



The Olive Branch

March 1, 2023

Sunday Readings

March 5, 2023
Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
John 3:1-17

March 12, 2023
Third Sunday in Lent
Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42

Accent on Worship

Interim Pastor Paul E. Hoffman

Baptismal Preparation -

We find ourselves deep in the Lenten season now, that time when the Church has traditionally focused on baptismal preparation. For many of our ancient siblings, the coming Vigil of Easter could have been the climax of as many as three years of preparation. In places such as Florence, the Sacrament, held in the baptistry next to the duomo, could take hours and was a feast for the senses.

For the next four Sundays, lengthy passages of Scripture from the Gospel of John set the stage for a baptismal journey that increases in intensity. From this coming Sunday's conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about being born again to the culminating text on +Lent 5 of the raising of Lazarus, each Sunday opens to us some Scriptural story of dying and rising in Christ. The stories intensify week by week until, with the coming Triduum of Holy Week we fully live into our own baptismal dying and rising with Christ.

In this particular Lenten journey – Spring 2023 – to what is Christ calling you? What is the part of your life that longs to be drowned in the waters, and how might you hope for Christ to raise up something new in its place? It is a question worthy of contemplation on many levels of our lives: personal, congregational, national, global.

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

Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

During this Lenten journey between Ashes and Easter, if it's not already a part of your daily devotional practice, consider setting out a small bowl of water and a candle beside your Bible and hymnal in whatever space you pray your daily prayers. Each morning, be the woman at the well who comes to the waters and finds in them the Living Christ. Make the sign of the cross and remember your baptism. Such a practice just might lead you to a realization such as the one I read recently about the woman at the well: *I thought Jesus was coming to the well for water; then I realized he was coming for me.*

Both our individual and community encounters with Christ around the baptismal waters are deep and meaningful reminders that Christ comes for *me*, for us. Luther said the two most important words in the entire Eucharistic liturgy are the words, "for you." Each moment of Eucharistic participation in the bread and cup, given and shed *for you* reminds us of the eternal baptismal claim Christ has on us.

As we journey together toward the Easter celebration, you will find yourself in one way or another in the stories of Nicodemus, the man born blind, the Samaritan woman at the well, or Lazarus. And their stories of new life in Christ will be foundation blocks upon which a vibrant and meaningful resurrection celebration will be built, a powerful rising with Christ to the gift of endless life. For you. For us. For the world.

- *Interim Pastor Paul E. Hoffman*

Blood Pressure Checks Available

Come get your blood pressure checked in the Library on the first Sunday of each month after the second liturgy. A nurse from the congregation will be waiting for you to grab your coffee or tea and come on over! Blood pressure is an important indicator of health, and it's a good idea to keep track of yours.

A Note of Thanks from the Sorenson family

Marlene Sorenson and her children, Bart, Beth, and Nancy, wish to extend their heartfelt thanks to the Mount Olive community for all their support at Jim's recent hospitalization and death. Whether you called, sent a card, visited, participated in the funeral liturgy, helped with the luncheon, or prayed for them, your acts of kindness and support were needed and much appreciated.

Calendar

Wednesday, March 1

- 9:00 am Staff meeting
Noon *Midweek Lenten Eucharist*
1:00 pm Soup Luncheon
5:30 pm Children's Choir Supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
6:00 pm Soup Supper
7:00 pm *Midweek Lenten Vespers*
7:30 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Thursday, March 2

- 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, March 3

- 7:00 pm Recovery group

Sunday, March 5 - Second Sunday in Lent

- 8:00 am** *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation
9:30 am Education for all ages
10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation
1-4 pm Godly Play Doorperson training

Monday, March 6

- 5:30 pm Family Music Time (online)
6:00 pm Vicar Committee meeting

Tuesday, March 7

- Noon Bible Study
7:00 pm Global Ministry Comm. meeting

Midweek Lenten Worship

Wednesdays in Lent

Holy Eucharist at Noon,
followed by Soup Luncheon

Vespers at 7:00 pm,
preceded by Soup Supper at 6 pm

All are welcome.

