

December 2017

THE *Messenger*

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

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Advent - The Quiet Holy Days

We are returning this year to an Advent practice that was a childhood favorite of mine – the Advent calendar. At the beginning of Advent, all Sunday School children will have the opportunity to take home with them an Advent calendar whereby they will be able to open a little window during each day in Advent. I loved doing that as a child. Each day when we opened a little door there would be a picture or a Bible verse, and I knew that for every door opened, we were that much closer to Christmas.

Spoiler alert! I have peeked at the Advent Calendar! Day one says, “Come Lord Jesus. Come into the manger, come into our hearts, come into the world. With your justice, change our hearts. With your love, change our world.” What a lovely and timely prayer. We all would do well to pray this prayer throughout the season.

Another practice that we are returning to this year is that of having a brief midweek service during Advent. We will gather each Wednesday at 6:30 pm for a time of prayer, reflection, and song. Our themes are:

December 6 – “Hear Us” December 13 – “Heal Us” December 20 – “Send Us”

You are invited to come to one or all of these services, and bask in some quiet space amidst all the holiday hub-bub.

Advent is a quiet season. It comes to us during the darkest days of the year. We pray it will be for you a time when you know that God hears, heals, and sends you into the world with God’s love.

Blessings,

Pastor Glenn

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Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday Morning Advent Services—8:00 am and 10:30 am

Evening Festival Christmas Eve Services

4:00 pm—Candlelight Service with Bells and Brass

7:00 pm—Candlelight Service with Choir

Stewardship Update

Hello Mount Olive! As of November 19, 2017, here is where our pledging is along with the comparison to where we were by the Annual Meeting in January:

	2016	2017	change
Pledge Cards Received	133	147	+14
General Fund	\$ 504,099.00	\$ 505,038.00	+ \$ 939.00
Building Fund	\$ 101,125.00	\$ 111,042.00	+ \$ 9,917.00

Thank you to the new members who have pledged and to members who are first-time pledgers! There are also many people who have increased their pledges for this next year! Thank you!

On a different note: People who have pledged in the past but who haven't for this coming year, would add an additional \$20,000 to the General Fund and an additional \$5,000 to the Building Fund (if they pledged the same this year as last year). Your pledge will go a long way to help meet the benevolence goals that the Church Council is aiming for. **To everyone – Thank you!**

Inclusive Church Taskforce Update

On Saturday night, November 18, about 50 people gathered for pizza, a movie and a discussion in relation to our overall goal of taking on the identity of a *Reconciling in Christ (RIC)* congregation, which emphasizes the mission of growing as an intentionally welcoming and inclusive community to people who are LGBTQ. The movie was titled "For the Bible Tells Me So," and it explored the complexities of human sexuality through the eyes and experiences of five Christian families as they dealt with having a family member come out as gay. Woven into the narrative were the diverse attitudes of both society and the church in regard to homosexuality. "Very informative" was the comment of one teenage viewer. Another viewer said, "it was good to have this conversation in our church." The film was well received by those in attendance. If you weren't able to attend and would like to see the movie, it can be checked out of the Mount Olive Library.

Our next steps as a congregation include:

- Further education about what it means to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
- Crafting a Welcome Statement
- Formal consideration of taking on the RIC designation

Look for more information to come in January. Meanwhile, you are invited to review the resources available in the front entry at church and to ask any questions you may have to any of the taskforce members: Elmer Odland, David Johnston, Paula Frietag, Jake Johnson, Becky Lashinski, Tom Rigby, Mickaela Pasch, and Pastor Paul Moody.

Donations to Hurricane Victims Delivered

Earlier this fall, Mount Olive members, Dave and Elaine Monson, organized a relief effort for Faith Lutheran Church in Florida which had many parishioners affected by Hurricane Irma last summer. This community neighbors Dave and Elaine's winter church in Florida. Following is Dave's report of delivering the gift cards:

"Elaine and I met Pastor Jhon Correa at Faith Lutheran in Lehigh Acres this morning to present to him the gift cards that have been donated by our friends at Mount Olive Lutheran in Rochester, MN.

