The Olive Branch

July 31, 2026

Sunday Readings

August 2, 2026
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 18 A
Isaiah 55:1-5
Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

August 9, 2026
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 19 A
1 Kings 19:9-18
Psalm 85:8-13
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-23

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

Accent on Worship

Vicar Erik Nelson

On Wednesday, July 29, our church remembers Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany, Jesus' dear friends. The siblings get their greatest highlight in the Bible in the 11th and 12th chapters of the Gospel of John.

Lazarus becomes ill and dies, and when Jesus arrives four days later, Martha comes to him and says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." In these words, I hear Martha's faith, and I also hear her anger. After Martha sends Mary out to see Jesus, Mary says the same thing to him. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Mary's words came with painful grief. Jesus' humanity is shown in this incident as he joins the crowd in weeping for the death of Lazarus. This story shows us Jesus' compassion and care for us. It reminds us that when we feel the pain of death and loss, it's okay to cry and grieve. Our faith is not deficient. Even though the sisters know that Jesus can help them, even though Jesus knows he's going to raise Lazarus from the dead, their hearts are moved, and they share their grief.

After Lazarus is raised from the dead, many people come to believe in Jesus. This puts a target on his back, and the religious leaders plotted to kill him with Jesus. There are many legends about the rest of the siblings' lives after their experiences with Jesus. Some say that they split up, traveling with various apostles around the world. My favorite legend says that they were put into a boat with no sail or oars, cast out into the sea to die, and God instead guided them to France, where Lazarus became the first Bishop of Marseille.

These siblings remind us how Jesus loves us, how Jesus cares for each and every one of us. He weeps when we weep. He desires to be close to us, just as he was close to his friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany.

Calendar

Friday, July 31
7:00 p.m. Recovery Group [Undercroft]
Sunday, August 2 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 18 A
10:00 a.m. ***Holy Eucharist,*** followed by coffee and conversation
11:30 a.m. Theological Discussion Group [Schroedel Library]
Monday, August 3
6:30 p.m. Recorder Group
7:00 p.m. Global Ministry Committee [Schroedel Library]
7:00 p.m. Monday Night WAVE (N.A.) [Undercroft]
Tuesday, August 4
10:00 a.m. Personnel Committee Meeting [Schroedel Library]
Wednesday, August 5
10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting [Schroedel Library]
12:00 p.m. Bible Study **(meets on Wed. in the summer)** [East Assembly]
Thursday, August 6
9:30 a.m. ***Morning Prayer*** [Columbarium]
7:00 p.m. Shared Ministry Committee [Schroedel Library]
7:00 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous [Undercroft]
Friday, August 7
7:00 p.m. Recovery Group [Undercroft]
Saturday, August 8
9:00 a.m. Gardening Day
10:00 a.m. Book Discussion Group [Schroedel Library]
Sunday, August 9 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 19 A
10:00 a.m. ***Holy Eucharist,*** followed by coffee and conversation
Monday, August 10
7:00 p.m. Monday Night WAVE (N.A.) [Undercroft]
Wednesday, August 12
8:00 a.m. St. John's Bible Tour bus departure
10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting [Schroedel Library]
12:00 p.m. Bible Study **(meets on Wed. in the summer)** [East Assembly]
1:00 p.m. Olive Branch submission deadline
5:30 p.m. St. John's Bible Tour bus return
Thursday, August 13
9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer [Columbarium]
7:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting [East Assembly]
7:00 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous [Undercroft]
Friday, July 31
Olive Branch Published
7:00 p.m. Recovery Group [Undercroft]

Wednesday Noon Bible Study Link

The Wednesday 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 Wednesday noon Bible study will be the same every week. To join from your computer, tablet, or smartphone, **click here.**

Book Discussion

On August 8 we will hear from Palestinian author Susan Abulhawa in her book ***Mornings in Jenin*** as she follows a family through the years in Palestine. Then as we move into the fall we will read ***Winter in the Blood*** by James Welch for our September 12 gathering. It is set at Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana. An October book has been chosen as well, ***Lost Horizon*** by James Hilton.

