



The Olive Branch

November 26, 2025

Sunday Readings

November 30, 2025

*First Sunday in Advent,
year A*

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

December 7, 2025

*Second Sunday in Advent,
year A*

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Romans 15:4-13

Matthew 3:1-12

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

Accent on Worship *Cantor Daniel Schwandt*

Each of us has a different relationship with time. Some of us are early birds, while others are night owls. Some of us are chronically late (surely not I, Lord!) while others understand that arriving early is the only way to be on time. Some feel anxious about the future, while others simply live in the moment, responding to each day's challenges as they come.

Even without clocks, we perceive time in our bodies. We sense the waning daylight. We feel the growing chill against our cheeks. We hear the crunch of leaves under our feet. We know what time it is by what the earth tells us.

St. Paul announces to us this Sunday that we, too, "know what time it is" in the chronology of our salvation. God's reign is nearer to us today than it was yesterday. Don't be distracted by foolish or sinful things, he writes; Christ is coming because he has already come and comes among us still.

The church knows well this Advent time. We embody it every year. The candlelight grows. We gather closer together to feel the warmth of community. We sing and hear the familiar songs of hope and expectation as we await God breaking into our time: in the past, in the future, and at every liturgy. Through bread and wine, water and oil, God breaks into our time and makes visible the promises of grace and mercy that are beyond time. We know what time it is. It is time to hold fast to the promises of God and the future God has in store for us.

Reflections from Palestine: *Incarnational Presence*

One of the reasons a religious experience is life-changing is the degree to which it is truly incarnational, meaning that the spiritual takes human form and marches before us, providing an opportunity to respond or to be changed. From November 3-12, 18 members of Mount Olive and I were given the gift of experiencing the presence of God in so many ways that it had the potential to be overwhelming, difficult to fully appreciate, and difficult to absorb.

And from the first day, the incarnational presence of God came in human form, talking to the people of Palestine. Our first day included a visit to Dar al-Kalima, a Palestinian university supported by the Lutheran church and Bright Stars of Bethlehem. We met Christ in the faces of three young students who maintained hope despite so many challenges. Despite the images of destruction on the West Bank and Gaza, which the media presents almost exclusively, these three adhered to a common theme. All believed there would not be change or peace without them. The future is in their hands, and all three were committed to making a difference. They represented different faith foundations, but none saw this as a reason for division; rather, they saw it as a reason for hope.



I wondered if I could remain as hopeful as they were. They looked forward. Achmed dreamed of being a musician and proved the point by bringing his guitar to our gathering and playing a piece by Metallica, though in the form of a ballad. The women who joined us would be fashion designers. None of these dreams was questioned. They would be what they had set out to be. War, division, and racism would not stop them.



God's spirit of hope is alive in them and others who are focused on healing and service in a place the world has often labeled hopeless. God's Spirit was encouraged in all of us who were privileged to speak to them that day.

- David Engen

Photo1: The three students we met during our visit to Dar al-Kalima University, pictured with our tour guide Sami, who kindly interpreted for us the few times it was needed.

Photo 2: Achmed playing his classical guitar. He is skilled at both classical and solid-body electric guitar.

Calendar

Wednesday, November 26

10:00 am Staff meeting
NO rehearsals or Confirmation this evening

Thursday, November 27 – Thanksgiving Day

10:00 am *Thanksgiving Day Eucharist*

7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, November 28

Church offices closed

7:00 pm Recovery Group

Sunday, November 30 – First Sunday of Advent

8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

9:30 am Godly Play / Youth Discussion / Adult Forum

10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

4:00 pm MFA Advent Procession

Monday, December 1

Noon Bible Study

5:30 pm Family Music Time (online only)

6:30 pm Recorder group

7:00 pm Vicar Committee meeting

7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

Tuesday, December 2

Noon Bible Study

Neighborhood Ministry Greeter Needed

As we further refine the work of our Neighborhood Ministry Hosts, it has become apparent that we need to add a role to our team. We are looking for a person or several people who have availability to serve with us on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. A person serving in this role will answer the doorbell and register our guests when they arrive. Work with technology is important, but if you feel comfortable using an iPad or similar tablet, your skills will serve you well.

Please contact Jim Bargmann,
neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org if you are interested.

Tuesday Noon Bible Study Link

The Tuesday Noon Bible Study meets weekly in person in the East Assembly Room. For those who are unable to come in person, the Bible Study is held 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

On December 13 the group will consider Barbara Kingsolver's latest, *Demon Copperhead*. This will be the fifth Kingsolver book the group has read. On January 10, the group will consider an author new to the group, Niall Williams, as they read *Time of the Child*.