...While the effects of the hurricane and other disasters are so traumatic and painful, it is good to see the generosity, true personal concern and willingness to help that come in response to these disasters. On behalf of Pastor Jhon and the people of Faith Lutheran, please pass our thanks to members of Mount Olive that have been part of the caring community of Christians."



Midweek Services Coming in Advent

On the first three Wednesdays in December, we will be holding midweek services at Mount Olive. A brief meditative service will be offered on December 6, 13, and 20 at 6:30 pm. Plan now to come and enjoy a time of quiet worship amidst the hubbub of the holiday time. Come to one, or come to all.

Volunteer Update

Thank you to everyone who attended our worship volunteer training in November. It was great to see some new faces. Schedules for December Worship Volunteers and Sunday coffee and cookie fellowship have been distributed to all volunteers. There are still several openings for volunteers on both schedules. Is there a time that you could serve? At Mount Olive, volunteers select their service opportunities, time and date, via the online scheduling program, Sign Up Genius. If you would like to receive an invitation to Sign Up Genius or have any questions about volunteering at Mount Olive, please contact Nancy Britson, Director of Congregational Life. The current schedules are updated regularly and posted on the Mount Olive website, www.molive.org, under the "Service" tab. Links to the Sign Up Genius schedules are also on the website.

Children's Moments

During the Children's Moment each Sunday of Advent and continuing to Epiphany, children will follow the path to the star of Christmas by placing characters from the Bible story on a banner as they hear the story. Bring your little ones to engage in worship with this activity. The banner, an old favorite created by Gloria Rosencrants, is reappearing after some needed repairs.



Healing Station

Since the last weekend of December is a fifth weekend of the month, we will be offering anointing for healing at each service during the distribution of Holy Communion. All are encouraged to come to the rail following receiving communion and receive a word of blessing and anointing for healing.

Christmas Eve Worship

For centuries, followers of Jesus have gathered in candlelight to remember and celebrate the mystery of Christ's incarnation. Come join us as we continue this tradition proclaiming Christ's presence in our lives. Services are family friendly and include Holy Communion.

On December 24, the 4th Sunday of Advent, morning worship services are at 8:00 am and 10:30 am. Evening Festival Christmas Eve services are at 4:00 pm (a candlelight service with bells and brass) and at 7:00 pm (a candlelight service with choir). We hope you can join us.

The Christmas Tree

The Christmas tree for the Mount Olive sanctuary has been donated by Roger Morse and Jeanette Ramseth in memory of their loved ones. The lights of Christmas remind them of the light their loved ones brought to their lives and the Christmases shared in the past. The celebration of the arrival of Christ in our world brings light and life to all who need it most!



ELCA Walk for Water

Here in Rochester, being able to take a cool, refreshing drink of water right from your faucet is a given, but in many places around the world and even here in the USA, clean water is a rare commodity. There are many in the world who suffer from dehydration, hunger and disease, because they don't have access to safe clean water. On January 14 during the education hour, the Second Sunday Service project will be a time to raise money and awareness for ELCA World Hunger's "Walk for Water". It will be a fun event that no Sunday School student will want to miss. We will be walking through the halls of Mount Olive, carrying water and facing real obstacles along the way. In preparation for this event, we are asking all Sunday School students to keep track of how many times they use water at home. Every time you use water— washing your hands, taking a bath, brushing your teeth, washing your clothes or taking a drink of any kind (water, milk, juice, coffee, pop, etc.)— put a dime in a cup. Do this for a month, starting on Dec. 11. Then, bring your coins to Sunday school on January 14 as an offering for ELCA's Walk for Water. (Please note: This is still a regular day of Sunday school. All teachers and students are expected to attend.) We challenge all members of Mount Olive to do this as well and bring their coins and dollars to church on January 14. For questions contact Sherry Will at sherry@molive.org or Kailea Mattheis at kailea@molive.org.

Salvation Army Bell Ringers

Thank you to everyone who signed up to ring bells at Hy-Vee North on Saturday, December 2, at 1:00 pm. All of the slots reserved by Mount Olive filled quickly. Don't worry, you didn't miss the chance to ring bells. Gather some family and friends and sign up online for a time that works for you at www.registertoring.com. Many times/places are available to help with their good work.



