



The Messenger

December 2020

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

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Those Who Dream” – Be Part of the Dream Team

In Psalm 126 we read, “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.” The psalmist goes on to write about mouths filled with laughter, tongues shouting for joy, and an atmosphere of continual thanksgiving. This Advent at Mount Olive, we will join those who dream. Each Sunday will begin with a litany which lifts up the things we dream of in this pandemic time: Days when we can be part of a crowd again, full tables of food and holidays with loved ones, schools filled with excited students, the opening pitch at the ballpark, birthday parties with all our friends, and so on. We all so look forward to these things. This Advent we will laugh and dream together. Be sure to tune-in to online worship each week in Advent and join the Dream Team.

THOSE
WHO
DREAM

Advent Mid-week Services

This year we will be utilizing the beloved Holden Evening Prayer for our mid-week Advent services as a time of vespers. Each Wednesday, a video will be published on YouTube that you are invited to participate in with us. We will sing Holden, read a Psalm, reflect, and pause together.

December 2 – Psalm 130

December 9 – Psalm 37

December 16 – Psalm 126

December 23 – Psalm 146

Christmas Eve Services

Christmas is a time when we get together to celebrate Jesus, the Son of God, coming to earth for all people. While we won't be able to do this in a traditional sense, we have two different worship services planned to help bring hope and joy to this season.

On Christmas Eve, we will offer multiple worship services of Lessons and Carols in the Mount Olive parking lot with a beautiful tree and Christmas decorations as background. We will sing our favorite Christmas music and hear scripture that speaks of the birth of Christ. Each parking lot service will be limited to 50 cars, so you are asked to register ahead of time. Please click on the following link or call the church office at 507-288-1580 to sign up your family:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0449a5a92aa1fb6-september1> Services will be at 4:00 pm & 5:30 pm. We will add a third service if the first two fill up. The service will be broadcast on an FM radio channel, so you may listen from inside your car. People are asked to remain in or next to their cars in order to keep one another safe.

Additionally, we will be offering a more traditional online worship service with Holy Communion on Christmas Eve. Special music from the Bells, Choir, and Brass will help make this service one you won't want to miss. We imagine you starting a fire, having a fresh loaf of bread and wine or juice for communion, and participating in the service with us remotely. Christ promises to be with us as a community of believers, even in a pandemic.

Making a Financial Pledge is Super Important this year

If you have sent in your Commitment Card for 2021, thank you very much! Each one is received with gratitude. With in-person worship cancelled for the time being, we are seeing substantially less un-pledged income than in previous years, which means that pledged income is even more critical than ever. At this point, we are budgeting for \$60,000 less income than last year, which will mean some significant adjustments in expenditures. If you have not yet made your pledge for 2021, please do so today. If you have made your pledge, but would consider increasing the amount, that would be greatly appreciated. Let Bill in the office know. If you'd like to talk about online giving, call or email Bill Hollander at the church office. (bill.h@molive.org, 288-1580, ext. 204).

New Mount Olive Task Force Forming

Over the past 6+ months, through reading, conversation and study, Mount Olive members have been invested in learning more about the history and current realities of racism in our country. This is important work and we give thanks for everyone who has pushed themselves to grow and be challenged, wherever you are on the journey.

Some members have expressed a desire to move their learning into helpful actions, lived out through their church and faith. At their November meeting, the Executive Council approved the development of a task force to begin exploring next steps for Mount Olive. Leadership envisions that this will be a long and thoughtful process with community engagement at a number of levels, similar in many ways to the Inclusive Church Task Force that led Mount Olive through the highly beneficial Reconciling in Christ process a few years ago.