Everyone is invited to join whenever you are able, at 10:00 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.**

Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: Every Meal

Every Meal seeks to fight child hunger through community and school partnerships. Their primary focus is providing food when children are not in school and lacking the school supplied meals many depend upon. Through their Weekend Meal Program, children in Pre-K through 8th grade experiencing food insecurity receive weekend food bags directly and discreetly in their backpacks at approximately 375 schools across Minnesota. A team of volunteers from Mount Olive, coordinated by Jerry Duncan, deliver meals every other week to students at Sullivan STEAM, a magnet school of the Minneapolis Public School District.

For more information about Every Meal, please visit their website at www.everymeal.org.

Farewell to Vicar Nelson This Sunday

It's never easy to say goodbye, but once again we are reaching the end of a vicar's year with us. We have received grace and blessing from Vicar Nelson as he has shared ministry with us for this past year, and he concludes his year with us this Sunday, August 2. A reception will be given for Erik by the Vicar Committee following the liturgy on Sunday, and it will be an opportunity for us all to thank him for the blessing he has been among us this past year. We also send him off with our prayers for his first call steps. He will be a blessing to this church as a pastor!

Interment of Jerry Ostlund – August 6

Our brother Jerry Ostlund died this past May and his family did not want to have a funeral. However, I will be doing his interment at Fort Snelling on Thursday, August 6, at 12:30 p.m. Any who knew and loved Jerry are welcome to attend.

The interment is from Gate 3; enter Fort Snelling by the entrance marked for funerals. Fort Snelling very much runs on a tight schedule. When you arrive, drive to the numbered gate. All the cars line up in a row at that gate, and at the right time the cemetery escort drives us to the place of interment. If you are coming, please plan on arriving at least 15 minutes early.

Rest eternal grant our brother, O God, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

– Pr. Crippen

A New Voice Comes to Mount Olive

A Flentrop/Dobson organ will soon join the other instruments in the south transept. It is a one-manual, three-stop chamber organ patterned after instruments found in many northern European homes in the 17th and 18th centuries.

It was originally built for the chapel at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). In January of 1979, Mount Olive's then cantor, Paul Manz flew to Chicago to play the first Epiphany Vespers at Rockefeller Chapel, which raised money to purchase the organ from Flentrop Orgelbau of the Netherlands. The instrument was assembled and finished by then-seminarian Art and Elaine Halbardier.

The small organ accompanied daily worship until 1988, when Christ Seminary (Seminex) of Saint Louis merged with LSTC, bringing to Chicago faculty, students, and the Christ Seminary organ. This larger instrument was chosen for use in the chapel. The small Flentrop organ was loaned to a local congregation for several years but eventually was returned to the seminary. At some point, the instrument had been badly damaged while being moved and so was placed in storage in the seminary basement.

In 1996, Paul Manz, now faculty at LSTC, became aware of the extensive damage to the small organ. Paul contacted Art and Elaine with an offer to acquire the instrument, as resources were not present for its repair at the seminary.

Over several years, they did get the organ into reasonable playing condition again. A new, more elaborate case of cherry and walnut was constructed. It lived in their home until 2014 when they moved to a condo in the city.

Now lacking room for it, Art and Elaine gave the organ to Marc Levine and Tami Morse for their new Baroque Room performance space in Saint Paul. To prepare the instrument for use with professional ensembles, the Dobson Organ Company was engaged to do an extensive rebuild of it, replacing many damaged pipes, and revoicing the instrument. It was used extensively until the COVID-19 pandemic brought the ten-year series of Baroque Room concerts to an end.

Since the pandemic, the organ has stood silent in the Baroque Room. This spring, Tami, Marc, Art and Elaine offered the organ to Mount Olive as a gift. Volunteers from Mount Olive disassembled, packed, and moved the instrument. It will be reassembled in the south transept this summer and be ready by fall to support singing of choirs, soloists, and with instrumental groups.

Mount Olive Art Updates

"You are not required to finish the work, neither are you free to abandon it."

