



The Olive Branch

December 3, 2025

Sunday Readings

December 7, 2025

*Second Sunday of Advent,
year A*

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

December 14, 2025

*Third Sunday of Advent,
year A*

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalmody Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

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

Accent on Worship *Jim Bargmann*

A stump is generally regarded as a dead thing. Mushrooms often grow around a stump, signaling that there are decaying roots below the surface and the mushrooms are doing their work, decomposing the dead material and returning the nutrients to the soil. In fact, over the last few weeks, members of my family and I have been the cause of a few stumps in the woods around my mom's home, cutting down dead trees to ensure she has adequate firewood for the winter. But occasionally, a tree that appears dead from above the ground actually still has life in the below ground parts and will produce a new tree from the seemingly dead stump. I have observed this incredible feat of creation on many hikes in the woods. It is always amazing and always beautiful to see a new tree emerge from something that was seemingly dead.

This beautiful image forms the foundation of the prophecy from Isaiah about the coming of Jesus.

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

Scripture is full of times when something was dead or something that appeared dead and God used that very thing to accomplish great things. The barrenness of Sarai and the subsequent birth of Isaac. The dry bones prophesied to by Ezekiel. The Babylonian exile and the remnant spoken to by the powerful prophetic voices of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The raising of Lazarus. The Talitha kum spoken to Jairus' daughter. The stories of the restoration of health, sight, hearing, and mobility recorded throughout the Gospels and the accounts of the leaders of the early church.

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Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

As I consider these words myself, I hope to offer you, dear friends, the same encouragement I find in them. Whether you find yourself discouraged by world events - the impacts of the abuse of our world, growing income inequality, a portion of the church seemingly more aligned with those who offer power and glory more than Jesus - or some more intimate, personal situations where things may seem dead, consider the stump.

Consider and ponder the stump, the seemingly dead remnant of a once proud tree. Consider the stump, dry and becoming food for mushrooms. Consider the stump with a life deep within, invisible, until a small, green shoot begins to grow. Consider the stump, producing a new tree, small at first, but growing into a great structure of trunk and branches and leaves, becoming so large and important that it is no longer food but a provider of food and shelter and oxygen and protection and beauty.

Consider in which stumps God may bring about new growth from the life already within.

- Jim Bargmann

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 7 and 14**. 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, Bright Stars of Bethlehem, Bethania Kids in India, Common Hope in Guatemala, 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, resources, rights, and a vision of hope in their communities. You can purchase beautiful and unique fair trade items from these artisans, including coffee and chocolate.

BRIGHT STARS OF BETHLEHEM. Purchase items to support the ministry of Bright Stars of Bethlehem. Our Mount Olive travelers brought back ceramics, olive wood, jewelry, textiles and other items from the Holy Land. Many of them are from Dar al-Kalima University, made by students or former students.



Calendar

Wednesday, December 3

10:00 am Staff meeting
5:30 pm Children's Choir Supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
7:00 pm *Advent Vespers*
7:35 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Thursday, December 4

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

Friday, December 5

7:00 pm Recovery Group

Saturday, December 6

9:00 am Lefse Making
3:00 pm Early Music Minnesota Concert

Sunday, December 7 – Second Sunday of Advent

GIFTS THAT GIVE SALE

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
12:30 pm Theological Discussion group
12:30 pm Cookie Baking (Undercroft Kitchen)

Monday, December 8

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

Tuesday, December 9

Noon Bible Study

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](#).

Theological Discussion Group December meeting

Theological Discussion Group's next meeting: this Sunday, 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 McCarthys 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.

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.

It's a Cookie Bake!

Christmas cookie decorating will take place **after the second liturgy this Sunday, 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!

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 it is clearly designated for "Staff Gifts." Thanks!

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.

Third Annual Lefse Making Extravaganza

Do you love lefse? Ever wondered how to make it? Now's your chance to learn-or-share your expertise with a beginner. We'll meet in the Undercroft **on Saturday, December 6**, from 9:00am-1:00pm.

Bring your prepared potatoes, quart size storage bags, extra flour, and any equipment you have.

Any questions can be directed to Marsha Johnson at 763-843-7024. Or email mejohanson56@yahoo.com. Please use [this Signup Genius link](#) to register. Limit of 15 people.

Early Music Minnesota Concert: A Baroque Christmas

This Saturday, December 6 - 3:00 pm
Mount Olive Lutheran Church

Celebrate the season with a joyful mix of baroque brilliance and festive charm. This holiday program sparkles with spirited works by Georg Philipp Telemann, alongside traditional carols and lively fiddle tunes. From pastorales to toe-tapping dances, A Baroque Christmas captures the joy and elegance of the eighteenth century, bringing together the sacred and the vivacious in a musical celebration of the season.

This concert is free to members of the Mount Olive community.

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!

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

December 7: Part 3 of a 3-part study about Mary Magdalene, led by Pastor Crippen.

