



The Olive Branch

January 8, 2025

Accent on Worship

Vicar Natalie Wussler

I am a huge fan of Dolly Parton. She radiates positivity and kindness, and her songs are sure to put me in a good mood. One of my favorite songs of hers is “Light of a Clear Blue Morning,” and the words of the first verse resonates deeply with me:

*“Cause I can see the light of a clear blue morning.
I can see the light of a brand new day.
I can see the light of a clear blue morning.
Oh, and everything's gonna be all right.
It's gonna be okay.”*

Dolly wrote this song after she made a career-altering decision that almost ended her career. She began to see the fruits of her sacrifices, and she describes it as “the clouds lifting.” After personal and professional turmoil, she started to catch glimpses of hope that she would be okay.

In Matthew, it says that when the star stopped over the house where Jesus was born, the Magi were overwhelmed with joy. I wonder if this was one of those “clouds lifting” kind of moments, if the joy comes from any anxiety that there would be no reason for rejoicing, if the Magi had been uncertain that they had been doing it wrong or if there were dangers on the road, and if when they saw the star stopping, they knew their journey was coming to an end, finally reaching the one for whom they’d been searching. Was this overwhelming joy a sigh of relief as well? A clear blue morning after a long night?

That’s what Jesus is, for me. The promise that despite the brokenness of the world around us, God still chooses to be present. Amidst the hard nights, Jesus' birth as a human guides us to see the hope in the chaos, that love can be brought to birth anytime it chooses. Love can be brought to birth in us, too, and we can be beacons of God’s love and hope in this world.

continued on page 2

Sunday Readings

January 12, 2025

*The Baptism of Our Lord,
year C*

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalm 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 19, 2025

*Second Sunday after Epiphany,
year C*

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalm 36:5-10

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

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

Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

“Light of a clear blue morning” starts with “It’s been a long, dark night, but I see a brand new day a’ dawning.” There’s no denial that things have been hard and will continue to be hard. But that hope rising in the distance is enough to say a new day is coming. That all things are being made new every day, and that God is walking with us as we exist in the tension of now-and-not-yet.

- Vicar Natalie Wussler

Upcoming Adult Forums

January 12: Spiritual Practices and the Ancient Christian Ministry of Spiritual Direction, part 2 of a 2-part series presented by Teresa J. Rothausen, Ph.D.

Many of us are discerning if we need to make changes or shifts in our lives now in response to the events in our country and the world. In every era, Christians have done this type of discernment. Jesus told us, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when the Spirit of Truth comes, she will guide you into all truth." John 16:12. What does Christian tradition teach about how the Spirit guides us in the decisions that, together, result in the direction of our lives and our impact on the world? In common with other faith traditions, a way of life basic to Jewish and Christian traditions interweaves of loving God and loving neighbor in gospel terms, spirituality and social justice according to the prophets, contemplation and action in traditional spirituality, or mysticism and resistance in contemporary theology.

These two sessions will focus on spiritual practices of loving God, spirituality, contemplation, and mysticism, from our tradition, which are necessary and central to right love of neighbor, social justice, action, and resistance. Many spiritual practices will be briefly covered and two covered more deeply; the first session will focus on the ancient ministry of Spiritual Direction, and the second on ways of Spiritual Discernment.

January 19: Mount Olive’s Global Ministry Committee is excited to present Tammy Walhof, who serves as the Director of the Office for Lutheran Advocacy for the State of Minnesota. She will speak primarily about from her 2023 experience as an observer on behalf of the ELCA to COP 28, the International Climate Conference in Dubai. Several months ago, we heard about local initiatives to mitigate the effects of global climate change. We will learn from Tammy as she presents a knowledgeable, informed, and engaging perspective on an issue that concerns us all.

For more information on Lutheran Advocacy in Minnesota, and to meet Tammy Wahlhof, check out <http://Lutheranadvocacymn.org>.

