



# The Olive Branch

May 8, 2024

## Accent on Worship

*Jim Bargmann*

In this week's First Reading, we see an account of a curious practice referred to only by the phrase "cast lots." This is the second time in the past few weeks where this tradition is mentioned - the other at the crucifixion when the soldiers tasked with putting Jesus on the cross then cast lots to decide who would get which piece of Jesus' clothing. In this week's reading, this practice, whatever form it took, was used to choose a new leader for the early church to replace Judas. The lot fell to a follower of Jesus named Matthias, who according to this account, was with them "from the baptism of John until the day when [Jesus] was taken up from us...[and chosen in order to] become a witness with us to his resurrection" (Acts 1:22).

Historical and Biblical record from this time supports that this practice of casting lots was common for any manner of decision making. It seems it took many forms that included throwing down multicolored stones for a binary choice, using pieces of broken pottery that had been written on for multiple choice decisions, or even drawing different lengths of grass or wheat to determine order or responsibilities. The practice is mentioned at least 18 times in both Testaments of Scripture and appears in writings of ancient Greek and Roman society.

The prevalence of this practice throughout the Biblical record, and even taught about in Proverbs (16:33), seems to support an overall belief that God, by the Spirit, could and would reveal their will for earthly decisions.

I find myself fascinated by this practice. To be clear, I'm not advocating a return to a widespread use of this practice. I do think there is much benefit to a decision-making process that involves thoughtful and prayerful conversation with others in genuine community with the goal of consensus building, the use of voting when appropriate, and the like. In short, there are many ways an individual or a community might go about making a Spirit-guided decision.

What I find myself drawn to in this practice is the complete sense of trust in God that these early followers of Jesus and their predecessors in the faith had to turn decisions over to inanimate objects, trusting that God would make their will known through them. *(continued on page 2)*

## Sunday Readings

**May 12, 2024**

*Seventh Sunday of Easter,  
year B*

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

Psalms 1

1 John 5:9-13

John 17:6-19

**May 19, 2024**

*Day of Pentecost*

Acts 2:1-21

Psalms 104:24-34,35b

Romans 8:22-27

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

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

## Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

Decisions are a part of our daily lives, some of great importance and some seemingly lesser. Sometimes decisions are individual in nature, some involve a community of people and must be done within the context of relationship.

What can we take from this? Whether we literally take up the practice of casting lots or not is not really the question in my mind, but rather, what attitude do we take in the process of making a decision, either individually or in community? Is it one focused on what I want to see or are our conversations filled with a focus on what is good for the community, the neighborhood, or even the greater good of humanity? Have we dedicated ourselves to prayer throughout the process, not simply as something to do on an agenda, but as a consistent practice throughout, seeking wisdom from the Spirit herself? I see all of these things playing out in this decision to choose Matthias as a new leader in the early church, regardless of the method used for making that decision.

And now I find myself writing another article to you where perhaps I pose more questions than answers. But I do think these things are worth considering and I hope perhaps my sharing my wonderings provoke thought for you and conversation for our community of faith in this place.

- Jim Bargmann

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## Align Minneapolis Lunch and Learn

Align Minneapolis holds a series of quarterly educational events for volunteers and leaders on a variety of topics related to housing and homelessness. The May gathering will be hosted by Mount Olive.

You are invited to join us on **Wednesday, May 8 from 1:00-2:30 pm** for a conversation about how people navigate the often complex web of resources as they seek help on their housing journey. If you are someone who is curious about what the process looks like for someone seeking social service support and/or moving out of homelessness, this conversation is for you. Please join us.

Lunch will be provided.

Align Minneapolis is an interfaith coalition of 18 congregations, one of which is Mount Olive, and people with lived experience of homelessness working to address homelessness together.

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**The Ascension of Our  
Lord**

**Thursday, May 9  
Holy Eucharist at 7:00 pm**

**Vigil of Pentecost**  
**Saturday, May 18 at 7:00 pm**

# The Olive Branch

## Calendar

### Wednesday, May 8

- 10:00 am Staff meeting  
1:00 pm ALIGN Lunch & Learn  
7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal  
7:00 pm Y2 Confirmation

### Thursday, May 9 - The Ascension of Our Lord

- 5:30 pm Feminine Divine Study Group  
7:00 pm *Ascension Eucharist*  
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### Friday, May 10

- 7:00 pm Recovery Group

### Saturday, May 11

- 10:00 am Book Discussion group

### Sunday, May 12 - Seventh Sunday of Easter

- 8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation  
9:30 am Mother's Day Recital  
10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

### Monday, May 13

- Noon Bible Study (Book of Amos)  
7:00 pm Vestry meeting  
7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

### Tuesday, May 14

- Noon Bible Study  
6:00 pm Bible Study (Book of Amos)

## **Mollie Hamre to be Ordained May 11**

Mollie Hamre, our vicar last year (2022-2023), has received a call to serve as associate pastor at Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Prior Lake. She will be ordained into the ministry of Word and Sacrament on Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 1:00 p.m., at Shepherd of the Lake. The Mount Olive community are all invited to share this day with the Church and with Mollie. Shepherd of the Lake is located at 3611 N Berens Rd NW, Prior Lake, MN 55379. All are invited to wear red in celebration, and clergy who attend are invited to vest. The service will be streamed online at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/3kapvfv>.

