

# The Olive Branch



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## SUNDAY READINGS

### Sunday, December 13 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
Psalm 126  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
John 1:6-8, 18-28

### Sunday, December 20 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
Psalmody: Luke 1:46b-55  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

*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

***Vicar Andrea Bonneville***

*John came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. John himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.” John 1: 7-8*

Like John, we are witnesses to testify to the light!

Consuelo Gutierrez-Crosby, our Stewardship Director, has invited us to share stories about how we have experienced light and how we have been a light for others. Many Mount Olive members have shared powerful stories testifying to the light. These stories serve as “A Light in the Darkness” for all of us who read them. Thank you for everyone who has shared and I hope we continue to gather stories as we testify to the light of Christ shining in our community! I would like to follow Consuelo’s lead and share with you a story of light.

You know the traditional saying, “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” Taking something sour in your life, if you aren’t particularly fond of sour, and turning it into something sweet and tasty.

At the beginning of the year, I learned from a man that when life gives you lemons, you should squeeze it on your freshly caught walleye and then plant the seeds.

This man planted five seeds and three sprouted. He let them grow for a while and eventually had to pick one of the 3 that he suspected would survive and thrive. Now, the lemon tree is over 3 feet tall.

He told me his favorite thing about the tree was that it was sturdy.

“When I planted those seeds about three years ago, there was lot of change happening in my life. I watch this tree grow and care for it every day. It has become a sturdy presence in my life, and you better believe it is a sturdy and tough tree for having survived for this long in Minnesota.”

“And you know what?” he said, “It is about only thing that reminds me of God every single day. It’s like the story of the mustard seed. But instead, I planted a lemon seed at a sour point in my life, and look how beautiful it is now.”

I was struck by the powerful proclamation of God and followed this man’s lead. In the past few months, I have planted many seeds watching as God transforms them into something beautiful.

*Vicar Andrea*

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

#### WEEKLY CALENDAR

##### Wed., Dec. 9

10 am – Staff meeting  
5:00 pm – Y2 Confirmation  
5:30 pm – Children’s Choir  
6:30 pm – Y3 Confirmation

##### Thurs., Dec. 10

6 pm – Thursday Bible Study

##### Sat., Dec. 12

10 am – Book Discussion

##### Sun., Dec. 13

###### *Third Sunday in Advent*

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

##### Mon., Dec. 14

7 pm – Vestry meeting

##### Tues., Dec. 15

Noon – Bible Study

##### Wed., Dec. 16

10 am – Staff meeting  
5:00 pm – Y2 Confirmation  
5:30 pm – Children’s Choir  
6:30 pm – Y3 Confirmation

## Midweek Advent Worship

Under normal circumstances, it is our practice to gather midweek during the seasons of Advent and Lent. This provides us with an opportunity for deeper contemplation and prayer together in these two introspective and preparatory seasons. For liturgy at home use in our pandemic-induced year of exile, for Advent we offer two forms of observing Advent between Sundays.

1. **An order for prayer in the home.** A brief order of prayer to be used in the home will be provided each week. A simple service of the Word, at the center of this rite are a Scripture reading reflecting the themes of the Sunday of that week, a second reading or poem connected to that Scripture, and an invitation to intercessory prayer. The rite is begun with the lighting of an Advent wreath, or even a simple arrangement of four candles, as the prayer begins. This is suitable for morning or evening prayer, or prayer at the dinner table, and could be used every day during the week if desired.

2. **An audio/video of the ancient prayer office of Compline** (Prayer at the Close of the Day).

This service is the centuries old “bedtime prayer” of the Christian community. It is a 15- minute brief pattern of prayer intended for use just before extinguishing the lights at bedtime. An important dimension to this simple service is in its repetition – the more it is prayed, the more internalized it becomes. This audio/video can be used for prayer once or more each week at the close of your day during Advent. The service will not change during Advent except for an increase of the number of candles lighted on the wreath. The video consists solely of the candles of Mount Olive’s Advent wreath, and the words of the liturgy. Participants may prefer to light the candles of a home Advent wreath rather than viewing it on the video, using only the audio for the prayer office. The more often the service is prayed, you may join in as much as you’d like, or remain a participant through listening alone. For those who might wish to print a copy of the service (with music), a pdf below is provided. Our thanks to singers of the Cantorei for providing this worship aid for Advent. A link to the next week’s Compline liturgy will be sent each Saturday night with the brief order of home prayer, to be available throughout the coming week.

