



# The Messenger

February 2021

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

*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

## February Reading Challenge

February is Black History Month - a time to celebrate the influence and achievements of Black Americans who have shaped our country. As part of Mount Olive's commitment to racial justice, we're excited to kick off a year of great book suggestions in the Messenger. Each newsletter will feature two or three books recommended by people in our community. If one of the books catches your eye, maybe it's your next read. At the end of the year, we'll have built a Mount Olive bibliography that has shaped our journey in our work of racial justice.

### February 2021 Book Recommendations:

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan -***Jesus and the Disinherited*** by Howard Thurman. Howard Thurman was a black preacher, author and mystic of the civil rights era. This book explores the themes of love, hate, fear and deception in a world wrestling with racial injustice and faith. MLK often traveled with this book under his arm. When I discovered him in seminary, I fell in love with his poetry and gentle, thoughtful way of describing monumental things.

Pastor Luke -***The Hate U Give*** by Angie Thomas. This young adult novel is a quick and engaging read. Written by Angie Thomas in 2017 and adapted as a film in 2018, it offers a unique perspective from a 16-year-old black girl from a poor neighborhood who attends a private, predominately white school. The narrator, Starr Carter, witnesses a white police officer shoot and kill her childhood friend, and wrestles with the social tensions and events that follows.

Pastor Glenn -***Stand Your Ground*** by Kelly Brown Douglas. The author wrestles with questions of social justice and God's justice in the wake of the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin, a Floridian teenager, and the acquittal of his killer based on "Stand Your Ground" laws.

Throughout the year, we want to know what *you're* reading. What book can you recommend to other Mount Olive members that has been important to you? Would you even be interested in leading a small group discussion around that book? Be in touch with Nancy Britson with your ideas— [nancy@molive.org](mailto:nancy@molive.org). For additional book suggestions, see page 6.

## Ash Wednesday Includes Ashes-to-Go

Ash Wednesday, February 17, will have a definite COVID feel to it this year. We will be offering a full **Online Worship** service, including the Imposition of Ashes, and we will also offer a **Parking Lot Worship** service that day at 6:00 pm. Again, at that service, there will be the opportunity for Imposition of Ashes. As an added opportunity, the pastors will also be present from noon to 1 o'clock for "**Ashes-to-Go**", which means you can drive into the parking lot, receive a cross of ashes and a prayer from one of the pastors and be on your way. Whichever way you choose to observe this important day, we pray it is a blessing.

## 2021 is Our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

In February 1960, a Mission Developer, Rev. Don Johnson, of the Board of American Mission of the Augustana Synod of the Lutheran Church, was called to plant a new church in Rochester, Minnesota. Its name was to be Mount Olive Lutheran Church. Rev. Johnson, his wife and four children, arrived in September of that year and led the congregation through the building of its first unit, which broke ground in July 1961. Before the completion of its first unit the congregation met in the Covenant Church on Elton Hills Drive, now the River of Glory Church.



## Thank you for Your Year-End Gifts!

As the last months of 2020 approached and the effects of being closed to in-person worship and in-person gatherings of any kind since March began to be felt financially, the Church Council was wondering what kind of decisions might need to be made going forward. Would we need to dip into our reserves? Would we be able to continue our mission support and outreach goals as they had been outlined in the past? Would staff members be expected to go without a cost-of-living adjustment or even asked to reduce hours? We didn't know. What we did know was that the effects of not being open added up to nearly \$40,000 in lost income for the year. **But then you came through!** A number of generous households in the congregation stepped forward to offer matching funds for year-end gifts totalling at least \$11,000. When all was said and done, the sum we had been lacking was almost completely regained through your generosity. Year-end gifts above regular giving totaled nearly \$40,000, including the matching funds! Thank you very much! Your generosity has meant we are on a firm footing financially going forward.

## Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held virtually on Sunday, **January 31**. The meeting will open at 10:30 am and be called to order at 11:00 am. Further directions regarding your participation in this important meeting and paper ballots were sent out to all members by email/mail. Please contact the office if you have questions or need further assistance,

**Annual Meeting YouTube Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44S0y1FFo5Q>

**Annual Meeting Zoom number for phone in only:** Call 1 312 626 6799

When prompted, give the meeting ID: 980 252 5207

**Return ballots to the Mount Olive office between January 31 and February 7.** Please fill in the verification number given at the live meeting. Members must be present at the virtual meeting to cast a vote for election of officers/ministry leaders, approval of the annual budget, and any other items necessitating a vote. The **annual report** of the congregation is now available as a pdf or you may pick up a printed copy in the church office.

