



# The Olive Branch

February 21, 2024

## Accent on Worship

*Cantor David Cherwien*

### Sunday Readings

**February 25, 2024**

*Second Sunday in Lent, year B*

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm 22:23-31

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38

**March 3, 2024**

*Third Sunday in Lent, year B*

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

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

### *Lent*

Four years ago, in February of 2020, we had no idea what was about to unfold. After two short weeks into March, the world had pretty much shut down. What was routine, what we knew, what we wanted to do with the freedom to do it, even our sense of safe being - all out the window. Now four years later, we have gone back to our routines, doing what we want if we are able, back to little things bothering us again. (Isn't it amazing how times of crises remind us that little things are just that: little?)

I've wondered from time to time: Lent is offered as a time to renew; to decide what is truly important, and what is little. Putting the season simplistically, we're working on what our souls need for a change into new life in the Resurrected Christ. What does that new life look like? How different is it from before we ventured into Lent? Imagine if the impact of this yearly exercise were to have the same dramatic effect as having gone through pandemic. How we were so happy to be able to get out of our homes, be with other people, to be able to gather in person and sing together again. Can we experience this kind of dramatic change as full of joy when we arrive at the Vigil of Easter and offer the Easter proclamation? The power of the Easter Vigil liturgy is most impactful if we've spent 5 weeks working towards it.

Lent is a time that is offered for you to enter into as much as you decide to. It's not just additional disciplines, forcing ourselves to feel bad, or blue. Lent is not a plea for God to intensify God's presence but a plea for each of us to renew; reconnect with our awareness of God's presence in a transformational way.

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

Lent can be for anyone who wants to step fully in – a package. That package began with Ash Wednesday, and its flow carries us all the way to Pentecost Sunday – which this year falls on May 19. The more one enters into that flow with all its pieces, the more potential impact the transformation can carry. What we need and ultimately choose for entering this package can be at varying levels of what that looks like.

I compare it to studying the Bach B-minor Mass. It can be enough to simply listen to it. The music is amazing, and indescribably deep even if we don't know why. But there are many layers to discover by looking closer. How Bach embodies this set of texts in ingenious ways, the symbolism – at the macro and micro level. Musicologists have an endless supply of material with which to do their research and peel these layers of the onion for a long time as they earn their doctorates. After doing their research they usually are driven to do more, and there is more to discover – all increasing the intensity of their listening experience. But for many, merely listening is enough.

So, back to Lent – this portion of the package. Lent is available to you to step into at whatever level or layer you need. But consider this invitation to step into the deep waters of Lent. The water is fine.

*-Cantor David Cherwien*

## Midwest Academy Community Organizing Event

The week of January 22-26, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry Jim Bargmann attended a weeklong community organizing training event led by Midwest Academy and coordinated by Central Lutheran Church. Fifteen participants from Saint Olaf Catholic Church, Our Saviour's Lutheran, Mount Olive, and Street Voices of Change learned to more effectively assess community needs, raise up leaders from within communities, and work for lasting community change. The skills learned in this event supplement



and add to the tools we can use in the work we do in our local community, supplementing the work we already do in direct service and advocacy. Expect that Jim will use this training not only in the work he does alongside our neighbors, but will also work to train members of the Mount Olive community to work for lasting community change as well.

## Calendar

### Wednesday, February 21

9:00 am Staff meeting  
Noon *Midweek Lenten Eucharist*, followed by Soup Luncheon  
5:30 pm Children's Choirs supper  
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals  
6:00 pm Soup supper  
7:00 pm *Midweek Vespers*  
7:30 pm Cantorei rehearsal

### Thursday, February 22

7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### Friday, February 23

7:00 pm Movie Night  
7:00 pm Recovery Group

### Sunday, February 25 - The Second Sunday in Lent

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

### Monday, February 26

5:30 pm Family Music Time (online only)  
7:00 pm Lutheran Volunteer Corps gathering  
7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

### Tuesday, February 27

Noon Bible Study

## 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 March 9 meeting, the Book Discussion group will read *Tom Lake*, by Ann Patchett. For their April 13 meeting, they will read *Mr. Ives' Christmas*, by Oscar Hijuelos.

