

The Olive Branch

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SUNDAY READINGS

Sunday, March 7

Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

Sunday, March 14

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

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

This week's Gospel reading from John 2 recounts the story of Jesus confronting merchants and money changers in the temple courtyard. As a child, I admit to not fully understanding what was happening here and remember feeling somewhat disturbed by the story of

Jesus. Later in life, I have come to a fuller understanding of the concept of "righteous anger" at injustices and how anger can be channeled to bring about positive change. And that would be one lesson we could take from this Gospel reading. However, more than that, this story to me is one that illustrates the importance of inclusion in God's kingdom.

The first century practice of temple worship prescribed particular temple sacrifices, corresponding to certain seasons and life events. These sacrifices involved offerings of grain, birds, or animals. Individuals and families would often travel great distances to offer these sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple, and rather than bring grain or animals on the long journey with all the care that might entail, they would often purchase the items they needed for sacrifice upon arrival. Herein lies the problem that sets the stage for Jesus' confrontation of these merchants and money changers. These traveling worshipers would come from their own towns and regions that often had their own currency. So in order to purchase the items needed for sacrifice, they would first need to exchange their money for the local currency. The money changers would charge sometimes exorbitant rates for the exchange. Then, when these worshipers would seek out the items needed for sacrifice, they would be charged an amount much greater than the purchase price offered at a market outside of the temple area. You begin to see the reason for Jesus' anger. Here are travelers wanting - needing - to participate in the prescribed practices for worship and being charged unfair amounts not once but twice for the very things needed for worship. Certainly, the ones hurt most by these practices were those least able to pay.

In my mind, it is worth it for us, as a faith community, to keep this story in mind as we consider opportunities for people to participate in our work together - our ministry - in this place. Do we ask people to be something they are not to participate in our



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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Wed., Mar. 3

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

Sun., March 7***Third Sunday in Lent***

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

Mon., March 8

7 pm – Vestry Meeting

Tues., Mar. 9

Noon – Bible Study

Wed., Mar. 10

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

Lumina Concert to be Available Until March 21

If you could not watch last Sunday’s concert by Lumina, “The Veil and the Thorn,” it will be available for viewing at your convenience until March 21.

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

The concert can be accessed by visiting Mount Olive’s YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/DLm4AHm0_10. You can also click the link on the home page of Mount Olive’s website: www.mountolivechurch.org.

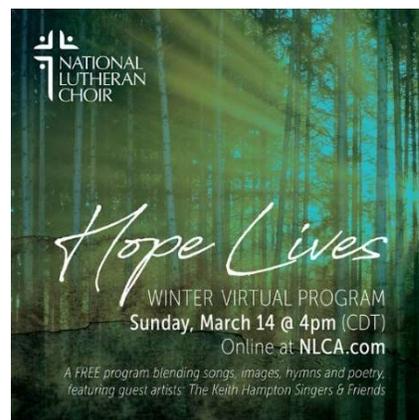
NLC Virtual Hymn Festival: Hope Lives!

Join the National Lutheran Choir and guest artists, the Keith Hampton Singers, for a FREE virtual program blending spoken reflections, songs and familiar hymns of joy and hope with new music that speaks to our present time, inviting all people of faith to sing in joy *together!*

Sunday, March 14 @ 4pm (Central Daylight Time) @ NLCA.com

This online presentation is **FREE** for all.

For a Virtual Subscription to exclusive content (\$10/month), visit NLCA.com



Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

ministry? Are people excluded from participation because of who they are or who they were? Do race, gender, socioeconomic standing, or who someone loves ever stand in the way of participation in our ministry together?

I will say this.... I find myself offering words of thanks every day for the privilege of serving in a community like Mount Olive. This is by far the most open, accepting, and welcoming faith community I have been a part of in my 40 some years of life. And I find myself connected to a marvelous community of like-minded church leaders throughout the Twin Cities who work every day to include people of all walks of life in the work they do. But at the same time, there is always more we can do. There are more ways we can pay attention to barriers we may set up - intentionally or unintentionally - to participation in our work together. And, when we find them, perhaps, even though it may be a bit discomfoting, we can allow ourselves a bit of justified anger that motivates us to work toward more welcoming, more accepting, more inclusive practices.

