

# The Olive Branch

January 31, 2024

## Accent on Worship

*Pastor Joseph Crippen*

*Grasshoppers matter*

“Have you not known? Have you not heard?” Isaiah says next Sunday. God sits “above the circle of the earth.” The heavens are like God’s curtains, stretched out, like God’s tent, set up for God’s dwelling. There is no one to compare to God, Isaiah says, no one who is God’s equal. And if God is this large, this universal, what must the people of this tiny planet be? Well, Isaiah says, we’re grasshoppers. God is so great, so vast, so eternal, we’re just little grasshoppers. And our rulers, princes, leaders? Isaiah says they’re uprooted plants, floating on the wind, transient. Kind of makes one feel a little insignificant, doesn’t it?

So, Isaiah says, yes, God is above all, greater than all. But then the prophet promises that even these little grasshoppers of humans on this tiny planet on the edge of the galaxy matter to God. God pays attention to the weak, the faint, the weary, the exhausted. These are the ones God strengthens and lifts up.

We might be insignificant in the big picture of the universe. It’s good to remember that. But have you not known? Have you not heard? God loves the insignificant. God gives us significance in a love that death cannot destroy. Those who wait for God’s healing, they will find it. That’s your promise and hope.



### Sunday Readings

**February 4, 2024**

*Fifth Sunday after Epiphany  
year B*

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalms 147:1-11, 20c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

**February 11, 2024**

*Transfiguration of Our Lord  
year B*

2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalms 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

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



## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

The Youth and Family Committee would like to invite you to a Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday, February 13, from 5:30-7:00, in the Mount Olive Undercroft.

We will invite kids to help prepare and serve pancakes and will also have a variety of games and activity options available.

Following the Pancake Supper, we will gather to burn the palm branches from last year's Passion Sunday, to create the ashes for Ash Wednesday services the following day.

Hope to see you there!

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## Congregational Life Updates

**Save the Date:** Movie Night. Join your Mount Olive friends for movie on Friday, February, 23, at 7 p.m. Hopefully, we'll be able to access *The Holdovers*, nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Acting category. Popcorn and beverages provided.

**Prayer Chain:** Congregational Life would like to re-energize the Prayer Chain. This group of folks commits to regularly praying for those folks on our prayer list and also responding quickly to prayer needs identified by the staff. If you're interested in joining "The Chain," email [conglife@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:conglife@mountolivechurch.org).

**Coffee, coffee, coffee:** The coffee hour sign up list looks pretty empty. Please sign up to bring some goodies and serve them, or if you aren't able to serve, bring some goodies anyway. There is generally someone available to help serve and make coffee. Thanks!

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## Calendar

### Wednesday, January 31

- 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, February 1

- 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### Friday, February 2 – The Presentation of Our Lord

- 7:00 pm *Holy Eucharist for the Presentation of Our Lord*  
7:00 pm Recovery Group

### Saturday, February 3

- 3:00 pm Early Music Minnesota Harpsichord Concert

### Sunday, February 4 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

- 8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation  
9:30 am Godly Play (No Adult Forum scheduled this day)  
10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

### Monday, February 5

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

### Tuesday, February 6

- Noon Bible Study

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**The Presentation of Our Lord**  
**This Friday, February 2, 2024**  
**Holy Eucharist at 7:00 pm**

*All are welcome.*

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## **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 February 10 meeting, the Book Discussion group will read *Of Human Bondage*, by W. Somerset Maugham. For March 9, they will read *Tom Lake*, by Ann Patchett.

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 smartphone, [click here](#).





## January 2024 Vestry Meeting Summary

The beginning of the meeting was focused on discussing the budget. Several Vestry members had questions, which led to a longer discussion. The plan is to share specific information about this with the congregation in the near future.

Pastor Crippen was not present, since he's on vacation. However, he asked the vestry to approve a vicar program for next year.

Property Report – Hail damage: Information gathered by the Property Committee indicates that the flat roof on the building needs to be replaced, due to hailstorm damage.

Issues with the slate roof are being looked at, also because of hailstorm damage.

The Director of Education has resigned due to a need to step back from this time commitment. The Vestry appreciates all of his good work, including the great Adult Forums which are scheduled through May.

There's been a recommendation to make a little change in the Vestry meetings and begin each one with a specific restorative practice.

Reports written by staff and committee heads (usually monthly) can be requested by congregation members to read. These requests go through Cha in the church office. Her email is [welcome@mountgolivechurch.org](mailto:welcome@mountgolivechurch.org).

Cantor Cherwien expressed his appreciation for his staff Christmas gift from the congregation. He also reports that he'll be doing more frequent music ministry with the greater church community.

Vicar Mildahl also expressed appreciation for her staff Christmas gift from the congregation. She reported progress on the Library project.

The Global Ministries Committee reminded us of the Taste of Israel and Palestine, which will take place on Feb. 11. It will be a time of learning, sharing and understanding.

