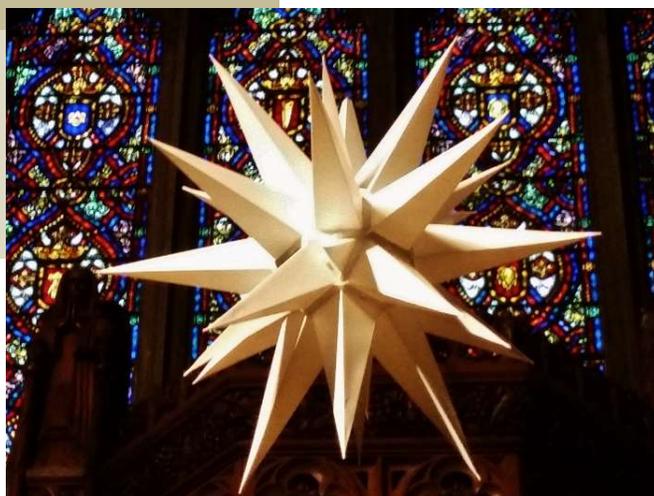


The Olive Branch



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SUNDAY READINGS

Sunday, February 7
5th Sunday after Epiphany

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

Sunday, February 14
Transfiguration of Our Lord

- 2 Kings 2:1-12
- Psalms 50:1-6
- 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
- Mark 9:2-9

Accent on Worship

Pastor Joseph Crippen

Not impressed

This Sunday we'll sing with the psalmist: "God is not impressed by the might of a horse, and has no pleasure in the speed of a runner." (Psalm 147:10)

That verse has always made me laugh. Horses are pretty strong; good runners are really fast. But God says, "Not such a big deal."

Of course, God made the runner, and God made the horse. Maybe it's hard for the creator to be impressed that the creation does what it was made to do.

Or, maybe the psalmist is giving you a gift of hope here. God isn't impressed by great feats and abilities. But, as we will also sing in this psalm Sunday, God rebuilds cities, gathers exiles, heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. God lifts up the lowly and feeds young birds when they cry. God may not be impressed with strength and success. But God most definitely cares for those who are weak, hurting, struggling. To those, God gives love and food and encouragement.

I'm sure God believes horses are beautiful and enjoys watching us run. Yet I am so grateful to know that it isn't strength or success that truly draw God's attention, but weakness and need. Maybe that's good news to you as well.

In the name of Jesus,

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.

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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

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

Saturday, Feb. 6

1 pm – Prayer Shawl Group

Sun., Feb. 7

5th Sunday after Epiphany
7 am – Worship at a Distance
9 am – Virtual Coffee Hour

Tues., Feb. 9

Noon – Bible Study

Wed., Feb. 10

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

Worship Materials Packets

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 are available for pick-up in the chapel lounge at church. 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.

Want to get your home energy from solar power and help the planet?

Financial incentives available for homeowners! MN Interfaith Power and Light is hosting so you can learn more. February 9 at 6:30pm.

This year has started with renewed energy and hope in our country for reversing the climate crisis. It has also started with a **pile of incentives and discounts for homeowners to go solar** and become part of the renewable energy linchpin for our saving the planet. But these incentives won't last all year. Now is the time to go solar, and a Solar Co-op makes it much, much easier.

[Join us Tuesday, February 9 at 6:30 p.m.](#) to learn how joining our Twin Cities Solar Co-op can help you make the best choice about your solar energy opportunity. Invite a neighbor or friend — especially anyone living in a [Minneapolis Green Zone](#) or receiving energy assistance, as they are eligible for additional financial benefits.

MNIPL created this Solar Co-op, in partnership with Solar United Neighbors, to bring homeowners together for more buying power. SUN has a trusted co-op model that has helped thousands across the country take advantage of solar power and become part of the renewable energy movement. They teach you how home solar installations work, explain net-metering and bill credits, and make sure you get access to the variety of discounts available at local, state, and national levels. These discounts are considerable and make switching to clean energy almost always a good financial as well as moral decision.