## Lenten Offerings to Benefit Global Companions

During the Lenten season this year the Southeastern Minnesota Synod is encouraging all congregations to jump aboard an initiative called **40 Together: 1 Body, 1 Dollar, 40 Days**. Through this project, monies will be raised to support our companions in ministry in Colombia, Tanzania, and the southern border of the U.S. who are suffering greatly because of COVID-19. Food insecurity is common in these places as work has become scarce and the virus has placed enormous strains on already struggling families. During the season of Lent, every person from every congregation in our synod is asked to give one dollar for every day of the Lenten season. If every member of Mount Olive gave at least \$40, our gift would be nearly \$3000. We can do this. Make your gifts to Mount Olive, memo: Lenten offering. Thank you.

**40 Together**  
*1 Body, 1 Dollar, 40 Days*

## Yes, Tailgate Worship Continues – Weather Permitting

Is Tailgate Worship still continuing on Sundays in February? Yes! Believe it or not. If it gets too cold and/or snowy for us to gather we won't, but until then, bring your thermos of hot coffee and/or cocoa, your Holy Communion supplies, and your sense of adventure and join us Sundays, February 7 and 21 for Tailgate Worship at 11:00 am in the Mount Olive parking lot. Who knew that our south-facing Fellowship Hall windows which overlook the parking lot could be such an advantage!



## Lenten Midweek Services Are Psalm-centered

The Book of Psalms will be our focus for the Midweek Lenten online services this year. Each Wednesday, a member of the pastoral/musical team will provide a reflection on the Psalm that is appointed for the following Sunday. In addition, we will be introduced to a new Lenten liturgy written by Olive Branch Cantor, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan. We may even add some interactive elements to these midweek services, so be sure to tune in. Service links will be shared on Facebook and available each week on Mount Olive's YouTube Channel- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqQHPLrP-lcwjKD0lwIGwdA>. Be sure to click on the "Subscribe" button.

Lenten Schedule	
<b>Ash Wednesday February 17</b>	Noon-1:00 pm - "Ashes to Go" in the church parking lot. 6:00 pm - Parking Lot Worship with Imposition of Ashes Online Worship on Mount Olive's YouTube Channel
<b>Wednesdays beginning February 24</b>	7:00 pm Bible Study: <i>The Psalms: Songs of the Faithful</i> on Zoom Online Worship on Mount Olive's YouTube Channel
<b>Thursdays beginning February 18</b>	10:30 am Bible Study: <i>The Psalms: Songs of the Faithful</i> on Zoom
<b>Sundays beginning February 21</b>	Online Worship on Mount Olive's YouTube Channel 4:30 pm Sunday Psalm Prayer on Olive Branch YouTube channel



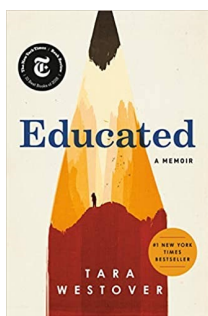
## Sunday Psalm Prayer Continues

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan leads us every Sunday at 4:30 pm in a simple, contemplative service of music, reflection and silence with the psalms. We're making our way through the Psalter in numerical order, and we're up to Psalm 5! If you can't join us live at our YouTube channel, be welcome to the recordings there anytime you desire.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPRunOmryq5TCrOsrXM50tw>







## Monday Book Group

The **Monday Book Group** gathers monthly to discuss a wide variety of literature. They will meet again via Zoom **February 8** at 6:30 pm. This month's selection is ***Educated: A Memoir*** by Tara Westover. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. If you would like to be added to the email list or receive the Zoom invitation for February, contact Jodi Schoer at [mjschoer@charter.net](mailto:mjschoer@charter.net).