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](#).

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## Looking for Soup Makers

If you are interested in helping with the soup and bread for one of the Wednesday Lenten Soup Meals, please sign up on the chart provided in the East Assembly Room. Typically, about 25-35 guests attend the midday meal that is served at about 1:00 pm, following the noon Eucharist. The evening meal runs between 10-15 guests and is served at 6 pm, prior to Evening Vespers. All meals are served in the East Assembly Room.

ADDENDUM: While any soup and bread left over from the noon meal is available for the Soup Supper, it often is not enough, so evening soup makers are needed also.

## Attention Children's Choirs

A note from Laurie Richardson Johnson who will be making art with our choristers on Wednesday evenings during Lent, February 21, 28, March 6, 13, and 20:

### *The Land of Dreams, Songs, and Stories for Hidden Alleluia*

We have now said goodbye to *Alleluia* for the Lenten season. Last Sunday, the children recessed out of the sanctuary with the *Alleluia* banner, snaked through the corridors of the church, down stairways, descending even farther until the *Alleluia* banner reached the geothermal basement. There, in the dark, *Alleluia* will stay throughout Lent until Easter Sunday.

What is it like to wait and stay by oneself in the dark? In the quiet? Is *Alleluia* lonely? Afraid? Bored? Frustrated? How would you feel? For five Wednesdays during choir time, we will be answering these questions with our imaginations and our art—the painting and building of *The Land of Dreams, Songs, and Stories for Hidden Alleluia*. Each chorister will be making their own three-dimensional offering (dreams, songs, stories) to our special hidden land. We'll put them all together as a secret gift to *Alleluia* as *Alleluia* waits to be claimed and brought into the light and new life of Easter. This art work will be an offering for our Mt. Olive community too. Perhaps we can help one another during times when we might feel that hope is hard to find.

*The Land of Dreams, Songs, and Stories for Hidden Alleluia* is about listening to the voice who knows us best, and sharing sparks of hope, joy, light, and glimpses of the new life to come.

Choristers, please wear comfortable clothes, bring a paint shirt, and your crackling imaginations. See you soon!

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## ELCA Lenten Study Available Online

The ELCA's initiative, Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel, presents "Following the Way of Jesus: A Lenten Holy Land Journey." Samud is the new name for the ELCA Peace Not Walls campaign. Sumud is an Arabic word meaning "steadfastness."

This Lenten video series for individuals and congregations consists of six short videos that introduce people to the land, the theology of sumud and its significance through Scripture as the "way of Jesus." The videos will post on Facebook (ELCA Sumud), Instagram (@elcasumud) and webpage ([elca.org/sumud](https://elca.org/sumud)) every Monday, so you can share from there if it is easier for you. There is also a guide that goes along with the videos. It includes discussion questions and the scripture for the week.



## A Reflection from Our Taste of Palestine and Israel

Our education hour was a thoughtful, respectful, and moving experience. Our speakers, Ashraf Ashkar and Sam Rahamim had never met before they accepted our invitation. The three of us met three times before Sunday, twice in person, once on Zoom, for a total of over four hours. What a gift from these men. At first it seemed like a combined forum would be impossible. Each man has spoken to groups numerous times, and each suggested that perhaps two separate education hours were in order. That was not our vision. After agreeing that both would speak from their personal perspective rather than any organization, that questions would be agreed upon ahead of time, that questions would not be taken from the floor, that the stance would be one of listening, sharing and learning, and that we would not record/post the conversation we were able to move forward.



Both told their stories of historical and personal pain and displacement. Both helped us understand more about this present moment. (Here is where I believe I personally learned the most.) Both spoke frankly about their hopes/fears for the future. Of course, we didn't get through all of the questions, but more is being shared here.



At the meal our committee took the stance of looking for and praying for hope, of sharing a meal from both cultures, and of learning more about our global ministry partners around the globe and specifically in Palestine and Israel--Bright Stars of Bethlehem (Dar al-Kalima University) and Lutheran World Federation (Augusta Victoria Hospital). We showed a short video from Bright Stars of Bethlehem. While these organizations are in our Global Ministry budget, you may add your own donation by using your blue envelope and marking it for a specific partner.

