The Olive Branch

October 2, 2026

Sunday Readings

October 4, 2026
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 26 A
Isaiah 5:1-7
Psalm 80:7-15
Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46

October 11, 2026
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 27 A
Isaiah 25:1-9
Psalm 23
Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

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

Accent on Worship — Cantor Schwandt

Gravity

Several years ago, at my father's funeral, the homilist paraphrased the famed architect Frank Gehry, who said architecture is mostly about fighting gravity. Gravity, in the end, always wins. And in the end, gravity came for my dad as it will for all of us someday.

The illustration was apt, as my dad spent his whole working life as a draftsman, detailing countless plans and blueprints for engineers and structural steel manufacturers. His work was part of the myriads of laborers whose hidden ingenuity allowed the architects' "pretty drawings" (as he would sometimes smirk) to become actual standing buildings. He was particularly skilled at detailing stairs and railings – his colleagues hated doing them, but he loved them and their unique set of problems to solve. (As a result, I seldom take for granted the look and functionality of a building's stairs and railings.) He took pride in the quiet yet essential work that helped build schools, hospitals, and skyscrapers.

In Sunday's gospel, Jesus quotes Psalm 118 – the one we sing every Easter Day – to remind us that he is the cornerstone, the very stone that the builders once rejected. He is the one who won ultimate victory in the battle against gravity: the depths of sin, death, and evil. We may fail again and again at tending to his vineyard, as he points out in his parable, but the cornerstone of our life is there, forming the foundation of our lives. In Christ's building, gravity has forever been conquered, and with the psalmist we can surely sing, "this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

Music and Fine Arts Series Begins – Mark Your Calendars!

Friday, October 9, 7:00 p.m., Jonathan Ryan Organ Recital

Jonathan Ryan, an internationally acclaimed organist and winner of numerous prizes in organ performance, will perform music of Flor Peeters, J. S. Bach, Robert Schumann, Calvin Hampton, and Paul Manz on Mount Olive's legendary Schlicker organ.

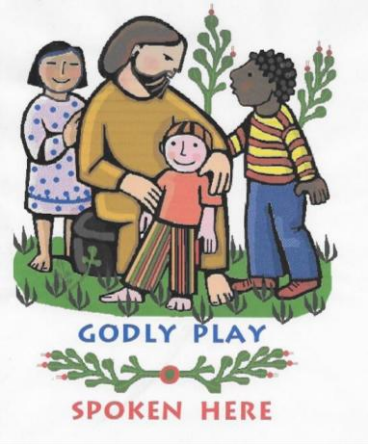
Ryan is currently director of music and organist at Christ Church Cranbrook (Episcopal), Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Eastman School of Music and has performed around the world. His most recent recital appearance brought him to the restored organ of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris earlier this summer. Tell your friends!

National Lutheran Choir Hosts Sunday's Coffee Hour

This Sunday, October 4, National Lutheran Choir Artistic Director Jennaya Robison and Director of Advancement Anna Meyer will worship at Mount Olive at the second liturgy and will be at the coffee hour following worship. The National Lutheran Choir is also pleased to host the post-service coffee hour, as their way of saying thank you to the many Mount Olive members that support the work of the choir. Be sure to stop by after liturgy, enjoy a treat, greet Jennaya and Anna, and pick up some information about the choir's upcoming season.

Blessing of the Animals This Sunday!
Sunday, October 4, 2:00 p.m.

Bring your pets to this annual service of blessing.
All are welcome.



Godly Play

This Sunday, Godly Play Circle One will hear the story of the Tower of Babel. (See how we get the word babble?)

Godly Play Circle Two will hear the story of Abraham and God's promise to him.

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

Upcoming Sunday Adult Forum Topics

October 4 The Life and Organ Works of David N. Johnson

Cantor Daniel Schwandt will share his doctoral research project, the life and organ works of David N. Johnson.

Organist, pedagogue, and composer David N. Johnson created an extensive body of organ and church music and influenced twentieth-century organ pedagogy through his teaching and writing. As an organist, he excelled at improvisation, inspiring audiences with his varied and engaging programming. As a composer, he focused on creating music for musicians of limited skill and provided organists of all abilities with music of craft and aesthetic worth. Working during an era of significant change and artistic experimentation, Johnson also sought to bring various experimental compositional practices to church music. The motivation for his life's work came from a spiritual imperative to bring music to ordinary people. By elevating their spiritual and musical experiences, he sought to open them to even higher artistic possibilities.

