

The Olive Branch



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SUNDAY READINGS

Sunday, November 22

Reign of Christ

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Psalm 100

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 25:31-46

Sunday, November 29

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37

At this time, all worship services and activities are being conducted online, not by gathering, in the interests of the health of our members, our neighborhood, and the world around us.

Accent on Worship

Cantor David Cherwien

What's your "Here and Now?"

This Sunday is referred to as "Reign of Christ". It is the final Sunday of the Liturgical Year we began last Advent. I always do a little looking back at the Liturgical Year we've just come through. Little did we know at that time, December 1 of 2019, about the events that were facing during the year we started. My last Sunday helping God's people sing on the organ bench was Lent 1, March 1, 2020. I then left for Sabbatical leave (albeit briefly). March 8, Lent 2 of 2020, was the last time an assembly gathered here at Mount Olive for the Eucharist. We had about twice as many Sundays apart on line than we were able to gather for in person.

But we have not ceased being church. We have not ceased "gathering," we just are doing so on-line. The Vestry, committees, Godly Play, even Children's Choir – all have carried on face-to-face . . . on a screen. Liturgies are still observed by most of us . . . with the help of a screen. We are still finding ways to provide neighbor-needs during this time, with less dependence on being inside the building.

This Sunday's Gospel as we wrap this liturgical year, is a vision of "When the Son of man comes in his glory, . . . all nations will be gathered before him . . . and he will separate people one from another." Those who gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, (and the list goes on), they take their place – invited to inherit the kingdom prepared for them. And to those who did not . . . well, not so good.

The point might be this: God's world (perhaps called "kingdom") is not only formed when Jesus comes back, but is also the here and now. What are we doing with this time? The message seems rather clear – it's not just a list of chores we need to accomplish in order to be invited to sit at God's right hand some later time when Christ comes back, (feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit those in prison) – but rather, doing these things in the here and now are indicators that we get what it means to be a child of God, a follower of Christ, a sheep of the flock (as opposed to a goat . . .) and that God's realm is then, and now.

Accent on Worship, continued on page 2

*In the presence
of God.
Being the presence
of God.*

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Wed., Nov. 18

10 am – Staff meeting
5 pm – Y2 Confirmation
5:30 pm – Children’s Choir
6:30 pm – Y3 Confirmation

Thur., Nov. 19

9:00 am – Supplies
Distribution (final)
9:30 am – Time in the Nave
6:00 pm – Bible Study

Sun., Nov. 22

7 am – Worship at a Distance
9 am – Virtual Coffee Hour

Tues., Nov. 24

Noon – Bible Study

Wed., Nov. 25

10 am – Staff meeting
No Confirmation this day
5:30 pm – Children’s Choir
6:30 pm – Y3 Confirmation

Thurs., Nov. 26

Thanksgiving Day
Church offices closed

Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

We get that, and doing these things is what we are DRIVEN to do out of our Love of God and our neighbor. It’s not a preparation for a ticket into heaven sometime later, it’s here and now.

We do have choices. Especially in pandemic time. We can wait for when the vaccine gives the all clear to go back to observing the Lord’s Day together at Mount Olive with our liturgies and do the things such as those on that list Jesus gives this Sunday again – meaning: all LATER. Or, we choose to always live in a sense of THEN being also here and now: God’s reign, God’s presence is NOW, through us. We do all those things because we are driven to. Just differently in this here and now given its state of things.

God give us strength and courage to live “a different rule of righteousness, [serving] a different kind of king” (ELW 431 “O Christ, What Can It Mean for Us”).

- *Cantor David Chernien*

Thanksgiving Offering

For the past number of years, our Thanksgiving Offering has been split evenly between our two food shelf partner organizations, Sabathani Community Center and Community Emergency Service (CES). This year will be no different.

