

The Olive Branch

January 10, 2024

Accent on Worship

Vicar Lauren Mildahl

Sunday Readings

January 14, 2024

*Second Sunday after Epiphany
year B*

1 Samuel 3:1-20

Psalm 139:1-6. 13-18

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

January 21, 2024

*Third Sunday after Epiphany
year B*

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 62:5-12

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

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

Recently, a seminary friend of mine told me how shocked she was when a professor at Luther began a class by listing off which books of the Bible he thought were “just plain evil.” And while I agree that hearing the Holy Scriptures described as “evil” would also upset me, the truth is, I can kind of get where he was coming from. Especially when I think about how often some specific scripture passages have been put to evil uses in my life and in the lives of those I love.

For me, the Second Reading this week is one of those passages.

Now, I don’t hate all of it. In the first verse Paul writes to the Corinthians: “All things are permitted for me, but not all things are beneficial...” (1 Cor 6:12a), which is kind of a perfect “law and gospel” verse. It begins with a succinct encapsulation of the gospel, the freedom we have in Christ: there are no requirements -- nothing we must do to earn salvation, nothing we must not do for fear of losing God’s love -- all things are permitted! And it ends with a gentle reminder of the law, that this freedom is not a freedom from consequences. “Not all things are beneficial” is just a fact, a plain admission that our actions have consequences - sometimes very negative ones. And that if we choose to take advantage of our neighbors, to look out only for ourselves, to chase worldly pleasures, sooner or later we will have to live with the fallout: brokenness, isolation, bitterness, and suffering. Or, as it has often been put, we will be punished not so much **for** our sins, but **by** our sins. “All things are permitted for me, but not all things are beneficial.” I like that part.

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But, I find reading the rest of the passage pretty traumatic. Because then Paul goes on for quite a long time, strongly urging the Corinthians to “shun sexual immorality,” (which, in this case, seems primarily to mean to stop sleeping with prostitutes) and concludes by reminding them that their bodies are temples and that they must use them to glorify God.

This might not seem like a particularly harmful idea. But, for me, growing up in the South in the height of the Purity Culture Movement in non-denominational churches, Paul’s admonitions against sexual immorality loomed large. They were weaponized, forceful and inescapable, especially for girls. It was widely understood in the tradition I grew up in that sexual sins were THE WORST SINS, and at the time I probably would have said that it was easier for God to forgive murderers than it was for God to forgive those who have sex outside of marriage. It was drilled into me through the language of scripture passages like these and through books like *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* and fads like wearing promise or purity rings.

This passage was never really framed for me as being about gospel at all, or about the intersection of freedom and consequences. It might as well not have started with “all things are permitted,” because all I heard was law. And I was scared. I was scared of degrading my temple. I was scared of my own body, of my own sexuality, of the men I might ‘tempt,’ and of the rejection I might experience from God or my church if I slipped. And it’s hard not to call that evil.

So what do we do with the parts of the Bible we just don’t like? For me, this story does end in redemption. It ends, after deconstruction and reconstruction, in freedom and in Christ. As an adult, I am still discovering the life that is possible in Christ, in the Word-Made-Flesh, rather than the words on the page. Still discovering with quivering possibility that everything is permitted in the abundant life of Christ! It doesn’t mean I’m free of scars. My journey is not over, not with God and not with God as revealed in these ancient writings we revere as Scripture. But now I can see the Bible as one more place for redemption, one more chance to experience the love of God that overcomes even our own descriptions of it. That overcomes evil with good.

- Vicar Lauren Mildahl

Coffee Hour Hosts (Always) Needed!

You know the drill!

Sign up on the chart near the serving window in the East Assembly Room.

Calendar

Wednesday, January 10

- 10:00 am Staff meeting
- 3:00 pm Library Committee meeting
- 7:00 pm Y2 Confirmation
- 6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
- 7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Thursday, January 11

- 5:30 p.m. Feminine Divine Study Group
- 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, January 12

- 7:00 pm Recovery Group

Saturday, January 13

- 10:00 pm Book Discussion group

Sunday, January 14 - Second Sunday after Epiphany

- 8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation
- 9:30 am Godly Play and Adult Forum
- 10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

Monday, January 15

- 5:30 pm Family Music Time (online only)
- 7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

Tuesday, January 16

- Noon Bible Study (Zoom only)
- 6:00 pm Neighborhood Ministries Committee meeting

Save the Date

Mark your calendars for February 11 for the Taste of Palestine and Israel.