Everyone is invited to join when-ever you are able, at 10 a.m. in the Library, usually on the second Saturday of each 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](#).

Thanksgiving Day Eucharist Thursday, Nov. 27 10:00 a.m.

All are welcome.

The offering received at the Thanksgiving Eucharist will be donated the Community Emergency Services and Sabathani food shelves.

It's a Cookie Bake!

Christmas cookie decorating will take place after the second service on December 7 in the downstairs kitchen. While this has traditionally been a yearly Youth and Family event, anyone who is interested in decorating (or tasting) cookies is welcome!

A Note of Thanks

"We are thankful to the Mount Olive community for your prayers for Rhonda Fish. Rhonda recently died. She appreciated knowing that you upheld her during her extended medical treatment and during her time in home hospice care. She was a beloved daughter, wife, mother, and friend."

- The family of Rhonda Fish

Midweek Advent Vespers

Midweek Evening Prayer will be prayed each Wednesday evening during Advent (Dec. 3, 10, and 17), at 7:00 pm.

All are welcome.

Mount Olive Music & Fine Arts 2025–2026 Season

Mount Olive Music & Fine Arts returns this month with a new season! Join us on **Sunday, November 30, 4:00 p.m.** for the Advent Procession, a liturgy of lessons & carols to welcome the season of wonder.

Later in the season, experience the papercut art of Aaron Silver, the dynamic musicality of Ukrainian pianist Bohdan Tataryn, and a hymn festival led by our own Cantor, Pastor, and Cantorei! See mountolivechurch.org/music/music-fine-arts-series for details.

Your support has sustained our Music & Fine Arts series for over three decades. Music & Fine Arts is separate from the congregational budget and relies on direct, over-and-above contributions to maintain programming. As we continue to welcome our new Cantor this year, please consider contributing to Music & Fine Arts to provide for this season. Committee members will be present in the west assembly room to receive contributions on Sunday mornings through November 30. You may also [make a contribution online](#), in the offering plate (be sure to mark it MFA), or at the church office. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Thursday Morning Word and Prayer Service Invitation

In need of a pause from the hectic pace of life? Please join us as we gather in the columbarium transept for an informal and brief order of Word & Prayer on Thursday mornings at 9:30. The rite is a variation of the Matins service provided by the Iona Community, an international peace & justice coalition founded in the Scottish Presbyterian church. The Rite is lay led, contemplative, and brief. Afterward, some gather in the East Assembly Room for conversation and coffee/tea. You are welcome here.

The peace of Christ be with you.

Have You Heard of Our Saviour's Homeless Shelter?

It's just a few blocks north on Chicago Avenue.

Some families from Mount Olive have been providing a monthly dinner to Our Saviour's guests for over 15 years. It's a wonderful and rewarding ministry. The meals are deeply appreciated by the shelter residents -it's the high point of their day. And they are quick to express their gratitude.

Our Saviour's depends upon volunteers to prepare one meal per day. They have neither the funds nor the staff to provide quality meals without help. At this time, four new teams or families are critically needed for 2026, so no one has to cook more than one meal annually.

Is that something you could do? You will feel the gratitude when you serve your first Sunday evening dinner to the residents at Our Saviour's. It's a blessing you give, and also truly receive. Please call or email me for details.

- Elaine Halbardier

Ech914@comcast.net 763-639-7702

Scandinavian Coffee Hour December 14th

Calling all Scandinavians, Nordics, and friends! Do you have a holiday treat you would be able to share at coffee hour? Does it have a special story? Please bring your treat to either or both coffee hours on Sunday, December 14. Join us for coffee and conversation, lefse, herring, krumkake, rosettes, almond cake, fruit soup, rommergrot, and more!

Can you join with contributing a homemade or purchased item, with set up, serving, or clean up? [Sign up here to help](#). Thank you!

Thanks to the Altar Guild

Thanks to Margaret Bostelmann, Beth Gaede, Peggy Hoeft, Bonnie McLellan, Cynthia Prosek, and Lynn Ruff for dusting and polishing our worship furnishings and brass on Saturday. The space positively shines!

Altar Guild Opportunities

Join Mount Olive's altar guild to prepare for our eucharists. (No extra trips to church needed to participate in this ministry!) We are looking for help with either of two tasks.

Task 1: Set up *or* clean up linens, bread, wine, and flowers for liturgies

How often: one to three times per month (you choose days and times)

How long it takes: 1/2 an hour before or after liturgies, between liturgies when we have two

Task 2: Pick up soiled linens from sacristy, launder and press them, return them to the sacristy

How often: every week for one month, two times a year

How long it takes: One to two hours per week

Training: Work alongside experienced altar guild members until you feel comfortable working on your own.

