

The Olive Branch

January 21, 2026

Accent on Worship

Sunday Readings

January 25, 2026

*Third Sunday after Epiphany
year A*

Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalms 27:1, 4-9

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23

February 1, 2026

*Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
year A*

Micah 6:1-8

Psalms 15

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12

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

Accent on Worship

*Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop's Statement after the death
of + Renee Good +*

Friends in Christ, grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus, our comfort and our salvation.

As I've watched the events unfold across the Twin Cities and our state, the killing of Renee Good, and the unaccountable and indiscriminate targeting of immigrant neighbors by ICE and the Department of Homeland Security, the story of Jesus visiting the grave of his friend Lazarus has been ringing in my ears (John 11). The cry of Mary and Martha, "Lord if you had been here..." and the deep grief and weeping of Jesus for his friend feels particularly resonant.

I, too, weep for our own cities and communities in the Minneapolis Area Synod and around Minnesota. I weep for Renee Nicole Good and her family, and I weep for all who have been impacted by the chilling actions of ICE in our community -- immigrant families fearful and separated and facing impossible decisions, children who have been witness to violence, black and brown neighbors unjustly profiled, congregational leaders and everyday neighbors struggling to respond to an unprecedented crisis.

This past Sunday we celebrated the baptism of Jesus and remembered our own baptismal identity as God's beloved. With this belovedness, comes inherent dignity, the knowledge that every person bears the image of God, and the power to uplift the common good and love of neighbor.

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Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

In that spirit, we call for justice and accountability. We call for a thorough and impartial investigation of the shooting death of Renee Good, and we call for ICE to cease their cruel surge and leave our state immediately. We call for our members of Congress to hold the Administration accountable and exercise their oversight powers. We call on our local leaders, at the State and City level, to do everything in their power to protect *every* Minnesotan from unlawful harassment and targeting by ICE. We make these calls consistent with Scripture, our church's social teaching, and our Synod's resolutions.

Amidst this all, I am grateful, proud, and encouraged by the way neighbors across our Synod have shown up for one another through mutual aid, serving as observers on the street, and adding voices to vigils and calls for justice. Thank you. We are showing the world what it looks like to lead with love, to trust that we are better together, and to proclaim our hope for justice. We know that the targeting of our communities will continue and is likely even to intensify. In this moment, we must continue to rely on one another – to stay rooted in the resilience of community, the power of prayer, and the hope of God.

We trust that in Jesus, God comes near to us in our joys and sufferings, in the incarnation we proclaim at Epiphany, and the cross we walk toward in Lent. But death does not have the final word. Our story, rooted in Christ, is a resurrection story. We remember that while Jesus wept for his friend Lazarus, he also called him out of the grave, into resurrection life. Beloved ones, the events of these last weeks are not the end of our story. We stand firm in our faith that justice is stronger than injustice, that community is stronger than division, and that love is stronger than cruelty. We have hope that our weeping will be transformed into resurrection, and that, like those at Lazarus' graveside, we too will "...see the glory of God." (John 11:40)

In Christ,
Bishop Jen Nagel

Save the Date for Taste of Palestine

Mark your calendars! **February 8** will be the Taste of Palestine.

The Global Ministry committee hosts a "Taste of" event each year, highlighting our supported ministries. This year we will learn more about Bright Stars of Bethlehem and Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem.

Our Mount Olive travelers who recently went on a partnership trip will present our adult forum on Feb. 8. In addition, there will be a forum preceding the event on Jan. 18. After the second liturgy on February 8, we will gather for a meal of typical food from Palestine, using recipes from Dar al-Kalima University's culinary education program. Travel team members will also be present to answer questions. Please let Lisa Ruff (global@mountolivechurch.org) know if you are interested in making one of the recipes for the event. We are also looking for people to help with preparing, serving and cleaning up that day.

