

The Olive Branch

February 26, 2025



Accent on Worship

Jim Bargmann

Holy God, mighty and immortal, you are beyond our knowing, yet we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Transform us into the likeness of your Son, who renewed our humanity so that we may share in his divinity, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- Prayer of the Day, Transfiguration of Our Lord, Year C

Sunday Readings

March 2, 2025

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Exodus 34:29-35

Psalm 99

2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2

Luke 9:28-43a

March 9, 2025

First Sunday in Lent, year C

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Romans 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-13

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

Reflecting on years and years of teaching and writing about the texts for the Sunday celebrating the Transfiguration of Our Lord has caused me to realize that I have gotten stuck. Time and time again, I have found myself fascinated by the reaction of Peter, James, and John to witnessing the metamorphosis taking place before their eyes and the appearance of Moses and Elijah. Have these lessons and writings led to new understandings and insights? I certainly hope so. Has the Holy Spirit led me to new learnings? Without a doubt. But stuck I still remain. Is there more to say on the reactions of these witnesses in wanting to remain in a literal and figurative high place? Perhaps. But not this time. I am thankful the Spirit led me to the prayer of the day for this festival.

While not Scripture itself, but certainly based on Scripture, this prayer offers some powerful thoughts in its two-sentence briefness.

First, the mystery of God and God's actions is named. God, you are beyond our knowing. God, in their very God-ness, is unknowable by us as humans. God's thinking, reasoning, acting or not acting, is often a mystery to us unless God themselves chooses to reveal those things to us. We can hypothesize all day long about the reason God chose to transfigure Jesus before a select group of followers, why God chose to bring back Moses and Elijah to join the witnesses, and why God

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Accent on Worship, *continued from page 1*

would choose to speak the words they did at this moment. And many of those insights have been Spirit led. But the reality is we do not know. God has chosen not to tell us explicitly about the meaning or purpose of these events. And there, perhaps, we have a first insight. It often remains a mystery to us why God chooses to act in the ways they do or seemingly chooses to not act. But we also trust in the omniscience and love of God, however confusing the action or inaction might be.

Second, we are reminded that in Jesus, we see the glory of God. I wrote a whole Accent on Worship about the glory of God revealed in Jesus just before Christmas, so I won't go into that at length here, but as I see it, the glory of God in Jesus is not seen in the ways often associated with glory, but rather in the loving actions of Jesus - the teaching, the healing, the care, the service, and yes, the sacrifice. Perhaps here in the transfiguration is the exception. Through the witness of Peter, James, and John, we see God's glory in a more glorious way through Jesus.

Third, and perhaps the line that caught my attention the most: "Transform us into the likeness of your Son, who renewed our humanity so that we may share in his divinity..."

We pray together that WE may be transformed, transfigured, metamorphosed, into the likeness of Jesus - that the glory of God seen in Jesus may be seen in us. What does that look like? Just the same - we can be about the work of Jesus in our lives - the teaching, the healing, the care, the service, and yes, the sacrifice. And just like Jesus, our renewed humanity - our gifts, our talents, our abilities, our very bodies used by God, and the reality of God's own divinity dwelling in us by the Spirit, lead to the glory of God being made known in the world.

- Jim Bargmann

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

The Youth and Family Committee would like to invite you to a Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday, March 4, from 5:30-7:00, in the Mount Olive Undercroft.

We will invite kids to help prepare and serve pancakes and will also have a variety of games and activity options available.

Following the Pancake Supper, we will gather to burn the palm branches from last year's Passion Sunday, to create the ashes for Ash Wednesday services the following day.

Hope to see you there!

The Olive Branch

Calendar

Wednesday, February 26

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

Thursday, February 27

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

Friday, February 28

- 7:00 pm Recovery Group

Sunday, March 2 - Transfiguration 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, March 3

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

Tuesday, March 4

- Noon Bible Study
5:30 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Wednesday, March 5 - Ash Wednesday

- 9:00 am Staff meeting
Noon Ash Wednesday Eucharist
5:30 pm Children's Choirs supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
7:00 pm *Ash Wednesday Eucharist*

Mount Olive Card Club?

Do you play 500 or Cribbage? Would you like to learn? We're gauging the interest in forming a card-playing group to meet at Mount Olive. To indicate your interest, please follow the link below, or call Paul Nixdorf at 612/296-0055. Please indicate your preferred days and times to gather for cards. <https://tinyurl.com/2nrhfmz6> .

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.

