

The Olive Branch

November 4, 2024

Accent on Worship

Jim Bargmann

A little “inside baseball talk.” When talking with Cha about this Accent, her comment to me was, “It’s the widow’s mite...” with the implication that this would be an easy passage for me to write on and have something valuable to say to all of you. With no disrespect to our office manager, my reaction in hearing that was exactly the opposite. For me this is not an easy story on which to write - nor really are any of the readings for this week.

More often than not in my life, due to a variety of really complicated circumstances, often not of my own making, I have found myself in a position of wondering how I would pay my bills or buy gas or put groceries in the refrigerator. I have a dream of being extravagantly generous with my resources, but so often seem to find myself in a place of uncertainty and anxiety around finances. And I work with people on a daily basis who struggle to afford even the basics - rent, food, childcare, transportation - and many who do not even have a place to call home - much less the ability to share financial resources with others.

These are not easy readings. And perhaps that is made even worse by the all-too-common interpretation of these readings - especially our First and Gospel readings for this week. Too often the message, spoken or otherwise, from the Church has been, “Be like the widows. Trust God. Give generously and God will provide.” These interpretations only serve to put down those who are struggling to afford the basics of life. These are difficult passages. At the same time, I don’t want to dismiss the vital and important examples of trust communicated here. These widows did indeed give - even though they themselves did not know how they would afford the things needed for life. And, at least in 1 Kings, we are told that God provided what was needed and we assume the same in Mark. And I have seen it in my own life too. God has often provided what was needed - no more, no less - just what was needed.

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Sunday Readings

November 10, 2024

*25th Sunday after
Pentecost. Lect. 32 B*

1 Kings 17:8-16

Psalm 146

Hebrews 9:24-28

Mark 12:38-44

November 17, 2024

*26th Sunday after
Pentecost, Lect. 33 B*

Daniel 12:1-3

Psalm 16

Hebrews 10:11-25

Mark 13:1-8

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

Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

But what if we understood this passage a bit differently? In Mark, what is given is monetary. In 1 Kings, the gift to Elijah was food. What if the gift we have to give is different for each of us? Or even further, what if the gift we have to give is even different in different circumstances?

I have witnessed those without a home and struggling to afford even a meal, exhausted from a long day of simply trying to survive, sit down with another and offer wisdom about how to navigate a complicated system of formal and informal supports available to those experiencing houselessness. I have witnessed people dedicating hours upon hours to supporting an immigrant family in their dream to settle in the United States, many with their own work and family responsibilities. I have witnessed people giving of their gas and freshly charged batteries to drive around the city and deliver diapers. I have witnessed people in conversation for hours on end to support someone going through a tough time.

So what if the message here is not “be like the widow and give money” or “be like the widow and give up what seems to be your last meal” but rather “give what God has gifted you to give”? I hope this doesn’t seem as though I’m looking for an easy way out of a difficult teaching. That is not my intent. But I do think that God wants us to give and have it be a joy - not legalistically or out of guilt.

I believe God asks us each to give differently. And I do believe God provides what is needed. But I also know that sometimes, even when we are giving joyfully and out of our God-given gifts, it can be hard. We do get tired. We do get nervous about having enough. We may be in a place where our own emotional capacity is limited. And there, perhaps, is the challenge, the stretch in these teachings. But I hope to have also provided a way to see the joy and maybe just a little relief in what, I at least, find to be some difficult teachings.

- Jim Bargmann

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

The choice for November 9 book club discussion is *The Ski Jumpers: A Novel* by Minnesotan Peter Geye. For the December 14 gathering the selection is *The Secret Chord* by Geraldine Brooks, an author the group seems to return to almost as much as it does books by Louise Erdrich. Everyone is invited to join whenever you are able, at 10 a.m. in the library, usually on the second Saturday of the month. 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](#).

Calendar

Wednesday, November 6

- 10:00 am Staff meeting
1:00 pm Align to Learn
5:30 pm Children's Choir Supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal / Y2/Y3 Confirmation

Thursday, November 7

- 6:00 pm Bible Study
7:00 pm MIRAC meeting
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, November 8

- 7:00 pm Recovery Group

Saturday, November 9

- 9:00 am Foundation Board meeting
10:00 am Book Discussion Group

Sunday, November 10 - 25th Sunday after Pentecost

- 8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation
9:30 am Godly Play / Adult Forum / Youth Conversation
10:45 am *Holy Eucharist, with the Sacrament of Holy Baptism*, followed by coffee and conversation

Monday, November 11

- Noon Bible Study
5:30 pm Family Music Time (online only)
7:00 pm Vestry meeting / Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

Tuesday, November 12

- 9:00 am Diaper Depot Volunteers meeting
Noon Bible Study

Attention Worship Assistants!

