

THE

Messenger

April 2020

MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH · ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA · 507-288-1580 · MOLIVE.ORG

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear People of Mount Olive,

In our Lenten study of First Peter we learned that the people to whom the letter was written were living in a difficult situation – exiles in a foreign land. There were forced into this new situation because of their faith claims, and were treated as members of a cult. As such they endured regular harassment, exclusion, prejudice, and even violence.

Writing to these exiles, listen how Peter begins his letter: “Peter, a messenger of Jesus Christ, sends this letter to God’s people now dispersed..., whom God the Father knew and chose long ago to be made holy by his Spirit, that they might obey Jesus Christ and be cleansed by his blood: may you know more and more of God’s grace and peace.” (I Peter 1:1-2)

It seems to me that we too are living with dual identities in this new age of COVID-19. On one hand, we, along with the rest of humanity, have been thrown into a very difficult situation, the end of which is unknown. We are exiles, as it were, from our former lives, living now in a new land.

But we also claim another identity. We are God’s people, chosen long ago, set apart for God’s use. As St. Peter also reminds us, “we have been born again into a life full of hope, through Christ’s rising from the dead.” We have been given “a perfect inheritance beyond the reach of change and decay, reserved in Heaven” for us. And God has also promised to guard us until we “enter fully into the salvation which is all ready to be revealed at the last.” Because of all this, we have tremendous joy.

I remind you to remember your identity in Christ every day. Claim your place in God’s family. Live your life in Christ-like love. Believe that God has equipped you for this time and God will see you through. Be that voice of hope and comfort for others.

In this newsletter you will find instructions for our life together. You will see how to link into our online worship services. You will learn how you can join in an online Bible study. There will be mechanisms to sign up for service projects, and ways to connect with others. As one of our homebound folks said to me the other day, “The Church is not the building; it’s the people.” So it is. We will continue to be faithful to our calling as Ambassadors for Christ, rooted to grow and serve.

May Peace and Grace Abound for you,

Pastor Glenn Monson

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Worship

Practice Sabbath observance every weekend by setting aside time for worship online. We will be producing abbreviated worship services each week via the Internet. Service orders will be provided so you can follow along at home. We encourage every household to have ready a small bit of bread/cracker and wine or juice to take communion at home during worship. Worship services may be accessed by following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqQHPLrP-lcwjKDOLwIGwdA>

Weekly Email Communications

Once a week, members and visitors will receive an email update from Mount Olive. This will include devotional readings and reflections for each day of the coming week provided by the pastoral staff. We will also provide the online worship service order for the week which will include the readings and hymns featured in the weekend service. Those without email addresses will receive this information by mail. If you would also like this message via a *mailed* letter, please contact the church office—507-288-1580.

Offerings

Your financial gifts will be more important than ever during this time. If you do not already give automatically, you may contact Bill Hollander in the church office, to set this up. You may also make a gift by clicking the green [“Donate Now”](#) button at the bottom of the church website homepage, or simply put a check in the mail.

Worship Assistance

As we transition to an online worship and video production model, Travis Beck will call on members of our musical ensembles to come in and record some music in the coming weeks, especially for Holy Week and Easter services. If you have any questions or would like to offer your assistance, please contact Travis—travis@molive.org.

Service and Social Outreach Ministry

All of our ministry partners have made changes in response to COVID-19 and in some cases, temporarily shut down operation. We will continue to communicate with them and share needs that arise via our new weekly email mentioned above. Please read this important update about Channel One:

Channel One Regional Food Bank- COVID-19 Response

Channel One is planning for an increase in the need for its food programs because of the growing Covid-19 pandemic. The strains on families can lead to them having to make difficult choices between food and housing costs. Channel One can help people facing food insecurity and poverty by taking a \$25 donation and turning it into 100 meals! While the food donations given by Mount Olive members have been gratefully received, the best way to help now is to make a monetary donation by clicking the [“Donate Now”](#) button on the church website. Please indicate Channel One in the “other” category. Channel One is also looking for **volunteers** to pack emergency food boxes and to help fill the gaps they are seeing as many of its current volunteers fall in the at-risk or vulnerable populations category. If you are a healthy, low-risk individual, sign up for a shift by going to helpingfeedpeople.org, click on COVID-19 Response. Volunteers are crucial to maintaining Channel One’s operations, and with many individuals practicing social distancing or self-quarantine, extra hands are needed.

Women’s Day of Service Projects

Unfortunately, we were not able to meet for the Women’s Day of Service on March 21. A project you can work on at home is available. Bandage rolling kits are available to pick up in the entry at church. You may contact Sherry Will if you have any questions at sherry@molive.org.