October 11 Working for the Public Good: Lutheran Ethics and Modern Social Democracy

Les Weber Jr., a former Vicar at Mount Olive in 1971, will return to discuss his recent book "Working for the Public Good: Lutheran Ethics and Modern Social Democracy"

In this book, Weber demonstrates that despite historical critiques of quietism, European Lutherans developed a social ethics in the centuries following the Reformation that brought about fundamental systemic and structural changes in social services, law, education, health care, the formation of states and nations, and public morality. Those changes eventually led to the development of the welfare state. In so doing, Weber challenges interpretations by scholars, such as the German Lutheran theologian Ernst Troeltsch, who argued that Lutheran theology created a church operating at a remove from society's pressing questions.

Why I Have Hope

Common Hope (Familias de Esperanza in Spanish) is one of Mount Olive's supported Global Ministry partners. They promote hope and opportunity in Guatemala, partnering with children, families, and communities to improve their lives through education, health care, housing, and family development.

Guatemalan culture is centered around family ties. However, many households face financial constraints preventing them from sending their children to school. This predicament contributes to the country's literacy rate, standing at 69%, ranking among the lowest in Latin America. One out of every three residents has never been to school and most adults have less than a 4th grade education. Only 32% of children complete junior high and only 18.6% receive a high school education. But, it is likely that if a student graduates from high school, they not only can lessen the effects of poverty, but they can often have a positive impact on the whole family. A high school diploma significantly increases the chances of employment and can lead to necessary systemic change in Guatemala.

When students become affiliated with Common Hope, they and their families receive support. Affiliated students graduate at a rate of 3-4 times the national average. Since 1986, over 2,500 students have received a high school diploma. There is a Pathway of Dreams at the site in Guatemala with the graduate's names. It is powerful to see graduates look for their name with such pride. Younger students new to Common Hope also walk the Pathway, receiving encouragement and inspiration from those before them.

This is why I have hope.

With the exception of one school, students affiliated with Common Hope attend public schools in their communities. While these schools have their own graduation ceremonies, Common Hope also has one for affiliated students. I have been able to attend graduation at Familias de Esperanza in Antigua, Guatemala. Last year, I was privileged to attend with Sandra and her family. Sandra is a student Mark and I have sponsored since she was in elementary school. It has been a joy to watch her grow into a confident young woman who now is employed and has hopes to attend college.

Learn more about Common Hope and participate in writing letters to students in Guatemala at the Adult Forum on October 25. Mount Olive youth will also be there writing letters to the students they are connected with. Use these links to make a donation or become a sponsor or Pathway member.

- Lisa Ruff, Director of Global Ministry

Sing for the Healing

Sunday, October 18, 2026, 4:00pm
Christ Church Lutheran
3244 34th Avenue South Minneapolis, Minnesota
christchurchluth.org

A festival of song in thanksgiving for twenty years of Evangelical Lutheran Worship.

Sing and hear music from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, first released in October 2006. For two decades the treasures old and new in this groundbreaking worship book and its family of resources have helped thousands of Christian communities sing the church's song. Join your voices with musical leaders Jennifer Baker-Trinity, Robert Buckley Farlee, Zebulon Highben, Sally Messner, Nathan Proctor, Jonathan Rundman, Mark Sedio, David Sims, and a festival choir. A pre-concert conversation with Martin Seltz, Jennifer Baker-Trinity, and Zebulon Highben about assembling hymnals begins in the sanctuary at 3:00 p.m.

Our community partner at this event is Hats & Mittens (hatsandmittens.org) that serves schools, shelters, and other organizations in the Twin Cities. Bring hats (any kind, including handmade) and mittens (insulated preferred) to the event. 100% of the freewill offering collected during the event will go to Hats & Mittens.

MONARCA Democracy Defense Training Summary

Monarca training this past Tuesday presented helpful information about the upcoming elections and ideas for organizing networks to defend our democracy. Here are the main takeaways:

- Know your voting rights! Visit the Minnesota Secretary of State website.
- Vote Early and encourage others to do the same.
    - Find early voting sites and one day early sites in Minneapolis, which begin October 17.
    - Find other state-wide in person early voting locations and hours.
- Focus on the importance of networks.
    - Networks can be faith communities like Mt. Olive, nonprofits, or neighborhoods and include connected concerned citizens.
    - Networks create hope, unite many people to respond with power, and are a way we protect our democracy and organize for the future our communities deserve.
- Join Monarca Democracy Defense if you are interested in helping with MONARCA networks.

