

# The Olive Branch

December 11, 2024



## Sunday Readings

**December 15, 2024**

*Third Sunday in Advent,  
year C*

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Psalmody: Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

**December 22, 2024**

*Fourth Sunday in Advent,  
year C*

Micah 5:2-5a

Psalmody: Luke 1:46b-55

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-55

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

## Accent on Worship

*Vicar Natalie Wussler*

Throughout my life, repentance was preached in a way that felt convicting, but never redeeming. Repentance was about admitting how awful I was and how much I needed saving. So John's "you brood of vipers," the wrath, and the throwing into fire was always at the forefront of the sermons I heard about this passage—not exactly the most edifying or encouraging words.

In college, I came across the Hebrew word for repentance: "*Teshuvah*." *Teshuvah* can also mean return or turn around, as if you have strayed from the path. Returning home, back to God, back to your true self, back to community and living well with others are all things that *teshuvah* can mean. This return language brings to mind "Amazing Grace:" "'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." Last Sunday we heard that God's path to repentance is done in love, molding us into our truest selves and trimming away the parts of us that lead us away from God, ourselves, and each other. It's through grace God shows the changes we can make by repenting, and that same grace will guide us toward a more loving life until we enter the life of the world to come.

When we read John the Baptist's words through the lens of *teshuva*, it's far less fire-and-brimstone and more loving, leading, and guiding. John the Baptist's words here are directives to help the crowds—yes, even the outcast tax collectors and the soldiers of the occupying Roman government—live in a loving community that embraces and cherishes all people. Those are the fruits of repentance—a life lived in the pursuit of truth, fairness (not taking more than you need, and not using power over others), and justice for all of God's beloved children. John is saying to the crowds that though they may have strayed from the path of right living, they are not hopeless and can return to the ways God wants them to live. This is a word for us, too. You are never too far from God's grace. You are never too far gone to return, to *teshuvah*.

## Christmas and Epiphany Worship at Mount Olive

**Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24, 2024**

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: Wednesday, December 25, 2024**

Festival Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

**The Name of Jesus: Wednesday, January 1, 2025**

Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

**The Epiphany of Our Lord: Monday, January 6, 2025**

Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

**The Baptism of Our Lord: Sunday, January 12, 2025**

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

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## Proposed Constitutional Amendment for Housing Adult Forum Follow Up

A quick follow up piece from our Sunday, December 8 Adult Forum on the Proposed Constitutional Amendment for Housing. Below is a link that will allow you to easily send an email to your Representative in the House and the Senator for the area in which you live. The form is set up to find those people for you and automatically populate with their email addresses. The form will also fill in some suggested text for such an email, but you can customize it - which I encourage you to do. Please feel free to share your own story if it speaks to the need for consistent and reliable funding for housing as this proposed Amendment will provide. I would also encourage you to include a note about the importance of establishing committees designated for housing - as we have had in the past. Much of this will likely only make sense if you were at the Forum this past Sunday, and for that I apologize to the rest of you. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org).

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/4hdwsp2>

*Jim Bargmann, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry*

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## Calendar

### Wednesday, December 11

- 10:00 am Staff meeting  
5:30 pm Library Committee meeting  
5:30 pm Children's Choir supper  
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals  
7:00 pm *Advent Evening Prayer*  
7:30 pm Cantorei rehearsal

### Thursday, December 12

- 9:30 am *Morning Prayer*  
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### Friday, December 13

- 7:00 pm Recovery Group

### Saturday, December 14

- 10:00 am Book Discussion Group

### Sunday, December 15 - Third Sunday of Advent

#### **GIFTS THAT GIVE SALE**

- 8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation  
9:30 am Godly Play / Youth Conversation  
9:30 am Scandinavian Coffee Hour  
10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation  
12:30 pm Youth Cookie Baking Gathering

### Monday, December 16

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

### Tuesday, December 17

- Noon Bible Study

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## Midweek Advent Vespers

Midweek Evening Prayer will be prayed each Wednesday evening during Advent (Dec. 4, 11, and 18), 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

On December 14, the book group will consider *The Secret Chord* by Geraldine Brooks, an author the group seems to return to almost as much as it does books by Louise Erdrich. The book choice for January 11 is *Kindred* by Octavia Butler.

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](#).