**Lent Begins.**

**Ash Wednesday, February 14**

Holy Eucharist  
at Noon and 7:00 p.m.

*All are welcome.*

## 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](mailto:ech914@comcast.net).

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## Upcoming Adult Forums

**Feb. 4:** No adult forum is scheduled. If this changes, we will send an update via TWIG.

**Feb. 11:** A Taste of the Holy Land, hosted by the Global Ministry Committee.

**February 18 & 25:** "White and Delightful: Christian Missionaries and Cultural Chaos in Dakota Indigenous Communities, 1833-1863."

This two-part series will provide an overview of the ways in which Christian missionaries likely hastened the cultural destruction of Dakota peoples in Minnesota and contributed to the tragic U.S. Dakota War of 1862. Discussion of how Mount Olive members might respond to the call for justice for our Indigenous neighbors will be part of the presentation.

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## Call for Palms!

If you have palm branches in your home from last year's Palm Sunday liturgies, please bring them to church and place them in the basket provided in the narthex.

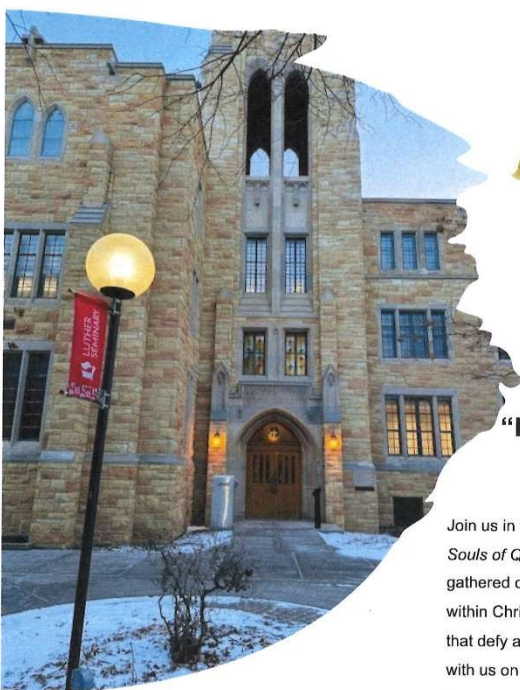
These branches will be burned on Shrove Tuesday (February 13) to make ashes for this year's Ash Wednesday liturgies on February 14.

## What's Your Question?

On Sunday, February 11 we will have an opportunity work to understand, learn, and expand our thinking about the Holy Land, our partnerships there, and the current situation.

Ashraf Ashkar will help us to realize the complex nature of both the history and the present situation in this part of the world. We would like to have your questions ahead of time to give him appropriate time for thought. What would you like to know? Please submit your questions to [judyhinck@gmail.com](mailto:judyhinck@gmail.com) by February 5. And then prepare your heart and mind to listen and learn. Indeed, your Global Ministry Committee knows that this will be an unusual Taste of... event, one that focuses on hope for peace and understanding.

We hope that you will join.

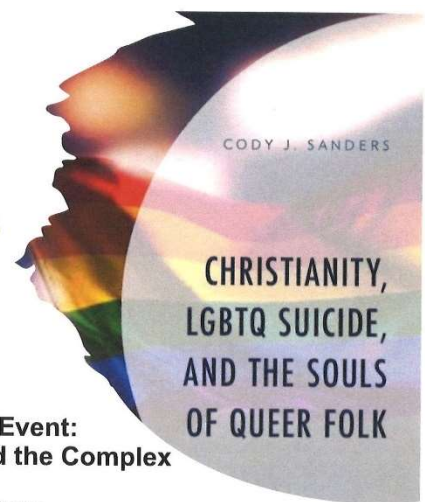


Library is located on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Gullixson Hall (pictured above). 2481 Como Ave., St. Paul



**Luther Seminary Faculty Book Event:  
"LGBTQ+ Religious Stress-Trauma and the Complex  
Beauty of Queer Faith"  
Wednesday, February 7, 1:30pm**

Join us in the Luther Seminary library where Cody Sanders will reflect with us on his book *Christianity, LGBTQ Suicide, and the Souls of Queer Folk*. Isaac Horwedel will respond, and there will be time for questions and further conversation among the gathered community. "LGBTQ+ people have long experienced spiritual stress, religious trauma, and soul violence from and within Christian communities. Yet, queer and trans people have also lived fiercely and faithfully in face of these realities in ways that defy a single story of the relationship between LGBTQ+ people and Christian faith," writes Sanders. His talk will reflect back with us on his book while also imagining forward to an upcoming keynote address he will present at the Loma Linda University Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Research Conference on spiritual trauma in the LGBTQ+ community. You are invited to be in dialogue with him about his work and its implications for Christian community and the practice of ministry.





## 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](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.*

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