This Hebrew quote is the core of our newly commissioned artwork by the artist Aaron Silver. The new art piece is being framed and will be presented to Mount Olive on Sunday, August 16th during the coffee hour following our Liturgy.

We have a full bus scheduled to visit St John's University in Collegeville, MN on Wednesday, August 12. If you have signed up for this trip, please submit your $75 bus and lunch fee to the church office or give it to Paul Nixdorf. Make your check payable to Mount Olive Lutheran Church with "St John's Tour" noted on the memo line. Please do not put your check in the Sunday offering, as this could delay receipt of your payment.

Thank You from Cha Posz

On Wednesday, July 15, Gertens delivered Mount Olive's congregational retirement gift to me: a beautiful Autumn Blaze maple tree for our front yard. A gift that will continue to give for years to come.

Thank you, Mount Olive!

- Cha Posz

Summer Choir Opportunity

Calling all SOPRANOS and ALTOS – All who sing Soprano and Alto voice parts are invited to meet in the choir room at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 16 to learn a short piece and then sing in the liturgy that same morning. All singers welcome!

Indigenous Justice

One of our goals for the Indigenous justice part of the Justice Ministry committee is to partner with a program serving Indigenous people. To prepare for that, we recognize the need for learning and more in-depth understanding of Indigenous cultures, perspectives and norms of respectful behavior.

In the spirit of learning more and experiencing a significant cultural event, we're offering an opportunity to attend part of the upcoming Wacipi (powwow) at the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community in Prior Lake on Saturday, August 15. We're planning on getting a group from Mount Olive to attend it together. We'll try to leave Mount Olive about 12:15 and return around 4:00. We'll be there to see one of the grand entries, some of the dancing, art at the vendor tables and try some food. This is the main powwow for the nearest Dakota band, and it has its own website, www.smscwacipi.org

Here's a brief description of the event from the Wacipi website:
"Representing dozens of tribes from across the United States and Canada, dancers dressed in traditional regalia compete for top honors in various dance style categories and age groups, while drum groups and singers surround the perimeter of the arena. Native American artists and crafters display traditional beadwork, jewelry, and handmade goods, while food vendors offer a variety of tasty, authentic meals and treats."

Please email Candy Husemoller at justice@mountolivechurch.org if you're interested in joining the Mount Olive group going to the Mdewakanton Sioux Wacipi (powwow) on Saturday, August 15.

Annual School Supply Drive

Irene Campbell is once again organizing an annual school supply drive at Mount Olive in collaboration with Sigma Gamma Rho Inc. Sorority and the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). Supplies will be distributed to Saint Paul and Minneapolis schools. Donations are accepted between now and August 15. Look for a collection box in the West Assembly area. Financial donations are also accepted.

Thank you for your past support of this project. We look forward to your generous donations. Please contact Irene if you have any questions.

Opportunities to Serve on the Neighborhood Ministry Team

We are looking to add people to two of the teams serving in Neighborhood Ministry.

Diaper Depot Driver

We could use at least one more driver for the Diaper Depot to lighten the load on our existing drivers. Each driver delivers diapers to between 4-6 families each week on Wednesday afternoons. Routes are planned to minimize the distance between each stop.

Neighborhood Ministry Host

We would like to add to our core of servants working with our neighborhood ministry guests during the week. We have a wonderful group of people that allows us to have 2-3 people here for the times we are open, but it often gets busy and adding to this team would be a great help. Neighborhood Ministry hosts serve from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Most servants choose one of those days – and although some choose to work more than one – there is no expectation that anyone serve more than one day a week. A Neighborhood Ministry Host serves by greeting our guests, assisting them with bus cards, laundry vouchers, obtaining vital records, and listening to guests' stories. Training and mentorship with current hosts will be provided for anyone wanting to serve.

Contact Coordinator of Neighborhood Ministry Jim Bargmann (neighborhood@mountolivechurch.org) if you are interested in either.

Gardening Days at Mount Olive

Come and join other Mount Olive members who are experiencing the joy of our gardens!

