The Olive Branch

March 18, 2026

Sunday Readings

March 22, 2026
Fifth Sunday in Lent, year A
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45

March 29, 2026
Sunday of the Passion, year A
Isaiah 50:4-9
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 26:14—27:66

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

Accent on Worship

Pastor Joseph Crippen

So you may have life in Christ's name

In John's Gospel, the Evangelist gives the reader richly fleshed out stories, characters with depth and complexity, and in all of them John asks us: can you see Jesus as these people did? We've been having these encounters all Lent: Nicodemus (Lent 2), the woman at the well (Lent 3), the man born blind (Lent 4), and now this week we meet and walk with the siblings from Bethany facing the reality of death.

John's hope seems clear from his words in chapter 20:30-31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to trust that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through trusting you may have life in his name."

"These are written," these stories told, these people introduced to you and me, in the hope that you and I might come to trust in Jesus as God's Christ and find life in Jesus' name. When you imagine yourself as Nicodemus, or Photine (the traditional name of the Samaritan woman), or the blind man, or the Bethany family, by looking at Jesus through their eyes, or even the eyes of others in the stories, what do you see? Who do you come to trust Jesus really is? Might you come to find the life that all of these people eventually find, the abundant life in God's love Jesus came to give?

That's John's hope. Come, see for yourself, and find this life, too.

In Jesus' name,

Easter Garden

As the Three Days and Easter approach, it's time to think flowers again! Over-and-above giving in support of the Easter Garden helps make this beauty possible. As you are able, consider making a special gift toward it.

Gifts can be placed in the offering plate or brought directly to the office. Be sure to mark your check or envelope as Easter Garden.

Holy Week, Triduum, and Easter at Mount Olive

Monday-Wednesday, March 30-April 1: Monday-Wednesday in Holy Week
+ Daily Prayer at Noon, in the side chapel of the nave, near the columbarium

Thursday, April 2: Maundy Thursday
+ Holy Eucharist, Noon
+ Holy Eucharist, with Washing of Feet, 7:00 pm

Friday, April 3: Good Friday
+ Stations of the Cross, Noon
+ Adoration of the Cross, 7 pm

Saturday, April 4: Holy Saturday
+ The Easter Vigil, 8:30 pm, followed by a festive reception

Sunday, April 5: The Resurrection of Our Lord/Easter Day
Easter Carry-In Brunch, 9:00 am
+ **ONE** Festival Holy Eucharist at 10 am (note change in Sunday schedule!)

Calendar

Wednesday, March 18
9:00 am Staff meeting
Noon ***Midweek Lenten Eucharist,*** followed by Soup Lunch
5:30 pm Children's Choir supper
6:00 pm Children's Choir rehearsals
6:00 pm Soup Supper
7:00 pm ***Midweek Lenten Vespers***
7:30 pm Cantorei rehearsal

Thursday, March 19
9:30 am ***Morning Prayer***
7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous

Friday, March 20
7:00 pm Recovery group

Saturday, March 21
9:30 am Foundation Board meeting

Sunday, March 22 – Fifth Sunday in Lent, year A
8:00 am ***Holy Eucharist,*** followed coffee and conversation
9:30 pm Godly Play/Youth Discussion/Adult Forum
10:45 am ***Holy Eucharist,*** followed coffee and conversation
12:30 pm Justice Committee meeting

Monday, March 23
5:30 p.m. Family Music Time (online only)
7:00 pm Monday Night WAVE (N.A.)

Tuesday, March 24
Noon Bible Study

Midweek Lenten Worship

Wednesdays in Lent

Holy Eucharist at Noon,
followed by Soup Luncheon

Vespers at 7:00 pm,
preceded by Soup Supper at 6 pm

All are welcome.

Tuesday Noon Bible Study Link

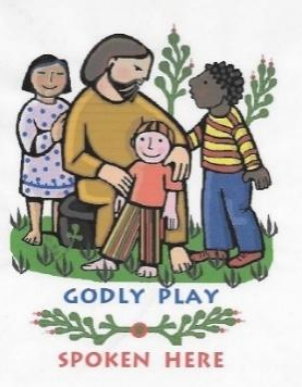
The Tuesday Noon Bible Study meets weekly in person in the East Assembly Room. For those who are unable to come in person, the Bible Study is held over Zoom as well.

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 14, the group will revisit a favorite author, reading *Hotel New Hampshire* by John Irving. Then on April 11, we will get a chance to look at *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Bighorn* by James Donovan, a compelling nonfiction book.

Everyone is invited to join whenever you are able, at 10 a.m. in the Library, usually on the second Saturday of each 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.**



Godly Play This Week

As we move through Lent, this Sunday Godly Play 1 children will hear about the Jesus the King, while Godly Play 2 will learn more about Jesus' Ministry in Judea.