Zoom Utilized for Classes and Meetings

Mount Olive has purchased a license for Zoom, a video conferencing format. This will be utilized for Pub Theology, the Lenten Bible study, and possibly other groups that are prevented from meeting currently. Participants will be invited via email to join the sessions. You can help expedite this process by downloading and installing Zoom on your computer, phone, or tablet, either from Zoom's [website](#) or from your app store. See further updates about Pub Theology at <https://rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com>.

Pastor Glenn's Lenten Bible Study Continues

Each Wednesday at 6:00 pm, you can join Pastor Glenn in the continuing study of I Peter, via Zoom. If you have not been part of this study previously you are welcome. Just contact Pastor Glenn by email to be added to the list— glenn@molive.org. We will have our first session together via Zoom on **March 25**. We will be in Chapter 3 in the book for those that have it. (Note: the book is not essential for joining in the class, but if you'd like a copy, you may purchase one at the church office.)

Little Leapers Families

All families with children aged 0-3 should have received an email invitation to join a group that will help to connect them. Watch for continued updates in the group and on the website under the Fellowship-Children, Youth & Family tab. Please contact Carrie Fletcher with any questions- carrie@molive.org.

Sunday School Lessons Available

Intern Pastor Luke will work with others to offer a weekly Sunday School lesson. We will look at a Bible story and do a craft/activity together using regular household items. This will come out as a video which can be accessed on our website: <http://molive.org/index.php/children> or the Mount Olive [Facebook](#) page.

Fellowship

Connecting Helpers with Those in Need

Several members have contacted the church office to say "how can I help?". All members are encouraged to be caregivers for one another in this difficult time. Send cards, letters, and emails, and make calls to anyone you think of who might need encouragement. Offer to do errands for people who can't get out or are afraid to do so or make a meal for a neighbor. To better facilitate connecting people, we have created a Google sheet for anyone willing to be a resource. It will be monitored and as requests come in, we will connect those in need with those who are willing to help. We're calling it *Mount Olive Ambassadors for Christ* and you can find it at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/tga8yxu>

If You Are In Need of Pastoral Care

If you are having difficulty at this time of crisis, are in need of pastoral care, help with errands or meals, or simply would enjoy a friendly phone call on a regular basis, please contact the church office at 507-288-1580. If you leave a message, we will return your call. In-person pastoral visits will only be done in the case of emergencies.

Mayo Clinic has a high need for blood donors at this time. Please call 507-284-4475 to make an appointment.

Family Devotion Coming Soon

Fellowship is going to look drastically different for a while and this can take a toll on our mental and spiritual health. As a response to this, Intern Pastor Luke is dreaming up a family devotional. This will come out as a regular short video accessible on the Mount Olive website featuring some spiritual reflection, time outside, encouragement and ideas for interactive fun. Watch for more information to come.

Reminders

Unfortunately there are people who will try to take advantage of vulnerable people during this time. Scams by phone or internet, promising cures and treatments, financial aid, and other advice will be commonplace. Be alert for these ploys, and be watching out for others who might be vulnerable to such scams.

Welcome Richard!

We welcome Richard Bruxvoort Colligan to the Mount Olive staff as the Cantor of Olive Branch. Richard will be working closely with Pastor Lisa to plan Olive Branch activities and services and will also assist with Mount Olive services on occasion. Until he is able to join us in person, we will be sharing some of his wonderful work in our weekly digital communications.



In March, Mount Olive assembled 68 Baby Care Kits for those in need around the world. Special thanks to all who helped with sewing, knitting, gathering, and bundling and for the many donations that were collected.

Hull Dining Hall Update

Construction on the Dining Hall at Hull High School in Kijota, Tanzania has begun. The staff and students there, are so thankful to Mount Olive for the funds raised to begin construction on this much needed dining hall. Mount Olive has raised \$26,000 of the \$30,000 needed. We are so close. For more information contact Sherry Will at sherry@molive.org.



Mount Olive's Welcome Statement:

"We trust that God calls Mount Olive Lutheran Church to a ministry of reconciliation. We embrace as a gift the diversity of our neighborhood and the world, and we extend God's hospitality by welcoming, hearing, and treasuring:

All gender identities and sexual orientations

All races and ethnicities

All ages and abilities

All economic statuses and education levels

All faith journeys and personal histories

As Christ welcomes all, we too welcome the full inclusion of all people into the life, ministry, and sacraments of Mount Olive, joining in a journey toward greater love, understanding, and mutual respect."



Mount Olive Lutheran Church

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A Reconciling in
Christ Community

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