At this point, we are inviting you to reach out if you are interested in helping lead Mount Olive on this next step in our journey of learning about systemic racism and cultivating spaces to consider new ways of living and moving in the world together. If you are interested in participating or have questions, contact Pastor Lisa at lisa@molive.org

COVID-19 Guidance for In-Person Meetings

In-person meetings at Mount Olive are now limited to 10 people with safety guidelines in place. The guidelines are available on the church website, www.molive.org or by contacting the office. Meetings must be scheduled ahead of time with church staff. Wearing masks, practicing social distance and using hand sanitizer or washing hands frequently are required. If anyone is showing any signs or symptoms of COVID, or has been in contact with anyone who has presumed or confirmed COVID – they should not attend in-person meetings until they are feeling better and have completed the recommended time of isolation. Note that guidelines are subject to change based on local or state-wide regulations. Groups will be notified of changes or cancellations. Your cooperation is appreciated!

Help Us Send Christmas Cheer

When the daylight hours are short, the days can seem long, especially when experiencing the isolation so many of us are enduring these days. You are invited to spread a little Christmas cheer by writing notes to those who are more isolated than usual this year – those in congregate living situations where visitors are prohibited, those who can't go out because of health conditions, people who are grieving, those in the military — you get the idea. There are many in our community whose days would be brightened by a cheerful note. To simplify the process, we will be providing pre-addressed cards that you can pick up from the church office. Add a short note, sign your name, and send it along. If necessary, you may return the completed cards to the church office for postage. Cards will be available in the office beginning December 1. Note that the office is generally open Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am—5:00 pm, but there are exceptions, so you may want to call ahead. Thank You!



Santa Lucia Day Observed December 13

Santa Lucia Day will be celebrated in online worship on Sunday, December 13. We will be listening to the Santa Lucia story and singing the familiar carol, but instead of our usual procession of Santa Lucia and the Star Boys and the reception with the Mint Girls, we will be sharing pictures of celebrations from the past. Maybe you will catch a picture of *yourself* in action! Perhaps you could plan to bake a batch of Lucia buns and celebrate at your home too!



Tailgate Worship Continues – Weather Permitting

When will it be too cold to hold Tailgate Worship on Sundays? We don't know, so at this point, we are planning on continuing Tailgate Worship at 11:00 am, Sundays, December 6 and 20. As usual, worshippers will be tuning into the service via FM radio, and with COVID restrictions now in place, everyone is asked to remain in their cars for the entire event, as well as before and after. Also, all worshippers need to bring some wine/juice and cracker/bread for Holy Communion. See you Sundays in the parking lot!

Longest Night Service

This year, our Longest Night service will be available online the week prior to Christmas. It will be a meditative service that acknowledges that the season can bring up hard feelings for many of us, particularly this year when we may be more isolated and have fewer distractions.

Through word and song you will be invited into a space where you can enter the darkness and confront both the pain and the gifts to be found there.

We encourage you to watch the service on December 21st, the Longest Night of the Year, or any other time that feels like the "longest night" for you. The link will be shared on the front page of the Mount Olive website, www.molive.org.

Sunday Psalm Prayer—30 Minutes of Quiet Goodness

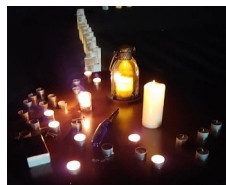
Beginning January 3, 2021, join Richard Bruxvoort Colligan every Sunday at 4:30 pm for engagement of the psalms with music, reflection, silence and prayer. YouTube livestream. Watch olivebranchcommunity.org for details/links.

Christmas Eve Offering

Rainbow School has been a long-time ministry partner of Mount Olive's. Housed at Zumbro Lutheran Church, it supports families needing affordable daycare, much like our new Early Learning Center at Mount Olive. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Rainbow School has now been reduced to half its usual student capacity, and their need for increased vigilance in virus control has also brought on new challenges. Their primary need now is to install hand-washing sinks in each of the classrooms, so that students do not need to make constant trips to the bathrooms to wash before and after activities and meals. The cost of this project is \$18,150. Needless to say, this is well beyond their planned-for expenses. That's where we come in. Mount Olive has designated this project as its Christmas Eve offering recipient this year. Gifts in any amount will be gratefully received. Thank you for supporting Rainbow School.