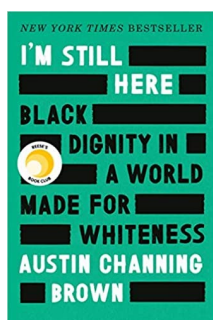
## Ripe Olives Zoom with Mayor Kim Norton

The "Ripe Olives", Mount Olives senior citizen's group, will gather again via Zoom on Friday, **February 12**, at 9:15 am. (Note earlier meeting time.) Last March, we had planned to host Mayor Norton at Mount Olive, but had to cancel due to COVID-19. She has graciously agreed to meet with the group on Zoom this month to update us on the news in Rochester. If you have any particular question you'd like to ask her, please email it to Nancy ahead of time. To accommodate her busy schedule, our meeting will be brief, but informative. The Zoom meeting ID, which will stay the same each month, is: Meeting ID: 826 2188 5743 Passcode: 213773 Please contact Nancy Britson at [nancy@molive.org](mailto:nancy@molive.org) or call 507-288-1580 with any questions.



## Pastor Glenn Hosts Lenten Bible Study on Psalms

This year during the season of Lent, Pastor Glenn will be leading a Bible study based on selected Psalms on Zoom. We will study six different psalms, including laments, praise psalms, instructional psalms, and even an acrostic psalm. Classes will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 17 and Thursday, February 18, and go for six weeks. Classes will be held via Zoom on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm, and Thursdays at 10:30 am. Feel free to attend either time as your schedule allows. We will be using a study guide entitled "Songs of the Faithful", which may be ordered through the office for \$8.00. Guests and friends of members are always welcome. Contact Nancy Britson to order a book and sign up, [nancy@molive.org](mailto:nancy@molive.org) or 507-288-1580. Participants will be sent the Zoom link and book pick-up information.



## Faith Seeking Understanding (FSU) Meets February 4

Faith Seeking Understanding reads and shares conversations about a variety of books and videos on theology, spirituality, social justice, and Christianity and our changing church. The next meeting is on Tuesday, **February 4** at 6:30 pm. This month's book selection is *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown. The Bestseller that began a movement: "In a time when nearly all institutions (schools, churches, universities, businesses) claim to value "diversity" in their mission statements, *I'm Still Here* is a powerful account of how and why our actions so often fall short of our words. Austin writes in breathtaking detail about her journey to self-worth and the pitfalls that kill our attempts at racial justice, in stories that bear witness to the complexity of America's social fabric--from Black Cleveland neighborhoods to private schools in the middle-class suburbs, from prison walls to the boardrooms at majority-white organizations." -- from the book website. All are welcome to attend. The Zoom Meeting ID: 883 1860 1767 Please contact Pastor Lisa with any questions—[lisa@molive.org](mailto:lisa@molive.org).

## 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](http://rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com).

## Children, Youth and Family Updates

Hi friends and family of Mount Olive,

I don't have many updates for this February as we close in on a year of this pandemic. I continue to miss and pray for you regularly. Look for me to reach out to you over the next month in efforts to check in. I have enjoyed seeing a number of you at our parking lot worship services.

Thank you for your participation in the Christmas Program – it was my second favorite thing to happen in 2020. (You may recall our son, August, was born in January) If you have not seen it, or simply need something to lift your spirits and wish to watch it again, here is the link: [https://youtu.be/PtiLgXo\\_bQU](https://youtu.be/PtiLgXo_bQU).



I am already imagining what creative things we can participate in together during Lent and the Easter season. Look for some fun crafts like making palm branches and opportunities to take pictures and incorporate them in worship. I also imagine some alternative ways we might try Sunday school. And if we can find safe ways to gather, fellowship events like skating outside. I will keep you updated via email and encourage you to reach out if you have any ideas.

Things that will continue for now:

**Online Sunday School:** Each week I will publish a video to YouTube for our Sunday school age students including songs, a Bible story and a craft or activity. It is great when we get others involved, so if you and/or your family would like to create a video of any Sunday school elements, please reach out to me. There will be an additional video for our 3 and 4-year-olds to supplement the packets you received which were organized by Ms. Linda and myself.

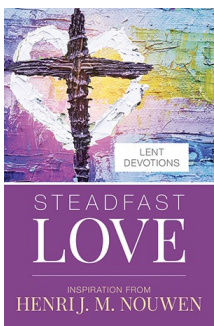
**Confirmation:** We will continue to meet every other week, 7:00-8:00 pm, at the church masked and socially distanced to keep one another safe. This means we will meet on Wednesday, February 24. Note that Pastor Luke will be gone on February 10, but will send out an engaging video for confirmation students to watch and participate in. Our February retreat will be held at the church on Sunday, February 21, 1:00-4:00 pm.

