



# The Olive Branch

December 13, 2023

## Sunday Readings

**December 17, 2023**

*Third Sunday in Advent,  
year B*

Isaiah 64:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

**December 24, 2023**

*Fourth Sunday in Advent,  
year B*

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Luke 1:46b-55

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

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

## Accent on Worship

*Vicar Lauren Mildahl*

After three weeks of jumping around in other epistles (Ephesians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Peter), this week, the lectionary finally comes back to pick up where we left off in the last part of 1 Thessalonians. Which means that we finally get to read one of my favorite verses in the Bible: 1 Thessalonians 5:24. In the NIV translation (which was how I first learned it) it reads: "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it."

This has been a very important verse to me for a long time. In fact, when a friend and I decided to try to write a worship song in college (she was the composer, I was the lyricist), my scriptural inspiration was this very verse. (You can ask me for the lyrics sometime, but I'm not sure I still stand by them!)

And I love to share this verse with people, because it is not one of the "greatest hits" of Bible memorization (it's no John 3:16 or Psalm 23), but it is perfect to memorize because it is so short and sweet and lovely. Additionally, "and he will do it" has such an appealing vagueness! What will God do? "It!" Whatever is needed, whatever we can't. Because God has called us and God is faithful, God will do it. Whatever it is.

In point of fact, this verse is actually talking about sanctification. Verse 23 (which is also nice) reads "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (NRSVUE). Sanctification means "being made holy" and it's a word that I'm not sure Lutherans are always entirely comfortable with (because if we are too holy then we might not think we need grace so much!). But being made holy, to me, doesn't mean being made perfect and it doesn't mean being made more worthy of God's love — God loves us the same whether we are sanctified or not.

*continued on page 2*

## **Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1***

But being made holy, to me, means being made whole, “kept sound.” It means embracing life in the Spirit, producing fruit like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and goodness. It means loving every minute of loving your neighbor. And it’s what God wants for us! It’s why, in God’s faithfulness, God will do it!

And that’s why I think Lutherans should love this verse. It isn’t about sanctifying ourselves - God is sanctifying us and sanctifying us entirely. We aren’t doing it - God will do it. Amen and Amen!

- Vicar Lauren Mildahl

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## *Christmas and Epiphany Worship at Mount Olive*

### **Christmas Eve: Sunday, December 24, 2023**

Christmas Eve Eucharist at 4:00 p.m.

Choral Prelude at 9:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Eucharist at 10:00 p.m.

### **Christmas Day: Monday, December 25, 2023**

Festival Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

### **The Name of Jesus: Monday, January 1, 2024**

Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

### **The Epiphany of Our Lord: Saturday, January 6, 2024**

Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

### **The Baptism of Our Lord: Sunday, January 7, 2024**

Holy Eucharist at 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

\* Please note: On Sunday morning, December 24 (Fourth Sunday in Advent), and December 31 (First Sunday of Christmas), we will celebrate **one Eucharist, at 10:00 a.m.**

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## **Mount Olive Youth and Family Christmas Party This Sunday**

**Date/time:** This 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. See you there!

## Calendar

### Wednesday, December 13

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

### Thursday, December 14

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

### Friday, December 15

7:00 pm Recovery Group

### Sunday, December 17 - Third Sunday of Advent

8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation  
9:30 am Education for all ages (Godly Play, Adult Forum)  
10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation  
Noon Youth & Family Christmas Party  
12:30 pm Y1 Confirmation

### Monday, December 18

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

### Tuesday, December 19

Noon Bible Study

### Wednesday, December 20

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

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## A Note of Thanks

Dear church family,

We want to thank you for helping us with the lawyer fee as we seek legal asylum to stay in the USA. Our hearts are so full of joy that you help us with this. We will have peace of mind when it is final that we can stay in this country and raise our family in safety. You have helped us in many ways, and we want to express our thanks to all of you.

- The Mohammadi family

## 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](#).

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## Book Discussion

For their January 13 meeting, the Book Discussion Group will read *Lost Colony: The Hennepin Island Murders*, by Mount Olive member Steve Berg. For the February 10 meeting they will read *Of Human Bondage*, by W. Somerset Maugham.

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](#).

## Midweek Advent Worship

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

All are welcome.

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## 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.

There will be no Adult Forum on December 24.

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## Christmas Day Coffee

There will be no carry-in brunch for the 10 a.m. Christmas Day liturgy. However, if you would like to make coffee and bring in treats for after the service, you may sign up on the chart next to the coffee window in the East Assembly Room.