Contact: Beth Gaede (bgaede13 [at] [gmail.com](mailto:bgaede13@gmail.com))

Adult Forums Through December

November 23, 30, & December 7: Pastor Crippen will lead a 3-part study about Mary Magdalene

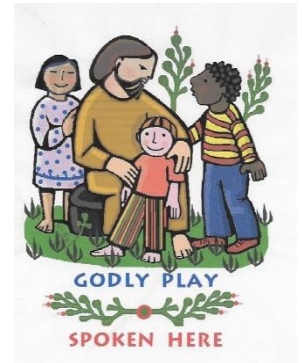
December 14 – St. Lucia Scandinavian Brunch – No Adult Forum

December 21 – Christmas Service Project: Welcome Home baskets for Simpson Housing

Godly Play This Week

Note: There will not be Godly Play on November 30, Thanksgiving weekend. Godly Play classes resume on December 7.

All children ages 3-Grade 1 are welcome to Circle One, and children in grades 2-5 are welcome to Circle Two.



National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival

The Christmas festival is quickly approaching, and we look forward to seeing you there! The National Lutheran Choir is proud to present *Come, Dwell With Us* this December at the beautiful Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis. Alongside instrumentalists, the NLC Children's Music Ensemble, and Brian Newhouse as Narrator, this Christmas festival will be a perfect addition to your holiday season.

This festival concert will include works by Jocelyn Hagen, Gwyneth Walker, Rosephanye Powell, Pavel Chesnokov, Mark Butler and many more!

Friday, December 12th | 4:30pm

Saturday, December 13th | 1:30pm

Saturday, December 13th | 8:00pm

[Click here for tickets!](#)

Staff Christmas Gifts

This is the time of the year that we give gifts to our staff to recognize the wonderful work that they do among us all year. If you would like to contribute to these gifts, drop your contribution in the offering plate or leave it in the office. Be sure to identify your gift as intended for the staff. Thanks!

Shared Ministry Reflections: Pledging

(Traditionally, Pledge Campaigns happen in the fall. However, since Mount Olive doesn't base its annual budget on the results of a pledge drive, the Shared Ministry committee has decided that we will ask the congregation to make pledges of financial resources early in 2026. This column will offer occasional reflections by those who pledge on why this practice is important to them. This week's comments are submitted anonymously.)

For me, my pledge is an extension and visible reminder of the commitment I make to my God and community in response to their grace and goodness. For the past several months our liturgies included the rite for affirming our baptism before the prayers of the church. Each recitation of those words was a reminder of God's love and grace to us and a renewal of the evils we renounce daily and the beliefs in the triune God we hold dear. Those were good reminders for me, and I heard the same from others around me.

In today's world of many distractions and uncertainty, making and keeping commitments can be challenging at best, and fear-inducing at its worst. But we believe in a gracious and loving God and I want to honor that. I know God does not need my pledge (though it helps my faith community gauge what they can expect as they plan for ministry to me and my neighbor) and that God will continue to love me and be ever-faithful whether I pledge or not, and whether I fulfill my commitment or not. I continue to pledge, though, because I need it. Each time I make an entry in my check registry (even though I now give electronically) it is a tangible reminder of the promises I made to God and this community in my baptism – to profess my faith in Jesus Christ, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church. It is physical evidence of my commitment to support my brothers and sisters and pray for them in their life in Christ. It is a thank-offering for God's promised gifts through water and the Holy Spirit – new birth, cleansing from sin, and eternal life. Pledging ensures I don't get distracted by the cares and chaos of the world and forget these promises (at least for very long). I know my nature. Without making a commitment, the noise of the world and my sinful flesh could easily erode my intentions or relegate them to what is convenient instead of keeping them constantly before me. And each year when it is time to renew that commitment, it is an opportunity to re-evaluate both my and the church's needs and make adjustments as I am able.

Theological Discussion Group December meeting

Theological Discussion Group's next meeting: Dec 7, 2025, in the Library following the second liturgy. We'll continue discussing the first five chapters of "All Things Flee Thee"

What don't you 'buy' of McCarthy's understanding of Christianity, the New Testament, and Jesus' life and teaching? (i.e. What doesn't make sense to you?)

We'll hand out the last chapters to those of you who didn't purchase the book.

Welcome Home Baskets for Simpson Housing Residents

We again have the opportunity to work with our partner organization Simpson Housing to prepare welcome 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.

For the next three Sundays, 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 21.

On Sunday, December 21, 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 20, purchasing one or more of the needed items, then join us on December 21 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.

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

Staff

Pastor - *Joseph Crippen*

Cantor - *Daniel Schwandt*

Vicar - *Erik Nelson*

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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