DOING THE
MOST GOOD™

Alternative Learning Center Donations

GREAT JOB, Mount Olive!! THANK YOU for the tremendous outpouring of supplies to reinforce the Alternative Learning Center's closet for students. Our September drive provided shorts, hoodies, leggings, tennis shoes, and personal care items as well as diapers and baby clothing. What a profound effect on the students when we do "God's work with our hands."



Mitten Tree

During the months of November and December, the "Mitten Tree" in the Gathering Area will give you an opportunity to continue to support our neighborhood schools: Elton Hills Elementary School, John Adams Middle School, and The Alternative Learning Center. These schools have let us know of specific items that are needed and we have labeled paper ornaments with these items. Take an ornament of your choice and put the new or gently used item under the tree. If you choose to provide a gas card, gift card, or cash for an ALC student, please put these items in the secure office box. Keep the ornament as a reminder of the difference you have made for a student.

After the "Mitten Tree", you may continue to help these students in two ways: 1) put your name and contact information on the Neighborhood Schools list in the Gathering Area for a phone call from us asking you to bring in a specific item, or 2) go to rochesteralc.rochester.k12.mn.us/resources/communityschool and find their changing list of requests.

Habitat for Humanity

On December 16 from 4pm-7pm, Mount Olive will be wrapping gifts at the Apache Mall as a fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity. Thanks to all of the volunteers who quickly filled the slots. Bring your purchases by the wrapping table, located near Macy's, to have your gifts wrapped and contribute some funds to Habitat. Contact Erin Sinnwell with questions: 507-990-6079

Second Sunday of Service

Thanks go out to all those who donated personal care items and the 50 Sunday school students and youth who assembled Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief on November 12. The group assembled 57 kits. Special thanks to Cathy Hanson who organized this project. These kits will be taken to the LWR warehouse in the Twin Cities and shipped to those in great need either here in the USA or abroad.



Food For Friends Needs You!

Are you looking for a meaningful opportunity to spend 15 to 30 minutes of your free time each week? Do you have 15 to 30 minutes a week to invest in area youth and are looking for an enjoyable motivated team of volunteers to join? If you answered yes, Food for Friends, formerly known as the Mount Olive Backpack program, needs you. Each week our drivers and packers, working with Channel One and John Adams support staff, make a big difference by providing nourishing food for 35 to 50 students at John Adams Middle School. **Currently our biggest need is for drivers. Please sign up at the Gathering Area table. If you have questions or need to arrange a substitute, contact Warren Kemplin at 507-254-4932 or Mark Schultze at 254-4164.**

Monthly Service Opportunities

Regularly scheduled opportunities that Mount Olive members participate in include:

- Serving Meals at the Dorothy Day Hospitality House
 - Construction on the current Habitat for Humanity Project
 - Distributing food for Community Food Response (CFR)
- 1st Friday of the month
2nd Saturday of the month
3rd Monday afternoon of the month

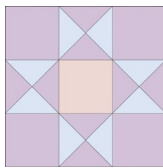
See the sign up schedules for the above ministries on the Gathering Area cabinet.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Tuesday, December 12 at 9:00 am

All knitters and crocheters are invited to attend our meeting on December 12. Yarn, needles, treats, and guidance are provided. To request a shawl for someone who is experiencing illness, loss, or a difficult time, contact Peg Whitley pmwhitley@charter.net, or call the church office at 288-1580.



Mount Olive Quilters

Thursdays at 9:00 am in the Fellowship Hall

The quilters were blessed with a sewing machine donation from Brian Schelling. He had the machine tuned up and ready to go for us. We now have 3 sewing machines to help with our ongoing quilting projects. Twenty large quilts and twenty baby quilts have been made and are ready to be picked up by the Women's Shelter in early December.

We are always in need of cotton fabrics. Donations may be left in the cupboard in the Gathering Area.

Ongoing Collections

Cleaning up at home in preparation for the holidays? Did you know that the SSOM team at Mount Olive has an ongoing collections of many items that can be put to use by others? Items include: travel sized care products, eye glasses, pop can tabs, and fabric. In addition, the white collection bin in the parking lot can be used for many items. A list of accepted items is available on the gathering area table.