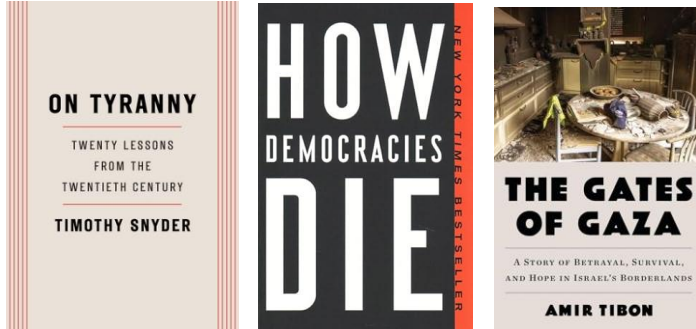
The link for the Tuesday noon Bible study will be the same every week. To join from your computer, tablet, or smartphone, [click here](#).

Book Discussion

On March 8, the group will discuss *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo in celebration of the 25th anniversary of this Minnesota author's award winning. In April, the discussion will travel to Nigeria to consider *Under the Udala Trees* by Chinelo Okparanta.

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](#).

New or Notable books in the Louise Schroedel Memorial Library



On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century, by Timothy Snyder (Crown, 2017, and other editions)

How Democracies Die, by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt (Penguin, 2019)

The Gates of Gaza: A Story of Betrayal, Survival, and Hope in Israel's Borderlands, by Amir Tibon (Little, Brown, 2024)

Those first two titles were published a few years ago, but many readers would argue that U.S. and global events in the intervening years have only made their messages more urgent. Snyder, a history professor at Yale, addresses “America’s turn toward authoritarianism.” The twenty chapters in his short (126 pages) book are instructions for resisting the rise of tyranny, with titles like “Defend institutions,” “Believe in truth,” “Investigate,” and “Be calm when the unthinkable arrives.”

Levitsky and Ziblatt are political scientists at Harvard. They’ve studied how democracies around the world have been weakened or died – and they observe that in our time democracies die “less at the hand of men with guns and more by elected leaders.”

On October 7, 2023, Amor Tibon, his wife, and their two young daughters, living in a kibbutz about a mile from Gaza, awoke to mortar fire and sheltered in their windowless safe room for about ten hours as Hamas fighters surged through their neighborhood – until they were rescued by Tibon’s father, a retired Israeli general. Amor Tibon is a respected international correspondent for the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. You won’t soon forget his account of his family’s experience that day. Tibon, no friend of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, also puts the historical and present Israel-Palestinian conflict in a broader context – so don’t stop reading when the family attack is over and the family is safe.

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

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.

Bring Out Your Dead Palms! Last Chance Until Next Year

Do you have palm branches at home left over from last year's Passion Sunday services?

If so, bring them to church by this Sunday, March 2, and place them in the basket in the narthex. These ashes will be burned on Shrove Tuesday for use in our Ash Wednesday services.

Godly Play Themes for This Week

Many thanks to Ms. Patsy for helping us make bread! This coming week Circle One will consider the Parable of the Prodigal Son while Circle Two will look at how the parables fit together, Parable Synthesis. And remember that next Tuesday is the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Lent begins next Wednesday with services at both noon and 7:00 p.m.



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

Needed: Winter Coats and Gloves

We are in need of coats and gloves! While Mount Olive does not operate a full-scale clothing ministry, we often encounter neighbors without proper winter wear. We have a really great supply of hand-made hats and scarves (thank you to those who have made those for us!). But we are running low on coats and gloves. In particular, we are in need of both in men's sizes, in particular, large and extra-large, but can use any donations - even children's sizes. If you have any such items that are still in good condition but you have replaced, please consider bringing them to Mount Olive for us to give out. All winter wear donations can be left in the coat closet on the upper level on the marked coat rack. Thank you in advance.

Love One Another: A day of Music for Children and Youth Choirs

Members of Mount Olive's Children and Youth Choirs will join singers from around the Twin Cities for a day of singing, playing Orff instruments, and making new friends on Saturday, March 15 (most of Mount Olive's young singers are participating!). Jennaya Robison, artistic director of the National Lutheran Choir, will conduct the festival Youth Choir and Mari Espeland will conduct the festival Children's Choir. Our own Rebekah Schulz will present a session to choir directors in attendance on supporting neurodivergent learners in your church choir. Sara Lukkasson, music educator at The Blake School, will present Orff sessions for both choir directors and children's choir members.