A Meaningful All Saints Walk

Many gathered for the first ever All Saints Memorial Walk on November 1.





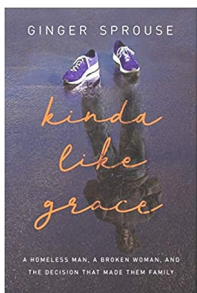
Women's Christmas Party December 7

The Women's Virtual Christmas party will be on Monday, **December 7** at 6:30 pm via Zoom. Everyone is asked to put on a Christmas sweater and a hat for a fun evening on Zoom! You don't have a Christmas Hat?? Then it's time to get creative! Silly or serious, tall or small, we'll look forward to seeing all the different hats on Zoom. The evening program will include a Christmas devotion, music, and a presentation by Courtney Dugstad, Executive Director of Next Chapter Ministries. The offering will support Next Chapter's Christmas Sharing Program. There will also be a short business meeting to discuss the budget and planning for the Women of the ELCA in 2021. We hope to see you there! The Zoom Meeting ID: 893 9120 7197

The Mount Olive women's circles do not meet in the month of December. In January, they will resume meeting for fellowship and a study from *Gather Magazine*. Some groups will meet via Zoom and some will meet in person, socially distanced. Meeting times vary and include: Tuesday or Friday mornings, Tuesday afternoon, and Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Contact Regina Seabrook, Mount Olive Women of the ELCA President, with any questions or if you are interested in joining a small group - rseabroo@gmail.com.

**Women of the ELCA Study
Leader's Meeting Tuesday,
January 5 at 5:30 pm on Zoom.**

Monday Book Group



The **Monday Book Group** gathers monthly to discuss a wide variety of literature. They will meet again via Zoom December 14 at 6:30 pm. This month's selection is ***Kinda Like Grace: A Homeless Man, a Broken Woman, and the Decision That Made Them Family*** by Ginger Sprouse. The author tells the story of befriending a homeless man with warmth and humor, sharing her love of Christ and the Bible along the way. Her mission is to dispel the stereotypical portrait of a Christian and let her light shine with love and compassion for all. If you would like to be added to the email list or receive the Zoom invitation for December, contact Jodi Schoer at mjschoer@charter.net.

Ripe Olives

The "Ripe Olives", Mount Olives senior citizen's group, will gather again via Zoom on Friday, **December 11**, at 9:30 am. Deacon Travis Beck will be our guest to share a class he has developed for the Learning is ForEver program in Rochester. Entitled ***From Saint to Santa: The Evolution of Father Christmas***, we'll learn how a Christian saint became transformed into the sleigh-riding, present-delivering, cookie devouring, "jolly old elf" that we know today. While not the same as gathering in person, Ripe Olives is a way to safely stay connected in these difficult times. The Zoom meeting ID, which will stay the same each month, is: Meeting ID: 826 2188 5743 Passcode: 213773 We also hope to be able to provide an online recording of the program. Please contact Nancy Britson at nancy@molive.org or call 507-288-1580 with any questions.



Children's Christmas Program

The Mount Olive children's Christmas program will be available to watch online starting on Sunday, **December 20**. This year, our confirmation students will tell the Christmas story in creative ways. A virtual children's choir will be put together for three of our favorite Christmas songs. And we hope to see a wide variety of Christmas-related musical and other creative offerings from our kids and families. The more involvement we get, the better this program will be! Kids and families, **please send videos** (4 minutes or less) of you/your family singing, playing musical instruments, teaching a craft, showing a secret talent, etc. to Pastor Luke – luke@molive.org. Pastor Luke sent an email to all families with more specific instruction on video submissions including a link to a folder they can be uploaded to.

Advent Packets & Videos

During Advent, we will have family-based Advent videos instead of Sunday School. Pastor Luke has put together Advent packets which include craft supplies & a family Advent devotional to supplement the videos. Watch your mail for this exciting package! Each week we will sing songs, read through the devotional and learn an Advent/Christmas-themed craft with our high school students. Advent may look different this year, but we can still have fun waiting and hoping together during this season!



