



The Olive Branch

February 12, 2025

Accent on Worship *Pastor Joseph Crippen*

Sunday Readings

February 16, 2025

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Lect. 6, year C

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalm 1

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Luke 6:17-26

February 23, 2025

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Lect. 7, year C

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Palm 37:1-11, 39-40

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Luke 6:27-38

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

The Light of Christ (thanks be to God!)

Our Epiphany worship has been filled with images of Christ's light since January 6. Reading after reading, prayer after prayer, hymn after hymn, this is grace beyond telling, because this world feels very much in the shadows of evil these days. The endless barrage of edicts that are pouring out of Washington and causing harm to countless people everywhere, the near certainty of bleaker and bleaker times ahead, casts a pall over everything. The list of people threatened goes on and on, whether they're faithful government workers instantly let go, immigrants working and living here under the shadow of fear, or LGBTQ folks in our midst and in our world facing dire possible realities. We deeply need Christ's light, the world deeply needs Christ's light.

As gray February stretches out ahead, and all these shadows grow stronger, I pray that the light of Christ that is so prevalent in our worship these days is something you can recall to your mind and heart every day. That you can find a moment to stop and recall Christ's light and so brighten your moment before you have to move on. That in quiet you might remember the light of God's Word we have heard, the light that breaks through our songs to God, the light in each other's eyes as we greet one another before and after our worship, and at the sharing of Christ's peace.

The light of Christ shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overtake it. And you and I have been made to be light to this frightened world, in Christ's name. Let's listen to the Spirit together to see what that will mean, and in the meantime, let your light so shine.

Our Life Together: Opportunities to Gather

These last few weeks have been difficult for many of us, as we watch events unfold on the national front. One “antidote” to the anxiety and frustration that we feel is to spend time together, both gathered around Word and Sacrament in the sanctuary, and in fun and engaging activities outside worship. Expect to see opportunities for gathering in the coming months. If you have ideas for being together, let Lora know at conglife@mountolivechurch.org

Upcoming events:

Movie Night: Friday, February 21, 7 p.m. Popcorn and beverages provided. No charge, but a free will offering will be accepted to cover the licensing cost. Title TBD.

All Church Picnic: Sunday, July 27, following worship.

Homeless Day on the Hill: Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Please join Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry Jim Bargmann at Homeless Day on the Hill, an annual event to raise awareness and work for legislative solutions to homelessness and the full continuum of housing at the Capitol.

Each year, Mount Olive and our partners gather for a rally at Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Saint Paul and then walk to the Capitol for a day of meeting with lawmakers to advocate for our housing related priorities. Registrants will be assigned groups for meeting with lawmakers based on their home legislative districts - so you have the opportunity to meet with your elected leaders in small groups of like-minded individuals who live near you.

The day starts at 9:00 am and ends after your last scheduled lawmaker visit. In past years, that has been around 2:00 pm.

Please contact Jim if you have any questions or to let him know if you plan to attend, Use this link to register: <https://tinyurl.com/2re5rjrn> .

Second Quarter Servant Schedule

The Servant Schedule for **2025 Quarter 2 (April - June, including Holy Week)** will be published in March. Please send any scheduling preferences or dates you will be unavailable to me **by Friday, February 21.**

Please let me know any questions you have.

Thank you.

- Greg Murphy

gregRmurphy@gmail.com

The Olive Branch

Calendar

Wednesday, February 12

- 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

Thursday, February 13

- 9:30 am *Morning Prayer*
5:00 pm Cantor Call Committee Interviews
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, February 14

- 7:00 pm Recovery Group

Saturday, February 15

- 10:00 am Cantor Call Committee Interviews
3:00 pm Early Music Minnesota Chamber Music concert

Sunday, February 16 - Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

- 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, February 17

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

Tuesday, February 18

- Noon Bible Study
6:00 pm Neighborhood Ministries Committee meeting
6:00 pm Feminine Divine Study Group

Wednesday, February 19

- 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

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

The February 8 selection, *To The Bright Edge of the World* by Eowyn Ivey, will take the discussion to Alaska. In March we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the publication of Minnesota author Kate DiCamillo's award winning young reader's book, *Because of Winn-Dixie*.

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](#).

Mount Olive Family Music meets in-person

Mount Olive Family Music, our music and faith experience for children from birth through Kindergarten with a caregiver, usually meets on Mondays over Zoom. We sing, pray, dance, and play from the comforts of home, no need to get bundled up and in a car seat for this musical experience. The caregiver-child bond grows through musical connection in a faithful context, with the hope that music and prayers shared will become part of home life.

On Sunday, February 23 from 9:45-10:30 Family Music participants ages birth-35 months are welcome to an in-person session in the Godly Play 3 room on the lower level. We will enjoy familiar songs and activities with the novelty of friends and teacher Mari in person! Children and families new to Mount Olive Family Music are very welcome to join us. We will happily sing, "God loves you!" with you and to you.