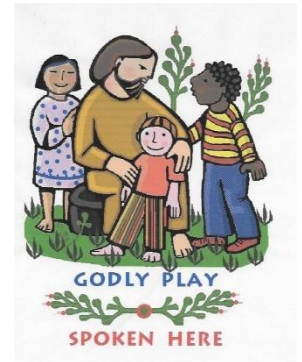
December 14: St. Lucia Scandinavian Brunch – No Adult Forum

December 21: Christmas Service Project

Godly Play This Week

Advent: For the next two Sundays both Godly Play circles will be hearing the stories of Christmas. Who is telling the story? The prophets, the holy family, the shepherds, and the magi. And then on Sunday, **December 21**, both circles will join in the sanctuary to light all of the Advent candles, hear the story and leave to celebrate together. There will be no Godly Play on December 28.

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.

Friday, December 12th | 4:30pm

Saturday, December 13th | 1:30pm

Saturday, December 13th | 8:00pm

[Click here for tickets!](#)

Justice Committee Conversation

This Sunday December 7, after the second liturgy, there will be another opportunity for conversation about the new Justice Committee. Please join us in the West Assembly Area (room near coffee hour with couches and comfy chairs.) We'd love to have you bring questions, ideas, and potential resources. Our main foci for the Justice Committee include: Indigenous rights & history, climate justice, racial awareness, and sexism & gender.

Thanks - looking forward to talking together!

- Candy Husemoller

Director of Justice Committee

Agenda Launch & Anti-Authoritarianism Strategy Training

On Saturday, December 13, a group of Mount Olive folks will be joining ISALAH's Agenda Launch & Anti-Authoritarianism Strategy Training at the Minneapolis Convention Center. We will join thousands of other people of faith to hear from ISALAH and Faith in Minnesota about their agenda through 2027 and plan a path to protect our state, neighbors, and families in the face of rising authoritarianism.

If you'd like to attend with the Mount Olive group, register at this link: <https://secure.everyaction.com/ynRIqYiqZkO8JmuFnKMjaw2>

Get in touch with Vicar Nelson or Candy Husemoller for more information.

Help protect our state, neighbors, and families in the face of rising authoritarianism.

Christmas and Epiphany Worship at Mount Olive

Christmas Eve: Wednesday, December 24, 2025

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: Thursday, December 25, 2025

Festival Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

First Sunday of Christmas: December 28, 2025

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

Second Sunday of Christmas: January 4, 2026

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

The Name of Jesus: Thursday, January 1, 2026

Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

The Epiphany of Our Lord: Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

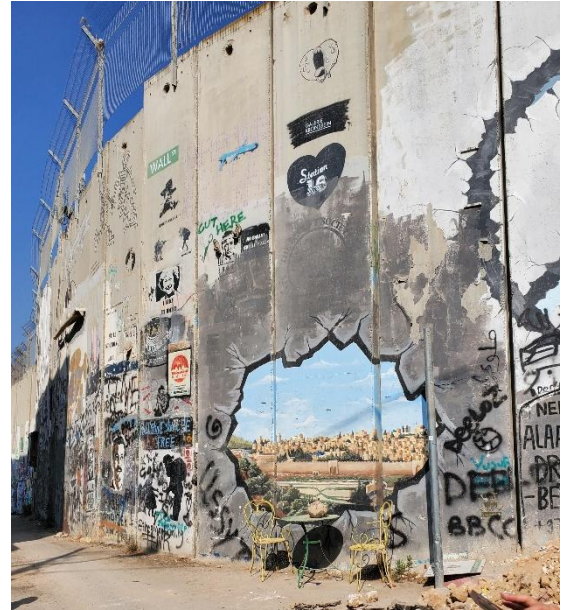
The Baptism of Our Lord: Sunday, January 11, 2026

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

Resilience

Webster's definition of resilience is the ability to adapt and recover from difficult situations, challenges and stress by using a combination of positive traits like optimism, purpose and a strong support system. Resilient people focus on finding solutions rather than dwelling on the problem and maintain a hopeful outlook.

Travel has a way of reshaping how we see the world. This was my second trip to the Holy Land, and both were life changing for me. Once I saw the people of Palestine, I cannot unsee their struggles, hospitality and resilience. From students at Dar al-Kalima University who exuded hope as a force for them and their future, to Claire whose home and business were suddenly surrounded by the wall and who chose to remain and be courageous, to visiting the Aida Refugee Camp and meeting a young jeweler who sells jewelry he made from missiles used in war there, to The Walled Off Hotel where the artist Banksy uses his art to tell the story in this beautiful walled off building, to the many and various smiles and joy that met us from so many Palestinians, it was obvious that this is a people and community of spirit and resilience.



The Bible tells us in Corinthians 4: 6, 8-9: "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ... We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed."

I saw the light of Christ in the Palestinians through hope and dreams they hold for a better future ... through their resilience.

~ Carol Peterson

Upper photo: The Separation Wall adjacent to the Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem. Extensive portions of the barrier are covered with graffiti and other forms of street art produced by both Palestinian and international artists.

Lower photo: A projectile intended to be repurposed through cutting, shaping, bending, and polishing into one or more pieces of jewelry.

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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