



Sunday Readings

April 26, 2020

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

1 Peter 1:17-23

Luke 24:13-35

May 3, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19-25

John 10:1-10

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.

The Olive Branch

April 22, 2020

A publication of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Accent on Worship

Pastor Joseph Crippen

So we do not lose heart

⁷ [W]e have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. (2 Corinthians 4:7-10)

The whole world is groaning with this affliction, this pandemic, and suffering is everywhere. More and more are dying in the United States, and the death toll worldwide keeps climbing. Medical professionals risk their lives to help, to serve, and expose themselves to this plague. So do everyday people who don't have the privilege and ability to stay away from work, lest they lose their jobs and their homes.

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This suffering is moving closer and closer to us, too. Some of our Mount Olive community have been exposed to the virus through their work, some of our community are infected. As far as I know, all are OK right now. A very dear friend of mine died from COVID-19 last week, a kind, joyous, grace-centered person in the lives of many. This is coming close to home, friends.

We have this treasure, our life, in clay jars, Paul says. We are creatures made of earth, and are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted by this invisible thing, struck down. All of humanity knows what Paul is talking about here. This is as close to a universal suffering as humanity has experienced, especially for the vast majority of the planet and the country who are not well off and who are unable to protect themselves or keep free of this virus.

But in this Easter season Paul's words are deeply important to hear: we are afflicted, *but not crushed*. We are perplexed, *but not driven to despair*. We are persecuted, *but not forsaken*. We are struck down, *but not destroyed*. Paul says we are carrying in our own bodies the death of Jesus – our mortality, our suffering – so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our bodies. So Easter life, life that is abundant and full even in suffering, might be evident, visible, in us.

Paul frames this section with the same verse, before, in v. 1, and after, in v. 16: "So we do not lose heart." My dear ones, this is our Easter hope. We do not lose heart. So many are suffering, so many are afraid, and many have it worse than we. But we know suffering and fear, too. We share this clay jar reality of our humanity with all, and that gives us compassion and love for all who are suffering, all who are risking.

But we do not lose heart, because God's life is in us. It may seem as if death has the upper hand, that suffering is winning. But we are not crushed, despairing, destroyed, forsaken. God's endless love fills your hearts and spirits, the promise that death cannot stop God's love is always yours. Even in this life now, Paul says, we can show Jesus' life in our bodies. In our hope. In our empathy. In our giving. In our loving. In our letting go of what we want so we can help others stay safe. The abundant life Christ gives us, gives you, can only shine through your body, your words, your actions, your love.

I know this, because you have been giving this life to me over this time. I see you giving it to each other in love and care and reaching out. I know you are sacrificing to help others, to be God's life for them.

God is with you, and giving you life. And that life is seen in this world, too. So do not lose heart. Christ is risen, indeed. Indeed. Indeed. Let that life be visible in you, and watch for it in others. God will not fail to reveal it.

In Jesus' name,

- Joseph

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>

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. So if you can, please send an email.

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. Messages left after office hours will be returned when office hours resume.

Music & Fine Arts Concert Cancelled

Due to the governor's StayHomeMN order, the concert by Billy McLaughlin and Friends which was scheduled for April 26 has been cancelled.

Communication in the time of Covid-19.

A group of about 25 people, coordinated by Lora Dundek, have been working hard to make sure that everyone in the congregation gets at least one phone call or email during this "stay home" time. And another group, overseen by Katie Krueger-McCuen, have agreed to run errands, get groceries, and, last week, drop off CDs of Holy Week music to those who aren't connected to the internet. If you have any need for food, supplies, or just for a friendly voice, call the church office and leave a message in Cha's voice mail (ext. 10), and either Lora and Katie will arrange for a helpful person to contact you. This is how we are church together!

Mount Olive in the community

Mount Olive in the Community seeks to raise up those things the people of Mount Olive are doing in their own neighborhoods while participating in the StayHomeMN programs initiated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mount Olive in the Community provides our faith community an opportunity to see examples of what the Church looks like out in the world.

The Church is not defined by a building or even a congregation; it is important to see each of the neighborhoods where we live as our “neighborhood ministry.” This is always true - but acutely so now. We hope this inspires you to come to a fuller realization of yourself as the Church in your neighborhoods and take action to care for those around you.