According to Second Harvest Heartland, “before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 1 in 11 Minnesotans struggled to afford food. Now, 1 in 8 Minnesotans face hunger. [In addition,] stark racial disparities in who is hungry have deepened since the pandemic began. In Minnesota, this means that Black, Latinx, and Indigenous families now experience food insecurity at more than two times the rate of white Minnesotans, with Black Minnesotans facing the worst disparities in consistent access to food.”

Our two food shelf partners are a vital part of a network of food shelves, Meals on Wheels programs, school-based family food organizations, and others that are working to fight hunger in our community.

This year, especially without an in-person opportunity to drop off food, monetary donations are the most useful and go the furthest when put into the hands of our partners. Thank you for your continued generosity and support of the work of Mount Olive and our partner organizations.

Stewardship News

Thank you everyone for your compassion and commitment to Mount Olive. We want to make the process of supporting our church financially easy and convenient for everyone. If you are okay with the delay in the deposit posting to your account, please feel free to continue sending your offering via US mail. If you would like, we have alternative methods for giving that you may want to consider:

• **Bill Pay:** You can set up a regular offering through your bank by calling and talking to someone or by logging in online. You tell your bank how much to send, how often and they will electronically transfer the amount. This service is most often free of charge and already used by many at Mount Olive.

• **Electronic Funds Transfer:** Set up a regular deduction from your bank account 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 either by US mail or via email.

• **Mount Olive Website:** You can donate by credit card through the church website. Visit our site www.mountolivechurch.org, go the very bottom of the home page and a "Donate" link is on the left. This method is good for one-time donations rather than recurring donations as the fees charged to Mount Olive per transaction are higher than the other two methods.

Moving?

Don't forget to call the church office if you have a change of address or a change of any other information.

During this time when we are physically apart, it's more important than ever that we are able to stay in contact with each other.

A Light in the Darkness

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." ~John 1:5

This year has provided plenty of time for reflection. For me light has been something that has been part of that reflection. Light as in a source that illuminates but also as in lightheartedness, hope and joy. I must admit I have not done as much of bringing light to others as perhaps I could and should have. That is what made me think about this opportunity. How can we share our stories to bring a sense of joy and light to members of our community. I hope you will join us in sharing how you have been a light in this world or how maybe others have shined a light in your life. If anything, it brings our families, friends and Mount Olive community close together in reflection and sharing.

Reflection & Family Conversation - John 1:1-18

Share your stories here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y66qk284>

If you are unable to click on the link above, try copying and pasting the link in a separate browser tab.

In your email please include:

Your name, your story, and whether you are okay with your name being attributed to your story (Yes, No, okay with sharing but as anonymous). You can also call Consuelo if you do not have electronic access.

Light, Peace & Hope!
Consuelo Gutierrez-Crosby
Stewardship Director



Alternative Gift Giving

The Missions Committee is promoting the idea of alternative gift giving this Christmas. Consider giving a gift from one of these organizations in honor of a loved one. New this year, Mount Olive has its own Common Hope giving tree-online!

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Lutheran World Relief | https://lwr.org/giving-category/gifts |
| Heifer Project International | https://www.heifer.org/ |
| Bethania Kids | http://bethaniakids.org/creative-giving-catalog |
| ELCA | http://www.elca.org/goodgifts/ |
| Common Hope | give.commonhope.org/MountOliveGivingTree |

Mount Olive Lutheran Church is sending HOPE to Guatemala with a Common Hope Giving Tree!

Common Hope (www.commonhope.org) is working to end generational poverty in Guatemala through a model that utilizes education as the solution. During COVID-19, together, we can meet families' immediate needs and push through this pandemic. Your purchase of a gift from the Common Hope Giving Tree will help Common Hope to continue to provide vital programming for families in Guatemala.

