayer at the dedication of the site for the **new Shalom Home in Batlagundu**. The grand celebration also included members of the Bethania Kids India Board of Trustees.

**On their return home, the travelers shared stories** of their experiences with the children of Bethania Kids at a **Taste of India** event after church one Sunday. Mark Pipkorn showed the location of the homes and care centers they visited on a map.





Church members cooked a delicious Indian meal for "Taste of India." They got rave reviews! We would be glad to **share recipes** for a similar fun event at your church to raise awareness for Bethania Kids. We can also help with presentation materials, including a wonderful video of Bethania Kids children. Contact [wendy@bethaniakids.org](mailto:wendy@bethaniakids.org) for information.



**Bethania Kids President, Kate Teece**, traveled with the group which also included her husband, Scott, and sister, Emily Hennig. Kate and Emily are granddaughters of **Al and Polly Hennig** and daughters of **Gene and Kristie Hennig**, all part of the founding families of Bethania Kids in 1987. Kate spoke at **Taste of India** wearing a beautiful silk sari from India.

### You can help!

The children of Bethania Kids continue to thrive with your support. Perhaps a Sunday School class at your church could support a child. Perhaps a church group could furnish a room at the new Shalom Home.

*Just \$35/month provides all one child needs at a Care Center.*

This is a great gift to make in honor of family or friends.  
Ask others to join you in creating futures for our children.

*There are two ways to make your gifts:*

- By check to Bethania Kids, PO Box 2140, Winchester, Virginia 22604
- Online at [bethaniakids.org](http://bethaniakids.org).

Please contact us any time with questions or ideas you may have to make our ministry partnership stronger.

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Bethania Kids • P.O. Box 2140 • Winchester, VA 22604  
[bethaniakids.org](http://bethaniakids.org) • 800 993 5179 • [wendy@bethaniakids.org](mailto:wendy@bethaniakids.org)



## Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

### **Sunday Eucharist:** *Temporarily suspended*

#### **Contact Us**

Phone: 612/827-5919

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Web: [www.mountolivechurch.org](http://www.mountolivechurch.org)

#### **Staff**

Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*

Interim Cantor – *Chad Fothergill*

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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