Tuesday Noon Bible Study Link

The Tuesday Noon Bible Study is meeting in person, in the **East Assembly Room**. For those who are unable to come in person, we will continue to hold the meeting over Zoom as well.

The link for the Tuesday noon Bible study will be the same every week. To join from your computer, tablet, or smartphone, [click here](#).

Book Discussion

For its March 11 meeting, the group will read *These Precious Days*, by Ann Patchett, and for April 15, *The Bohemian Flats*, by Mary Relindes Ellis.

The Mount Olive book group has been meeting once a month for 20 years, usually on the second Saturday from 10am to noon. While the book selections are predominately novels, they are not always so. Lately the group has been using Zoom to provide remote access to the sessions. If you would like to participate in the group, you can either attend the monthly sessions which meet at the church or join remotely via Zoom. To join from your computer, tablet, or smartphone, [click here](#).

The names of the books for the two upcoming sessions are published in *The Olive Branch*, along with instructions for joining via Zoom. If you would like a list of the books the group has read, make a request at the church office along with your email address.



Taste of Afghanistan Coming March 12

Have you wondered about the items in the display case? Well, we are getting ready for our celebration of Afghanistan and our friendship with a wonderful refugee family.

All are invited to a full Sunday celebration on March 12. Anita, pictured here, will join us for our education hour along with a representative from the Afghan Cultural Society. Get your questions ready, and in fact, feel free to send them along ahead of time to global@mountolivechurch.org. Perhaps you already got to meet 4-year old Mahdi (also pictured) when he and his sister Efat visited Mount Olive a few weeks ago. What delightful children!

The men in the family,
Mustafa and Milad,

will be at their jobs in the morning, but they will be able to join us for our great Afghan feast downstairs after the second liturgy. All are invited to taste the wonderful food that Anita has been feeding our mentor team for over a year. And the best part--many of you, Mount Olive cooks, will be preparing that food from the recipes that Anita shared with us.



What a wonderful way to learn, to celebrate, and to make new friends.

Copious Thanks!

Thanks to our friends at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in St Paul for the use of their beautiful cope for the Lent Procession on Sunday, 26 February.

Many years ago, that congregation planted a new church start at 31st and Chicago Ave. in Minneapolis: Mount Olive!

Upcoming Education Topics

March 5: "The Hymns of Susan Palo Cherwien," presented by Cantor David Cherwien.

Susan Palo Cherwien was a brilliant presence among us who shared her light and faith in many ways, but especially in the creation of hymns found throughout *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and other publications. However, some of Susan's hymns have not been published. David will graciously present some of these hymns, giving us a deeper appreciation of her works of faith.

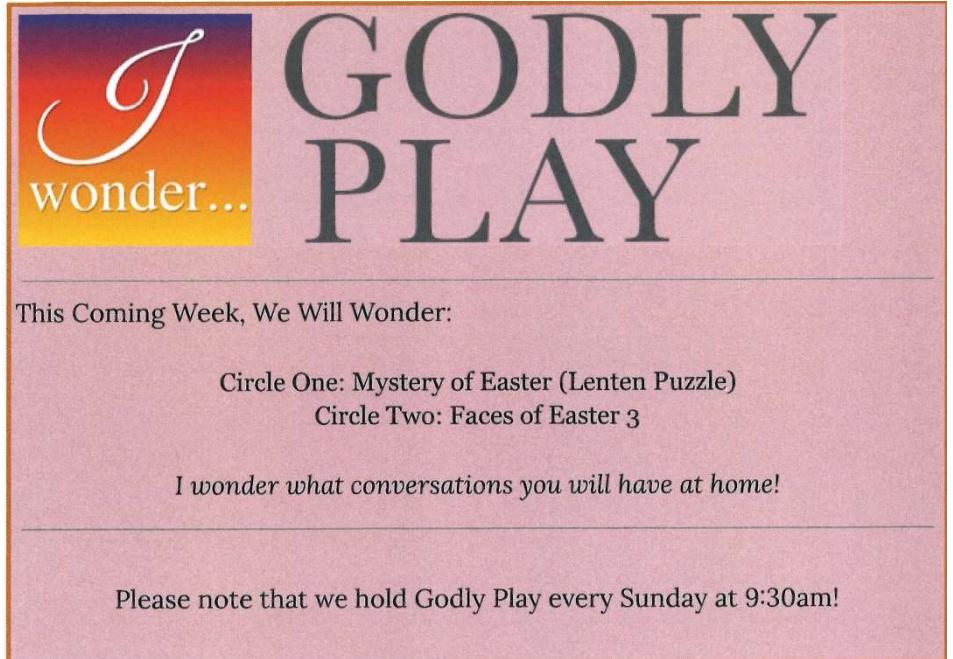
March 12: "A Taste of Afghanistan" (see page 4)