**YouTube link for Compline, week of Advent 2** (this link will be active starting Sunday, November 29): <https://youtu.be/PjyIjWnqe6s>

[PDF of Compline service for printing](#)

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## National Lutheran Choir Virtual Christmas Festival

The National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival comes to audiences FREE in a virtual, multi-media format **this Friday, December 11**. “The Incarnation: For the Healing of the World” brings music from around the globe announcing the birth of Christ with messages of peace and joy that nothing – not even a pandemic – can take away.

**Friday, December 11, 2020 – 8pm (CST) @ [NLCA.com](http://NLCA.com)**

This online presentation is FREE for all. For a Virtual Subscription to exclusive content (\$10/month), visit [NLCA.com](http://NLCA.com).

## 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](http://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.

## Staying in Touch

Are you moving? Have you recently moved?

Don't forget to share your updated contact information (address, phone number, email) with the church office.

During this time when we don't have the opportunity to see or speak with each other in person, it's more important than ever for your friends to be able to reach you.

The church directory has been updated online and in paper format. If you would like an updated directory mailed to you, contact the church office. Likewise, if you are having trouble accessing the online directory, call the church office and we will help to get you connected.

## 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**      <http://www.heifer.org>

**Bethania Kids**      <http://bethaniakids.org/creative-giving-catalog/>

**ELCA**      [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts)

**Common Hope**      [give.commonhope.org/MountOliveGivingTree](http://give.commonhope.org/MountOliveGivingTree)

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

Order a gift with a purpose soon! You will receive an ornament reflecting the gift or you can have it sent gift wrapped directly to the person you are honoring with the gift. Here are some of the gifts you can buy.



**Masks & Cleaning Supplies**      \$60



**Gift of Hope**      \$20



**Holiday Basket**      \$50



**Nutritional Support**      \$100

## 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.

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## 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.

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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://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 (9-9:30 for the kids' room)**. 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](mailto: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

9:00-9:30 a.m.

<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*, by Per Petterson, and for January 9, 2021, *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

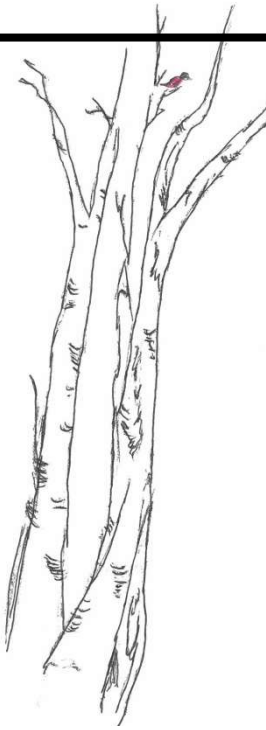
## Thanks to all who have sent in their pledges!

Please remember to make your [pledge](#).

Pledging is engaging in the life of Mount Olive to carry out our shared commitment to living a life in Christ through our fellowship, ministry and stewardship together. Why [pledge](#)? It is a sign of our personal and communal commitment to one another and to the work of the church. On the practical side, it guides the Vestry in decision making and gives us a solid foundation on which we know our work can move forward. It gives us a sense of what is possible for our ministry and mission. What possibilities do you see? What will your financial gift be?

If you haven't made a pledge before, please consider doing so. For those who pledge, we thank you! If you pledge or not, we ask that you prayerfully consider what your financial commitment will be to our ministry together at Mount Olive and how it will illuminate the impact of our shared work.

To complete your pledge go to: <https://forms.gle/Wdsrj7suvCfoTWJR8>.



## A Light in the Darkness Reflection

For years, the phrase “I wish I had more time” was my lament in a very busy world.

Now is the time of “sheltering in place,” time had magically reappeared! We have time to clean the basement, contact friend via media, and improve or finish tasks we started long ago.

The hobby I now have time for is sketching.

My birch trees and rocks were always good, but now I am working on perspective. I live on the parkway where nature abounds.

As I search through previous sketchbooks, those birch trees remind me of our Advent decorations at church, those branches near the altar in which cardinals appear.

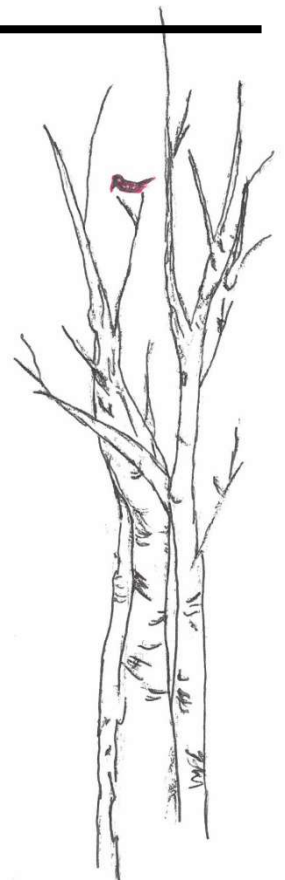
Perhaps such a picture would remind other congregation members and friends of our time together.