**High School:** Every other Wednesday we gather at the church, 7-8:30 pm, for safe, fellowship time. We have some fun things coming up including skating, crafts, games and more. Watch your emails for more specific information. Additionally, we are starting to plan for our youth trip to Colorado this summer. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or interest in participating in one of the best weeks of your life, filled with adventure.

God's Peace,

Pastor Luke

[luke@molive.org](mailto:luke@molive.org)



## Lenten Devotions Available

A Lenten devotion entitled *Steadfast Love* by Henri J. M. Nouwen will soon be available in the Mount Olive office. Those on the bulletin mailing list will receive a copy in the mail. One of the most beloved spiritual thinkers of the 20th century, Nouwen wrote passionately about the steadfast love of God in a way that has touched the hearts of readers the world over. Pick a booklet up for your daily Lenten reading time or contact the church office if you would like to receive one by mail.

## Artist's Studio

Olive Branch continues to gather each Monday, 6:30 – 8:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall for Artist's Studio. In the coming months we will repeat some of the most well-received workshops and offer some new ones, along with Open Studio nights to work on any project you choose. Find out more about Artist's Studio here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/133131729587>

## Olive Branch Website

Visit [olivebranchcommunity.org](http://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.

### White people want to know: Do you say "African-American" or "Black?"

Words are important because they help us understand someone else's reality. Using the descriptive words they prefer is a way to love our neighbor. To honor a person's preferences is an open-hearted way to engage in relationship with them. Preferences vary, but Alisha Harris and Amber Ruffin recently wrote that they prefer "Black". Why? While dark skin connects them genetically to Africa, both women describe their life experience as being far enough removed from their African heritage that a different word is helpful. With several generations of their families born and raised in the United States, they describe their experience as being distinctively Black American.

## Suggested Reading List:

Would you be willing to provide a 2-3 sentence book summary/recommendation for a future newsletter? It may be a book from this list or another of your choosing. Contact Nancy Britson at [nancy@molive.org](mailto:nancy@molive.org) to share your review.

***Dear Church: A Love Letter From a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.*** by Rev. Lenny Duncan

***I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*** by Austin Channing Brown

***New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*** by Michelle Alexander

***White Fragility: Why it's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*** by Robin DiAngelo

***Between the World and Me*** by Ta-Nehisi Coates

***You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey*** by Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar.

***The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey*** by Walter Mosley

***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*** by Isabel Wilkerson

***Strength to Love*** by Martin Luther King, Jr.

***Made For Goodness and Why This Makes All the Difference*** by Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tuto

## Women of the ELCA News



**World Day of Prayer Update-** Because of the pandemic, the World Day of Prayer

Ecumenical gathering will not be held this March. First Presbyterian Church will host the World Day of Prayer on March 4, 2022. We look forward to getting together again for fellowship and worship.

Contact Regina Seabrook, Mount Olive Women of the ELCA President, with any questions or if you are interested in joining a women's small group for a monthly Bible study - [rseabroo@gmail.com](mailto:rseabroo@gmail.com).

**The Women of the ELCA Study Leader's Meeting with Pastor Glenn is Tuesday, February 2 at 5:30 pm on Zoom. You'll need your February copy of Gather Magazine. Zoom ID: 853 9855 7199 Passcode: 399944**



## Mount Olive Quilters

A limited number of the Mount Olive quilters have resumed meeting weekly in the Fellowship Hall, socially distanced while wearing masks. They meet 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. The cupboard also contains a bin for fabric donations. Drop off clean, cotton fabric measuring at least 12" x 12" in size.

## Channel One

Channel One, our local food bank, is not accepting donated food from the general public. To support Channel One, you are asked to give financial contributions to help them to provide food to families experiencing difficult times. 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](https://helpingfeedpeople.org/volunteer) to learn more.



## Mount Olive Prayer Shawl Group

The Mount Olive prayer shawl group will meet on **February 9** at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall, socially distanced and wearing masks. Yarn, needles, patterns, and guidance are supplied; please contact Vickie Kubly if you would like to join the group—507-282-7696. If you would like to request a prayer shawl for someone who is experiencing illness, loss, or a difficult time, please contact Vickie, or you may call the church office at 507-288-1580.