## Youth & Family Christmas Cookies Event

Youth & Family Christmas cookie decorating is planned for 12:30 pm on Sunday, December 15 (after church), in the downstairs kitchen. We will provide the cookie dough and supplies. Feel free to contact Erica at [youthfamily@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:youthfamily@mountolivechurch.org) with any questions.

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## About our Prayer List

Our prayer list in the worship folder and in *The Olive Branch* has become quite long and many names have been on the list for a very long time.

Please take a moment to read through the printed prayer list to determine if someone you have put on this list is still in need of our prayers. If so, we are happy to keep them on for as long as needed. If not, please let us know, so that we can try to keep the list a bit more manageable.

Contact the church office with any updates. Thanks for your help in keeping this list current.

## National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival – This Weekend!

### [Healing: of the Nations](#)

Join the National Lutheran Choir at the beautiful Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis for the Christmas Festival tradition. This year's program, *Healing: of the Nations*, seeks to bring a beacon of hope to all who open their hearts and listen. Concerts will be held on December 13 & 14. Tickets and additional information available at [NLCA.com](http://NLCA.com).

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## Gift Baskets for Simpson Housing Residents

We have the opportunity to work with our partner organization Simpson Housing to prepare gift baskets for families moving from shelter into a new home. Often, these families only have some clothing and a few items from their previous home. When they move to a new place they need some basic items to get settled - and these baskets help provide those items.

Between now and Saturday, December 21, you will see a Christmas tree and posterboard in our west assembly area decorated with ornaments. Each ornament represents items needed to fill these baskets. Please take an ornament, purchase the item, and bring it back to Mount Olive on or before Sunday, December 22. If you are not able to join us on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, you can leave your purchased gifts in wrapped boxes near the tree.

On Sunday, December 22, our Neighborhood Ministry and Education Committees have planned an intergenerational service project during our Adult Forum time (9:30-10:30 am) where we will pack the baskets and write notes for the recipients.

So in summary, please consider choosing an ornament between now and December 21, purchasing one or more of the needed items, then join us on December 22 to pack the baskets!

## December Neighborhood Ministry Partner of the Month: Tubman

Tubman helps “women, men, children and families struggling with relationship violence, substance abuse, mental health, and other forms of trauma.” Tubman has locations throughout the Twin Cities, including here in south Minneapolis that provide shelter, legal services, counseling, elder care, youth programming and education programs.

Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month though 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).

### GIFTS THAT GIVE

The Global Ministry Committee is hosting a Gifts that Give sale where you can buy Christmas gifts that also give back. Stop by the west assembly room between or after the liturgies on **December 8 and 15**. You can use cash, check or credit card.

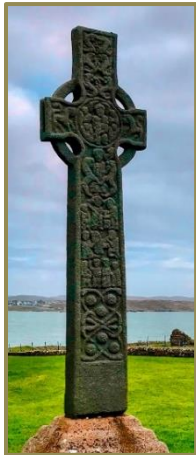
**ADVENT GIVING TREE.** Choose an ornament to represent a gift supporting one of Mount Olive’s ministry partners. We have ornaments from ELCA Good Gifts, Bethania Kids in India, Common Hope in Guatemala, the Diaper Depot, and Lutheran World Relief.



**SERRV INTERNATIONAL.** SERRV works to empower more than 8000 artisans and farmers through long-term trading partnerships, helping them build sustainable employment and a vision of hope in their communities. You can purchase beautiful and unique fair trade items from these artisans.

**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.





## Invitation to Morning Prayer

All are warmly invited to a brief service of Word and Prayer on **Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** in the columbarium transept. This lay-led service, lasting about 30 minutes, draws inspiration from Morning Prayer offered daily by the Ecumenical Iona Community of Glasgow, Scotland.

The lessons will follow the ELCA Year C lectionary for the coming year. Initial leaders, Al Bipes and Nancy Anderson, will guide us in a time of contemplation and community prayer.

All are welcome at this informal and reflective gathering.

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## Scandinavian Coffee Hour This Sunday

Calling all Scandinavian/Nordic friends and family!

Do you have a homemade or purchased holiday treat you would be able to share? Does it have a special story you can tell?

[Go to sign up genius](#) for easy ways to help and contribute that Sunday. Please bring your treats to serve at both coffee hours to the upstairs kitchen. Join us that day for lefse, herring, fruit soup, krumkake, rommegrot and more!