Add cardinals as we approach the time of joy, “Christ is born!”

Sing as cardinals would.

Rejoice!

- Carol Austermann



## Mount Olive Sibling Connection Opportunity

We know that several of our siblings in Christ at Mount Olive are especially isolated, lonely or are otherwise experiencing losses or grief during this season. Here’s an opportunity to provide a little extra support and connection to help gladden their hearts. If you’d like to join this effort, you will be given a name (or two, if you wish), and contact information. You could then reach out in whatever way you wish - phone, letter, email, etc. Ideally, you would maintain contact at least through Advent and the Christmas season, or longer, as appropriate. No gifts are required, unless you wish to provide them. (Parents: this is a great opportunity for kids to write letters or do art projects to brighten someone’s day!)

Interested in establishing a special Sibling Connection? Contact Lora Dundek by phone or email (lhdundek@usfamily.net or 651/645-6636). You’ll get further information at that time. Thanks!

## Fair Trade Sale

This is the last week to order gifts from the Fair Trade Sale! Mount Olive members and friends can use this custom link [serrv.org?a=MountOlive](https://serrv.org?a=MountOlive) to buy handmade gifts through SERV V International. The link will be active until Dec. 14.

A story from SERV V: Our partners in India have continued to find ways to work and support artisans throughout COVID-19. Several have provided artisans with pantry staples and delivered food to those who were unable to leave their homes. Many artisans not only rely on handcrafts to feed themselves and their families, but also to find safe and fulfilling work. Our partners in Ahmedabad shared this story: "Our staff member Latha could not think of remaining at home without work because there was nothing to eat...When she came to work, her fear and anxiety was forgotten."



*SERV V partners in Delhi deliver food packages to artisans in need.*

When you use Mount Olive's custom link, 20% of all purchases will be donated to the Bethania Foundation in India, one of Mount Olive's long supported missions. These proceeds will be going to help furnish the Shalom Home.

This Bethania Kids' home for 48 girls is under construction and will be completed soon (The girls are currently living in a small, rented facility). Our goal is to provide the dining room with plates, bowls, glasses and utensils—50 @ \$5.00 per child = \$250.

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.

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

Global food items are also available through SERV V. 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://equalexchange.coop/>.

## Christmas Gifts for Our Neighbors: Baking Cookies!

Do you enjoy baking? Especially Christmas cookies and treats?

In addition to on-going Neighborhood Ministries programs, this year we wanted to do something special for those living closest to the Mount Olive building, many of whom have been a great blessing to us in keeping an eye on our building though the nights of civil unrest in May and June and watching out for one another. Ideally, we would like to have around 40 dozen cookies which we would divide up into gift baskets to be dropped off to our neighbors. If you are able to bake cookies for this effort, please email Jim Bargmann at [neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org) and let him know how many dozen you are able to make. Please complete your baking by Monday, December 21. If you feel comfortable doing so, please bring your cookies to Mount Olive on that day. If you would rather, we can arrange to pick them up (contactless, of course). If you would like us to pick up your cookies, please include that request in your email, along with your address.





## Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

### Contact Us

Phone: 612-827-5919

Fax: 612-827-4557

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

### Church Staff

Pastor – [Joseph Crippen](#)

Cantor – [David Chernien](#)

Vicar – [Andrea Bonneville](#)

Coordinator of Neighborhood

Ministries - [Jim Barymann](#)

Administrative Assistant – [Cha Posz](#)

Sexton – [James Wilkes](#)

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## Gifts for Our Saviour's Supportive and Transitional Housing Residents

Our sister congregation, Our Saviour's, has a broad ranging housing program and each year we have the opportunity to give gifts to residents of their supportive and transitional housing programs. Typically, we would have a small Christmas tree in our common area at Mount Olive where you could choose ornaments, purchase gifts, and deliver them back to Mount Olive where we could then deliver them to Our Saviour's and the residents. This year, we have moved that process online. Mount Olive has 15 residents for which we have agreed to purchase gifts. We have set up a Target Wish List for you to use in selecting gifts you would like to purchase for our neighbors. The gifts you order will be sent to Mount Olive and we will then assemble gifts baskets and deliver them to Our Saviour's for distribution. If you are interested in purchasing a gift for one of our neighbors, **please do so by Wednesday, December 16** to allow time for delivery to Mount Olive and subsequent delivery to Our Saviour's before Christmas.

To purchase a gift, please visit [Mount Olive's Charity Registry](#).