



The Olive Branch

November 29, 2023

Sunday Readings

December 3, 2023

*First Sunday in Advent,
year B*

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37

December 10, 2023

*Second Sunday in Advent,
year B*

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

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

Accent on Worship

Jim Bargmann

*"O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence – "*

- Isaiah 64:1

Our First Reading this week begins with a prayer that ends up being way too sanitized, too peaceful, too calm, in our current usage. Not that it is not a good thing to read these words - that can have its own power - but at least in my life, these words have been shouted at God, sometimes through tears. I imagine this was how they were first uttered by Isaiah as well.

The common and familiar interpretation of the words of Isaiah 64, and likely the reason the Revised Common Lectionary has it included in the readings for Advent, is that God did indeed tear open the heavens and come down - in the person of Jesus. And similarly, in the duality of Advent, we await Jesus' return.

But when I have found myself praying for God to rend the heavens and come down, it was not in either of these contexts. Upon learning that work I loved would end because my position would be eliminated because of a deficit in the budget, I found myself screaming at God to intervene - to come down and do something. Similarly, in the midst of divorce. And again in the messiness and uncertainty inherent in navigating the family court legal system. In all of these times, I prayed for God to "tear open the heavens and come down," for God himself to intervene - because no path I could see, no action on my part, seemed to work. And I can assure you, those prayers were not peace-filled, head-bowed, hands-folded prayers.

But just the same, I also recognize that while these words were fulfilled in Jesus' coming and will again be made true with Jesus' return, we are called to be Jesus in the here-and-now. We are to be

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Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

God's presence made real in the lives of those around us. And so in a very real sense, God has torn the heavens and come down and we are the embodiment of God's presence. And so, while the messiness in many of the situations mentioned above still exists and my prayers have not changed much - I still await God's own intervention - I feel God has guided me to understanding that I have a role in being God's very real presence in the world. I find myself adding to these prayers - praying that God would reveal to me where I have the power to "make mountains quake" as Isaiah says - to affect change where it seems only God's intervention will work. Perhaps God is tearing open the heavens and coming down - working through me to do the work that needs to be done.

- Jim Bargmann

Mount Olive Youth and Family Christmas Party

Date/time: Sunday, December 17, 2023, after church 12:30-3:00

Location: Downstairs kitchen area at Mount Olive

What to bring: A potluck item to share for lunch with other families.

We plan to stay after church to have lunch and to bake and decorate cookies. Feel free to come for any time period that works for your family after church until approximately 3:00. Hope to see you there!

National Lutheran Choir Annual Christmas Festival

New Hope: Finding light in unexpected places

In Christ's birth we see, hear, and feel a sense of renewal as Christmas connects us to the roots of our faith. Join the National Lutheran Choir at the magnificent Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis for the beloved Christmas Festival tradition! Carols, readings, and music from brass, oboe, harp, and organ will sound throughout the Basilica to ring in another Christmas.

In Person Concerts at the Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis

Friday, December 8 - 4:30pm

Saturday, December 9 - 1:30pm and 8:00pm

Adults and Seniors: \$35 | Students: Pay what you can | 18 and Under: Free

Discounts for groups of 10+! Call the NLC office at 612-722-2301 for more information.

Livestream

Saturday, December 9th - 1:30pm CT Free to all | Visit [NLCA.com](https://www.nlca.com) to watch!

For tickets and more information, visit [NLCA.com](https://www.nlca.com).

Calendar

Wednesday, November 29

10:00 am Staff meeting
5:30 pm Children's Choirs supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
7:00 pm Y2 Confirmation
7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Thursday, November 30

6:00 p.m. Bible Study
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, December 1

7:00 pm Recovery Group

Saturday, December 2

Sunday, December 3 - First Sunday of Advent

8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee & conversation
9:30 am Education for all ages (Godly Play, Adult Forum)
10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee & conversation
4:00 pm *Advent Procession*

Monday, December 4

Noon Bible Study
5:30 pm Family Music Time (online)
7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A. group)

Tuesday, December 5

Noon Bible Study

Wednesday, December 6

10:00 am Staff meeting
5:30 pm Children's Choirs supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
7:00 pm *Advent Vespers*
7:30 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Scandinavian Coffee Hour December 10

Calling all Scandinavians, Nordics, and friends!

Do you have a holiday treat you would be able to share? Does it have a special story? Please bring your treat to either (or both) coffee hours December 10th. Join us for coffee, lefse, herring, krumkake, rosettes, almond cake, sweet soup, rommergrot, and more!

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 their December 9 meeting, the group will read *Pachinko*, by Min Jin Lee, and for January 13, they will read *Lost Colony: The Hennespin Island Murders*, by Steve Berg.

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 in person or join remotely via Zoom. To join from your computer, tablet, or smart phone, [click here](#).

2024 Pledges

Pledges for 2024 were received at the morning Eucharists on Sunday, November 19.

If you wish to pledge but forgot your card or were not able to attend church that day, it's not too late to submit your pledge of support for the coming year.

You may bring or mail your card in at any time through December. If you have lost track of your card, contact the church office and we will be happy to mail you another.