## Family Promise Resumes Hosting Homeless Families

Family Promise is preparing to host families at their new Day Center at 913 1st St. NW. They will be using a Signup Genius link (given below) to organize ALL volunteers. A few additional details:



- There will be just one family in the program at a time. Details regarding the family will be given the week prior.
- Masks are required at all times--by both families and volunteers. This is a very strict rule; families not following the rules will not be allowed to continue in the program.
- Handwashing and social distancing are encouraged. If volunteers do want to eat with the family, know that there are eating areas in two separate rooms.
- It is not required for the family members to be tested for COVID-19 before entering the program. While mask wearing is effective, it isn't 100% effective, therefore it is advised any volunteers 65 or older or volunteers with pre-existing conditions do NOT participate in person at this time.
- **There are several options for no-contact volunteers:** order a meal to be delivered, make a meal for no-contact drop off, donate a gift card, or donate money or food to another volunteer who could bring/drop off the food.

Click on this link to see open volunteer slots and sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c4fa4aa22a3f94-913master>

Please contact Erin Sinnwell, Mount Olive member and Family Promise Board President with any questions: [etracy515@hotmail.com](mailto:etracy515@hotmail.com) or 507-990-6079.

## Lutheran World Relief Sewing Projects Available

Receiving blankets to be hemmed, baby jackets to be sewed, and kits of fabric squares and instructions for making LWR quilt tops are available to pick up from the cabinet in the Gathering Area. Directions are included for these simple projects. Return finished items to the same cabinet. Contact Cathy Hanson with any questions - 507-398-3917.



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](http://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 have completed the recommended time of isolation. Your cooperation is appreciated!

Mount Olive members and friends in need of prayer are being remembered by prayer chain members, the Mount Olive staff, and are included in bulletins that are mailed to a number of members. Prayer chain requests are sent along via email to the group as they are received by the prayer chain coordinator, Kim Ignatius, and also sent out before weekend services. If you have a prayer request and would like the prayer chain to be in prayer for you or someone you love, or if you would like to join the prayer chain as one who prays, please contact Kim at: 507-271-6087 or [ignatius.kimberlie@charter.net](mailto:ignatius.kimberlie@charter.net). You may also contact any of the pastors with requests via phone or email—see contact info. below.

Offering envelopes for anyone who does not use *Simply Giving* have been made available to pick up in the church entry. The building is open daily for the Family Circle Learning Center, so stop by anytime. If you are interested in learning more about electronic giving to Mount Olive, please call Bill Hollander at 288-1580, ext. 204 or [bill.h@molive.org](mailto:bill.h@molive.org).



*"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:*

<i>All gender identities and sexual orientations</i>	<i>All races and ethnicities</i>
<i>All ages and abilities</i>	<i>All economic statuses and education levels</i>
<i>All faith journeys and personal histories</i>	

*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."*



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## A Reconciling in Christ Community

<b>The Rev. Dr. Glenn Monson</b> Senior Pastor <a href="mailto:glenn@molive.org">glenn@molive.org</a> Ext. 206	<b>The Rev. Lisa Janke</b> Associate Pastor of Outreach <a href="mailto:lisa@molive.org">lisa@molive.org</a> Ext. 205	<b>Deacon Travis Beck</b> Director of Worship, Music, and Arts <a href="mailto:travis@molive.org">travis@molive.org</a> Ext. 203
<b>The Rev. Luke Hollander</b> Associate Pastor of Children, Youth, and Family <a href="mailto:luke@molive.org">luke@molive.org</a> Ext. 207	<b>Richard Bruxvoort Colligan</b> Cantor of Olive Branch <a href="mailto:richard@molive.org">richard@molive.org</a>	<b>Bill Hollander</b> Congregational Administrator <a href="mailto:bill.h@molive.org">bill.h@molive.org</a> Ext. 204
<b>Carrie Fletcher—Administrative Assistant and Nursery Coordinator</b> <a href="mailto:carrie@molive.org">carrie@molive.org</a> Ext. 209	<b>Nancy Britson</b> Director of Congregational Life <a href="mailto:nancy@molive.org">nancy@molive.org</a> Ext. 202	