Calendar

Wednesday, January 21

10:00 am Staff meeting
5:30 pm Children's Choir supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal
7:00 pm Y3 Confirmation

Thursday, January 22

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

Friday, January 23

7:00 pm Recovery group

Sunday, January 25 - Third Sunday after Epiphany

8:00 am Holy Eucharist, followed coffee and conversation
9:30 pm Godly Play / Youth Discussion / Adult Forum
10:45 am Holy Eucharist, followed coffee and conversation
3:00 pm MFA Event: Singing the Art of Aaron Silver

Monday, January 26

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

Tuesday, January 27

Noon Bible Study

CaringBridge Invitations

Keith Bartz is facing a challenging illness, and his daughters Rachel and Laura have created a CaringBridge site to update people on his situation. Included is also a visitor's calendar for those who'd want to schedule a visit. [Click here to go to Keith's CaringBridge page.](#)

Al Bipes had back surgery on Monday, January 19, and is using CaringBridge to keep his family and friends updated. [Click here to go to Al's CaringBridge page.](#)

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

Our January book group was canceled so that we, too, could celebrate JoEllen Kloehn's life. Consequently, *Time of the Child* by Niall Williams will now be the book for consideration on February 14, and in March we will wade into a whole different genre and time with *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Bighorn - The Last Great Battle of the American West*, by James Donovan.

Everyone is invited to join whenever 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.](#)

Counters for Sunday Offerings Needed

Mount Olive has 3 teams of loyal counters for the offerings and gifts which come in each Sunday. To spread the work load, we'd like to develop a 4th team. Counting occurs at a time the team determines mutually. It usually involves less than 2 hours each time.

If you think you would like to assist in this important job, please contact David Anderson, who is serving as the Financial Secretary, at dtaparkave@aol.com, or 612.730.2997, or see him on Sunday morning!

Early Music Minnesota Concert Postponed

The EMM concert, "Conversations in Counterpoint," at Mount Olive will not take place on Saturday, January 24, as previously scheduled. The concert is being postponed until a later date to be announced.

Singing the Art of Aaron Silver January 25th — 3pm

In connection with Music & Fine Arts' art exhibit, join Aaron and Rabbi Emma Kippley-Ogman, who will teach you to sing a number of song texts from the papercuts in the exhibit, with song sheets and translations. The more people attend, the more enjoyable it will be as we fill the room with song! Texts we'll sing include:

- I will build this world from love.
- You are not obligated to complete the work, neither are you free to abandon it.
- My God, the soul that you placed in me is pure.
- Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will not fear because you are with me.
- And more!

Note: Aaron Silver shares with Mount Olive the fundamental belief that Palestinians are entitled to equal and basic human rights and that the Israeli government does not represent the feelings and sentiments of the Jewish people.

Mount Olive Music and Fine Arts Presents Bohdan Tataryn, pianist Sunday, Feb. 1 - 4 pm Mount Olive Lutheran Church

Ukrainian Pianist Bohdan Tataryn plays a recital of music by Ukrainian composers. Tataryn is in his final year of study at the Lawrence University Conservatory.

An offering will be received for Ukrainian war relief, and a light reception follows the concert.

All are welcome.

The Presentation of Our Lord Monday, February 2 Holy Eucharist at 7:00 pm

All are welcome.

January Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: *Our Saviour's Community Services*

Our Saviour's Community Services, a non-profit founded by our sister congregation, operates a shelter, which in the last year has served a vital role in providing housing for those experiencing homelessness who have recently been released from the hospital. In addition, they provide transitional housing for women who have experienced domestic abuse and permanent supportive housing for men and women who live with a mental illness, physical disability, and/or substance use disorders. In addition, Mount Olive volunteers provide meals at the Our Saviour's shelter once a month.

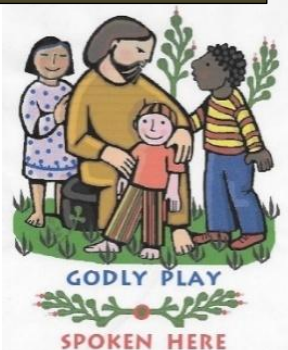
Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month through a yearly contribution from our budget, and often, like our partner this month, we also volunteer in support of their work. On top of those financial and labor contributions, we encourage any member who wishes to donate over and 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 Our Saviour's work, please visit their website at <https://oscs-mn.org>. For more information about the teams from Mount Olive serving meals at the shelter, contact Elaine Halbardier at ech914@comcast.net.

Godly Play This Week

This Sunday Circle 1 will learn about The Good Shepherd, and Circle 2 will learn about the Great Pearl.

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



Upcoming Adult Forums

Jan. 25 - Director Candy Husemoller and Justice Ministry Committee updates

Feb. 1 - George Heider and Judy Hinck (and perhaps others!) will share information from the recent Palestine trip (originally scheduled for Jan 18)

Feb. 8 - Taste of Palestine and discussion with the group who travelled to Palestine in November

The People of Palestine

The Palestinian people are living under occupation. They face limitations on their travel, poor infrastructure. They risk being arrested and imprisoned for weeks or months with no charges. They are denied access to harvest their olives and groves of trees are uprooted while land is taken for Israeli settlements. Many have lived in refugee camps for generations.