How to participate:

1. Go to the Common Hope Giving Tree at this link: give.commonhope.org/MountOliveGivingTree
2. Choose your gift(s) and click donate. (You will be able to donate for multiple gifts all at the same time.)
3. Fill out the donation page, selecting the gifts of your choosing.
4. If you wish to have an ornament sent directly to a person besides yourself, check the box to “dedicate my donation” and include their mailing address in the indicated field. Common Hope will send an ornament to this person directly on your behalf.
5. If you do not opt to have the ornament sent to an honoree, you will receive the ornament mailed to your billing address unless otherwise specified.
6. And you're done! You will receive an electronic receipt within minutes to acknowledge your generosity.
12/21/2020 is the last day to choose a gift to have an ornament mailed out in 2020. Donations received after 12/18/2020 are not guaranteed to arrive before Christmas.

Fair Trade Sale

The Missions Committee has hosted a fair trade sale for 16 years so that people can purchase beautiful and unique fair trade items made by artisans in developing regions around the world. This year, we will continue this tradition virtually through SERV International. Mount Olive members and friends can use [this custom link](https://www.servv.org/?a=MountOlive) (<https://www.servv.org/?a=MountOlive>) to buy handmade gifts. By using this special link, 20% of all purchases will be donated to the [Bethania Foundation](http://www.bethaniakids.org) (www.bethaniakids.org) in India, one of Mount Olive's long supported missions.



The Fair Trade Sale link is active from November 16-December 14. Be sure when you are shopping that you see this orange banner at the top of the page. Orders need to be placed online and can't be retroactively included. Click the link on the Olive Branch cover page to see some of the beautiful items available.

20% of your online order today will be donated to Bethania Foundation

Global food items are also available through SERV. If you prefer the coffee, cocoa, and chocolate of the Equal Exchange program, which we have also had in the past, you can order those items here: (<https://shop.equalexchange.coop/>)

Real Life Theology: Paul helps the Romans – Thursday Bible Study Session Continues

Paul's letter to the Romans is some of the most sublime theological writing in Scripture. But Romans is also a letter, like all of Paul's other letters, written to real people in the midst of real problems in life. Using Scot McKnight's book "Reading Romans Backwards: A Gospel of Peace in the Midst of Empire," as a starting point, Pr. Crippen will lead the next Thursday Bible study series on this beautiful letter. We'll consider how Paul's beautiful theology applies not only to the lives of his Roman churches but to ours. We'll seek what light their lives (and struggles with empire and societal turmoil) might shine on ours, and how Paul's word to them also speaks to our situation.

This second Thursday Bible study series of this year begins on Thursday, Nov. 5, and will end on Dec. 17. We'll take Thanksgiving Day off, of course. The time of the study is 6:00 p.m., and should last about 90 minutes.

The link to join the meeting on your computer or tablet is:
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/342516141>

It's also possible to join by phone – please consider it if you aren't comfortable with video chats. The phone number (just call it at the time of the meeting) is 1 877 309 2073. When you call in, you'll be asked for an access code. It is: 342-516-141.

Anniversary Book Link

Several people have asked to see a copy of the book that was given to Pr. Crippen for his 10th anniversary of ministry with Mount Olive. You may look at a digital copy of the book by clicking on the following link. A copy will be made for the archives at a later date, when we're together and can share it. (You may have to copy the link and paste it into your browser): <https://tinyurl.com/y5y52hh9>

Staff Christmas Gifts

As is our tradition, this is the time of year that we gather monetary gifts for our terrific church staff. If you would like to contribute, please either use the offering envelope provided especially for this, or simply note "staff gifts" on your check and send it to the church office. Please have the gifts in by Sunday, December 15.

Thanks for your generosity.

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://tinyurl.com/y4qs46v5>

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://tinyurl.com/y274v5rs>

Virtual Coffee Hour

Join fellow Mount Olive friends and members for an hour of physically distanced socializing! There will be weekly video chat meetings using Google Meet **every Sunday from 9-10 am**. You can join by video on a smartphone or computer, or you can join by phone to participate in the informal conversations. It has been wonderful to see familiar faces and catch up with each other.

