

The Olive Branch

IN THIS ISSUE:

Accent on Worship	1
Worship Packets	2
Stewardship Information	3
Building Our Home	4
Bible Studies Links	5
Virtual Coffee Hour	6
In Our Prayers	7

SUNDAY READINGS

Sunday, January 31 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

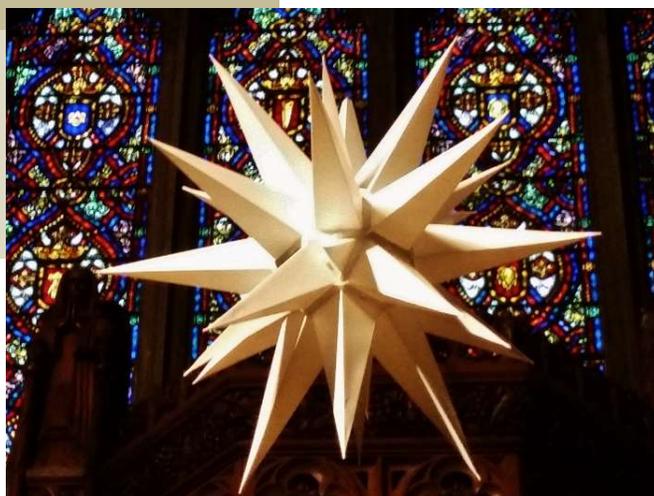
Sunday, February 7 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

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

Jim Bargmann



I know many of you reading this have a background similar to my own. Many of you, like me, were raised in the Christian faith and because of that, you have grown up hearing and reading the words of Scripture on a regular basis. Sometimes I long to know what it is like to read and hear these stories, these words, for the first time, as something completely new.

These were my thoughts reading the Gospel reading for this upcoming Sunday, Mark 1:21-28.

It's a story of Jesus going to the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach, one of many references this very activity on the part of Jesus. Those there were struck by Jesus' teaching, noting that he taught as "one having authority" unlike the teachers they were accustomed to hearing. But that was before Jesus was confronted by a demon who had taken up residence in another human. Jesus rebuked the demon, causing the host to convulse and the demon to cry out in a loud voice. This would have been a shocking event to have witnessed not to mention the accompanying teaching, so different from what the people were accustomed to!

How many times have we read this very passage as though we were simply reading the story of some common day occurrence? I know I have.

Those who were there for this teaching and this event were not in that position. They understood the significance and rarity of such an occurrence. Even the word in verse 27, translated as "they were all amazed," might more accurately be translated, "they were struck by amazement." As I understand it, this is a pretty forceful word, much more akin to the modern, "struck me over the head" as in actually being hit by something.

The reality is that much of Jesus' teaching, and really, much of Scripture, is radical, uncommon, "struck me over the head" kind of teaching. I fear we (and I include myself in this) have lost some of that perspective. When God teaches us to feed those who are hungry, house those without a house, visit those in prison, heal those who are sick, those aren't simply nice phrases symbolic of some greater pattern of love. Certainly, those actions are motivated by love for others, which itself is motivated by God's work in us, but God really means it.

I invite you to join me this week in looking at God's teaching anew. Consider with me what is really happening when we read stories like this. Join me in reading Scripture with new eyes - to understand the radical wonderfulness of God's words, God's teaching, God's actions - and our actions, taken in response to those words.

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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Wed., Jan. 27

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

Sun., Jan. 31

4th Sunday after Epiphany

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

Tues., Feb. 2

Presentation of Our Lord

Noon – Bible Study

Wed., Feb. 3

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

Worship Materials Packets to be Available

When Christ's people gather to worship, it is a multi-sensory experience. We use our blessed bodies and all five of our senses in encountering God: singing, praying, listening, kneeling, touching. We feel the drops of baptismal water on our faces, we hear the singing of our neighbors, we see the beauty of icons, the light of candles, we smell the incense, we taste the bread and wine. Much of that multi-sensory experience is hard, if not impossible, to transmit through the worship videos that the Mount Olive staff and ministers are so carefully and beautifully constructing for the use of the community each week. And so the Worship Committee has decided to assemble and make available packets of liturgy materials to aid parishioners in at-home worship, especially for the upcoming holy days of the Presentation and the Transfiguration, for Shrovetide, Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of Lent. Among the materials included in the packets will be candles, incense, ashes, and recipes, as well as multi-age activities related to the liturgies.

