

THE Messenger

June 2020

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

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Internship Comes to Completion

Thank you for a great internship experience. I was able to experiment with different styles of preaching, preside over communion, take on various leadership roles, and most importantly, discover aspects of my pastoral identity. And I have even been editing online worship videos and leading online Sunday school, things I never thought I'd do!

On May 25th, my internship is officially over. And my final step is an interview with the synod candidacy committee that will happen in the last week of May. Assuming that goes well and pending a positive congregational vote, I will be ordained sometime this summer. I will be sure to let you know when a date is set.

It won't look like much of a change for you, but the shift in title from 'Director' to 'Associate Pastor' of Children, Youth and Family is the result of MANY years of work the Holy Spirit has been doing in me. I am grateful for this call, specifically to the Mount Olive family. God is doing great work in us all, in ways we least expect, especially during this unusual time. With Internship and the program year complete, I will begin my 6-week parental leave on May 25 and it will continue through the July 4th weekend. Please reach out to Pastor Glenn or Pastor Lisa with any pastoral care needs while I am away.

Peace,

Intern (for one last time) Pastor Luke



Pentecost Parallels

In this global pandemic, ministry may be limited to the work of a small group of people behind closed doors; the language of worship and other programming has changed from in-person to online, amazing and perplexing many of us; and church leaders are discovering that the ripples of their ministry are traveling farther than before. As a colleague

wrote me in an email last week, "Livestream is an ongoing challenge and learning experience, but we're having fun and realizing that we're reaching a lot of people that we wouldn't with in-person worship only."

I can't think of a story with better parallels to this than the story of Pentecost. A small group of apostles in a closed room; the speaking of new languages, creating a commotion that draws an "amazed and perplexed" crowd (Acts 2:12); and a Spirit that continually pushes the Church's boundaries farther outward, from a handful of "witnesses in Jerusalem" to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Certainly this pandemic has served as a similarly inaugural moment: the birth of the virtual Church.

We'll be observing Pentecost in our worship the weekend of May 30-31. It's an opportunity to celebrate the gifts and challenges of being the Church in this amazing time and to reflect on how all of us can continue to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth." To help us celebrate, we invite you to send us pictures of you dressed in red and we'll include these in our worship video. Send pictures to luke@molive.org by Thursday, May 28.

Deacon Travis Beck

Glad You Asked!

Some members have been asking how Mount Olive is doing financially in this COVID-19 time. There is an assumption that offerings will be down since in-person worship is not possible at this time. This assumption is correct. There is some downturn in offerings, particularly offerings which we receive from guests, visitors, and occasional worshippers. Happily, Mount Olive members have come through in a big way to make up for this. We have seen an uptick in electronic giving and a number of concerned members have even given extra gifts or given their total pledge early to insure that we are in a good financial position. Thank you to everyone for all your gifts, large and small. We are in a good position at this time.

To ensure that we continue to be on steady ground financially, especially if this COVID-19 situation continues for months and months, the Church Council has recently made several decisions that give us a bit more cash flow, should we need it: **1)** We have applied for and received a loan/grant from the Small Business Administration which pays approximately 2 ½ months of payroll. If we use this money for payroll and related expenses, we will not be required to pay it back; if we use the money for anything else, it will need to be repaid. We will use it for payroll.

2) We have inquired at our bank, Bremer Bank, about extending the term of our mortgage for 3-5 years or refinancing the mortgage, thereby creating \$3000-5000/month in additional cash flow. This money would be set aside in a dedicated line to be used only in an emergency. If it is not needed, it would be applied directly back to the principal of the mortgage.

Thank you to all who have continued to be so steady and generous in giving to Mount Olive. Because of your gifts, all of our mission partners are receiving their promised support and our staff is fully funded and going forward with confidence.

Connecting Helpers with Those in Need

All members are encouraged to be caregivers for one another in this difficult time. We know that those who have sent cards, letters, emails, and made calls to spread encouragement have been greatly appreciated. Others have offered to do errands for people who can't get out or are afraid to do, helped set up Zoom, or sewed some masks. Mount Olive has an online sign up sheet for anyone willing to be a resource. It is monitored and as requests come in, we will connect those in need with those who are willing to help. **If you would like to volunteer to help** in any of the ways mentioned above, follow this link: <https://tinyurl.com/tga8yxu>

THANK YOU
#HELPERS

If You Are In Need of Pastoral Care, Help with Errands, etc.

If you are having difficulty at this time of crisis, are in need of pastoral care, help with errands such as grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions, meals, etc., or if you would simply enjoy a friendly phone call on a regular basis, please let us know as there are a number of Mount Olive volunteers who are willing to help. You may contact the church office at 507-288-1580 or email Nancy Britson at nancy@molive.org. If you leave a message, we will return your call. In-person pastoral visits will continue to only be done in the case of emergencies.



Offerings

Your financial gifts are 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. Please enter any special designations on the memo of the check or online comment area.

Confessions of a Psalm Nerd

I think I know when it started. Growing up Lutheran, I sang them every Sunday. The psalms, after all, are knit into our liturgy. Create in me a clean heart... O Lord, open thou my lips... You are slow to anger, full of mercy and abounding in steadfast love...

One of the great things about being immersed in a liturgical tradition as a kid was that I knew prayers and scripture by heart before I could read. What a gift! Those seeds sprouted in me, and years later in seminary, I noticed the psalms again in a fresh way. This time, bothered by them.