On Wednesdays during Lent, following the children's choir rehearsals, families are invited to join the Lenten Evening Prayer at 7:00 pm.

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

March Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month:

Sabathani Community Center and Community Emergency Services

In March, we highlight two of our partners that work on issues of food insecurity in our south Minneapolis community as a part of the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, a state-wide initiative intended to bring together "organizations, businesses, faith communities, and individuals" to raise awareness about the issue of food insecurity and support for local food programs.

"Sabathani Community Center is one of Minnesota's oldest African American-founded nonprofits... [and] helps equip approximately 32,000 South Minneapolis residents annually" through their food shelf, clothes closet, seniors' programs, workforce initiatives, support for school- age children, and more.

Community Emergency Service, or CES, works to alleviate hunger and food insecurity through an on-site food shelf, food delivery programs, a partnership with Meals on Wheels, and its unique Ani-Meals program, providing food for pets and service animals.

Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month through a yearly contribution from our budget. On top of those financial 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.

In addition, we will be collecting donations of non-perishable food items in the cart located in the West Assembly to be divided between our two food shelf partners. However, for those who are able, we strongly encourage monetary donations. Because our food shelf partners have access discounts and bulk purchase opportunities not available to regular consumers, monetary donations allow our partners to purchase much more food than if we were to purchase the same food through a retail store.

For more information about the work of the Sabathani Community Center, please visit their website at sabathani.org. For more information about CES, please visit cesmn.org .

Soup Maker Needed for One More Lenten Soup Meal

There is one opening left to sign up to cook and serve a pot of soup for Wednesdays in Lent. **March 25 at Noon** is still unsubscribed. We will need soup and bread for approximately 20-25 people.

A sign-up sheet is posted next to the coffee serving counter in the East Assembly Room, take a moment to sign up!

Sunday's Adult Forum: March 22

"***Singing Resistance Twin Cities" -*** Liz Digitale Anderson and other leaders from the now well-known Singing Resistance Twin Cities will lead us in a conversation and answer questions about The Singing Resistance and their work.

Come learn from some of the leaders of the Singing Resistance about the foundations of this nonviolent mass movement (and yes, we will sing together!)

National Lutheran Choir - Sacred Refuge: from Light to Light

This Sunday, March 22, 4:00 pm
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN

As we transition from the stillness of winter into the promise of spring, we are invited to seek refuge in song—a sacred space where the soul finds its voice and a place to belong. Opening with movements from Fanny Hensel's *Lobgesang* and Shavon Lloyd's *So Breaks the Sun*, the program traces the arc from winter's stillness to spring's awakening.

Works by Jake Runestad, *Under This Tree* and *Nada te Turbe*, offer reassurance and belonging. At the heart of the program is Aaron McDermid's *From Light to Light*, commissioned by the National Lutheran Choir in 2008, with texts by Susan Palo Cherwien that invite us into stillness and the heartbeat of God.

Buy tickets here

Way of the Cross

With the return of Lent comes the return of the Way of the Cross. As we began last year, visual representations of the nine Stations of the Cross we observe on Good Friday will surround the assembly in the nave this season. Some pieces are new, others will be familiar from last year. As you have time, take a few moments to ponder each work. Does it inspire consonance or dissonance in you? Why might that be? How might God be speaking in you through this artwork and your reactions to it?

Easter Carry-In Brunch

Bring your favorite brunch dish to the Easter Carry-In Brunch!

The Brunch will be on Easter Day, April 5, beginning at 9:00 am.

Following the Brunch, we will celebrate a single Eucharist that day, at 10:00 am.

Why do we pledge to Mount Olive?

David Engen & Greg Murphy

Throughout our lives, we have both been involved with several churches, and while each congregation had unique characteristics that made it stand out, Mount Olive has inspired us unlike any of the others. Most importantly for us, Mount Olive acts. Throughout the congregation, we see active ministries working in our church community and the greater community surrounding us. We see people welcomed enthusiastically, and who feel they belong. We see people helped with the most basic of needs. We hear the gospel preached with fervor. We are steeped in grace through the music and worship unique to our congregation. We hear the message of God's unconditional love in both the obvious and the subtle. In this environment, financial support feels more like an opportunity than a requirement, as we can see how these funds are put to good use.

And though we understand the importance of financial contributions, sharing our time and abilities has also led to a stronger relationship with the congregation. After the COVID period ended, and we realized how much we had missed the community aspect of Mount Olive during lockdown, we made a conscious decision to find ways to get more involved beyond attending services and congregational meetings. While the congregation shares a singular focus on serving Christ, we have found that this involvement may look quite different for different people. Some have musical talents to share, or wish to serve during worship services, while others prefer helping with tasks behind the scenes, or working with children and families. All these activities can lead to stronger relationships with others in the congregation, which then adds a new level of depth and richness to the worship services.

