



The Olive Branch

March 4, 2026

Sunday Readings

March 8, 2026

*Third Sunday in Lent,
year A*

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

March 15, 2026

*Fourth Sunday in Lent,
year A*

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

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

Accent on Worship

Jim Bargmann

This Sunday's Gospel reading from John 4 recounts a story familiar to most of us, Jesus' encounter with an unfortunately unnamed Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in Sychar.

Without explicitly stating so, John's retelling of this encounter points out at least four ways in which this person would have been dismissed by Jewish people of the day, including Jesus and the disciples who were on this trip with them (Jesus and the disciples had already excluded themselves from acceptable Jewish society by even traveling to Sychar in the first place). One, she was a woman. First century society considered women less than men, almost the level of property in some circles. Two, she was a Samaritan. "Good Jewish people" were not to interact with Samaritans - they were excluded from Jewish society by virtue of genealogy - it was a very much a racial discrimination thing. Three, she was divorced, not once but multiple times. Even though society at the time allowed a man to divorce a wife for nearly any reason, it was often the women that paid the societal consequences and faced judgement for the failure of the marriage. And she was living with a man not her husband - a choice looked down upon by conservative religious leaders as akin to adultery, much like in conservative circles in our society today. And the fact that she was at the well in heat of midday shows that even her neighbors had excluded her from their company.

And yet, this is the human Jesus chooses for conversation - and to use in sharing the message of God's love for all humanity with her neighbors.

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In this passage this week, I find both a point of reflection and a point of encouragement.

A point of reflection. Who are your divorced Samaritan women? Who are the people with whom you have a hard time engaging, whether because of some internal bias or past experiences or some other factor? I would venture to say that all of us have them. I do. Those biases do not have to define us. Moments like the reading of this passage, when they are called out, give us a time to reflect and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us. To teach us about our biases, where they might come from, and to work through them. To enable us to interact and love those who may have otherwise been excluded - either from society as a whole or because of our own internal biases.

And a point of encouragement. Have you felt excluded? By friends? Neighbors? Society? Know that those exclusions are not relevant in the reign of God. We see that in Jesus' behavior here - not only engaging in conversation with someone four times excluded from society and her neighbors, but initiating loving conversation. Now, I get it. It can seem trite to say to someone who is feeling excluded from real, meaningful, human relationships, "But God...!" I don't want to do that to you. But look around you in this place. I pray that here in this place we call our faith community, you might find the connection you desire, that you need. We are not all perfect here. Certainly not. But more than other communities I have been a part of, here people are willing to reflect on their own biases, desire to grow and learn, and genuinely want to include others. I have four this to be a community of people who want to interact with others as Jesus - to interact with and love and care for those who have been excluded. And to include them, not only in community, but also in the work of God we all share.

- Jim Bargmann

New Display in the Library

"Remembering the Altar Guild's Chancel Kneelers Project" is the new display in Mount Olive's Louise Schroedel Memorial Library. In 1981, the Altar Guild began a seven-year project to create nine needlework kneelers and two bench cushions for the chancel. They were designed by Marjorie Ford Pohlmann Sethna, a Minneapolis resident who was nationally recognized for her fiber-arts designs. The kneelers and cushions were dedicated on Sunday, March 29, 1987. The list of all the stitchers is lost, but we are trying to reconstruct it from photos and help from some members with long memories.

The display was nearly complete when former cantor Mark Sedio told us a charming story from the project – and we made room for it. If you want to find the story *quickly* – that word is a clue! – look under the two pictures in the introduction in the middle of the display case.

The Olive Branch

Calendar

Wednesday, March 4

- 9:00 am Staff meeting
Noon *Midweek Lenten Eucharist*, followed by
Soup Lunch
5:30 pm Children's Choir supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
6:00 pm Soup Supper
7:00 pm *Midweek Lenten Vespers*
7:30 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Thursday, March 5

- 9:30 am *Morning Prayer*
11:00 am Mpls. Synod Central Conference Gathering
7:00 pm Shared Ministry Committee meeting
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, March 6

- 7:00 pm Recovery group

Sunday, March 8 - Third Sunday in Lent, year A

- 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 Y1 Confirmation

Monday, March 9

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

Tuesday, March 10

- Noon Bible Study

Midweek Lenten Worship

Wednesdays in Lent

Holy Eucharist at Noon,
followed by Soup Luncheon

Vespers at 7:00 pm,
preceded by Soup Supper at 6 pm

All are welcome.