Pub Theology

Do you enjoy thinking about faith, life, and what it means to be a follower of Jesus in our world today? Do you like to gather with others for stimulating conversation and being opened to new ideas? If any of these sound like you, come join us Monday nights for Pub Theology, led by Pastor Paul. Meet us at the Hy-Vee Market Grill at the 37th Street Hy-Vee. Topics are always sent out a day ahead of time and can be found at rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com. Come and join as you're able. Order food or a beer at 5:30pm, conversation begins at 6:00 pm. See you at the pub! **Note that Pub Theology will not meet on December 25 or January 1.**

Sunday Forum

Each Sunday at 9:15 am we gather in the Fellowship Hall to hear from congregational and community resource people about various topics where faith and society overlap. On December 3 and 10 we will hear from Mount Olive member, Justin Lowndes, as he leads us in a discussion of the ELCA Social Statement on Criminal Justice. This pertains very much to our work with our ministry partner, Next Chapter Ministries. On December 17 all are invited to enjoy the Sunday School Christmas program. There are no forums scheduled on December 24 or 31.

Men's Discipleship

The Men's Discipleship group continues their weekly meetings on Saturday mornings at 8:30 am in the front Conference Room. This fall, they have been studying Galatians. This group, welcome to all men of the congregation, meets every Saturday morning during the program year for Bible study, discussion, and fellowship. Contact Mark Masbruch for more information at mmasbruch@hotmail.com

Note that the group does not meet on Saturdays, December 23rd or 30th.

Advent Devotions

Several devotion options for the season of Advent are available in the front entry. There are daily devotions from Luther Seminary, which are also available in large print, a weekly devotion from ELCA World Hunger, and a devotion for families of all ages compiled by Kailea Mattheis. An Advent calendar is also available.



Women's Christmas Evening - A German Christmas

All women of the congregation are invited to a special Christmas gathering on Monday, **December 4** at 6:30 pm. Learn about German holiday traditions, sing some hymns and carols from our Lutheran heritage and enjoy German holiday fare and sweets. Child care is provided in the Mount Olive nursery. Our speaker for the evening will be Nancy Cashman from the Gage East Housing and Empowerment Center. There will be a free will offering for the Empowerment Center or bring in-kind donations for Gage East. Pick up a slip with suggested items near the sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area. Please come and bring a friend! Sign up in the Gathering Area. Sponsored by Mount Olive Women of the ELCA and hosted by Mary Circle.



Note: Women of the ELCA circle study leaders, please attend the monthly leader preparation meeting led by Pastor Glenn on the first Tuesday of the month. Since circles do not meet in December, the next meeting is on **January 2** in the front Conference Room at 5:30 pm. Bring your study book and a Bible.

Christmas Bake Sale December 17

On Sunday, December 17 the youth attending the ELCA Youth Gathering next summer will have a bake sale to raise funds for their trip. Please come, following the services and the Christmas program, to support our youth as they prepare to go explore their faith in Houston. If you would like to contribute something from your Christmas baking to the cause, please sign up in the Gathering Area.



Little Leapers Meet December 3

Little Leapers is for parents of newborns through tots not yet in Pre-Kindergarten Sunday School. Come and join in conversation and fellowship **with your child!** We will meet the first Sunday of each month in the library nook of the gathering area at 9:15 am. The next meeting is December 3 at 9:15 am, everyone is welcome!



Advent Calendar and Devotions

The last Sunday in November, we had a brief lesson about Advent and why it is an important season of our church year. As we enter Advent, there are devotional materials corresponding to an Advent Calendar, which we received from the ELCA, for you to engage with this season. We encourage all families to spend some time looking at the passages and/or hymns and reflecting together on what they mean for us during this season. If you were not present on November 26th, additional copies of the devotional materials are available on the entry table.

Children's Christmas Program

This year the Christmas Program will feature our pre-school and elementary aged students. Our program is entitled "Mattie and Lucy's Version Births".

Instead of combining Matthew and Luke's versions of the Christmas story into one story, this program makes sure to highlight the differences in the two Gospels. Please come and join us in the sanctuary at 9:15 am on **December 17** to watch our children present the Christmas Story!