Please review the available slots and click on the button to sign up. Feel free to bring as many items as you wish. If you want to bring more than one of any item (i.e., two jars of lingonberry preserves), simply sign up in two "Lingonberry" slots. Thank you!

Questions? Linda Pipkorn email address: [Lpipkorn@Samarasys.com](mailto:Lpipkorn@Samarasys.com) or call her at 612.729.2179.

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## Advent Devotional, Week 3

[Click here for the Advent Devotional for December 15-21.](#)

For those who receive *The Olive Branch* in the mail, this week's devotional is enclosed.

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## Godly Play This Week

This Sunday the children will hear about the shepherds and the kings they anticipate Jesus' birth. **Another Special Note:** After the sharing of the story, instead of work and feast time, the children will be brought upstairs to join in the Scandinavian feast celebration. Please help your children join in this tasty treat.

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



## Updates from the Cantor Call Committee

On Monday, December 9, the Vestry approved with attached [Position Description](#) and [Congregation Profile](#), materials which will be used in calling a Cantor for Mount Olive. These documents were prepared by the entire Call Committee over a series of meetings and small group work, with careful consideration of historical materials, current needs of the congregation, and data and input collected from the staff and members.

The application process and documents will be posted publicly starting December 15, 2024 until January 31, 2025 for the purpose of recruiting applications, using the following web sites and methods:

- ❖ Adding a Call Committee page on the existing Mount Olive website
- ❖ Communicating via a TWIG to the congregation
  - Congregation can communicate any referrals, including name and contact information, directly to [callcommittee@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:callcommittee@mountolivechurch.org) and a member of the committee will reach out to the candidate directly to encourage them to apply.
  - Church members will be able to send links to friends and associates
- ❖ Posting link on Mount Olive Facebook page
- ❖ Post job listings on the American Guild of Organists (AGO) and the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM)
- ❖ A Google Form will be used to accept applications electronically, which is housed on the Call Committee Google drive. Links will be provided by December 15, 2024.

The phases of the application process have been set by the Call Committee:

- A. Preparation - complete
- B. Recruitment - December 15, 2024 to January 31, 2025
- C. Screening of applications (throughout application process)
- D. First Round Interviews (via Zoom) *February 2025*
- E. Selected Finalist Interviews (in person in Minneapolis) *March/April 2025*
- F. Selected Finalist(s) Activities estimated **March/April 2025**. Finalist activities will be active and in-person and may involve some of the following (Bold are required, the others will be as needed):
  - a. Rehearsing with and conducting the Cantorei**
  - b. Preparing and leading a worship service at Mount Olive**
  - c. Preparing and leading an Adult Education Forum; Conducting or leading a children's choir session; Improvisational and organ performance with members of the Call Committee; Individual meetings with staff members; Other evaluation tools as recommended by Call Committee
  - d. Interview with the Pastor**
  - e. Check of references with former employers or associates**
  - f. Passing a background check** based on direct involvement with children

- G. Call Committee Recommends Candidate to Vestry for approval and prepares Draft *Letter of Call* (**April - post Easter**)
- H. Vestry Calls Congregation Meeting and Vote to issue *Letter of Call* to Candidate (**April - post Easter**)
- I. Extend Letter of Call to Candidate (**May or immediately following Congregation Meeting**)
  - a. The call committee extends communication to the candidate, finalizes start date, and communicates with the non-selected finalists
- J. Start Date (**TBD**) - The Call Committee ensures the onboarding process and Cantor are established and Cantor is supported and feels welcome.

We appreciate your prayers ongoing, and the trust you have placed with the committee. We are working diligently and are all very excited to move to the next phase of the process.

Respectfully submitted,

Cantor Call Committee

*Kat Campbell Johnson, chair*

*Larry Duncan*

*Bob Farlee*

*Peggy Hoeft, recorder*

*Gene Janssen*

*Bekah Schulz*

*Tricia Van Ee Molbert*

*Cynthia Prosek, ex-officio*

*Joseph Crippen, ex-officio*

## 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 15.  
Thanks for your generosity.



## Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

### **Sunday Eucharist: 8 & 10:45 am**

#### **Contact Us**

Phone: 612/827-5919

On the Web: [mountolivechurch.org](http://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*

Sexton – *Jose Morocho*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ  
congregation.*

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