The Global Ministry committee hosts a "Taste of" event each year, highlighting one of our supported ministries. This year will be a year to come together to learn, pray and share as we have thoughtful conversations about the challenges to hope that Palestinians and Israelis are facing today.

After the second liturgy, we will gather for a meal of typical food from the areas. Please let Lisa Ruff know if you are interested in making one of the recipes for the event.

(global@mountolivechurch.org or 651-307-2933)

We are also looking for people to help that day with preparing, serving and cleaning up.

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 January 13 meeting, the Book Discussion Group will read *Lost Colony: The Hennenpin 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](#).

Genre-jumping Trumpet & Organ Recital at Mount Olive

Mount Olive Music & Fine Arts presents
American Nomad and *The Modern Hymn Project*

The magnificent Schlicker pipe organ at Mount Olive will get a different kind of workout on **Sunday, January 28 at 4:00 pm**. Instead of a classical concert, Mount Olive will host two outstanding Minnesota musicians to present *American Nomad* and *The Modern Hymn Project*. Mount Olive Cantor David Cherwien teams up with acclaimed Minnesota Orchestra trumpeter Charles Lazarus for an evening of exciting and virtuosic music making. At the center of the genre-jumping performance will be the performance of *American Nomad*, a classical/jazz hybrid concerto for trumpet written by Emmy Award-winning composer, Steve Heitzeg. The program will include selections from Lazarus's latest recording of modern takes on hymns and spirituals along with classical favorites.

Juilliard-trained Charles Lazarus is a respected orchestral soloist, composer and bandleader.

"There are very few classical trumpet concertos that incorporate jazz improvisation as an integral part of the work," said Lazarus. "American Nomad melds cool jazz and a contemporary cinematic flair. I hear it as a hipster's coast to coast journey that captures elements of many American musical styles."

Organist, composer, conductor and clinician, David Cherwien is delighted to be artistically stretched. "In addition to piano improvisation, I am doing a couple of organ pieces: In Dir ist Freude, by Bach, and my own "Prelude and Toccata on 'Of the Father's Love Begotten,'" said Cherwien. "We have been having much fun preparing this program - it's quite different and probably the most diverse program I've ever participated in!"



[Check out American Nomad on YouTube](#) - Charles Lazarus and the Minnesota Orchestra.

January Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: *Our Saviour's Community Services*

Our Saviour's Community Services, a non-profit founded by our sister congregation, operates a shelter, which in the last year has served a vital role in providing housing for those experiencing homelessness who have recently been released from the hospital. In addition, they provide transitional housing for women who have experienced domestic abuse and permanent supportive housing for men and women who live with a mental illness, physical disability, and/or substance use disorders. In addition, Mount Olive volunteers provide meals at the Our Saviour's shelter once a month.

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.

For more information about Our Saviour's work, please visit their website at <https://oscs-mn.org>. For more information about the teams from Mount Olive serving meals at the shelter, contact Elaine Halbardier at ech914@comcast.net.

Upcoming Adult Forums

January 14 & 21: "The Presence of Your Absence is Everywhere: The Feminine Divine in Our Tradition," presented by Teresa Rothausen

This two-week presentation will provide deeper understanding of the need for a balanced perception of God and a panel of the Feminine Divine class participants sharing their insights and realizations.

January 28: A presentation by Johan Baumeister, Minneapolis Area Synod Congregational Organizer for Climate Justice. Topic to be announced.

Be Aware

This past Sunday one of our members was accosted after services as she went to her car parked on 31st Street. Fortunately, she was not hurt, but did have her purse stolen. Other members and two individuals came to her assistance as she waited for the police. The police were able to retrieve her phone and related that they were in the area actively working car theft issues.

Although this is a very rare incident for us, please take the following precautions:

- Leave the building with others, if at all possible.
- Pay attention to who is around the area. Don't ignore your sense that something is not normal.
- If it doesn't feel right, listen to your intuition and return to the church until someone can walk with you.

Report any concerns to the church office and police if warranted.

Thanks to the Clean-up Crew!

Many thanks to the merry band of Olivites who came to church on Monday afternoon, January 8, and took down the Christmas decorations and cleaned it all up:

Carol Martinson, Warren Peterson, Marsha Johnson, John Bjork, Mike Knudson, Jerry Duncan, Peg Hoeft, Andrew Andersen, Adam Krueger, Bob Wick, Mike Rader, Eric Zander, and Larry Skene.



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

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Web: 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.*

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