There will be four meeting rooms, now with one room dedicated for the youngest of the Mount Olive family - "Cupcakes & Cookies"! You can feel free to move between them to mingle with others as you'd like. The meeting links are below (the names of the snacks are just for fun-- join whichever one you'd like). If you join with a computer, you don't need to install anything or have an account, but if you'd like to join on a phone or tablet, you will need to install the Google Meet app and log in with a Google account. If you have questions about how to join feel free to call Katie Krueger at 419-344-2727 or email katherinerkrueger@gmail.com.

Coffee & Tea

<https://meet.google.com/snm-zssf-dni>

(US) +1 407-545-7381 / PIN: 641 572 935#

Meeting code: snm-zssf-dni

Summer Sausage & Cheese

<https://meet.google.com/act-expn-hat>

(US) +1 402-509-7747 / PIN: 151 809 692#

Meeting code: act-expn-hat

Cupcakes & Cookies - Kids' room

<https://meet.google.com/vep-nyof-fzz>

(US) +1 216-930-8951 / PIN: 766 845 823#

Meeting code: vep-nyof-fzz

Book Discussion Group

The Mount Olive Book Discussion group will meet virtually on the second Saturday of each month until we can meet again in person.

The December 12 book will be *Out Stealing Horses*, Per Petterson, and for January 9, *No Picnic on Mount Kenya*, by Felice Benuzzi.

We are using the GoToMeeting platform. Just click on the link below. If you prefer, you may join by phone.

Join the discussion from your computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://tinyurl.com/y4knn7o3>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States (Toll Free): 1 866 899 4679

United States: +1 (571) 317-3116

Access Code: 998-208-989

Vicar extended to two years, part-time

Last week the Vestry approved changing Vicar Bonneville's internship to a two-year, part-time internship. Luther Seminary and the vicar's candidacy committee, as well as Mount Olive's Vicar Committee, had already given the go-ahead.

Due to COVID, it isn't clear how much time our vicar can have with us in-person in this single year, and that is a critical part of our teaching for her as she prepares for ordained ministry. By extending her to two years, we believe we'll give her ample opportunity to meet and lead worship and preach and visit with our congregation in person, as well as the learning that she's doing this year during separation.

This also gives Vicar Bonneville opportunity to complete her additional coursework at seminary that she would have needed done after her time with us during these two years. She'll then be ready for her approval interviews at the end of the second year, summer of 2022, at the same time she would have been otherwise.

Neighborhood Ministry New Project

Building Our Home

At our October Congregational Meeting, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry Jim Bargmann introduced a new initiative, led by Mount Olive, called Building Our Home. Building Our Home seeks to build our home, the Twin Cities, as we literally build homes for the most vulnerable in our community. Partnering with three non-profit developers, Building Our Home will leverage the resources of congregations, individuals, and community organizations to build over 2100 units of affordable and supportive housing.

The Problem

According to the Wilder Foundation study of those experiencing homelessness in Minnesota (mnhomeless.org), there were approximately 6,700 individuals experiencing homelessness in the seven county Twin Cities metro area in 2018. “More than half of respondents (56%) said they have had difficulty renting an apartment or getting housing because there was no housing they could afford.

Will This Help?

While 2,100 units of housing does not solve the issue of homelessness in the Twin Cities metro area, it will have a huge impact. Truly affordable and supportive housing that provides comprehensive social service supports for residents, like Building Our Home will help build, has proven successful in housing those who have experienced homelessness.

The Initiative

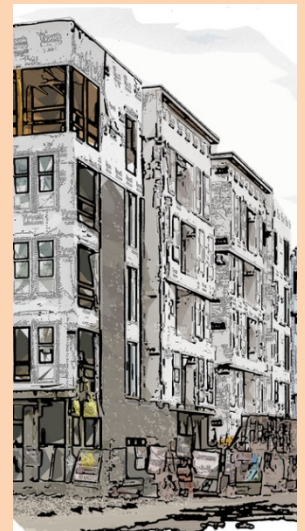
Through the work of our Housing Task Force, Mount Olive has existing relationships with three non-profit affordable housing developers, Beacon Interfaith, Aeon, and Alliance Housing. Each of these organizations has a list of in-progress projects awaiting funding.