## 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](mailto:vicar@mountolivechurch.org) if you have any questions!

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

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## Staff Christmas Gifts

As is our tradition, this is the time of year that we gather monetary gifts for our church staff. If you would like to contribute, please either use the offering envelope provided especially for this, or simply note “staff gifts” on your check/envelope and send it to the church office or place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning.

Please have the gifts in by this Sunday, December 17. Thanks for your generosity.

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## Cookies, Bars, and Treats: January 7

On January 7, both coffee hours will appreciate your extra baking efforts and/or your purchase power.

Bring your extra holiday treats for coffee hour! Carol Austermann and Margaret Bostelmann will gladly host!



## Bright Stars of Bethlehem

Bright Stars of Bethlehem is one of Mount Olive's Global Ministry partners. It is a nonprofit that supports health, education, and cultural and spiritual development to promote peace in the region. Our prayers and ongoing financial support to Bright Stars are critical in this grim time of the Hamas- Israeli war which has impacted the lives of all Israelis and Palestinians throughout the entire Holy Land. Your Global Ministry committee is donating \$2000 to Bright Stars of Bethlehem. If you would like to make a personal donation, you can give here <https://www.brightstarsbethlehem.com/donate> or place a check in the church office or in the blue envelopes, marked for Bright Stars.

You can also join in with prayers on **Saturday, December 16 at 9:00 a.m. Central Time**. The 17th annual Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols, simulcast live between the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral in the United States and the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, Palestine, will take place. It is a beautiful service of familiar carols and readings in Arabic and English. You are invited to join in the service in person at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1200 S. Marquette, Minneapolis or by watching it live on [YouTube](#). The poignant message of peace and hope in these dark, challenging times is empowering hope where hope was born.



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## Christmas Worship Schedule, with Revised Sundays

This year Christmas Eve lands on the same Sunday as the Fourth Sunday of Advent. For both Sunday, December 24, and Sunday, December 31, we will have a **single liturgy** in the morning, at 10:00 a.m.

Our Christmas season schedule remains the same otherwise: Eucharist at 4:00 and 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve, 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day, 10:00 a.m. on Monday, January 1, the Name of Jesus, and Epiphany Eucharist at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, January 6.

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## Ordination of Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero

Former Mount Olive member, Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero, will be ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada on Saturday, January 13, 2024, 3:00 pm PST.

Kyle's ordination will take place at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. He has been called to serve in his current professorship at Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon.

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP at: <https://smlc.live/kylersvp>  
The service will be livestreamed on that day: <https://smlc.live/kylelivestream>

## GIFTS THAT GIVE

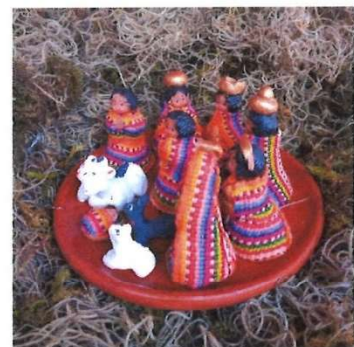
This is the final week of the Gifts that Give sale, hosted by the Global Ministry Committee. Stop by the west assembly room between or after the liturgies on December 17 to buy Christmas gifts that give back. You can use cash, check or credit card.



**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. New items will be available this week!



**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

3045 Chicago Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

### Sunday Eucharists:

**8:00 & 10:45 am**

### Contact Us

Phone: 612/827-5919

Fax: 612/827-4557

Web: [www.mountolivechurch.org](http://www.mountolivechurch.org)

### 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.*

## December Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: Tubman

A statement from the Tubman website powerfully articulates their mission and purpose: "For more than 45 years, Tubman has helped people of all ages, all genders, and all cultural backgrounds struggling with relationship violence, substance abuse, mental health, and other forms of trauma. Throughout the Twin Cities, Tubman provides safe shelter, legal services, counseling, youth programming, and community education. In 2022, we helped about 17,700 people in Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington counties and the surrounding area get the support and information they need to experience safety, hope, and healing."

Tubman has become a vital partner in the work of Mount Olive, working in areas that contrast many of our own programs and providing a valuable referral site for those struggling with relational violence and mental health issues.

Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month through a yearly contribution from our budget, but on top of that, we encourage any member who wishes to contribute 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.

For more information about Tubman, please visit their website at [www.tubman.org](http://www.tubman.org).