The Olive Branch

Calendar

Wednesday, January 8

- 10:00 am Staff meeting
- 5:30 pm Library Committee meeting
- 5:30 pm Children's Choirs supper
- 6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
- 7:00 pm Y2 / Y3 Confirmation
- 7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Thursday, January 9

- 9:30 am *Morning Prayer*
- 7:00 pm Vicar Committee meeting
- 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, January 10

- 7:00 pm Recovery Group

Saturday, January 11

- 10:00 am Book Discussion group

Sunday, January 12 - Baptism of Our Lord

- 8:00 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation
- 9:30 am Adult Forum / Godly Play / Youth Conversation
- 10:45 am *Holy Eucharist*, followed by coffee and conversation

Monday, January 13

- 5:30 pm Family Music Time
- 7:00 pm Vestry meeting
- 7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

Tuesday, January 14

- Noon Bible Study

Wednesday, January 15

- 10:00 am Staff meeting
- 5:30 pm Children's Choirs supper
- 6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
- 7:00 pm Y2 / Y3 Confirmation
- 7:00 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Coffee Hour Hosts (Always) Needed!

You know the drill.

Sign up on the chart near the serving window in the East Assembly Room!

Tuesday Noon Bible Study Link

Please note! There will be NO Tuesday Bible Study on Dec. 24 or on Dec. 31.

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

On January 11 the group will discuss *Kindred* by Octavia Butler. From the deep South of Butler's book, the February selection, *To The Bright Edge of the World* by Eowyn Ivey will take the discussion to Alaska.

Everyone is invited to join whenever you are able, at 10 a.m. in the library, usually on the second Saturday of the 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](#).

The Olive Branch

Thank you, thank you!

Many thanks to the people of Mount Olive for the generous Christmas gifts we received, and for all your kindness and support throughout the year! You are Christ to us in so many ways, and we are deeply grateful for you in our lives.

Blessings and peace to you all in this new year in God's care!

- *The staff of Mount Olive: Jim Bargmann, Joseph Crippen, Mari Espeland, Robert Farlee, Jose Morocho, Cha Posz, Bekah Schulz, Andrew Stoebig, and Natalie Wussler.*

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 packed on Tuesdays for delivery on Wednesday.
- + Routes are efficiently grouped by 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.
- + A route usually takes about an hour or less from the time you pick up the diapers at Mount Olive until you are back home.

Frequency?

- + Substitute drivers would be needed only occasionally when one of our regular delivery people is out of town or other circumstances prevent them from delivering their route.
- + Interested in being a regular delivery driver? We can use you, too! Larger routes can be split or shared so someone doesn't have to deliver every week. Note: We try to keep deliveries close to your home area, if possible.

How to get involved?

- + Drop an email with your interest, availability, and good contact information to Jim Bargmann at 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!

- *Adam Krueger (the NW suburb delivery guy)*

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.

Early Music Minnesota Concert This Saturday

*Froberger and his Contemporaries, with
Jacques Ogg, harpsichord
Saturday, January 11, 2025, 3:00 PM 5:00 PM*

The life and travels of Johann Jakob Froberger involved encounters with pirates, studies in Rome, sojourns in Paris and London, and working for the Emperor in Vienna. And being a student of Stylus Fantasticus, his music is no less dramatic or fanciful. Jacques Ogg, the Lyra Baroque Orchestra's beloved Artistic Director, presents an evening of toccatas, preludes and other whims by Froberger, and peers he encountered in his adventures: Louis Couperin and Matthias Weckmann, among others.



The concert will be held at Mount Olive and is, as always, free to the Mount Olive community.

The Olive Branch



Tree decorators and church staff members, enjoying post-decorating coffee and treats.

Altar Flowers Available

The 2025 Altar Flowers calendar is ready and available for your reservation. Many weeks remain open at this time, so be sure to check the poster next to the parish office to find the perfect week for you. If the \$100 cost is holding you back, consider purchasing just one bouquet or going in with a friend or two to help defray the expense. Altar flower sponsors may take the bouquets home following 10:45 Eucharist on Sundays. Thank you in advance for your contributions.

Godly Play This Week

Circle 1 will hear when Jesus said, "follow me."

Circle 2 will celebrate Epiphany.