High School Youth Fellowship

Mount Olive High School Youth will continue to meet every other Wednesday, 7-8:30pm, as long as we can do so safely. We will play Jackbox Games at our next gathering on Wednesday, **December 9**. You will need a smart phone, tablet or laptop for this (if you don't have one that is okay, email Luke and he will make sure we have extras). The big screen will serve as our game board and we will draw fun prompts on our devices that the other players will have to guess. It is a great time! Then, we will take some time off and start again January 20, 2021. Email luke@molive.org with any questions.

Advent Devotions

Advent devotion books for adults are available to pick up in the church office. Mount Olive members can watch for an Advent email as well, which will contain a pdf of the devotion. You may request a copy to be mailed by contacting Nancy Britson in the church office—nancy@molive.org or call 507-288-1580.

This devotional is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It's for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. And so, as you walk through these prompts and readings day by day, may you dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Together, may we seek and sow God's dreams for our world

Pub Theology

Pub Theology continues to meet weekly on Mondays, 5:30 – 6:30 pm on Zoom and has been enjoying this time of connection with each other. Weekly topics, announcements, and the link to our Zoom gathering continue to be posted at rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com.

Pastor Glenn's Lutheranism 101 Class

If you have never been confirmed in the Lutheran faith and would like to receive instruction towards this, now is the time to consider joining Pastor Glenn's Lutheranism 101 class. Meeting Wednesdays, January 6 through February 3, at 6:30 pm via Zoom, this class will explore the treasures of the Lutheran faith, and introduce spiritual practices that have sustained Christians for millennia. To sign up, receive a book, or learn more, contact Pastor Glenn anytime, glenn@molive.org.

New Website Launched

It is finally here! Visit olivebranchcommunity.org to soak in all the incredible things that are now possible (and already happening) because of your support. Stop by to register for upcoming events such as Off the Page or Artist Studio, access many resources, and learn more about Olive Branch. There is an option to offer financial support to Olive Branch as well.

Sold Out Events

Did you know that Olive Branch is reaching capacity at our events on a regular basis? From in-person workshops like **Artist's Studio** to online events like **Off the Page** and **Some Assembly Required** - we have been thrilled to have such incredible interest and attendance for our events.

Some Assembly Required

This is the name of a workshop that Olive Branch offered on Zoom on November 19, 2020. Having spent a great deal of time planning the **Longest Night** service for Mount Olive, we decided to share our resources with other church leaders who are thinking about having a Blue Christmas or Longest Night service this year, possibly for the first time ever.

We thought a few people might take us up on the offer. We didn't expect the interest to exceed the 100-person capacity of our Zoom call. Over 120 people registered/were put on a waiting list and we anticipate many more will view the recording online in the coming weeks.

We learned, once again, that what we are doing at Olive Branch is both exciting and inspiring to ministry leaders across North America.

Service

Family Promise Update

Family Promise (FP) has moved to their new day center and it is amazing! The staff are now working in their offices, which are located in the house. There will be a VIRTUAL open house coming soon. Right now, there are no families in the program due to COVID-19 and the need to keep guests, staff, and volunteers safe. The hopeful starting date for hosting guests at their new location is January 4, but with cases rising again, it will more likely be early spring.



If you are looking for a way to help FP or families that have graduated from the program, you are invited to see the day center's wish list for items they need at their Target registry: tgt.gifts/fprhousewarming. Additionally, if you are interested in adopting a family for the holidays, please contact Program Director, Nicolette Meyer at 507-281-3122 or nmeyer@fprochestermn.org. They will provide you with a list of gifts you could get the families. You can even shop via Amazon or Target and have it shipped to the day center!

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Due to the need for social distancing and other safety concerns, Mount Olive will not be coordinating specific times for Salvation Army bell ringing. If you would like to support the Salvation Army and the ways they help in the Rochester community, you are welcome to choose your own time slot at www.registertoring.com.