March 19: "J. S. Bach: A Musical Theologian," presented by Mount Olive member, Art Halbardier. Luther's friend, Johann Walther, wrote, "Music and theology are the gift of God. God has finely clothed music in the outer-garment of theology." Three centuries later, Johann Sebastian Bach pursued a mirror reflection of Walther's idea: "Theology finely clothed in the outer-garment of music." Though Bach never wrote a book or scholarly essay about theology, his theology and deep faith were the foundation of his marvelous religious compositions.

(This presentation was originally scheduled for Adult Forum on March 15, 2020. That weekend the Covid outbreak forced the cancellation of in-person gathering for worship and education for the following 15 months. At last, its time has come!)

March 26: "With Fresh Eyes," presented by Interim Pastor Paul E. Hoffman.

On his final Sunday of leadership among us, Pastor Hoffman will offer an adult education reflection - *With Fresh Eyes*. During this hour together, he will share with us the observations that he's made about our ministry and life together at Mount Olive. Woven around passages of Scripture, these reflections will be offered as a gift for us to take forward after spending these three months together as pastor and people of God.



This Coming Week, We Will Wonder:

Circle One: Mystery of Easter (Lenten Puzzle)
Circle Two: Faces of Easter 3

I wonder what conversations you will have at home!

Please note that we hold Godly Play every Sunday at 9:30am!

The Olive Branch



**Sunday, March 19, 2023 —
4:00 p.m.**

Billy McLaughlin with Members of Simple Gifts

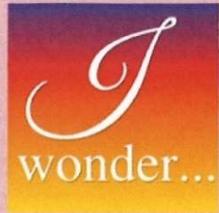
Billy McLaughlin is recognized as an innovative performer and composer who embraces the advantages of acoustic guitar amplification, unorthodox techniques, and altered tunings while celebrating a gift for melody.

His enormous yet fluid acoustic guitar tone has carried him around the world to Billboard's Top 10 chart and most recently through a devastating medical disorder called focal dystonia. McLaughlin has had to relearn the guitar lefthanded and is in the early stages of what might be described as "one of the great musical comeback stories of all time." His story is the subject of an award-winning documentary film, "Changing Keys: Billy McLaughlin and the Mysteries of Dystonia."

Advance Notice – Mark Your Calendars! Special Adult Education Events on June 18 and 25

We are once again very privileged to have Hamline University Professor Emeritus Earl Schwartz join us in the Chapel Lounge on two Sundays, June 18 and 25, following the 10:00 AM liturgy. Earl has been with us before and responses to his presentations are always to bring him back as often as possible.

This time Earl will present on the "The Priestly Culture as Taught in Hebrew Scriptures" as presented in the Hebrew scripture which he calls "the underlying 'life force' basis of purity, impurity, and sacrifices." He will explain how Israelite versions of these practices, as described in biblical texts, do and do not appear to resemble similar non-Israelite practices, and then, how the prophetic tradition came to re-contextualize this all in distinctly biblical ways.



GODLY PLAY

Opportunities for Youth and Adults to Serve our Youngest Faithful!