The crew meets every two weeks on Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. for weeding and yard maintenance. The dates are:

- August 8, 22
- September 5, 19
- October 3, 17, and 31 - fall cleanup and winter prep

DHH Partnership Food Delivery Program Update

Our partnership with DHH (Dios Habla Hoy) Church continues to support many families in our Mount Olive neighborhood. We've been pretty consistently able to deliver 70 boxes of food, along with diapers and formula each week, for about 7 months. We started this work towards the beginning of the Metro Surge crisis. The crisis has diminished and DHH Church has about half the number of families requesting help than during the height of the crisis. We're not sure how long DHH Church will continue to need community partners like us to deliver food, but we hope to continue partnering with them as long as we have enough people able to support this work.

DHH Church's connections to food banks and donors provide boxes of food, extra items, and diapers. They no longer receive donations for baby formula, wipes, and adult incontinence products. For families on our list who request formula and adult incontinence products, we've been purchasing those products using Neighborhood Support Funds. This alone averages about $350-400 per week. We will continue to provide these products as long as we have the funds, but the boxes of food will continue.

We appreciate people's generous support for this fund! Additionally, we recognize the challenge of continuing to ask for funds for a program that has an uncertain end date. This same fund supports our own Mount Olive food delivery program and the occasional rental assistance request for those families still struggling to get back on their feet.

If you are able to contribute to this continued work, you can indicate "Neighbor Support 2026" on any physical donations given or use this link to do so electronically.

The Olive Branch Summer Publication Schedule

During the summer months, the *Olive Branch* is published every other week on **Friday**.

The next issue will be Friday, August 14.

The submission deadline is **1:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 12**.

Our Going Out and Our Coming In

Staff Vacation Schedules

Pastor Crippen will be on vacation August 30 – September 7.
Cantor Schwandt will be on vacation August 24 – September 2.

Help with Live Streaming

We are in need of a couple more helpers to run the live stream during worship. You'll need to be comfortable using a computer, and to follow along with the liturgy to switch cameras in response to what's happening where.

What you'll do as a live streamer: Get situated at the computer in the South Gallery and start the live stream a few minutes before the prelude begins. Follow along with the liturgy, and when we come to a transition point (examples: a reader walks to the lectern, or a hymn is about to begin), you press a couple buttons to switch to the correct camera, move camera positions, and/or display overlay slides with music on them.

Training sessions and written directions are available. An experienced streamer will sit by you and assist you for your first services. How to get involved: Contact Dan Hellerich at streaming@mountolivechurch.org or 612-600-6982 to learn more. Or, please visit with any of us after liturgy for a couple minutes to see how it all works in the South Gallery.

Sacred Space, Singing Space

The north transept has become a little crowded in recent years. Storing our piano and harpsichord in the same space as our columbarium limits the physical space available for internment liturgies, smaller services, and personal prayer. To help alleviate this confinement, the Worship and Property committees undertook a small renovation project this summer.

The pews and half of the modesty screen have been removed from the south transept and placed in storage and the piano and harpsichord have moved from the north transept to the south transept. The chairs that were removed from the north transept following the expansion of the columbarium have been restored to both transepts to allow for seating during liturgies and at other times. Additional chairs may be acquired at a later date as need arises. The small organ (see page 4 of this *Olive Branch*) is being installed in the next weeks.

This project has a few added benefits as well. Nothing will be thrown out, so pew hardware from the south transept can be used to repair and replace ailing parts in the nave. The south transept also offers more flexible space for musicians during liturgies, concerts, and at other times. And everything can be restored if we discern in the future that some or all pews are needed again in the south transept. We may even find other uses for the south transept in the future as we discern God's good and gracious will.

Questions, comments, and other feedback is always welcome. Contact Andrew Stoebig at worship@mountolivechurch.org or 763-221-5612.

Save the Date

Mount Olive Church Picnic at Minnehaha Falls
Wabun shelter C on **Sunday, August 23, after church until 3:00 pm.**

Details to follow!

Save Another Date!

All are welcome to join the Bipes Family Hymn Sing on
Sunday, September 13 after the second liturgy.

Details to follow!