## **Tuesday Noon Bible Study Link**

The Tuesday Noon Bible Study is meeting in person, in the **East Assembly Room**. For those who are unable to come in person, we will continue to hold the meeting 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**

For their May 11 meeting they will read *Everything Sad is Untrue*, by Daniel Nayeri. For June 8, they will read *Horse*, by Geraldine Brooks

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](#).

## Attention, Sunday Servants!

The Mount Olive Servant Schedule for Quarter 3 (July - September) will be published at the beginning of June. Please send any scheduling preferences or dates you will be unavailable to serve to me by **Friday, May 10**.

Please let me know if you have questions or if you would like to know more about the servant roles.

Thank you -  
Greg Murphy  
[gregRmurphy@gmail.com](mailto:gregRmurphy@gmail.com)

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## Six-Week Bible Study on the Book of Amos

*"The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?"*

In April and May, Vicar Mildahl is leading a six-session Bible Study exploring the poetic and prophetic Book of Amos. Two identical sessions are offered each week: **Mondays at noon** and **Tuesdays at 6pm**. You are welcome to join either session in person or via Zoom. Tuesday nights will include a light supper (feel free to bring your own lunch on Mondays).

Contact [vicar@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:vicar@mountolivechurch.org) if you have any questions!

### Schedule:

April 8/9 - Amos and the Bible	May 6/7 - Chapters 7-9
April 15/16 - Chapters 1-3 (Skip April 22/23)	May 13/14 - Amos and Sundays
April 29/30 - Chapters 4-6	May 20/21 - Amos in the World

[Click here](#) to join any session via Zoom.

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## Pentecost Reading of Acts 2 in Many Languages

For a number of years, it has been our tradition at Mount Olive to hear a portion of the Pentecost reading from Acts 2:1-21 read simultaneously in various languages.

Some of you have either participated in this joint reading in the past or are knowledgeable enough in a foreign language that you might be willing to participate this year. Anyone who can read aloud in another language is invited to participate in this corporate reading at the morning liturgy on Sunday, May 19, 2024.

Please contact the church office if you would be willing to participate and we will be in touch soon.

## Minneapolis has a new bishop!

At the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly this past weekend (May 2 to May 4), our synod elected a new bishop, Pr. Jen Nagel. (note: Mount Olive is a congregation of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.)

Pr. Nagel has been lead pastor at University Lutheran Church of Hope for the past 9 years, and has been serving in pastoral ministry for over 24 years. Our current bishop, Bishop Ann Svennungsen, is completing her second six-year term this summer, and our synod has a two-term limit to bishop's tenures.

Please pray for Bp. Svennungsen in these days of her completing her ministry and for Pr. Nagel as she prepares to assume this call. She will begin on August 1, and be installed on September 21.

Here are two links, one to [Pr. Nagel's biography](#) that was submitted to our assembly, and the other the [video she prepared for the assembly](#).



*Mount Olive folks at the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly (L-R): Former vicar Mollie Hamre, Vicar Lauren Mildahl, Lora Dundek, Eric Kormanik, Pastor Crippen, and Cynthia Prosek.*

## Save the Dates!

**June 9:** Visit to B'Dote (on the grounds of Historic Fort Snelling and Fort Snelling State Park). Gather after worship for lunch and a brief introduction to the history of this area and then visit the sites which are so significant in the life of our Dakotah and other Native neighbors. More information and sign-up coming in mid-May.

**July 19-21:** Mount Olive Family Camping at Nerstrand/Big Woods State Park. More information and sign-up available in early June.

## Neighborhood Ministry News

### *Powderhorn Art Fair - Volunteers Needed*

The 33rd Annual Powderhorn Art Fair will be happening on August 3 and 4 in Powderhorn Park, bringing together over 150 artists, immersive art installations, food trucks, games, activities, music, and more for two days of fun and art.

Our partners at the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association plan and organize this outstanding community event each year and are asking for volunteers to assist.

Please consider volunteering. I (Jim Bargmann) have done this for several years and it is always a great event and lots of fun to be involved in this way.

To sign up, please visit [www.ppna.org/volunteer](http://www.ppna.org/volunteer).

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### *Two-Fold Neighborhood Ministry Request*

At our recent congregational meeting, I had the opportunity to share a number of things happening in Neighborhood Ministry, including our advocacy efforts, the opportunities offered by our direct service programs, our connections with many new arrivals from Central and South America, and our unique diaper program.

At that meeting, I ended my report with a two-fold request.

One, we are looking for people to volunteer in a new role we are calling Neighborhood Ministry Host. People in this role would agree to serve at least one time per month, offering hospitality to people coming to Mount Olive for our direct service programs. Volunteers in this role will also be trained to assist people with bus cards, laundry vouchers, and some of our more basic offerings. Volunteers in this role can serve on their own schedule, any day Monday through Thursday, but Tuesdays and Thursdays are our busiest days and the days we have the most need for volunteer support. Please contact me if you are interested in more information.