The Mitten Tree Collection Continues

The Mitten Tree will remain on display in the entry through December 20 to collect cold weather gear for our neighborhood school, Elton Hills Elementary. A number of items were already delivered to the school to be given to children as they pick up distance learning supplies. To help out, simply select an ornament from the tree and purchase the item requested. Warm, waterproof gloves of all sizes, winter boots for K-3rd grade, and boys coats of all sizes are especially needed. You may also donate funds that coordinators will use to purchase items requested by the school for specific students. Envelopes are available on the tree or you may make a gift by clicking the green "Donate Now" button at the bottom of the church website homepage- www.molive.org; indicate "mitten tree" in the comment.



God's Global Barnyard/Good Gifts

Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift this year? Well, look no further! Mount Olive will be taking donations for ELCA Good Gifts (God's Global Barnyard) which helps to fight hunger in 83 different countries. An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need, providing food, fertilizer, and offspring to market. With one gift, you can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.

When you purchase an ornament to give to a loved one, the ELCA will then purchase the animals to be given to a village with the most need. Ornaments available include: \$10 for 10 chicks, \$20 for honeybees, \$30 for a pig, or \$50 for a goat. There will be a tree set up in the entryway at church with ornaments for you to choose from. Envelopes will be provided for you to submit your payment. You may drop it in the church mailbox or in the office if it is open. The church is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you are unable to stop by the church, contact Carrie Fletcher for other pick up and payment options. This is such a wonderful way to give back. We will collect donations through December 1-15, 2020. Please contact Carrie at cxnfletcher@gmail.com with any questions. Thank you.



Mount Olive Quilters Receive Great News

The Mount Olive Quilters received the great news that the Lutheran World Relief quilts and kits that were feared to be destroyed in the Beirut explosion were found intact! These items will be shared with more than 24,000 people in that region. Visit: lwr.org/story-hub/humanitarian-aid-refugees-feared-destroyed-beirut-explosion-found-intact

A limited number of the Mount Olive quilters have resumed meeting in the Fellowship Hall, socially distanced while wearing masks, Thursday mornings at 9:00 am. If you are interested in joining them, please contact Donna Grever at 507-206-4605. Kits of fabric for sewing quilts at home are also available for pick up in the Gathering Area cupboard.

Channel One

Thank you to everyone who donated to Channel One during November! Your contribution helps to provide food to families experiencing difficult times during the holiday season.

Donations are still being accepted; you may click on the ["Donate Now"](#) button on the church website or send a check to Mount Olive. Please indicate Channel One in the "other" section online or your check memo. If you are interested in volunteering at Channel One, please go to helpingfeedpeople.org/volunteer to learn more.



Mount Olive Prayer Shawl Group

The Mount Olive prayer shawl group will not meet in December. If you would like to request a prayer shawl for someone who is experiencing illness, loss, or a difficult time, please contact Vickie Kubly at 507-282-7696 or you may call the church office at 507-288-1580.



From the Mount Olive Staff

A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS TO YOU

May you be surrounded with warmth and love
this holiday season!

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

2830 18th Ave. NW
Rochester, MN 55901
507-288-1580 Website: molive.org



A Reconciling in
Christ Community

Mount Olive Staff

The Rev. Dr. Glenn Monson
Senior Pastor

glenn@molive.org Ext. 206

The Rev. Lisa Janke
Associate Pastor of Outreach

lisa@molive.org Ext. 205

Deacon Travis Beck
Director of Worship, Music, and Arts

travis@molive.org Ext. 203

The Rev. Luke Hollander
Associate Pastor of Children, Youth, and Family

luke@molive.org Ext. 207

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan
Cantor of Olive Branch

richard@molive.org

Bill Hollander
Congregational Administrator

bill.h@molive.org Ext. 204

**Carrie Fletcher—Administrative Assistant
and Nursery Coordinator**

carrie@molive.org Ext. 209

Nancy Britson
Director of Congregational Life

nancy@molive.org Ext. 202