Mount Olive will host trainings with Rev. Suzanne Burke for youth and adults to learn how to shepherd and wonder along with our young ones. We have a core of dedicated storytellers and doorpersons who serve and they would love some more colleagues to join their ranks! See below for two opportunities to join this deep and joyful ministry team:

Doorperson Training: (3 contact hours): Sunday, March 5: 1-4pm

The doorperson greets the children by name at the door, and serves as a quiet and gentle presence throughout the Godly Play session. This is a quick and easy training that will be sure to get you hooked on Godly Play! (lunch will be provided)

Core Training to be a Storyteller: (18 contact hours)

Over the course of three days (minimum 18 contact hours), participants experience all aspects of the Godly Play method and begin to become fluent in the Godly Play core stories and fundamental practices. Additionally, Godly Play's guiding Theology of Childhood is introduced, so participants become more deeply connected to their work. Core training follows an action/reflection model of learning with a mixture of trainer-led presentations and participant storytelling presentations. Core training plenary presentations cover: the Spirituality of the Child, Setting up a Godly Play Environment and Supporting the Circle of Children.

Friday, April 21: 4:30-9:30pm (dinner provided)

Saturday, April 22: 8:30am-6pm (meals provided)

Sunday, April 23: 1-6pm (lunch provided)

Mount Olive will pay the registration costs for any from our congregation who wish to register. [Click here for the full training flyer.](#)

Can't attend the training but still want to be involved? Donate a meal (or two!) for the workshop attendees!

Contact Bekah Schulz to register, to help, or with any questions about Godly Play or these training sessions: deutschgirl@gmail.com or by phone, 651-399-2990.

The Olive Branch

Neighborhood Ministry Education

Lunch & Learn

Wednesday, March 15, 1:00-2:30 pm

Mount Olive will again host this event, organized by our partner, Align Minneapolis. We will have the opportunity to meet with Steve Horsfield, Executive Director of Simpson Housing. Lunch will be provided.

March Neighborhood Ministries Partners of the Month:

Sabathani Community Center and Community Emergency Service

In March, we highlight two of our partners that work on issues of food insecurity in our south Minneapolis community as a part of the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, a state-wide initiative intended to bring together “organizations, businesses, faith communities, and individuals” to raise awareness about the issue of food insecurity and support for local food programs.

“**Sabathani Community Center** is one of Minnesota’s oldest African American-founded nonprofits... [and] helps equip approximately 32,000 South Minneapolis residents annually” through their food shelf, clothes closet, seniors programs, workforce initiatives, support for school-age children, and more.

Community Emergency Service or CES, works to alleviate hunger and food insecurity through an on-site food shelf, food delivery programs, a partnership with Meals on Wheels, and its unique Ani-Meals program, providing food for pets and service animals.

Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month through a yearly contribution from our budget, and often, like our partner this month, we also volunteer in support of their work. On top of those financial and labor contributions, we encourage any member who wishes to donate over and above our budgeted amount to those partners doing work in their areas of passion and concern. You can do this using your offering envelopes or our online giving system. All additional contributions to our partner of the month will be distributed to the partner for the month in which the contribution is received.

In addition, we will be collecting donations of non-perishable food items in the cart located in the West Assembly to be divided between our two food shelf partners. However, for those who are able, we strongly encourage monetary donations. Because our food shelf partners have access discounts and bulk purchase opportunities not available to regular consumers, monetary donations to our partners allows them to purchase much more food for the same cost.

For more information about the work of the Sabathani Community Center, please visit their website at sabathani.org. For more information about CES, please visit cesmn.org.

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue
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*A congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Sunday Eucharists: 8 & 10:45 am

Contact Us

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On the Web: mountolivechurch.org

Staff

Interim Pastor – *Paul E. Hoffman*

Cantor – *David Cherwien*

Vicar – *Mollie Hamre*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry –

Jim Bargmann

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

Sexton – *Jose Morcho*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ
congregation.*

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