At the risk of sounding cliché, we receive far more than we give to the ministries of Mount Olive. And we can see how members and visitors who find themselves in our congregation's embrace also benefit from Mount Olive's devotion to serving Christ by serving others, each of us in our own way.

Calling all Knitters and Crocheters!

If you like to knit or crochet, Mount Olive has an invitation for you! We've had a prayer shawl ministry for a long time, but we have a need for knitted or crocheted blankets/afghans. At the end of April, four kids and one adult will be baptized during the morning liturgy. We'd like to present all of them with a blanket to remind them of God's love for them.

The children's blankets should be a minimum of 36 x 48 inches, and hopefully even a bit larger. The adult blanket should be about 54 x 110. The children and the adult are all male. The people who know them recommend a mixture of darker colors.

If you feel able to make a blanket, please contact Lora at shared@mountolivechurch.org, or Cynthia at president@mountolivechurch.org. Thanks!

Major Faith Action Event on March 29

On the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday), March 29, 2026, Christians across the country will gather together in a "Christian public action and worship rooted in our gospel-centered values: caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and loving all of our neighbors. Together, we will renounce abusive power, cruelty and greed and proclaim a better way." (Quote is from the organizers.) Locally our action will be at the State Capitol Mall.

This Palm Sunday Faith Action in the Twin Cities is the flagship action of 25 other similar events planned across 14 states (**palmsunday2026.com**). From the organizers again, here is the emphasis of this worship and action event: "We will push back against authoritarianism and white Christian nationalism. Our democracy is at stake. For ourselves and the dignity of our neighbors, we are standing up and speaking out."

This event is led by our Black Christian siblings in our community and will be musically led by the Black Church Power Project congregations. The time together at the Capitol will include diverse and dynamic speakers from across denominations, Scripture, prayer, music, and children's activities.

A procession to the Capitol is planned, starting at three different churches, at 1:30 p.m., with the main event on the Mall scheduled for 2:30-4:30 p.m. All are encouraged to bring palms from the morning, and signs if you wish (but there are instructions about making them appropriate for a Christian faith action). If you wish to meet at the Capitol at 2:30 instead of processing, that's fine, too.

It would be wonderful to have a large Mount Olive contingent present. As an incentive, our siblings to the north, Our Saviour's, are trying for 100% of the congregation coming - a worthy goal!

The organizers would like to have anyone attending register. There are links to that and other social media suggestions, along with full information about the timeline, where to gather for procession, what kinds of signs are encouraged, and so on, in the TWIG sent out next week, or you can also link to it through the national website.

Church Offering Envelopes Update

We have kept everyone who "opted in" for offering envelopes on that mailing list, but we've changed it up just a little, at least for now.

We decided to keep everyone on that list who has used their offering envelopes on a regular or at least semi-regular basis in recent months. This mailing list can be updated at any time, so if you received envelopes with the next mailing and REALLY don't want to get them in the mail, drop an email or call the church office and we will pull you off that (now much smaller) list. Alternatively, if you are not on the list or have changed your mind and think that offering envelopes might be helpful for you, we can add you back to that list at any time – just let us know.

Second Annual Mount Olive Fish Fry Pilgrimage

Back by popular demand, Mount Olive's Second Annual Lenten Fish Fry Pilgrimage schedule is listed below. Check each host church's website for discount pricing, payment options, and other events on offer. Mount Olive folks typically arrive between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. each week. Come join the fishy fun!

Fryday, March 20: Church of St. Peter, 1405 Sibley Memorial Hwy., Mendota, Freewill donation, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Fryday, March 27: Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church 5426 12th Ave. S., Minneapolis, $20, 5:00-7:00 p.m. OLP was last year's overall favorite, so don't miss it!

Mount Olive Lutheran Church
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A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Sunday Eucharists: 8 & 10:45 am

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Pastor – *Joseph Crippen*
Cantor – *Daniel Schwandt*
Vicar – *Erik Nelson*
Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry – *Jim Bargmann*
Administrative Assistant – *Cha Posz*

Mount Olive is a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

In This Issue:

- **Accent on Worship – Pastor Joseph Crippen**
- **One Opening Left for Lenten Lunches – Sign Up!**
- **Holy Week Service Schedule**
- **Major Faith Action Event: March 29**
- **This Week's Adult Forum: Singing Resistance Twin Cities**
- **Neighborhood Ministry Partner of the Month: MN FoodShare**
- **Attention Yarnworkers – Blankets/Afghans Needed!**