The packets will be available for pick-up in the north parish house entrance on **Saturday, January 30, from 10 am to 12 noon**. If you would like to receive a packet but cannot get to the church to pick one up, please notify Dan Hellerich at worship@mountolivechurch.org, and a time will be arranged to drop one off to you.

Mount Olive Music and Fine Arts Presents ...

... the women's ensemble “Lumina,” in a live-streamed concert performed at Mount Olive on **February 21, 2021 at 4:00 pm**.

In a program, entitled “The Veil and the Thorn,” Lumina explores mystery, beauty, and hope in music spanning centuries, creating a richly diverse program for Lent. From Byzantine chant by Kassia, one of the first known female composers, to well-loved pieces by Bach and Vaughan Williams, to newer works by living and local composers, these radiant voices will help illuminate even our darkest days.

Lumina’s performers for this concert are Angela Grundstad, soprano, Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano, and Linda Kachelmeier, alto and Artistic Director. Also performing with them will be special guest, Laura Sewell, cello.

Don't miss it! Go to the following YouTube link on February 21 at 4:00 p.m.: https://youtu.be/DLm4AHm0_10. You can also click the link on the home page of Mount Olive’s website: www.mountolivechurch.org. The link will not become live until the time of the concert.

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.

2020 Contribution Statements

Contribution statements for 2020 have been mailed.

These are summary statements, but if you would like a detailed listing of each of your 2020 contributions, please call Cha at the church office and she will be happy to send one to you via email or U.S. post.

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.

Art Shoppe News

The Art Shoppe in the Midtown Global Market is now selling online! Take a look at their web page and shop from the comfort of your home: www.theartshoppemgm.com.

Jewelry, pottery, cards, prints, clothing, and more from over seventy artists is available to you at the click of a button. Orders will be shipped to you.

The Art Shoppe was started several years ago with the financial and volunteer support of Mount Olive. As Lake Street is rebuilding and businesses begin to open again, Mount Olive is present, bringing peace and stability to the neighborhood.

Support this important local business!

Building Our Home



This week's question and answer:

Will This Help?

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. In addition, 81% of adults experiencing homelessness struggle with a chronic physical or mental health condition.

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

Working with three non-profit affordable housing developers, Beacon Interfaith, Aeon, and Alliance Housing, Mount Olive is working to build over 2100 units of affordable and supportive housing with a funding goal of 21.3 million dollars. Through our Neighborhood Ministry leadership, Mount Olive is seeking partnerships with its Twin Cities sister congregations of the Evangelical Church of America, along with other faith communities, organizations, and individuals.

The Ask

If you are able, we are asking for your support in two ways.

First, financially. We have set a goal of finding 26,000 individuals, representing the active membership of our 252 Twin Cities ELCA sister congregations, to donate to this effort. With this number of participants, we would reach our goal with a donation of \$338 per person. Over the next year, are you able to contribute \$338 per person in your family? If so, you can go to the Mount Olive web site and on the donation page, we have set up a dedicated account for Building Our Home. If you prefer to send a physical check, your offering envelope pack contains a special pink Neighborhood Ministry Offering envelope.

Second, talk to others about this effort. Many in the Twin Cities have expressed concern about the lack of affordable housing for our most vulnerable. We are looking for support from individuals, businesses, really anyone who has a passion for helping ensure others have safe, affordable housing.