In alignment with MNIPL's mission, this Solar Co-op prioritizes equity, so that the benefits of solar are available to all income levels and neighborhoods. Joining the Solar Co-op does not obligate you to have an array installed. The Solar Co-op leadership team negotiates the best price and chooses the best value installer. Each member is then free to go forward as they choose.

[Click here to register for the February 9 webinar](#), and find out how the Solar Co-op can help you be part of solving the climate crisis.

Building Our Home



This week's question and answer: **What is Supportive Housing?**

Building Our Home seeks to build housing in two defined categories - supportive and affordable. This week and next, we will provide the actual definitions of those terms.

The best and most succinct definition we have found comes from the Minnesota Housing, a department of our State government.

“Supportive housing, in its broadest definition, is affordable housing linked with social services tailored to the needs of the population being housed. The goal of supportive housing is to provide affordable housing with access to an array of services designed to foster housing stability and improve health and quality of life for the population to be served... Supportive housing is available to individuals and families with multiple barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing, including those who are homeless and those with mental illness, substance abuse disorders and other disabilities.”

The services provided in many supportive housing communities, including those built by our partner organizations, include mental health counseling, substance abuse supports, employment counseling, financial literacy programs, and more.

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. Though 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

Are you getting your take-out meal lined up? 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 and at the same time support our immigrant neighbor restaurateurs.

Starting February 8, you can learn more about LWR’s work in our four target countries—Ecuador, Lebanon, Nepal, and Somalia—through daily TWIGS. At every in-person “Taste of…” event, people have contributed to the featured mission partner by putting donations in a basket or through other means. This year, the basket is a virtual one. Please consider making a contribution to this year’s mission partner, LWR. The amount could be equal to what you spend on your take-out meal. Your Missions Committee will contribute its entire “Taste of…” budget to LWR.

You can contribute and designate your contribution in any one of three easy ways.

1. Go to the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) website: <http://bit.ly/LWR-Donate> When you donate make sure to note “Taste of Take-Out” in the comment section. LWR was very excited to hear about our event, and they will track our on-line contributions if you note that you are participating in “Taste of Take-Out”.
2. Use your regular blue missions envelope for your Mount Olive contribution and note “Taste of Take-Out” on the front of the envelope and on your check memo before mailing it to Mount Olive.
3. Use Mount Olive’s on-line donation button on our website: <http://bit.ly/MtO-Donate> and designate your donation for “Missions.” All mission contributions received between February 7-21 will be contributed to Lutheran World Relief.

And then, don’t forget to take a picture or video of your celebration so that we can all share in the fun. Send your photos and videos to missions@mountolivechurch.org and we’ll pass them along.

New take-out recommendations this week include the following (check the map for previous recommendations):

Lebanon

Both **Dwight Penas** and **Scott Lystig Fritchie** submitted the same two Lebanese restaurants, one for Minneapolis and one for St. Paul. Dwight rates the Beirut as the best in the Twin Cities and Emily’s as the one in the midst of the “Leb crowd” as his Lebanese friend called it. It must be great because **Adam Krueger** also recommended it.

- Beirut Restaurant, 1385 Robert St., West St. Paul
- Emily’s Lebanese Deli, 641 University Ave. N.E., Minneapolis

Ecuador

Gene Janssen’s recommendation is listed as a generally Latin restaurant, but Gene reports that it is owned and operated by a family from Ecuador and is a place where Gene goes with his Ecuadorian friend.

- Cahill Bistro, 7078 Admunson Ave., Edina

To see all of the recommended the restaurants on a map, check out this link courtesy of Missions committee member Mark Pipkorn. <http://bit.ly/Taste-of-Take-Out>



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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Church Staff

Pastor – [Joseph Crippen](#)

Cantor – [David Chernien](#)

Vicar – [Andrea Bonneville](#)

Coordinator of Neighborhood

Ministries - [Jim Barymann](#)

Administrative Assistant – [Cha Posz](#)

Sexton – [James Wilkes](#)
