

The Olive Branch

January 28, 2026



Accent on Worship

Sunday Readings

February 1, 2026

*Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
year A*

Micah 6:1-8

Psalm 15

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12

February 8, 2026

*Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
year A*

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 112:1-9[10]

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

Matthew 5:13-20

Accent on Worship

Cantor Daniel Schwandt

"How can we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?"

(Psalm 137:4)

You could certainly describe these days as being in a strange land: a land where anxiety, fear, death, and chaos have come to our city. So much has been turned upside down. Tears flow a little quicker. Shoulders sit a little higher. The sound of car horns and whistles off in the distance brings a shudder. The strange land has been brought to our doorstep.

I've often found myself asking the psalmist's question these past few weeks when selecting hymnody and music for our Sunday assembly. How can we sing "sing out, ring out, jubilation, exultation, tell the story" or "Glory to God in the highest!" in the midst of this strange land? Music in our liturgy is always a combination of prayer, praise, and proclamation. This blessed gift and creation of God forms us as a sonic community and shapes our identity, reminding us of who we are and who we want to be, even in the worst of times. To paraphrase Luther's hymn: Even in the midst of death, we are in life.

The words and music of Minnesota composer Shruthi Rajasekar, written in response to the murder of Renee Good, rings deep and true. Let the simple and profound act of singing together be balm for our woe:

Hard to be awake and / Hard to keep the faith but /
Feeling slightly better / Singing with you /
Feeling kind of numb as / Fire burns the world but a /
Step towards rebuilding is / Singing with you
Watching fear and violence / Watching voices silenced /
Giving thanks to still be / Singing with you /

continued on page 2

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

Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

Fill the streets with music / Make our voices louder /
There is joy and power in / Singing with you /
So I stay awake and / Try to keep the faith /
'cause I'm / Feeling slightly better / Singing with you /
Feeling slightly better / Singing with you

www.shruthirajasekar.com/post/music-in-this-moment

- Cantor Daniel Schwandt

Upcoming Adult Forums

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

Feb. 15 & 22 - "Practicing Hope, and Not Just 'Having' It," a 2-part forum presented by The Rev. Cody J. Sanders, Ph.D.

Faith, hope, and love: Paul's big three in First Corinthians 13. We have shelves of books, scads of curriculum, and robust catechism programs for nurturing faith. We devote more hours of our life to loving and learning how to love our loved ones than nearly anything else, and we likely have more sermons on love in the Christian homiletical tradition than nearly any other subject. But we often leave hope to chance. Why do we have no catechism for learning to practice hope? Why do we often just assume we all know what "hope" means when we invoke the subject in times of despair? These two forums will take a renewed look at hope as a practice of Christian community undomesticated from optimism, or progress narratives, or wishful thinking. We will use this conversation to begin rewilding our hopeful practice in an era of polycrisis, collapse, and despair when we need communities of hopeful practice the most.

Hymnwriters display ends February 1

Owing to my sloth, Sunday, February 1, is your last chance to see the "Celebrating the Hymnwriters Among Us!" display in Mount Olive's Louise Schroedel Memorial Library. It was to have closed January 25.

The display salutes writers of hymn and service music tunes or texts who have had significant connections to Mount Olive Lutheran Church. This past Sunday the psalm antiphon was by Ronald A. Nelson, once our interim choir director; we sang "Light Shone in Darkness" (ELW 307), by our former cantor Mark Sedio; cantor Daniel Schwandt was organist and choir director; the postlude was Mark Sedio's arrangement of "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright." And at second liturgy Robert Farlee, recently our interim organist, was sitting just a few rows ahead of us. They really are among us, in person or in spirit!

- Donn McLellan

Calendar

Wednesday, January 28

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 29

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

Friday, January 30

7:00 pm Recovery group

Sunday, February 1 - Fourth 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
12:30 pm Missions Committee meeting (rescheduled)
12:30 pm Theological Discussion group
4:00 pm MFA Event: Bohdan Tataryn, pianist
Monday, February 2 - The Presentation of Our Lord
5:30 p.m. Family Music Time (online only)
6:30 pm Recorder group
7:00 pm *Holy Eucharist for The Presentation of Our Lord*
7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

Tuesday, February 3

Noon Bible Study

A Note from a Neighbor Upon the Delivery of Food

"Bendiciones buenas que Dios bendiga siempre estamos muy agradecidos de parte de mi familia por la ayuda tan grande que an hecho por nosotros que el señor les bendiga siempre en su familias."

"Good blessings, may God always bless you. We are very grateful on behalf of my family for the great help you have given us. May the Lord always bless you and your families."

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.

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](#).

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper February 17, 5:30 pm

Come join us for a pancake supper (and pancake races!) from 5:30 to 7pm on February 17 in the undercroft. Everyone is welcome!

Lent Begins.

Ash Wednesday, February 18 Holy Eucharist at Noon & 7:00 pm

All are welcome.

Mount Olive Music and Fine Arts Presents

Bohdan Tataryn, pianist

This Sunday, Feb. 1 - 4 pm

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.

Date for Taste of Palestine

The Global Ministry Committee will host a Taste of Palestine on **February 8**. 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 this Sunday, February 1.