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



Vestry Meeting Summary 11/11/24

- **New Business:**

- Review of the Congregation Meeting and Oktoberfest – both went well and were fun
- Thanks to those who made significant contributions, especially:
 - Ted Thompson for the budget presentation
 - Jim Bargmann for the video
 - Eric & Steve Manual for help with the food and beverages
- Display case – someone else will be taking on this duty during Paul Nixdorf's surgery and recovery
- Remaining Foundation funds – the remaining \$4,100 won't need to be held in reserve with the current budget situation
 - \$200 was voted to be donated to All Nations Church – which works on Native American justice topics
- Vestry reorganization – There will be another meeting of the small group working on this. Then a proposal will be brought to the Vestry. It will then be presented to the congregation at the semi-annual meeting in April 2025.

- **Staff Reports**

- Pastor – since late September there have been:
 - Two baptisms
 - One wedding Eucharist
 - Three funeral Eucharists
- Interim Choir Director Andrew Stoebig – thanks to everyone involved in the All Saints liturgies
- Vicar Natalie Wussler – in addition to her report, thanks to Lora Dundek for help in providing a community meal on Election Day

- **Treasurer**

- In addition to his report, Ted's working on some communication with the congregation about the budget

- **Committee Reports**

- Education - Greg raised the question of how someone walking by or passing by the church would know that we are a LGBTQ+ -friendly church. Vestry members discussed this.
- Youth and Family - Erica reported on the Youth Education hour, noting that it is getting off the ground and several adults have agreed to participate.
- Evangelism - Eric reported that he's working on some communication topics and on ways to let people know how to become members.

Vestry Meeting Summary 12/9/24

New Business

- Call Committee Letter – Kat Campbell Johnson, Chair of the Cantor Call Committee
 - Kat presented 3 documents that the Call Committee had prepared
 - Position Description
 - Cover Letter to the Vestry
 - Congregation Profile – used to inform candidates about Mount Olive
 - Kat discussed these documents in depth and responded to questions.
 - Two changes in the wording were suggested and agreed upon
 - Vestry members expressed appreciation and gratitude for the ongoing high quality of work being done by the Call Committee.
- Budget Update
 - Small budget adjustments were discussed and agreed upon in the staff salaries for 2025. These changes came from new information from Synod guidelines. The overall staff salary budget amount for 2025 remains the same.

Staff Reports

- Vicar's Report
 - Vicar Wussler reported that her recent Bible Study has finished and she continues making visits and preaching.

Committee Reports

- Property – Carol Martinson
 - The slate roof needs repairs
 - Another needed outside repair – damage to a stained glass window and nearby brick from water leaking from southwest downspout/gutter on the highest roof.
 - In 2025, \$20,000-25,000 will be requested from Foundation funds to cover the costs of these repairs.
 - A Space Review summary report has been completed and a draft reviewed by the Vestry.
 - Matt McCuen has been approved to join the Property Committee.
- Evangelism – Eric Manuel
 - Names of potential member are being collected, with two currently.
 - There's consideration of way to share information about the Mount Olive Christmas and Epiphany season, as well as other special liturgies and events with prospective members.
- Global Ministry – Lisa Ruff
 - An upcoming highlight is the Taste of Chile on Feb. 23, 2025
- Worship – Andrew Stoebig
 - Progress report on the renovation of the north sacristy, nearing completion
 - \$800 from the Mount Olive Foundation funds will be allocated to cover the remaining costs of the renovation.
- Youth and Family – Erica Johnsen-Buss
 - Youth Conversation hour is taking place, meeting on the same days as Godly Play
 - A cookie decorating event will take place again this year

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

Phone: 612/827-5919

On the Web: mountolivechurch.org

Staff

Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*

Interim Organist – *Robert Farlee*

Interim Choir Director – *Andrew Stoebig*

Vicar – *Natalie Wussler*

Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry –
Jim Bargmann

Sexton – *Jose Morocho*

*Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ
congregation.*

In This Issue

- **Accent on Worship – Vicar Natalie Wussler**
- **November/December Vestry Meeting Notes**
- **Harpsichordist Jacques Ogg in Concert at Mount Olive
This Saturday, January 11, 3 pm**
- **Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: Our
Saviour's Community Services**
- **Sign up for Altar Flowers**