Neighborhood Food Drive

Thanks to all who contribute to the Neighborhood Support Fund! We continue to need support supplying formula requested by families on our list from DHH Church. Thanks to those who've donated so far! If you prefer to donate specific items for the Neighborhood Food Drive, there's a box in the coat room at church labeled 'Baby Formula' or you can order online (Target, Walmart, Amazon, etc.) and have it delivered to Mount Olive.

These formulas are typically requested by the families on our weekly list:

- Infant Enfamil Gentlease or Target's Gentle Premium Powder
- Infant Similac Total Care 360 or Target's Advantage Premium Powder
- Toddler Nestle Nido Kinder 1+ Powder or Enfamil Premium Toddler Powder

Neighborhood Ministries Partner of the Month: Central Lutheran Restoration Center

The Restoration Center at Central Lutheran provides a drop-in center for people in and around downtown Minneapolis experiencing homelessness and economic insecurity. They provide emergency rental assistance, meals, free-use computers, and a place for people to gather for community and support. Their Free Store provides clothing and household goods in a store-like environment and a partnership with Augsburg University provides free, low barrier healthcare.

Mount Olive has chosen to support each of our Partners of the Month through a yearly contribution from our budget, and often, 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 the Central Lutheran Restoration Center please visit their website at www.centralmpls.org/community/restorationcenter.

Noon Bible Study Link

The Noon Bible Study meets Tuesdays 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 Noon Bible study will be the same every week. To join from your computer, tablet, or smartphone, **click here.**

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 at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings. This month will focus on fall clean up and winter prep.

- October 3, 17, and 31

Book Discussion

On **October 10**, the discussion will center around James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*. Shangri-La anyone? Then on **November 14**, *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi is on the schedule.

Everyone is invited to join whenever you are able, at 10:00 a.m. in the Schroedel 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 at the church in person or join remotely via Zoom. To join from your computer, tablet, or smart phone, **click here.**

Save the Date: 4th Annual Lefse Baking

Mark your calendars for the 4th annual lefse baking event on **Saturday, November 7**. We will meet in the Undercroft and practice the beloved tradition of lefse making. More details to follow. Contact Marsha Johnson at mejohnson56@yahoo.com or 763-843-7024 with questions.

Calendar

Friday, October 2
The Olive Branch is published
7:00 p.m. Recovery Group [Undercroft]

Saturday, October 3
9:00 a.m. Gardening Day

Sunday, October 4 — Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 27 A
— St. Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church, died 1226;
— Theodor Fliedner, renewer of society, died 1864
8:00 a.m. ***Holy Eucharist***, followed by coffee and fellowship
9:30 a.m. Adult Forum [Chapel Lounge]
9:30 a.m. Godly Play [Circle 1 and Circle 2 Rooms]
9:30 a.m. Youth Conversation Group [Undercroft Youth Space]
10:20 a.m. Cantorei warm-up [Manz Choir Room]
10:45 a.m. ***Holy Eucharist***, followed by coffee and fellowship
2:00 p.m. ***Blessing of the Animals***

Monday, October 5
7:00 p.m. Monday Night WAVE [Undercroft]

Tuesday, October 6 — William Tyndale, translator, martyr, died 1536
12:00 p.m. Bible Study [East Assembly]

Wednesday, October 7 — Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, pastor in North America, died 1787
10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting [Schroedel Library]
1:00 p.m. *The Olive Branch* Submission Deadline
5:30 p.m. Children & Youth Choirs Supper [Undercroft]
6:00 p.m. Children & Youth Choirs Rehearsal [Circle 3 Room & South Transept]
6:00 p.m. Adult Forum Group [Schroedel Library]
7:00 p.m. Cantorei Rehearsal [Manz Choir Room]
7:00 p.m. Y2 Confirmation [Schroedel Library]

Thursday, October, 8
9:30 a.m. ***Morning Prayer*** [Columbarium Transept of the Nave]
7:00 a.m. Vestry Meeting
7:00 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous [Undercroft]

Friday, October 9
The Olive Branch is published
7:00 p.m. Music & Fine Arts: Jonathan Ryan, Organ Recital
7:00 p.m. Recovery Group [Undercroft]

The Olive Branch Publication Schedule

The Olive Branch is published every week on Friday.

The submission deadline for the October 9 issue is **1:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 7**.