Please send us stories, pictures, and ideas. We want and need your involvement.

Sharing: The people of Mount Olive being the Church

The Molbert, Crosby, and Thompson families gathered for a virtual happy hour. The adults had a channel where they visited with one another and the kids had their own channel where they were able to reconnect with friends.

One member, who wanted to remain anonymous, arranged to have dinner delivered to a family in their community. One of the parents in the family has done significant work in neighborhood development and assisting their neighbors with their needs. As a result of this caregiving, they were growing weary and expressed that they were struggling with keeping up their energy and enthusiasm for caring for others. The dinner was a welcome blessing and took one more thing off the list of things that needed to be accomplished.

Inspiration: Ideas about how to connect to neighbors and community members

- Do a regular prayer walk in your neighborhood, praying for each household.
- Chalk messages on the sidewalk at night so it surprises people in the morning.
- Set up a chalkboard in front of your house and write messages for passersby.
- Set up a community street pantry that everyone can donate to.
- Make a list of all the people you've wanted to catch up with and haven't, and then call or message them to check in on how they're doing.
- Project a film onto the side of a building for your neighbors to watch from their front yards.

- From author and teacher Michael Frost, Director of the Missiology Department at Morling College in Sydney, Australia

Education: Resources that can help as you care for others

For those of you in Hennepin County, there is a wonderful resource for finding help called Waypoint. If a neighbor expresses need for services beyond what you feel you can provide, you can let them know about this site: <https://gis.hennepin.us/waypoint/> Alternatively, if you encounter a neighbor or friend with needs that you do not know how to meet, please contact me or give them this number: (612) 216-8637. This is a special number set up for responding to assistance requests (financial and otherwise) remotely. Texting is preferred, but calling is acceptable too.

- Jim Bargmann, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry, neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org

Sign Up Now

Just a quick reminder to sign up now for Sunday's **Do with Your Family** action for **our Love Made Visible Challenge**. The movie "The Human Element" is free for downloading only through next Sunday, so if you can't watch Sunday, you may want to watch earlier in the week. Get the download at this Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light website: <https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/2020/01/the-human-element/> . Scroll down past the tabs to buy the movie to the bottom of the page for the special Faith Climate Action Week free download.

COVID-19 and Our Mission Partners

You may be wondering how COVID-19 is affecting our mission partners around the world. Over the next weeks, the Missions Committee will be sharing information from some of our partners. Look for future updates from Nigeria, India, Chile, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and South Africa.

This week will focus on Common Hope in Guatemala. As of April 15, there were 196 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Guatemala. Guatemala's strong measures to contain the spread continue with its shelter in place and strict curfews from 4 PM to 4 AM. Transportation and businesses remain closed, and travel between departments (like states) is not allowed so many are no longer able to work. In addition, it is now a requirement to wear a mask when in public, and there are fines for those who do not comply.

Common Hope's social workers continue to be in contact with the families affiliated with the organization and are learning that there is increased concern that there is enough food to eat. Fortunately, Common Hope staff delivered "Hope Kits" to more than 650 families last week. These kits contained food, face masks, Tylenol, soap, bleach and educational materials to keep kids learning. Donations are still needed to help fund Hope Kits for every family. Visit <https://give.commonhope.org/give/278018/#!/donation/checkout> if you are interested!



Alternative Methods for Regular Offering

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 contributions 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. **Please note that we will not deposit checks until the governor's shelter in place order expires.**
- 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 automated giving via electronic funds transfer (formerly known as "Simply Giving") through the church's existing account with Vanco Services. An enrollment form was included/attached to the April 1 issue of *The Olive Branch*. Complete the form and send it back to the church office via email or regular post.
- Finally, you can donate by credit card through the church website. Visit www.mountolivechurch.org, go the very bottom of the home page and a "Donate" link is on the left. (This method was primarily initiated for non-member givers to Mount Olive on a one-time or very occasional gifts, and the fees associated with it are fairly high. It's preferable all the way around for members to use one of the previous 3 methods).

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.

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 no later than Monday, and it will run in that week's issue.

Thanks!

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

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*A congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Sunday Eucharist:
Temporarily suspended

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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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