

The Olive Branch



IN THIS ISSUE:

Accent on Worship	1
MFA Event: Lumina	2
Lenten Fellowship	3
Building Our Home	4
Bible Studies Links	5
Virtual Coffee Hour	6
In Our Prayers	7

SUNDAY READINGS

Sunday, February 21

First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9-17

Psalms 25:1-10

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

Sunday, February 28

Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalms 22:23-31

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38

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

Cantor David Cherwien

Lent

What are you going to do with Lent?

It seems clear that in spite of the start of vaccinations, we will be remaining in exile, not able to gather for a while yet. No doubt conversations will need to begin in the next months about resuming in person liturgies: when, how, and all the other questions doing so will raise. We're all praying for that day to come, although the likelihood of it being a sudden "switch" that we turn back on is not high. Patience is truly a virtue here, just as waiting for our turn to receive the vaccine. The day will come!

But in the meantime, what this exile really does is force us each to take our own initiative in defining what our priorities are. What do we want to observe? How? For whom are we doing it?

On one hand, in exile like this, we might think there is no accountability among us. That's always true, no one takes attendance, and no one judges (although people can be missed!). Seeing each other each week does create a sense of belonging, welcome, and sense of common journey and task. Without gathering, no one knows if we are participating virtually or not. I suppose one could say "God does." But there's a cool thing about Lutherans (and others) – grace. God will always love us no matter what. So for whom would we be doing anything?

I remember discussing an approaching physical, for which I knew there would be blood work. Leading up to those tests, I cut down on high-cholesterol foods, and tried to drop a few pounds. As I was explaining this to a wise friend, he looked at me and said "You think you can fool your doctor? Who do you think these exams are for? The Doctor?" I knew that the test results might look better, but the likelihood of adding the food and poundage back was high.

Indeed. We don't observe faith practices to gain points with anyone. It helps ourselves (and our neighbors)! Our spiritual health is indeed a priority, and our practices can help us grow and be sustained in that regard. In addition to some personal devotional things you might do or consider doing, such as daily scripture and prayer, perhaps using the "Christ in Our Home devotional booklet," Mount Olive will be making some things available to you:

Accent on Worship, *continued on page 3*

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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Wed., Feb. 24

10 am – Staff meeting
Noon – Lenten Fellowship
5 pm – Y2 Confirmation
5:30 pm – Children’s Choir
6:45 pm – Y3 Confirmation
7 pm – Lenten Fellowship

Sun., Feb. 28

Second Sunday in Lent

7 am – Worship at a Distance
9 am – Virtual Coffee Hour
4pm – MFA Event: Lumina

Tues., Mar. 2

Noon – Bible Study

Wed., Mar. 3

10 am – Staff meeting
Noon – Lenten Fellowship
5 pm – Y2 Confirmation
5:30 pm – Children’s Choir
6pm – Vicar Committee
6:45 pm – Y3 Confirmation
7 pm – Lenten Fellowship

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 **this Sunday, 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.

Words for the Journey: Lenten Fellowship

On Wednesday evenings during Lent (Feb. 24 – Mar. 24) from Noon to 1 pm and from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., all are invited to gather online via Zoom to spend time in community and in reflection. Each week, Vicar Bonneville will introduce a word for reflection and provide a centering scripture reading. The time will begin in large group format and then break out into smaller groups for continued discussion/reflection and check-in with others as a way to be in community during this time.

Participate in this meeting via Zoom using this information. Either click the link, type in the meeting ID and passcode, or dial in by phone typing and typing in the meeting ID and passcode.

Join Zoom Meeting via Computer:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87426647181?pwd=QkprQ0I5bnVWWUhtNEdGaWxnTjJlZQT09>

Meeting ID: 874 2664 7181

Passcode: 031492

Join Zoom Meeting via Phone: Dial 1 312 626 6799

Note: If you are new to Zoom, contact Vicar Bonneville (vicar@mountolivechurch.org) and she will help you set it up.

Accent on Worship,

continued from page 1

Weekly Sunday Liturgy at home, with a weekly Sunday video provided for that purpose. These include hymns, psalms, liturgy with which you can sing, weekly readings with newly-prepared sermon and prayers offered in the fullest contemporary sense.

Midweek Evening Prayer – recorded by Pastor Crippen and singers of the Cantorei, for the purpose of joining in this service of prayer.

Lenten Fellowship gatherings via Zoom, on Wednesdays in Lent, from Noon-1pm and from 7 to 8 pm. (See separate article by Vicar Bonneville for more details).

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday – this week (Wednesday, February 17). A liturgy video will be released with which you can join – including Imposition of Ashes if you've picked up one of the packets the worship committee has prepared. There are some left which you could still pick up if you do not yet have one and wish to.

Whatever you decide to do, do it for you and for God's sake. We can use this time to go even deeper into the question: What does it mean to be a baptized child of God?

- Cantor David Chernien

Building Our Home



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: Follow-up

We hope that you had a great meal or two! (Remember, if last week wasn't convenient for you, please feel free to celebrate another week, and let us know.) In case you missed the last few weeks: 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.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Now for the follow-up:

First—Take a moment to share your celebration through pictures, words, video—or all three. Send your photos, words or videos to missions@mountolivechurch.org and we'll pass them along next week.

Then—Let us know what restaurants you visited. We will send a note to them thanking them for being a part of our community: missions@mountolivechurch.org.

And—If you haven't contributed to LWR yet, you can still 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.

Finally—Let us know if you have another restaurant you'd like to add to our map: missions@mountolivechurch.org 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>.

Thank you to all of Mount Olive for your commitment to our global mission partners.



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.

For March 13, they will read *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. For April 10 they will read *The Good Lord Bird*, by James McBride.

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](#)

Neighborhood Ministries Committee Welcomes All Interested

The Neighborhood Ministries Committee will meet on Thursday from 6:30-7:30 pm by Zoom. We would like to welcome all who are interested in learning about all the dynamic happenings undertaken by Neighborhood Ministries as we continue to meet the needs and concerns of our neighborhood.

Please contact Cynthia Prosek to for the Zoom invite. You are also able to connect by phone. As we chart our path this year, we will review last year, plan next year, and celebrate the impact of our congregation's stewardship in time, talent, and treasure. Phone: 612-860-7228, or email neighmin@mountolivechurch.org for more information.