Taste of Take-Out, February 7-14



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Recommendations are coming in for our “Taste of Take-Out” week. Each February the missions committee hosts a “Taste of (one of our mission partners)”. This year we virtually celebrate and support the work of Lutheran World Relief (LWR) in fighting Covid-19 around the world. We can have fun, learn, eat new things, and support our partner like we always have at Taste of... events. We are focusing on four countries where LWR is fighting the virus and countries who also have a strong immigrant-led restaurant presence in the Twin Cities: Lebanon, Somalia, Nepal, and Ecuador. *New recommendations this week include the following:*

Ecuador

To meet the Ecuadorian community, clearly Central Avenue N.E. in Minneapolis is the place to go! **Lisa Ruff** recommends these four restaurants.

- Chimborazo Ecuadorian Restaurant, 2851 Central Avenue NE, Minneapolis
- La Colonia, 2205 Central Ave NE, Minneapolis
- Pandaeria Ecuatoriana, 2409 Central Ave NE
- La Mesa, 230 Cedar Lake Road South, Minneapolis

Nepal

Connie and John Marty recommend a friend’s restaurant. They met her when she was a student, and even then she dreamed of owning a restaurant where she could sell food from her homeland. The restaurant is now ten years old.

- Gorkha Palace, 23 NE Fourth St., Minneapolis

Somalia

Jim Bargmann recommends any of the four Afro Delis. Jim worked with one of the co-owners when he worked at the airport. Jim would recommend the Somalian sambusas.

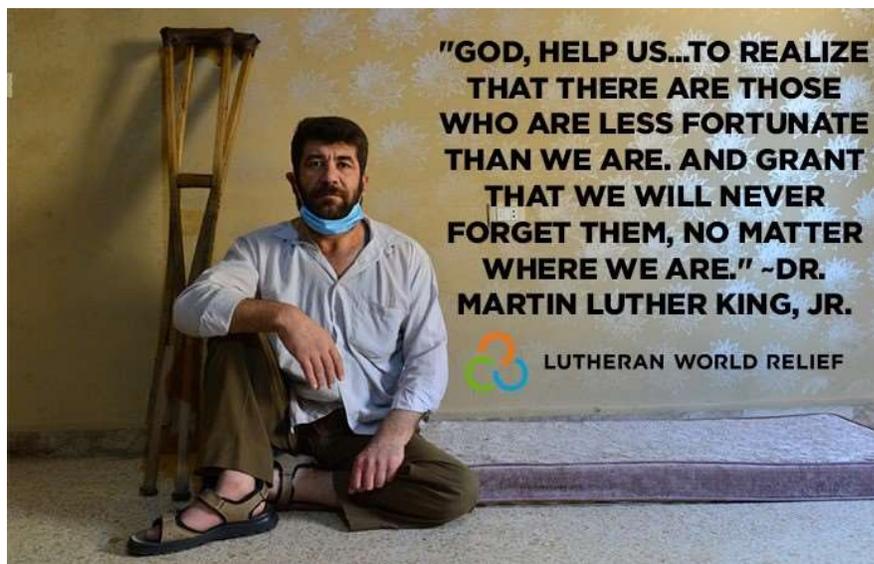
- Afro Deli locations:
- 720 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis
- 705 S. Marquette Ave., Minneapolis Skyway
- 5 West 7th Place, St Paul
- 55 5th Street E., St Paul Skyway

To see the restaurants on a map, check out this link courtesy of Missions committee member Mark Pipkorn:

<http://bit.ly/Taste-of-Take-Out>

What would you like to recommend? Do you have a favorite Lebanese restaurant?

Send your suggestions to missions@mountolivechurch.org by January 31. Be sure to check that the restaurant is doing take-out and then include the name of the restaurant and its address.



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 three 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

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.

On February 13, they will discuss *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and on March 13, *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro.

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

Regular link to the Tuesday Noon Bible Study

The link for the Tuesday noon Bible study is 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>



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Lutheran Church in America*

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Cantor – [David Chernien](#)

Vicar – [Andrea Bonneville](#)

Coordinator of Neighborhood

Ministries - [Jim Barymann](#)

Administrative Assistant – [Cha Posz](#)

Sexton – [James Wilkes](#)