All are welcome to the culminating Hymn Festival at 2:00 pm, Saturday, March 15 at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, 511 Groveland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403. We hope to see you there.

Taste of Chile

On Sunday, Feb. 23, we learned about the amazing work of our supported ministry in Chile, [Educación Popular En Salud](#) (EPES). If you didn't hear Karen Anderson's presentation at the Adult Forum, please watch the recording when it's available on our [YouTube channel](#). If you would like to add to the Global Ministry Committee's donation to EPES from the event, you can do that [here](#).

We enjoyed wonderful Chilean food. **Thank you to all who prepared a recipe!** These are the [recipes](#) we used. There are some unclaimed, washed dishes on a table in the undercroft.

Gretchen and Kat Campbell-Johnson
Sue Browender
John Bjork
David Engen and Greg Murphy
Linda Hafemeister
Elaine and Art Halbardier
Carolyn and George Heider
Patsy and John Holtmeier
Dan and Emily Hellerich
Steve Griffin
Peg Hoeft
Joyce and Merwyn Larson
Adam Krueger and Thomas Fenner
Wes Huisinga
Madonna and Mike Knudsen
Tim Pipkorn and Samantha Lucas

Lora and Allen Dundek
Beth Gaede and Bob Christenson
Matt and Consuelo Crosby
Mary Crippen
Keith Bartz
Allen Heggen
Jon Seiss and Candy Husemoller
Susan Snow
Mark Spitzack
Elizabeth Spang and Walter Still
Peter Tressel and Randy Werner
Ted and Amy Thompson and kids
Tricia Van Ee and Chandler
Molbert
Ellen and Eric Kormanik
Hannah and Brent Rivard
Elisabeth and James Regan

And thanks to all the helpers!

Mary Crippen
Margaret Gohman
Mark Ruff
Linda Pipkorn
Bonnie McLellan
Louise Lystig-Fritchie
Elizabeth Spang
Carol Austermann
Margaret Bostelmann

Global Ministry committee members:

Allen Heggen, Brad Holt, Connie Marty, Donn McLellan,
Judy Hinck, Lisa Ruff, Mark Pipkorn



Karen Anderson, former ELCA missionary to Chile, was our speaker for Taste of Chile.

Vestry Meeting Summary 2/10/25

New Business

- Nominating committee - Vestry approved the members of this committee: Chandler Molbert, Cynthia Prosek, Lora Dundek, Judy Hinck, and Pastor Crippen
- Audit committee (annual work) Two members will be asked to serve on this committee
- Synod Assembly on May 2 and 3
 - Erica Johnsen-Buss and Greg Murphy from Vestry will attend, in addition to Pastor Crippen and Vicar Wussler
- Information from Faith Lutheran Church of Duluth - Response to political realities and Lutheran service organizations, with resources. Pastor will share this in *The Olive Branch*.
- Immigration Response - working on this
- Discussion about possible regular sharing of information about Synod responses to current political concerns
- Discussion about the proposal for Vestry reorganization, Vestry passed the proposal
- Determined next congregational meeting to be on April 27 after the second liturgy, the Sunday after Easter

Staff Reports

- Pastor - serving as chair of Reference and Counsel for the Synod Assembly
- Cantor - looking forward to coming paschal cycle

Committee Reports

- Neighborhood Ministry - looking for a balance between responding to current challenges and also the big picture of issues.
- Finance - hoping to work on some debt pay off
- Congregational life - Girl scout cookies will be sold by Mount Olive Girl Scouts on February 21.
- Education -an education committee was held with all the various education programs represented.
 - Adult Education upcoming speakers:
 - forum coming about restructuring of vestry committee, on March 16
 - Karen from Chile, speaking on Sunday, February 23
 - Cody Sanders will be speaking for two Sundays on "Community in a Time of Cruelty"
 - There's a display in library featuring Mount Olive's current and past vicars
 - There's been an increase in library donations
- Evangelism - new members joining on March 16
 - streaming seems to be helpful
- Global Ministry - Taste of Chile will be held on February 23
- Property
 - Need to get an inspection of the slate roof and also discuss landscaping issues
 - The city will be redoing 31st St. from Nicolett Ave. to Bloomington Ave. in the next 2 - 3 years
 - The city has repaired the major water leak by the church parking lot entrance
- Youth and Family
 - Need for more adults to volunteer to lead the youth group discussion during the education hour on Sundays
 - There will be discussions with the youth about volunteer opportunities for them

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.*

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