The total funding goal for Building Our Home is 21.3 million dollars. Mount Olive is seeking partnerships with its Twin Cities sister congregations of the Evangelical Church of America, other area non-profits, and individuals. Using the “many hands make light work” philosophy, a major goal like this becomes possible.

In addition to opportunities to participate financially, there will be opportunities for members to participate in advocacy work with our elected leaders.

To Participate

In the following weeks, we will publish specific information about how you can participate in Building Our Home, through financial contributions or volunteer work on behalf of affordable housing. Please watch the Olive Branch. Until then, if you already know you are interested in supporting this effort, you can use your blue contribution envelope and note that you are supporting Building Our Home. Or you can contact Jim Bargmann, neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org, for more information.



The Art Shoppe is Open

Nine years ago, A Minnesota Without Poverty approached Mount Olive asking for help with a new project. That project involved helping local artists to support themselves by providing a space to sell their work.

Could we help? Mount Olive said, “Yes!” This project became The Art Shoppe in the Midtown Global Market. The shop prospered and grew from seven artists to seventy! This is another way in which Mount Olive is active in our neighborhood.

This activity has continued despite what has happened to Lake Street with the unrest of last spring. The Market has lost businesses and shoppers, but it is open! Come and shop and eat – Christmas is coming!

Hours for the Art Shoppe are 11am-3pm. Please continue your support of these local artists.

An Invitation from Interfaith Power and Light

Remember back before COVID - the 2019 protests filled the streets with millions of young people calling for climate action? That included our IPL youth leaders and activists! They were inspired by one shy teenager whose voice struck a chord that reverberated around the world. Some call her a prophet of our time, calling us to repentance and action.

Join IPL for an exciting free opportunity to view the just-released film about Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, *I am Greta*, and hop on a post film webinar to hear IPL Youth Leaders from around the nation tell us *their* amazing stories of continued activism.

Watch the trailer [here](#).

[Register here for the November 24 screening and webinar.](#)

The free screening of “I am Greta” will be at 3:15pm Pacific/ 5:15pm Central/ 6:15pm Eastern.

The webinar will follow immediately after the film at 5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern.

[Don't miss this exciting event - register to view I am Greta and join the webinar!](#)

Mozilla Firefox, SafeLink and (Potentially) You

If you use the Firefox internet browser to access *The Olive Branch* (and other things), please note that you will not be able to directly open links. Firefox now has an added safety feature which disallows the direct opening of links. Links seem to open fine in other browsers (Chrome, Safari, MS Edge, etc.).

If Mozilla Firefox is the browser you use, you must copy and paste the link address in a new tab to access the information. You might also consider using a different browser if this is troublesome for you.



Mount Olive Lutheran Church

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Lutheran Church in America*

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Church Staff

Pastor – [Joseph Crippen](#)

Cantor – [David Chernien](#)

Vicar – [Andrea Bonneville](#)

Coordinator of Neighborhood

Ministries - [Jim Barymann](#)

Administrative Assistant – [Cha Posz](#)

Sexton – [James Wilkes](#)

Prayer Times (for individuals) in the Nave: Updated

For about a month, there have been two times in the week the doors were open for people to come in and pray in the nave and be silent there, and visit the columbarium.

We're changing that slightly going forward. Anyone is welcome to come to the church any day during work hours (8 a.m. - 3 p.m. M-F), and pray in the church. Just buzz in at the north door and you'll be let in.

As always, COVID protocol applies: sign in at the door that you're symptom-free, wear a mask, and sign out when you leave.