Tuesday Noon Bible Study Link

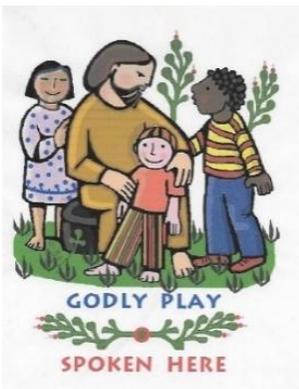
The Tuesday Noon Bible Study meets weekly in person in the East Assembly Room. For those who are unable to come in person, the Bible Study is held over Zoom as well.

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 March 14, the group will revisit a favorite author, reading *Hotel New Hampshire* by John Irving. Then on April 11, we will get a chance to look at *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Bighorn* by James Donovan, a compelling nonfiction book.

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](#).



Godly Play This Week

This Sunday Circle 1 will hear about Jesus and Zacchaeus while Circle 2 wonders about the Three Key Moments in the Parable Without Words.

On Wednesdays during Lent, following the children's choir rehearsals, families are invited to join the Lenten Evening Prayer at 7:00 pm.

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

March Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month:

Sabathani Community Center and Community Emergency Services

In March, we highlight two of our partners that work on issues of food insecurity in our south Minneapolis community as a part of the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, a state-wide initiative intended to bring together “organizations, businesses, faith communities, and individuals” to raise awareness about the issue of food insecurity and support for local food programs.

“Sabathani Community Center is one of Minnesota’s oldest African American-founded nonprofits... [and] helps equip approximately 32,000 South Minneapolis residents annually” through their food shelf, clothes closet, seniors programs, workforce initiatives, support for school- age children, and more.

Community Emergency Service or CES, works to alleviate hunger and food insecurity through an on-site food shelf, food delivery programs, a partnership with Meals on Wheels, and its unique Ani-Meals program, providing food for pets and service animals.

Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month through a yearly contribution from our budget. On top of those financial 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.

In addition, we will be collecting donations of non-perishable food items in the cart located in the West Assembly to be divided between our two food shelf partners. However, for those who are able, we strongly encourage monetary donations. Because our food shelf partners have access discounts and bulk purchase opportunities not available to regular consumers, monetary donations allow our partners to purchase much more food than if we were to purchase the same food through a retail store.

For more information about the work of the Sabathani Community Center, please visit their website at sabathani.org. For more information about CES, please visit cesmn.org.

Soup Maker Needed for One More Lenten Soup Meal

There is one opening left to sign up to cook and serve a pot of soup for Wednesdays in Lent. **March 25 at Noon** is still unsubscribed. We will need soup and bread for approximately 20-25 people.

A sign-up sheet is taped to the coffee serving counter in the East Assembly Room, take a moment to sign up!

Sunday's Adult Forum

This Sunday, March 8, Vicar Nelson will explore the ways Mount Olive's worship space proclaims the gospel visually. This exploration will primarily look at the stained glass windows and icons, and will also touch on the wood carvings, the chancel cushion designs, and more! Come learn (or re-learn) some of the history, intentions, and meanings behind these beautiful pieces of Mount Olive's worship space, and how they invite us into worship and praise of the Incarnate God.

Singing the Art of Aaron Silver – Again!

On **Sunday, March 15, at 3:00 pm** we are going to hold another Jewish music and art event in the Chapel Lounge within the exhibit. We had the first music event on January 25 and it was so well received that we are going to hold a second event. The songs are based on Hebrew texts that are a part of the artworks in the exhibit. Please plan on joining us.

Spring ahead!

Daylight Savings Time begins this Sunday, March 8.

You know what to do.

Way of the Cross

With the return of Lent comes the return of the Way of the Cross. As we began last year, visual representations of the nine Stations of the Cross we observe on Good Friday will surround the assembly in the nave this season. Some pieces are new, others will be familiar from last year. As you have time, take a few moments to ponder each work. Does it inspire consonance or dissonance in you? Why might that be? How might God be speaking in you through this artwork and your reactions to it?

Offering Envelopes

Please remember to contact the church office by **March 13 if you wish to continue to receive offering envelopes**. If you don't wish to receive them, you don't need to do anything - your name will be removed from the mailing list.

The envelope company works on a two-month mailing cycle, so you may have received envelopes recently, even though you no longer want them. You should not receive them on the next cycle.