- Jim Bargmann

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: Midweek Lenten Fellowship

On Wednesday afternoons or/and evenings during Lent (Feb. 24 – Mar. 24) from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. or/and 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=QkprQ0I5bnVWVWUhtNEdGaWxnTjJzQT09>

Meeting ID: 874 2664 7181 Passcode: 031492

Join Zoom Meeting via Phone - Dial: 1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 874 2664 7181 Passcode: 031492

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

Christ In Our Home

The next quarter (April - June, 2021) of the *Christ In Our Home* devotional booklet has arrived in the church office.

They have been mailed to all who have previously requested them.

If you have previously requested a copy of this devotional booklet and have not yet received it, or if you haven't requested one before and would like one sent to you, please call the church office and we will be happy to put one in the mail.

Building Our Home



This week's question and answer: Who are our partners in this effort? Part Two of Three.

Building Our Home is an effort in cooperation with three non-profit housing developers, Beacon Interfaith, Aeon, and Alliance Housing. Over the next three weeks, this space will highlight one of those three organizations.

This week, Aeon. Aeon was founded almost 35 years ago to replace housing that was torn down with the building of the Minneapolis Convention Center. Their portfolio is now made up of 58 properties, including a both new construction and rehabilitation of existing properties, preserving naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) in our market. Aeon properties currently house over 15,000 people in the Twin Cities. As an organization, Aeon operates under a four-part mission: build new affordable homes in the Twin Cities, preserve existing affordable homes, connect people to resources needed to stay in their homes, and “build communities that people are proud to call home.”

For more information, you are invited to visit their web site at:
<https://www.aeon.org>

And for an additional Mount Olive connection, a number of families who participate in our Diaper Depot program have found affordable, high quality homes in Aeon properties.

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.

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, and for April 10 the book is *The Good Lord Bird*, by James McBride.

They 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>

Order Easter gifts from SERRV and be ‘three times nice’

OK, we know that sounds hype-y. But it’s true. First, you’ll be doing something nice—brightening someone’s day and the Easter season—when you buy a SERRV gift for a friend, relative, or maybe yourself. Second, your



purchase will be an act of kindness and equity, because you’ll be helping to pay fair-trade wages to people around the world who make or grow these products. Third, because SERRV sends 20% of sales revenue to a nonprofit selected by the sponsoring organization (Mount Olive), March 3 through April 4, you’ll be

joining in a one-time special gift to Lutheran World Federation–Jerusalem, one of the ten missions we currently support through our global missions budget.

In case you’ve forgotten, SERRV International is the nonprofit that was our source for all those lovely items we sold on Advent Sundays in pre-pandemic times—and hope to sell again after the pandemic wanes. SERRV is no upstart. It was founded in 1949 to help Europe’s refugees earn income by selling their handmade items. Now it’s helping some 8,000 artisans and farmers in 24 nations sell what they grow or make—at fair prices.

We’re this time directing that 20% gift to LWF–Jerusalem. Why?

We like to rotate the spotlight among our ten global missions, describing the central mission of each but also reporting notable

accomplishments, challenges, and next steps. LWF–Jerusalem and SERRV International have in common their

beginnings shortly after World War II. LWF’s Jerusalem program was started in 1948 to provide food, milk,

medicine, and clothing to Palestinian refugees. LWF–Jerusalem has long sponsored the Augusta-Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem. Today it serves Palestinians on the West Bank, in East Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip. Its

priorities include vocational training and working to strengthen the capacities of other institutions in the area.

Early this year LWF–Jerusalem reported that the first available supplies of COVID-19 vaccine would be given to East Jerusalem medical staff. It also announced the opening—with support from Canadian Lutheran World Relief—of a new program to provide Palestinian women with education, training, and employment opportunities in nontraditional fields, including some that historically have been open only to men.

LWF–Jerusalem

To start shopping, click on our “SERRV and Earn” link: <https://www.serrv.org/?a=LWFEaster> (we recommend that you copy the link and keep it handy). When you get to the site, make sure you see the orange banner at the top of the screen that says “20% of your online order today will be donated to Mount Olive Lutheran Church” (which we then give to LWF–Jerusalem). **Again, this 20% deal runs March 3–April 4.** But starting today, March 3, and continuing through March 17, SERRV is offering Mount Olive members and friends **free shipping** on personal orders of \$50+ when they use the promo code SESPRING21 (some restrictions apply).

- Your (global) Missions Committee



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Lutheran Church in America*

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Vicar – [Andrea Bonneville](#)

Coordinator of Neighborhood

Ministries - [Jim Bargmann](#)

Administrative Assistant – [Cha Posz](#)

Sexton – [James Wilkes](#)

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