Fact checking recent attacks on Lutheran service agencies

On Sunday, February 2, the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Elon Musk, referenced a social media post accusing Lutheran aid organizations of "money laundering." Musk also asserted that "the DOGE team is rapidly shutting down these illegal payments." There is no basis for this accusation of money laundering. The use of federal funds granted to these Lutheran social services is not illegal. Lutheran organizations help resettle refugees here legally so they can start a new life, get jobs, and pay taxes.

Here are three critical ministries we're a part of as the ELCA:

- Global Refuge (formally Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, www.globalrefuge.org) works with people from across the globe as they make a new home in the United States, upholding a legacy of compassion and grace for people in crisis.
- Lutheran Services in America (www.lutheranservices.org) helps to fund services for people with developmental and physical disabilities so they can go to day centers and connect with others. They provide help for people who want to adopt a child and assist those who need mental health support.
- Lutheran Social Service of MN (LSS, www.lssmn.org) Beginning 160 years ago, LSS has advocated for our neighbors – children, people with disabilities and older adults – to ensure they have the opportunity to live and work in community. LSS serves to empower families and communities by recognizing and honoring the strengths and gifts of every individual.

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton stated in a video message to the ELCA at <http://www.elca.org> that "despite misinformation and baseless doubt cast today on funding that supports Lutheran organizations across our country, the ELCA remains steadfast in our commitment and work with our many Lutheran partners and expressions of our church."

These ministries live out the good news made known in Jesus by welcoming the stranger, uplifting the vulnerable, and building communities of compassion and hope. Mount Olive has long supported their work and will continue to do so and invites all members to support them as well.

February Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: *Walk-In Counseling Center*

Walk-In Counseling Center provides “free, easily accessible mental health counseling to people with urgent needs and few service options.” Counselors work with people struggling with depression, anxiety, chemical dependency, domestic violence, and many other emotional and interpersonal concerns.

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 the work of Walk-In Counseling Center, please visit their website at <https://www.walkin.org>.

Upcoming Adult Forums

February 16: A panel discussion by those members of Mount Olive who attended the recent Immigration Raid Response training.

February 23: Taste of Chile; Karen Anderson will lead our forum about the work of EPES.

March 2 and 9: “Care in Community in an Era of Cruelty” presented by Rev. Cody Sanders “Community” and “justice” are intimately connected in ways we often don't recognize. From the former Surgeon General's health warnings about "our epidemic of loneliness and isolation," to Hannah Arendt's naming of "organized loneliness" as a contributing factor in the rise of totalitarianism, to abolitionist geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore's notion of “organized abandonment” taking place through the systematic dismantling of structures our communities rely on, to biologist E.O. Wilson's naming of our age the Eremocene (“age of loneliness”) as humans are becoming a lonely species on a planet once lush and vibrant with many species rapidly going extinct.

Loneliness causes harm on individual, communal, political, and ecological scales, causing injuries that have adverse effects on the health of both humans and the wider web of life. In these forums, we will address these concerns of harm alongside the ways that relational and communal practices can increase health and the potential for healing on multiple levels of belonging: to God, to one another in human community, and to the larger ecological web of life.

Godly Play

This Sunday, Circle 1 will hear about the Parable of the Mustard Seed, and Circle 2 will learn about the Parable of the Sower.

Parents should feel free to take the "At Home" sheets in the Godly Play pockets on the bulletin board to help extend your wondering at home.

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



Taste of Chile: February 23



Come to the Taste of Chile on February 23. We will learn more about [Educación Popular En Salud](#) (EPES) based in Chile and its North American Counterpart, [Action for Health in the Americas](#) (AHA). They support sustainable, community-based public health initiatives that promote the dignity and rights of the poor in Chile. Karen Anderson, a recently retired ELCA missionary who worked with EPES, will present our adult forum.

After the second liturgy, we will gather for a meal of delicious Chilean food, including empanadas, a chicken and corn casserole, and yummy cookies called alfajores.



Translation: Health is a right and not a privilege; Fighting for health and dignified life for all.

Cantor Call Committee Update - Interview Phase

The application process was started on December 15, 2024, and ended on January 31, 2025. We received over 25 applications, with a wide range of musical interests and backgrounds, with a couple of years of experience to over 60 years of experience.

The Committee reviewed each application thoroughly, and because of digital technology, we were able to not only read resumes, cover letters, and recommendations, but additionally preview candidate videos and livestream links that were submitted along with the application materials. It was truly wonderful to experience the breadth and talent level of the applicants.

Given our careful review of each applicant by all committee members and the need to call a Cantor who can lead us in worship “from the bench,” we have narrowed down the selection to 4 qualified and talented candidates to conduct interviews with between now and February 20, 2025.

We are in the process of communicating with the applicants who were not selected to proceed. We will continue to update the congregation regularly as we proceed into this next phase. Feel free to contact anyone on the Call Committee with any questions. We appreciate and receive your prayers and feedback.

Respectfully submitted,

Cantor Call Committee

Kat Campbell Johnson, chair

Larry Duncan

Robert Farlee

Peggy Hoeft, recorder

Gene Janssen

Bekah Schulz

Tricia Van Ee Molbert

Vestry President Cynthia Prosek, ex-officio

Pastor Joseph Crippen, ex-officio

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

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*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.*

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