



# The Olive Branch

May 22, 2024

## Accent on Worship

*Vicar Lauren Mildahl*

This Friday we will commemorate the astronomer and polymath Nicolaus Copernicus, who is best remembered for formulating a model of the solar system that placed the Sun at its center. And as deeply as I admire Copernicus, the inclusion of a 16th-century Catholic scientist on our Lutheran Calendar

## Sunday Readings

**May 26, 2024**  
*The Holy Trinity*

Isaiah 6:1-8  
Psalm 29  
Romans 8:12-17  
John 3:1-17

**June 2, 2024**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*  
*Lect. 9 B*

Deuteronomy 5:12-15  
Psalm 81:1-10  
2 Corinthians 4:5-12  
Mark 2:22–3:6

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

of Saints, struck me as a bit odd. So I had to investigate. Copernicus was deeply committed to the Christian faith: he obtained a doctorate in canon law and served as a canon in Warmia in present day Poland. However, his most famous writings aren't explicitly theological, and, in fact, they offended many Roman Catholic authorities because they contradicted the orthodox cosmology of the time, which held that the sun and moon and stars, and the entire universe, orbited the stationary Earth. And Copernicus wasn't too popular with his Protestant contemporaries either. Martin Luther once mentioned him in a sermon: "There is talk of a new astrologer who wants to prove that the earth moves and goes around—instead of the sky, the sun, the moon...But that is how things are nowadays: when a man wishes to be clever he must needs invent something special, and the way he does it must needs be the best!" (Perhaps a bit of projection on Luther's part?) And Luther's colleague Philip Melanchthon was even more forceful: "certain people believe it is a marvelous achievement to extol so crazy a thing, like that Polish astronomer who makes the earth move and the sun stand still. Really, wise governments ought to repress impudence of mind."

Of course, Copernicus got the last laugh. His model was the foundation for a revolution in astronomy, continuing with Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler and Galileo (none of whom we commemorate, though perhaps we should!)

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

and paving the way for countless revelations about God's universe that still thrill us, puzzle us, and inspire us. And although in the modern day we tend to think of science as entirely divorced from theology, Copernicus' insights were deeply theological. His careful observation and analysis didn't separate creation from its creator, nor was he trying to displace God from the universe. Rather, he helped us see that we aren't the center of it - not even close. We commemorate Copernicus because he humbled us: inviting us to see how small we are and how big God is.

I think every theologian should be an astronomer. We should all keep in mind, whenever we think about God, how big, how utterly, ridiculously enormous the universe is. There is an iconic image, taken by NASA's Hubble Telescope, called "The Pillars of Creation" that I think about all the time. This section of the Eagle Nebula stretches four to five lightyears across, which means that it takes light, traveling at 671 million miles per hour, over four years to move across the pillars.

Trying to wrap my head around that fact, while gazing at the eerie and ethereal beauty of these cosmic formations, sends a shiver down my spine. And it helps me break God out of the tiny box in my head that I like to keep God confined in. Because God is out there, in the Pillars of Creation. God is creating, renewing, enlivening, and inhabiting the Eagle Nebula, just as much as God is doing all those things on Earth and in each soul.

We are not in any way the center of the universe. In Isaiah 40:22, the prophet calls us grasshoppers compared to God, but that's absurd over-inflation of our size and importance. We're particles. We're subatomic.

And God loves us anyway.

So in honor of Copernicus, I invite you to do a little star-gazing this week. And as you gaze on the marvels of creation, remember how much God loves even little specks like us.

To read more about Copernicus and the other scientist we commemorate this week Leonhard Euler, [here's a nice article from Living Lutheran](#).

- Vicar Lauren Mildahl

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## ***Olive Branch* Summer Publication**

This is the last weekly edition of *The Olive Branch* until fall.

During the summer months, we publish the newsletter every *other* week. The next issue will be published June 5. Information for that issue is due in to the church office by Monday, June 3.

## Calendar

### Wednesday, May 22

10:00 am Staff meeting  
6:00 pm Cantorei party (at the home of Tom Olsen)

### Thursday, May 23

5:30 pm Feminine Divine Study group  
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### Friday, May 24

7:00 pm Recovery Group

### Sunday, May 26 - The Holy Trinity

10:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

### Monday, May 27 - Memorial Day holiday

*Church offices closed*

7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

### Tuesday, May 28

Noon Bible Study

### Wednesday, May 29

10:00 am Staff meeting

### Thursday, May 30

7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

### Friday, May 31

7:00 pm Recovery Group

### Saturday, June 1

All Day Bach Tage  
9:00 am Gardening Day

### Sunday, June 2 - Second Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

4:00 pm *Bach Tage Vespers*

### Monday, June 3

7:00 pm Global Ministry Committee meeting

7:00 pm Vicar Committee meeting

7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

### Tuesday, June 4

Noon Bible Study

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## 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.