The Mount Olive Servant Schedule for 2025 Quarter 1 (January - March) will be published in December. Please send any scheduling preferences or dates you will be unavailable to me by **Friday, November 22**. Please let me know any questions you have. Thank you.

- Greg Murphy

gregRmurphy@gmail.com

Thanksgiving Day Eucharist

Thursday, November 28
10:00 a.m.

All are welcome.

Godly Play News

Stories for This Week: This next week both circles will hear the story of God's people's exile and return, a time when the people of God had to leave their land.

All children ages 3-kindergarten are welcome to Circle One, and children in grades 1-5 are welcome to Circle Two.



Upcoming Adult Forums

November 10 – “Jesus Saves – But How?” part 2 of a 2-part presentation by Mount Olive member George Heider.

Our congregational worship principles emphasize that we come before God as Trinity, in a "dance" consisting of a unity in diversity. Yet all too often, we imagine that there is only one way to think about the very heart of our faith, the saving work of Jesus Christ. Still, a close examination of the Scriptural witness shows that from its very beginning the Christian faith has thought of this work in discrete, yet ultimately complementary, ways.

Mental Health and the Bible: A Six-Week Study

What does the Bible say about our mental health and mental wellbeing? How does God interact with various people as they go through challenges in their minds and their hearts?

During this 6-week study we will take a closer look at the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament to uncover God’s love and care for those struggling with their mental wellbeing. We’ll discuss ways the Bible has been used in conversations about mental health and discover ways God shows up in our own journeys with our mental wellbeing.

Vicar Natalie Wussler leads this study which meets Mondays at noon and Thursdays at 6:00. [Join in person in the library or virtually using this link.](#)

Congregational Life Updates

The second annual Lefse-making party is scheduled for Saturday, November 16. [Please sign up here](#), or call Marsha Johnson at (763) 843-7024 if you don’t have access to email. There is no cost, but there is a limit of 15 participants.

On Election Day (tomorrow!), November 5, the church will be open throughout the day for prayer and reflection. From 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., you can gather with your Mount Olive family for a simple soup and sandwich supper. Please indicate your interest in eating together. Call or email the church office, or use the [sign up HERE](#). Signing up isn’t a solid commitment, but helps us plan for an approximate number.

Let us know if you’re interested: Join your church friends on Sunday, December 15, at 2 p.m. for a festive holiday concert featuring Mount Olive friend Charles Lazarus and the Minnesota Orchestra. It would help with planning for this event if you would indicate your interest [at this link](#), or by calling the church office. **THIS DOES NOT COMMIT YOU TO ATTENDING**, but merely indicates interest. Tickets cost \$62 each, but remember that Pr. Crippen can provide confidential financial assistance if needed.

November Neighborhood Ministry Partner of the Month

Restorative Justice Community Action

Restorative Justice Community Action (RJCA) provides a community-based alternative to criminal prosecution with the mission of fostering individual growth while strengthening communities through restorative justice practices. With a restorative and race equity lens, RJCA leverages the voice of community to transform the criminal legal system, public safety, and eliminate racial disparities. The indigenous roots of restorative justice focus on transformation of people, relationships, and community. In honoring these roots, RJCA humanizes conflict and supports community in finding shared solutions.

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 Restorative Justice Community Action, please visit their website at www.rjca-inc.org or contact Cynthia Prosek, RJCA Executive Director and Mount Olive Member.

The Joy of Mary and the Season

Mari Espeland, who directs the youngest of Mount Olive's children's choirs, sings in the local community treble choir, Bella Lumina. Mari would like to invite all to Bella Lumina's upcoming concert, "The Joy of Mary and the Season" on December 6, at 7:30 pm, and December 7, at 3:30 pm at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Hopkins.



Bella
Lumina

spreading light, hope & joy
through song

John Rutter's *Dancing Day* song cycle accompanied by harp will be featured. Music for the Advent and Christmas seasons for treble voices, some pieces accompanied by violin or handbells, will also be included. Tickets can be purchased at the door. All are welcome.