Second Annual Mount Olive Fish Fry Pilgrimage

Back by popular demand, Mount Olive's Second Annual Lenten Fish Fry Pilgrimage begins this Fryday, February 20. The season's schedule is listed below. Check each host church's website for discount pricing, payment options, and other events on offer. Mount Olive folks typically arrive between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. each week. Come join the fishy fun!

Fryday, March 6: [Holy Family Catholic Church](#), 5900 W. Lake St., St. Louis Park, \$12, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Fryday, March 13: [Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church](#), 1 Lourdes Pl., Minneapolis, \$15, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Check website for parking info.

Fryday, March 20: [Church of St. Peter](#), 1405 Sibley Memorial Hwy., Mendota, Freewill donation, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Fryday, March 27: [Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church](#) 5426 12th Ave. S., Minneapolis, \$20, 5:00-7:00 p.m. OLP was last year's overall favorite, so don't miss it!



*Another Fryday Fish dinner at Church of St. Albert the Great. **This coming Friday, March 6**, we will be at Holy Family Catholic Church, 5900 W. Lake St., St. Louis Park, \$12, 5:00-6:30. Please come join us!*

Blood Drive at St. John's!

St. John's Lutheran Church, 4842 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, is hosting a blood drive through the Red Cross. This event will be held on **Monday, March 16, from Noon-6 pm** in their fellowship Hall.

If you'd like to give by appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter StJohnsLutheran.

Shared Ministry Update

On Ash Wednesday, Pastor Crippen invited us all to the Lenten Disciplines, one of which is "Sacrificial Giving." (Members of the Shared Ministry Committee might call it "Sacrificial Sharing!"). Here is a meditation shared by one of our Shared Ministry Committee members, with some editing. It begs the question - what would Sacrificial Sharing look like for you?

[In Joel 2 we read] "Return to the Lord with all your heart... return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love ..."

*The same Trinity that is so abundant with love before Lent is the same God who invites us into the disciplines of Lent which includes sacrificial giving. And it is essential to remember what kind of sacrifice is going on ... **Our sacrifice is to give up those things which keep us from returning to the Lord of abundance.** Jesus faced those central temptations in Matthew 4 on the First Sunday in Lent. The self within us is the one whom the devil addresses: turning ourselves into the hero of the story, turning giving into a transaction with God (I am so worthy that if I give, you will bless me etc...) The sacrifice we make during Lent is to turn from ourselves to the gracious and merciful God full of abounding steadfast love. That is what I heard on Ash Wednesday at Mount Olive as the invitation to the Lenten disciplines.*

I also heard the actor Noah Wiley speak after he received an award recently. In regard to his approach to acting, he quoted Michelangelo who prayed this before he began working each day: "Lord free me of myself so I can please you."

The sacrifice we make during Lent is to turn ourselves toward the God of abundance who has made each of us a beloved child of God free to live in a world in which we can please God by serving God's creation.

- (From a Shared Ministry Committee member who requested no attribution)

National Lutheran Choir - Sacred Refuge: from Light to Light

Sunday, March 22, 4:00 pm

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN

As we transition from the stillness of winter into the promise of spring, we are invited to seek refuge in song – a sacred space where the soul finds its voice and a place to belong. Opening with movements from Fanny Hensel's *Lobgesang* and Shavon Lloyd's *So Breaks the Sun*, the program traces the arc from winter's stillness to spring's awakening.

Works by Jake Runestad, *Under This Tree* and *Nada te Turbe*, offer reassurance and belonging. At the heart of the program is Aaron McDermid's *From Light to Light*, commissioned by the National Lutheran Choir in 2008, with texts by Susan Palo Cherwien that invite us into stillness and the heartbeat of God.

[Buy tickets here](#)

Holy Week, Triduum, and Easter at Mount Olive

Monday-Wednesday, March 30-April 1: Monday-Wednesday in Holy Week
+ Daily Prayer at Noon, in the side chapel of the nave, near the columbarium

Thursday, April 2: Maundy Thursday
+ Holy Eucharist, Noon
+ Holy Eucharist, with Washing of Feet, 7:00 pm

Friday, April 3: Good Friday
+ Stations of the Cross, Noon
+ Adoration of the Cross, 7 pm

Saturday, April 4: Holy Saturday
+ The Easter Vigil, 8:30 pm, followed by a festive reception

Sunday, April 5: The Resurrection of Our Lord/Easter Day
+ ONE Festival Holy Eucharist at 10 am (note change in Sunday schedule!)

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Thanks for your support!

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Sunday Eucharists: 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*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry –
Jim Bargmann

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ
congregation.*

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