The question that often arises is why the Jews who suffered under the Holocaust, can now turn around and do this to others?

Frequently people have been persecuted and treated as 'other'. Underlying persecution is often racism, religion, ideology, or taking of land or resources. The persecutors argue that 'those' people are subhuman, undeserving, and dangerous. They don't belong here on land that God intended for us. They are taking our resources and are criminals and parasites. They are therefore undeserving of love, compassion, or empathy and what happened in the Holocaust is different.

Zionism began in the 19th century espousing the belief that God has given Palestine to the Jewish people to the exclusion of all others. Many Israelis are not Zionists (though the current government certainly is).

Virtually all the Palestinians we met are looking to live in peace with their neighbors. They want to live where they have for millennia in freedom and without fear. But there are also many Palestinians, notably Hamas and those who have been driven to desperation, who want to eliminate Israel.

So is there any hope? In spite of their situation, so many of the Palestinians we spoke with had hope. Going back before the Balfour declaration (1917), we find Palestinians living peacefully with their Jewish neighbors. Hope recognizes this can happen again. We have seen the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of apartheid in South Africa. It begins with breaking down the view of the 'other' on both sides; setting aside fears, acknowledging their humanity, and starting real communication.

How can we help? Stay informed. Contact your members of congress. Consider donating to organizations such as Bright Stars of Bethlehem. And pray for both the Israeli and the Palestinian people.

~ Mark Pipkorn

Photo: A piece of artwork on display in the gallery at the Walled Off Hotel (located next to the Separation Wall).



Neighborhood and Justice Ministry Update

Mount Olive is partnering with DHH Church to Pack & Deliver Food for Our Neighbors

Several members of Mount Olive have begun working to set up a food packing and delivery system for people in our neighborhood. We're visiting the DHH church - Dios Habla Hoy, this week, to learn about their processes and tools, to help us set up a small program for supporting our neighbors. They currently have 25,000+ families that have requested food. We'll be serving our neighbors and be part of de-centralizing their program. We'll supplement and broaden the families we can work with by partnering with them and taking on some families from their Food Drive list that also live in our neighborhood.

We're **tentatively** planning a meeting for this Thursday (tomorrow, Jan. 22) at 7 pm to begin creating the organization for this program at Mount Olive. We'll send out a Twig on Wednesday confirming or giving a different day/time. We'll also include a way for people to sign up if they're interested in supporting this effort in some way, packing, delivering, organizing, etc.

Options for Financially Supporting Programs Aiding Minnesota Neighbors

[@mplsmutualaid | Linktree](#) is a clearinghouse list of mutual aid for our neighbors currently struggling. It's encouraged to share this link with family and friends, also people outside of Minnesota who are looking for vetted organizations to support.

It has categories of the various needs, including:

- Frontlines Work
- Food Relief
- Neighborhood & Church Based
- School Based
- Rent Relief
- Additional GoFundMe pages

Treza from the DHH, was at Mount Olive this past Sunday during the Adult Education hour. She gave a brief overview of their Food Drive & Delivery operation and also ran a training for food delivery drivers.

Here is the link for the DHH church. [donate \\$\\$ to DHH for buying food](#)

(over)

New information from the Minneapolis ELCA Synod about supporting our immigrant neighbors:

“At the Synod Assembly, we passed a [Resolution on Accompanying Immigrants](#) that outlined actions that the Synod and Synod staff would take in support of immigrants and immigrant communities, including efforts to raise funds for these efforts. And as we’ve seen over the last weeks, the targeting of our immigrant neighbors is only increasing. Our faith and our church’s social teaching call us to respond, to stand with and support our neighbors, and to step boldly into this moment. The Welcome Fund will provide direct financial support to immigrant communities in our Synod.

You can [donate online](#) or send checks to the Minneapolis Area Synod (Send a check to Minneapolis Area Synod with “Welcome Fund” in the memo (122 W. Franklin Ave, #600, Minneapolis, MN 55404)” taken from the ELCA Minneapolis website

For more info: -[ELCA Resolution and Welcome Fund](#)

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue South
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*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*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ
congregation.*

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