Thanks for your generous support of Mount Olive!

Advent Approaches

Advent begins this Sunday, December 3.

Midweek Evening Prayer will be prayed each Wednesday evening during Advent (Dec. 6, 13, and 20), at 7:00 pm.

All are welcome.

Conspiracy vs. The Bible: Monday/Thursday Bible Study Continues

This month, Vicar Mildahl is leading a six-session Bible Study looking closely at common elements of modern American conspiracy theories that are drawn from a Christian worldview, such as the Devil, the end times, Jewish people, and Christian nationalism. We'll be comparing the conspiracy theory versions of these ideas with what the Bible actually says and discussing how faithful believers ought to respond and speak the truth in love.

Two identical sessions are offered each week: Mondays at noon (note the change, not Fridays) and Thursdays at 6pm. You are welcome to join in person or via Zoom. Monday participants, feel free to bring your lunch. Thursday nights will include a light supper. Contact vicar@mountolivechurch.org if you have any questions!

[Click here](#) to join the Zoom meeting for either the Monday or Thursday sessions.

Music & Fine Arts Advent Procession *This Sunday, December 3, 4:00 pm*

All are invited to this annual service of lessons and carols for Advent.

Save the Date!

Friday, December 29, 7:00 p.m.: Grown-Up Movie Night at Mount Olive.

Start your New Year's celebration with a movie with Mount Olive friends. Movie title to be announced soon.

LSS Refugee Services Accessible Housing Needs

Every once in a while, Lutheran Social Services reaches out with a very specific request to assist the refugee families we serve. For this request, however, they are not seeking donations (though they still love those!) or volunteers (always looking for more!). Instead, they are seeking housing connections. They have nearly exhausted all of their known leads and have two families who each need a very specific arrangement. Here are the details of what they're looking for:

- Move in date: ASAP
- 6 month to 1 year lease
- 3-4 bedroom homes/apartments
- Must be able to accommodate a family of 7-8 people
- Metro area (near bus line, easy to access groceries/pharmacy/etc.)
- Wheelchair Accessible (at least for one bedroom, and common living spaces)
- Ideally not over \$2000/month
- Property owner willing to work with a refugee family – they don't have credit or rental history, but come with an LSS guarantee of payment for the first several months. We also provide income verification.

If you have any connections, please send them to Lynn Mullin: Lynn.Mullin@lssmn.org, Em Antin: Em.Antin@lssmn.org, or Margaret Yapp: Margaret.Yapp@lssmn.org. We are seeing an increase of people arriving who require accessible housing options and would love to have a list of folks with spaces that meet those requirements so we can get them into their first Minnesota home as quickly as possible!

Thank you so much for your continued support of newly-arrived refugees!

December Adult Forums

December 3, 10 and 17: "Credo," a three-part study presented by Pastor Crippen.

This series will look at the way we declare our faith publicly in creeds in worship, how we are bound (or not) to those creeds, and what it means for our worship life and our life in the world. We'll also consider the three ecumenical creeds that our confessions and constitution claim are our heritage and part of our foundation, at their strengths and weaknesses, and consider their use in our liturgy. Additionally, we'll explore the growing field of alternate creeds.

Continued Youth Justice Conversation

At the end of August, the Neighborhood Ministry Committee hosted a conversation with younger members of Mount Olive on the topic of justice. We facilitated a conversation with a small group of those in our younger generation about what they would define as justice, what they are currently doing to work for justice, and which aspects of justice work they would like to pursue in the future.

At that gathering, we promised the conversation would continue. All those who were a part of that conversation, along with any other 11-18 year olds, are invited to join us to work on further developing these ideas and making them reality. That conversation will happen on Sunday, December 10, at 12:30 pm. Lunch will be provided.

GIFTS THAT GIVE

The Global Ministry Committee is hosting a Gifts that Give sale where you can buy Christmas gifts that also give back. Stop by the west assembly room between or after the liturgies on December 3, 10 and 17. You can use cash, check or credit card.



ADVENT GIVING TREE. Choose an ornament to represent a gift supporting one of Mount Olive's ministry partners. We have ornaments from ELCA Good Gifts, Bethania Kids in India, Common Hope in Guatemala, the Diaper Depot, and Lutheran World Relief.



TRAVELING TIENDA (STORE). Common Hope, one of Mount Olive's sponsored ministries, is bringing a Guatemalan market to us. Support Common Hope's education, health care, housing, and family development programming by purchasing Guatemalan artisan made gifts. This little market has ornaments, toys and beautiful textiles available for purchase.



EQUAL EXCHANGE PRODUCTS. Fair trade coffee, cocoa and chocolate, and dates are available for purchase. Equal Exchange builds long term partnerships with small farmers and co-ops around the world to bring economically just and environmentally sound products to consumers.

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

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*A congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Sunday Eucharists:

8:00 & 10:45 am

Contact Us

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Staff

Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*

Cantor – *David Cherwien*

Vicar – *Lauren Mildahl*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Outreach
and Ministry – *Jim Bargmann*

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ
congregation.*

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