For more information about Bella Lumina, visit bellaluminachoir.org/

Cantor Call Committee Update

On behalf of the Cantor Call Committee, we wanted to thank the entire congregation for entrusting us to lead the process for this unique and infrequent task - selecting and calling a new Cantor for Mount Olive.

Here are the key updates shared at the congregation meeting on October 27:

Committee is currently focused on finalizing two documents that will be used in the application process: a Site Profile, and a Job Description. The first document will be used to share information about the congregation and our mission together to applicants. The second is more standard and outlines the roles, responsibilities, required skills and capabilities we are seeking. These documents will be approved by the Vestry prior to publication.

There will be an application process for candidates, with a goal of publishing this externally by December 15, 2024. The documents noted above will be made available to the Congregation, as will the application instructions.

There will be a referral process for members to make recommendations to the committee. The committee has an e-mail address where any questions or topics may be directed - callcommittee@mountolivechurch.org.

Look for our next update in the November 20th Olive Branch.
Your support and prayers are most appreciated.

In Peace,

Cantor Call Committee: Kat Campbell Johnson (chair), Larry Duncan, Bob Farlee, Peggy Hoeft (recorder), Gene Janssen, Bekah Schulz, Tricia Van Ee Molbert, Cynthia Prosek (Vestry President, ex-officio), Pastor Joseph Crippen (ex-officio).

Weekly Youth Conversation

We are planning to have a weekly discussion time for youth who are in middle and high school with 1-2 adults helping to facilitate conversation each week. We will be meeting in the youth space just off the undercroft on Sundays at 9:30, on the same weeks that Godly Play meets.

Feel free to email youthfamily@mountolivechurch.org with any questions.

Vestry Meeting Summary 9/9/24

- New Business:
 - A vote for members of the Call Committee for the new Cantor at the Congregational meeting Sunday, September 15 after the second service.
 - Pastor Crippen and President of the Vestry, Cynthia Prosek, president of the Vestry, will be on the committee as ex-officio members.
- Property committee report:
 - Roof 99% done, total cost \$189,000 with about \$149,000 from insurance company with a 20 year warranty.
 - Solar panels are back up and some moved to better locations.
 - Sacristy work is continuing.
 - Church coffee cups will be replaced with mugs.
 - There's a plan for doing a space review of the church facilities, with some members of the Vestry.
- Neighborhood Ministry
 - Neighborhood ministries has been experiencing higher levels of need for new arrivals from Central and South America, for things that help them get settled, like IDs, birth certificates, bus passes, and laundry vouchers.
- Long conversation about our revenue shortfall
 - big picture and ideas for ongoing revenue challenges
- New members to the Vicar committee - Adam Krueger and Emily Hellerich
- Adam Krueger is our volunteer bookkeeper - much appreciation for his huge work!

Vestry Meeting Summary 10/14/24

This meeting mainly focused on the 2025 budget, so the agenda was adjusted.

- Property Committee Report
 - Sexton role – Jose will resume his position of Sexton, snow removal will be part of his duties.
 - IT work – Technology By Design, an IT service, has been contracted. They will assess what we have and have remote access to assist with issues. They will also look at our security systems and make recommendations for updates.

- Budget
 - The Vestry had a discussion and approved 2025 salaries for church staff.
 - The Vestry discussed the 2025 budget and approved it.

- Vestry reorganization
 - A smaller Vestry group will be working on some reorganization of the Vestry committees to be determined by April in time for the annual election of some Vestry committee directors.
 - The new committees would be: Shared Ministry, Hospitality, Community Well-being, and Justice Ministry
 - They would take the place of the current committees: Congregational Life, Evangelism, Stewardship, and Youth and Family.
 - The number of vestry directors would stay the same.

- Important October Dates
 - Oct. 20 at 9:30 - Budget conversation during Adult education hour
 - Oct. 27 after the 2nd liturgy – Semi-annual Congregation Meeting and Oktoberfest, main topics:
 - Neighborhood Ministries
 - Cantor Call Committee update
 - Budget
 - Stewardship

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Sunday Eucharist: 8:00 & 10:45 am

Contact Us

Phone: 612/827-5919

On the Web: mountolivechurch.org

Staff

Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*

Interim Organist – *Robert Farlee*

Interim Choir Director – *Andrew Stoebig*

Vicar – *Natalie Wussler*

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry –
Jim Bargmann

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ
congregation.*

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