## 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](#).

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## Book Discussion

On June 15 (please note change of date due to a funeral) they will discuss *Horse*, by Geraldine Brooks, and on July 13, *I am not Sydney Poitier*, by Percival Everett.

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](#).

## Diaper Depot Opportunity

Do you have a couple free hours from time to time and want to support the Diaper Depot Ministry? We are looking for people willing to be substitute drivers when our regular delivery people need to be away.

- What is involved?
  - Client orders are placed by Monday each week and routes are packed on Tuesdays for delivery on Wednesday. Each client's order is typically packed into a diaper box or grocery bag that you would deliver.
  - Each route has between 1 and 8 stops in a specific area of the city; e.g., central, south, western suburbs, northern suburbs, St. Paul, etc.
  - An optimized route sheet is printed and available to help plan your stops.
  - If no one is home to receive the order when you stop, you leave the order and text the client so they know where you left it.
  - Typically this takes one to two hours from the time you pick up the diapers at Mount Olive until you are back home.
- Frequency?
  - Most months our delivery drivers are able to cover the routes, so this would be sporadic.
  - We currently know of a need at the end of May and for at least three weeks in August
  - Interested in being a regular delivery driver? We can use you, too, to either split or share existing routes.
- How to get involved?
  - Drop an email with your interest, availability, and good contact information to [neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org). Jim will compile a list and he or the drivers will reach out to you as needs arise.
  - As always, thanks for considering serving in this way!

## The Story of the Wall

Once again, the retaining wall corner on 31<sup>st</sup> and Chicago is repaired thanks to Jim Johnson and Larry Duncan salvaging stones and finding, shaping, and fitting new ones in to make the corner whole again. This corner has not had an easy life. The latest episode was in September of 2023 when it was hit by two vehicles and left in pieces (photo on left). Unfortunately, it averages getting damaged every two to three years. Hoping for a longer life this time.



## From your Vestry, regarding the Cantor of Mount Olive

As we now know of Cantor David Cherwien's impending retirement, the Vestry wants to keep our community informed as we walk with David and with each other through this transition, and into the next part of the journey on which God is leading us.

The Vestry has set up a small task group to plan and dream and envision our farewell to David, what the celebration will be and look like, and all those details. His last Sunday is July 28, so right now that's likely the day we will have that celebration. Any who wish to help with this should contact Lora Dundek, [conglife@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:conglife@mountolivechurch.org).

The Vestry has also set up a small group to discern how we will be led in worship from the organ and choir loft during this transition. Clearly an interim will be needed while we engage in our search for the next cantor. The hope is that an interim will be chosen and announced by late June or early July.

Last, the Vestry has decided to have a call committee elected for the searching and discerning and calling of our next cantor. That process, which culminates in a congregational meeting where the call committee of seven members is elected, will begin in August.

It's not possible to know how long the interim period will last. It will largely depend on the call committee and their process, and how it all flows. But we know in all of this that God is with Mount Olive, with Cantor Cherwien as he moves into this time of retirement, with those who will lead us in our transition, and with the one who will one day come among us as cantor. As more things are known, they will be announced to the congregation.

## Desk Available

With help from many members, we're updating Mount Olive's Louise Schroedel Memorial Library. The "grand reopening" is July 7. We've reconfigured and are reusing all the shelving and have a single item that needs a new home--the former checkout desk (we'll have a new checkout system!). The desk is four feet wide, two feet deep, and is a couple inches higher than most kitchen tables. If you're part of our worshipping community and think you can use it, or if you know someone who can, phone or email Donn McLellan ([skjakcomm@outlook.com](mailto:skjakcomm@outlook.com)).



## 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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## Youth and Family Committee Updates:

We have a basement space designated for youth that is currently located to the side of the basement fellowship area with 2 couches that were donated. Youth are welcome to use this as a place to rest and relax in between other activities at church and have already started making use of it! We are planning to add more to the youth space and are requesting contact if you have any of the following donation items. We will take a look at what is offered as a committee to decide if it will fit the needs. Needed: Some kind of flooring (e.g., rug, foam mats), coffee table and/or end tables, gently used bean bag or floor furniture without animal or smoke smell, game options such as foosball table or ping pong table). Please email [youthfamily@mountolivechurch.org](mailto:youthfamily@mountolivechurch.org) or text Erica at 651-216-5983 with any donation items that you would like considered along with a photo of the item if possible.