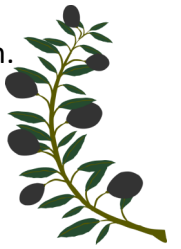
Deadline for the U.P.

Adventure Trip:

In August of 2018, Kailea will be leading a camping trip to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for 6th-12th grade students. We will be working our way through the eastern portion of the U.P. During the trip we will be hiking to waterfalls, Sugar Loaf Mountain, and the Log Slide near Grand Marais; kayaking in Lake Superior; swimming in Lakes Superior and Michigan; biking around Mackinac Island; and camping in Michigan's beautiful state parks! If you are interested in this wonderful trip, please contact Kailea (507-288-1580 ext. 207 or kailea@molive.org) no later than **December 10th**. Sign up in the Gathering Area.

Ripe Olives

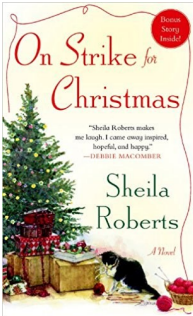
Ripe Olives, the group for Mount Olive's seniors, meets again on Friday, December 8 at 9:30 am. This month will feature a **Craft and Hobby Show** by the Ripe Olives themselves, a return of one of the favorite past programs. Everyone is encouraged to bring examples of their handiwork, crafts, or hobbies to put on display. During the program time, each person will be given the opportunity to "show and tell" if they choose and answer questions from the audience.



Additionally, **Travis Beck**, our new Director of Worship, Music, and Arts, will be on hand to formally introduce himself and provide some music. Everyone is welcome to attend, sign up at the Gathering Area table. Contact Nancy Britson, Director of Congregational Life, with questions 288-1580 ext. 202.

Monday Book Group

The Monday Book Group gathers again on December 11 at 6:30 pm, in the library, for their monthly book discussion and a time of Christmas fellowship. The December selection is *On Strike for Christmas* by Sheila



Roberts- *At Christmastime, it seems as though a woman's work is never done. Trimming the tree, mailing the cards, schlepping to the mall, the endless wrapping—bah humbug! So this year, Joy and Laura and the rest of their knitting group decide to go on strike. The boycott soon takes on a life of its own when a reporter picks up the story and more women join in.* Bring a gently used book for a gift exchange and a Christmas treat to share. New readers are always welcome to join the group. Contact Jodi Schoer for more information, mjschoer@charter.net or 288-1951.

Adventure Club

Please join the Adventure Club for **Caroling and Christmas Treats** on Sunday, December 17. We will meet at Mount Olive at 1:40 pm to car pool to local senior living facilities that are home to some of our members. All are welcome to join in singing familiar carols. After caroling, we will go back to the Fellowship Hall to enjoy some Christmas treats and hot chocolate. Please bring a treat to share. Sign up in the Gathering Area.

Save the Date! In January, the Adventure Club hopes to go sledding on Monday, January 15. There is no school that day due to the Martin Luther King Holiday. Watch for details in the January *Messenger* and the Adventure Club Facebook page and hope for snow!



Colombian Reception

All are invited to a special reception in the Mount Olive Fellowship Hall for 3 Colombian visitors; Zulma, Cati and Jennifer, on Thursday, December 28 from 7:00-8:00 pm. They were such gracious hosts to those of us who visited Colombia last March and we want to return the favor. Please bring a sweet or savory treat to share and enjoy fellowship and conversation with our guests from afar. Drinks will be provided.

Fellowship Tables

Fellowship tables have begun to meet. These groups include a family fellowship group (kids pictured below), restaurant groups, and home fellowship tables. If you would like to join a group, contact Nancy Britson, Director of Congregational Life, nancy@molive.org or 288-1580 ext. 202.