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.

Our Neighbor Support Efforts

Now that we have a little more clarity and structure to our neighbor support efforts, I wanted to write a quick article to clarify and summarize what we are doing at this present time to care for our neighbors, specifically in terms of providing food and rent support. All our existing programs - bus cards, assistance with IDs, driver's licenses, birth certificates, diapers, and rental assistance through Align Minneapolis - are continuing unchanged.

Through the cooperative efforts of the Neighborhood Ministry and Justice leadership, we are involved in two parallel but connected efforts to care for our neighbors.

Candy Husemoller has been leading our effort to form a new partnership with Iglesia Dios Habla Hoy (DHH) where we will support their vibrant and large food delivery program.

This effort will involve picking up bulk food donations from DHH, repacking that food into boxes for individual families, and then delivering that food to homes. Most of this work will happen on Tuesdays. We will begin with a list of about 25 families, provided by DHH, but will have the ability to add families, either on our own or from the list collected by DHH as our capacity allows.

If you are interested in connecting to this work, you can [use this link to sign up](#). There are slots for specific types of work needed. Contact Candy Husemoller at justice@mountolivechurch.org with questions.

In addition, there is a growing group of families with whom Mount Olive already has a relationship, through personal connections with our Sexton or the neighborhood block captains from the Powderhorn Park and Central neighborhoods.

With these families, we are shopping for them, packing up personalized boxes of food, diapers, and formula, and then delivering them to homes. Also, with some of these families, we are providing emergency rental assistance and other services. Most of this work is happening on Thursdays. If you are interested in connecting to this work, please email Jim Bargmann at neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org if interested in joining this project or with questions. If you are interested in supporting this work financially, you can use the donate link on the Mount Olive web site (or access the same [using this link](#)) or write a check specifying "Neighbor Support" on the memo line.

And if there is any confusion about how these two programs fit together and why we are pursuing both at this time, I hope this illustration might help. In Minnesota, we love our bodies of water. With both lakes and rivers, most have a shore or beach area leading to wide sections of shallow water appropriate for swimming and other similar activities for a wide variety of people from all backgrounds and abilities. But the most bodies of water also have significant deep areas too. Here is where more intense activities can take place - boating, fishing, water skiing. And where most of the natural life of a lake finds a place to live and grow and thrive. Both the shallow parts and the deep parts are necessary for a thriving water ecosystem. This is also true in social services too. We need the broad range ministries like DHH that can serve large numbers of people quickly and flexibly. But the deeper ministries with more significant relationships, more services, and more investment in the whole life of a person or people, like our own internal program, are important too. So these two go hand in hand to form a full and thriving program of supporting our neighbors.

Please join us in either or both as your time and energy allow.

- Jim Bargmann, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry

The Moon Over Palestine

The trip to Palestine on November 3 was long and tiring. As I wearily settled into my seat on the coach bus that would take us from Tel Aviv to Bethlehem, I looked out the window and was struck by the sight of a beautiful moon in the stark black skies over the Israeli and Palestinian heartland.

I kept my eye on that moon as we traveled through the darkness. I spent a long time musing about how Jesus had seen that same moon as he journeyed throughout his homeland. Much of what we deem as the "Holy Sights" in Israel and Palestine, are only believed by tradition to be actual places where Jesus was born, lived, taught, suffered and died. But that moon – it was there for Him, as it was there for me, and seeing it gave me a sense of physical connection to Jesus, a very powerful feeling.

Perhaps the moon might also serve as a reminder of being "enlightened" by my trip. What did the moon metaphorically shine on and light up for me? I learned so much about this tiny part of the world that looms so large on the world stage. I met Palestinians who are just trying to live their lives day to day in the face of oppression and injustice. I listened to people who struggle with shortages of jobs, housing, food, water. I walked through Aida Refugee Camp, sometimes described as an "urban slum", where nearly 7500 people live densely crowded together, as have generations before them. These and so many other experiences shed light on a complex and challenging situation in a land so much in need of healing and peace.

Every one of the Mount Olive travelers to Palestine can tell of "enlightening" experiences. The moon remains a haunting image for me, linking me to the life of Jesus, and the life of Palestinians currently living in the land that Jesus loved.

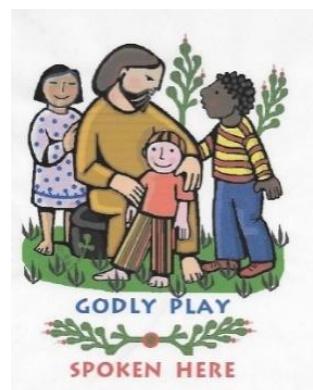
- Lora Dundek



Godly Play This Week

This Sunday we will continue telling Jesus' own stories. Circle 1 will hear the story of the Mustard Seed while Circle 2 will consider the Good Samaritan.

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



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

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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.*

In This Issue

- Accent on Worship – Cantor Daniel Schwandt
- Presentation of Our Lord: Monday, February 2,
Holy Eucharist at 7:00 pm
- February Adult Forums
- Taste of Palestine: February 8
- Reflections from Palestine
- Our Neighborhood Support Efforts
- Hymnwriters Display in the Library Ends This Sunday