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New York Times Bestseller

## Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor

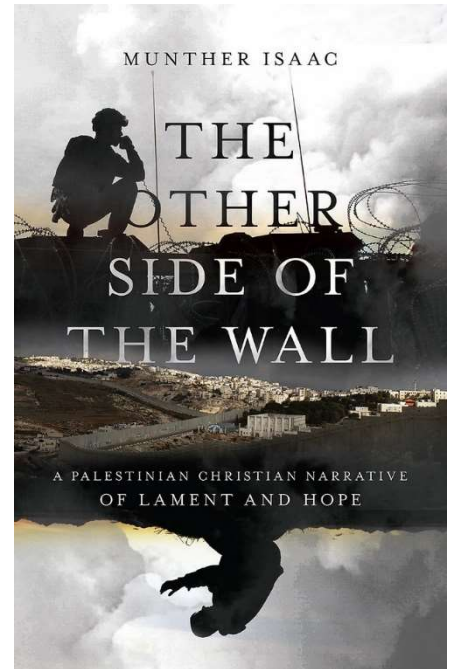


Yossi Klein  
Halevi

With an Extensive Epilogue  
of Palestinian Responses

We acknowledged the pain and prayed for peace. We will continue to work for that, to learn all that we can, to refuse any stance which does not acknowledge all of God's children. As Ashraf, Sami, and I agreed at our first meeting, if we cannot agree that no one wants their children killed, we have nothing to talk about. But if we can agree, then we can work together to find new paths, to stay out of the way when it is not our place, and to urgently support those who seek a lasting peace.

Ashraf and Sami were asked to share one book which they would recommend our members read to better understand Palestine and Israel. Below are their recommendations along with a short review of each. Both books (a single copy of each) will be available from the Mount Olive Library.



--Judy Hinck, Global Ministry Committee

Ashraf's recommendation: *The Other Side of the Wall: A Palestinian Christian Narrative of Lament and Hope*, by Munther Isaac

"In this remarkable book, Munther Isaac takes us behind that wall and offers us a glimpse into things that are generally kept from view. He tells a story that is as compelling as it is heart wrenching, a story that every Christian needs to understand to grasp one seemingly endless conflict in the Middle East."

-- Gary M. Burge, professor of New Testament and dean of the faculty at Calvin Theological Seminary.

Sami's recommendation: *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor*, by Yossi Klein Halevi

"The tantalizing proposition Halevi's book, never belabored but always peeking from between the lines, is that faith might unite these two warring tribes whereas reason only fanned the flames of discord."

--Tablet magazine (the newest edition includes some responses from his Palestinian neighbors).



## February Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month:

### *Walk-In Counseling Center*

Walk-In Counseling Center provides “free, easily accessible mental health counseling to people with urgent needs and few service options.” Counselors work with people struggling with depression, anxiety, chemical dependency, domestic violence, and many other emotional and interpersonal concerns.

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 the work of Walk-In Counseling Center, please visit their website at <https://www.walkin.org>.

## Upcoming Adult Forums

**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.



## 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 is 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!

## Lenten Pilgrimage

The Stations of the Cross are a long-standing Christian tradition in the West. Dating from the thirteenth century and promulgated by Franciscans, this devotional practice emerged as a way of visiting the sacred sites of Christ's Passion when travel to the Holy Land wasn't possible. Here at Mount Olive, we've celebrated a Stations of the Cross liturgy at noon on Good Friday for many years.

This year, visual representations of our nine stations will accompany us in the nave throughout Lent. They come from different artists of varying backgrounds and eras representing the richness of Christian thought and practice. Embracing our assembly, these pieces wrap us in the mystery of our salvation. They call us to the wonder of Christ's passion and to solidarity with all victims of violence and oppression.

When you have a moment, you might take this art in — one piece at a time or by walking the Way of the Cross in prayer, the Way that leads through Death to Life.

### 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.*



## 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

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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