We are planning to have monthly playground gatherings available during warmer weather. The first will be June 2 after church (approximately 12:00) at Hyland Park, also known as "Chutes and Ladders." The address is 10145 E. Bush Lake Rd. in Bloomington, MN 55438. Mount Olive members/families are welcome to pick up lunch on the way and meet at the park. Adults are responsible for supervision of their own children. Ellen Kormanik will be the Youth/Family committee member present as a contact at this event. Hope to see you there!

## June Adult Education

Cody Sanders was very well received when he presented before Easter on the care of our dead as well as options for interment. He will be back to present twice in June, this time on Gender Identity and recognizing sacred wisdom in the LGBTQIA+ community.

The events will take place in the chapel at 11:30 AM. A light lunch of sandwiches and salads will be served.

**June 2 - Sexual & Gender Identity 101 (and Beyond):** The landscape of LGBTQIA2S+ lives is continually emerging, shifting, and flourishing in myriad directions. As queer and trans people have more ability to name their lived experiences and identities for themselves, language changes, terminology proliferates, and more letters are added to the acronym. This forum will provide an up to date understanding of LGBTQIA2S+ lives and experiences, from the very basics of sexual and gender identity to more complex topics of spiritual care needs experienced by queer and trans people in our churches and communities. Bring your questions! This is the place to ask.

**June 23 - Beyond Affirmation: LGBTQIA2S+ Lives as Sources of Sacred Wisdom:** Many churches have practiced affirmation for LGBTQIA2S+ people for many years now. But what exists beyond affirmation? This forum will help orient our focus with a posture of compassionate curiosity to ask what we can learn from queer and trans lives that would benefit the whole church. What stories need to be told of queer and trans faithfulness, community, love, and courage that we all need to hear? What lessons have LGBTQIA2S+ people learned at the margins of many communities that we would all do well to learn? Beyond "affirmation," we have the potential to learn from queer and trans lives as sources of sacred wisdom, to reincorporate parts of the larger church's story from which we have been cut off, and to celebrate the gifts that LGBTQIA2S+ people have been and continue to be for the church and the wider world.

The Rev. Cody J. Sanders, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Congregational & Community Care Leadership at Luther Seminary. His books include, *Queer Lessons for Churches on the Straight and Narrow* (translated into Japanese and Swahili), *Microaggressions in Ministry* (with Angela Yarber, translated into Japanese), *A Brief Guide to Ministry with LGBTQIA Youth*, and *Christianity, LGBTQ Suicide, and the Souls of Queer Folk* (subject of the 2024 Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Research Conference at Loma Linda University in April of this year). He lives with his partner, also named Cody, in Saint Paul.

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## Gift and Party for Cantor Cherwien

The Vestry is planning a dinner reception for Cantor Cherwien as part of our farewell, and is also planning a gift from the congregation. If anyone would like to donate to these efforts, simply mark your check or offering as "Cantor Cherwien farewell." Thank you!

## India: Bethania Kids steps up women's empowerment programs

Bethania Kids reports that its Bethania Foundation India started eight women's empowerment programs in the last nine years and plans to add more soon. You might be thinking, "Wait, isn't Bethania supposed to be all about kids?!" It was and is. Its leaders from the start have recognized that infants and children need mothers, other caregivers, and teachers who have essential skills and resources, including money. As President Steve Zorn writes in the spring 2024 issue of Bethania's Seeds on the Wind newsletter, "We created women's empowerment programs because when women thrive, so do their children!"

Bethania's empowerment programs traditionally taught tailoring and embroidery skills to enable women to earn some money for their families. In a new women's empowerment program now starting at Shalom Home, at Batlagundi, local experts will introduce a new skill each month. A college professor will offer career guidance, a family counselor will teach drug awareness, a policewoman will teach women's safety. A new practical—and very popular—computer training program starts with the basics of typing in Tamil and English, then expands to accounting, photo editing, book editing, graphic design, and other skills. Some recent graduates of that program now have good-paying jobs, and others have entered college or other higher education.

Bethania Kids was started in 1987 by members of two American families with missionary roots in India, the Granners and Hennigs, the latter longtime members of Mount Olive. The first Bethania site, at Kannivadi, in southeast India, became home to nine students. Now Bethania serves nearly a thousand children, women, and families at fifteen sites in India. It's one of eleven ministries Mount Olive supports through the Global Ministry committee.



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## Attention Bookworms!

Please note! Due to scheduling conflicts with a funeral, the June Book Discussion Group will meet one week later than usual, on the **THIRD Saturday, June 15.**

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## 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.*

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