Two, because of increased demand and increased costs, we are looking for additional donations to support our diaper program. We are seeking additional support in the amount of \$15,000 to help us through the remainder of 2024. Our diaper program leadership group has been working on a number of plans to reduce costs, solicit donations of diapers, apply for grants, and establish new partnerships. But many of those plans will not be realized until later in 2024 or even into the beginning of 2025, hence the request for additional donations from the Mount Olive community. Any additional donations to our diaper program can be made by simply writing "Diaper Depot" on the memo line of a check, using your pink Neighborhood Ministry envelope, or using the direct Neighborhood Ministry donation link on the Mount Olive website.

- Jim Bargmann, Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry

## Afghan Family Update: May 2023

After the good news was shared at Sunday's congregational meeting that the Mohammadi family's application for asylum in the US was approved on April 18, several people asked about the family, so we thought a brief update was in order.

With the asylum approval, the risk of deportation is virtually removed and the path toward citizenship is more secure. It will be a year before they are eligible to receive green cards, but are already beginning that application process. Note: Milad received his asylum approval last year.

**Employment:** Both men, Mustafa and Milad, continue in their jobs as assembly workers at LSG Sky Chefs at the Minneapolis St. Paul Airport, preparing catering carts for international flights. This is not their career goal but provides some income until something better comes along. They are both interested in doing security work but open to other possibilities for better income. If you have any leads or ideas for better jobs for the guys, please let us know at [global@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:global@mountolivechurch.org). Anita continues her role as a part-time doula with Everyday Miracles at HCMC, a skill she brought from Afghanistan. She is eager to advance to a midwife position at some point.

**Education:** The adults continue their English as a second language training each week and we continue to be amazed at the improvements and how this has enabled them to become more independent in handling things like phone calls and other transactions. We are so proud of their progress in this area.

**The kids:** The 5-year-old (son) is in kindergarten and very bright which presents challenges for keeping him engaged and frustration for Anita who worries he will be kicked out of school for his typical kindergarten antics. We assured her he is a totally normal 5 year old. It is fun to watch him switch effortlessly between Dari and English depending on who he is talking to. The 2-year-old (daughter) has will be moving up to the 3-year-old room in child care in July, which will open a spot for the baby (daughter, who will be 1 year old this month) to begin childcare as well and make it possible for Anita to take on more doula hours. The 2-year-old has mastered potty training and has a growing English vocabulary as well. The baby now has four teeth and has been adding solid foods to her diet.



*(continued on page 8)*

## **May Neighborhood Ministry Partner of the Month: *Minnesota Council of Churches***

Minnesota Council of Churches seeks to “build strong communities that are made up of meaningful relationships and guided by our deepest values. They seek to partner organizations and individuals in living out faith in their communities. They do this through refugee services programs, social justice work, justice advocacy work, and fostering interfaith connections. In addition, through their Respectful Conversations program, they facilitate respectful conversations between people of varying backgrounds and train others to lead those conversations.

Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month through a yearly contribution from our budget, and often, like our partners 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 the work of the Minnesota Council of Churches, please visit their website at [www.mnchurches.org](http://www.mnchurches.org).

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## **Afghan Family Update, *continued from page 7***

Fiancé: Milad’s fiancé, Yasamin, who is still in Kabul, Afghanistan, was one of 55,000 individuals selected in last year’s Diversity Visa Lottery and awaiting her interview (hopefully in the next month or two). Successfully passing this interview will mean a visa and permanent residency in the US. We are hopeful that she can join the family later this fall. She is already working on her English in regular phone visits with Mount Olive members, Hannah Rivard and Carolyn Heider. Mount Olive congregation has already agreed to be her sponsor thanks to the work of our Global Ministry committee.

Again, we are so proud of the advances this family has made since we first met them in February 2022. Our role is shifting away from that of mentor and more and more toward family and friends as they continue to learn American ways, systems, and culture. They are so appreciative (as are we) for the Mount Olive family and the many ways you have and continue to provide hospitality, encouragement, friendship, support, friendly home visits, childcare, and love. Thank you so much.

*The current “Mentor Team:” Connie Marty, Judy Hinck, Joyce Larson, and Adam Krueger*



## Mount Olive Lutheran Church

3045 Chicago Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

*A congregation of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

### **Sunday Eucharists:**

**8:00 & 10:45 am**

### **Contact Us**

Phone: 612/827-5919

Web: [www.mountolivechurch.org](http://www.mountolivechurch.org)

### **Staff**

Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*

Cantor – *David Cherwien*

Vicar – *Lauren Mildahl*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Outreach  
and Ministry – *Jim Bargmann*

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ  
congregation.*

## **In This Issue:**

- **Accent on Worship – Jim Bargmann**
- **Eucharist for The Ascension of Our Lord: Thursday,  
May 9, 7:00 pm**
- **Polyglot Reading for Pentecost – Readers Needed!**
- **Afghan Family Update**
- **Neighborhood Ministry News**
- **Minneapolis Area Synod's New Bishop**