Saint Lucia Sunday Celebrated December 10

On Sunday, December 10, we will celebrate the Festival of Saint Lucia. This popular tradition, celebrated as part of Mount Olive's Swedish heritage, is rooted in an ancient story. Officially celebrated on December 13 during the darkest days of Advent, Saint Lucia is a symbol of the Light that Christ brings to the world. A legend tells that Saint Lucia came to Sweden during the great famine. She appeared in a halo of light on a ship sailing across Lake Vanern bringing food for the starving people. The custom in Sweden on Saint Lucia Day is for the oldest daughter in a family to be up long before daybreak to serve coffee and lussekatter buns. She wears a long white dress with

a red sash, and on top of her head is a wreath with lighted candles. Naomi, Rachel, and Anna Circles are busy preparing for the procession of Saint Lucia and her star boys which will take place during each worship service. After the services, come to the Fellowship Hall for coffee and lussekatter buns and a mint served by the mint girls.



RPO Winter Wonderland Concert

The Rochester Pops Orchestra and Chorale invites you to experience "Winter Wonderland" on Sunday, December 17 at 7:30 pm at Bethel Lutheran Church. Join the RPO and Chorale, which includes several Mount Olive members, as they celebrate the season. "Winter Wonderland" will feature many well-loved Christmas selections, along with pieces from "Home Alone", "The Polar Express", "White Christmas", and many more holiday favorites. This is a great family event for people of all ages.

Tickets are available online at www.rochesterpops.com, by calling the box office at 507-318-0801, or stop by the table in the Gathering Area. Advanced tickets are \$10.00 for seniors, \$12.00 for adults, and \$5.00 for students ages 13-18. Children ages 12 and under are always admitted free of charge. Tickets at the door are \$2.00 more.



BACH'S CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Friday, December 8, 2017 | 7:30 p.m. (pre-concert talk 6:45 p.m.)

Mount Olive is privileged to host this special performance by the Lyra Baroque Orchestra. Hear Bach's beloved telling of the story of Christmas with a powerful full orchestra from trumpets to timpani. For this impressive holiday performance, Lyra will join forces with the Bach Society of Minnesota. Tickets are available at the door or at lyrabaroque.org— \$5-student, \$20-Senior/MPR member, \$25-Adult.

Repertoire: J.S. Bach | Christmas Oratorio, Cantatas I, III, V, and VI with the Bach Society of Minnesota:



Matthias Maute, Artistic Director
Linh Kauffman, *soprano*
Clara Osowski, *mezzo-soprano*
Nicholas Chalmers, *tenor*
Aaron Larson, *baritone*

50th Anniversary Open House

The children of Ross & Sharon Parker are having an Open House to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on Sunday, December 3 from 3 to 5 pm in the Mount Olive Fellowship Hall. If you'd like to share in their celebration, feel free to join them. No gifts please!

Fair Trade Coffee

A new shipment of Equal Exchange fairly traded coffee has arrived just in time for Christmas. There are several varieties of ground coffee and tea to choose from. Every cup makes a difference. The farmers who grow this coffee are better able to provide for their families, improve their communities, and care for the land through Fair Trade. Stop by the display table in the Gathering Area to make a purchase. You can also sign up to sponsor the coffee on an upcoming Sunday. For \$15 you can help offset the cost of the coffee served during fellowship time and celebrate an occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, or the memory of a loved one.



Spiritual Care

Mount Olive has a Prayer Chain, coordinated by Kim Ignatius. If you have a prayer request and would like the prayer chain to be in prayer for you or someone you love, please contact Kim at: 507-271-6087 or ignatius.kimberlie@charter.net.

Please contact the church staff if you have any prayer concerns:

- Pastor Glenn: glenn@molive.org
- Pastor Paul: paul@molive.org
- Church office: 507-288-1580



Christmas Poinsettia Orders

Would you like to add to the beauty of Mount Olive's Christmas season? You may order your poinsettias to go on display in the sanctuary during Advent and on Christmas Eve. The cost is only \$8.00. Pick up an order envelope from the table in the front entry, select payment method, and drop it in the offering plate or the office drop box. All orders must be received by Sunday, **December 3**. Poinsettias may be taken home the weekend after Christmas. Contact Nancy Britson at nancy@molive.org with questions.

Take note of the bulletin board outside the office door where thank-you letters are now posted as they arrive. It is heart-warming to read of the gratitude our mission partners have for Mount Olive.

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

2830 18th Ave. NW

Rochester, MN 55901

Office Hours: 9:00AM-4:00PM Mon.-Thurs.

9:00AM-noon Fri.

507-288-1580

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