That's when the Long-Term Project began.

Some of the psalms are happy, some are about wonder and awe, but *most* of them? Most of them are called laments — sad, angry songs of grief. When I learned that the scariest ones are not in the lectionary (so we don't tend to hear them in worship), I decided to get to the bottom of this. So I committed myself to be a student of these 3000-year-old songs of Israel, the prayers that Jesus prayed.

Fast forward to now. I've been immersed in the psalms eighteen years now. Along the way, against all odds, a psalm-centered vocation and career has taken shape— studying, teaching, singing and composing for the wider church. I just love it.

In these Sundays of the pandemic, I've been writing a new psalm song each week and making a song leading video for congregations like ours. The Project continues!

The psalms remain my central spiritual practice. They are a consistent partner in joy, wonder and challenge. They're not for everyone, of course, but I'm absolutely enthralled, and of this immersion, there's no end in sight.

Yep. I am a Psalm Nerd.

Richard BC, Olive Branch Cantor

Olive Branch presents – Off The Page!

Over the course of 5 weeks (beginning May 27 at 10 am or May 31 at 4 pm) we will meet on Zoom for a creative time of engaging with God's Word in new ways. This session will focus on 2 Corinthians. Check out our promotional video: <https://youtu.be/ilf-thAPwRA>

And while you're at it – watch this fun video made especially for Mount Olive members:

<https://youtu.be/LFKRDeTXHn0> And when you're ready to register, here's a link for that

too: <https://www.eventbrite.com/x/off-the-page-tickets-105286073480>



Litany for Motherhood

In worship a few weeks ago we included a litany for the wide spectrum of motherhood that was produced by our Olive Branch team. Many of you have expressed how meaningful this was for you. Did you know that this litany was made available for other churches and was used by at least 25 other church leaders and viewed on Facebook well over 1,000 times? This is just one example of how your investment in Olive Branch is benefitting the wider church and beyond!

Special Music Musicians Wanted

Travis continues to look for any musicians willing to record some special music at home for our virtual worship. It could be an instrumental or vocal solo or simply a single verse of a hymn; it could be accompanied or unaccompanied; even just audio if you don't want to appear on camera. Family groups welcome! We want you to be a part of making virtual worship happen. If you're interested, email Travis Beck at travis@molive.org.

Mount Olive Victory Gardens

The gardens have been planted! Tomatoes, peppers, radishes, carrots, peas, beans, cucumbers, potatoes, onions, garlic, lettuce, and cilantro. We are hoping to harvest and replant some of the



items. It is our hope to have an abundance of fresh produce to donate to Community Food Response, Channel

One, and Family Promise. If you know of any other organization that could benefit from fresh produce, or if you are interested in helping to weed and water the garden, please contact Lori Kuhlmann-Liebried at lorikl@hotmail.com or Carrie Fletcher at cxnfletcher@gmail.com.



Mount Olive Quilters-Fabric Mask Updates

It was decided that since the quilters had a lot of cotton fabric, our mission would temporarily change to help combat the Covid-19 virus by making face masks. Bags of fabric to make masks have been placed on a table in the entry for those wanting to make their own masks; feel free to pick up a bag or two. Mask patterns and tutorial videos are available on the Mount Olive website, www.molive.org.



Reminder: Take all completed fabric masks directly to Olmsted Medical Center, Marketing and Foundation Offices, 102 Elton Hills Drive, Rochester, MN, between 8 AM and 12 PM, Monday-Friday. **We will not be collecting them at Mount Olive.** OMC inspects and sanitizes each mask before use. OMC will work with Olmsted County Public Health, Mayo Clinic, and Zumbro Valley Medical Society, among other partners and health organizations to ensure the best possible allocation of donated homemade masks, PPE, and other resources.

Since this mission began, Mount Olive volunteers, led by Elaine Monson, have sewed hundreds of masks and donated them to many places in Rochester including Olmsted Medical Center, Mayo Clinic, Assisi Heights, the Rochester Fire Station' collection for nursing home residents, Grammercy Park, Rochester YMCA, Lutheran Social Services, and more. Masks have also been made for many Mount Olive members and their families. **If you would like a mask** for yourself or a family member, please contact Elaine Monson at 507-272-6404.

Special thanks to Elaine, the Mount Olive quilters, and all others who have been making masks. Your time and care is greatly appreciated!



Channel One Regional Food Bank- COVID-19 Response

Channel One is continuing to work hard to help people facing food insecurity. They have teamed up with the City of Rochester, Family Service Rochester, and Cradle 2 Career to provide food boxes to families in need. During this time, Channel One is focusing all volunteer efforts on packing emergency boxes and sanitizing. Several new procedures for volunteering have been implemented. If you are a healthy, low-risk individual, go to helpingfeedpeople.org/volunteer to learn more. Channel One is extremely grateful for your support of the community during this time.

Channel One Food Bank is currently in need of donations to allow the food bank to support all of those currently affected by COVID-19. Since Channel One is no longer accepting donated food from the public, the best way to help is to make a monetary donation. 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.

Family Promise Rochester

Homeless families participating in Family Promise are currently staying in Bear Creek Apartments (instead of host churches) during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This plan will continue as long as necessary to support the families and keep staff and volunteers safe. Family Promise is asking churches to donate \$500 when they host to help cover the \$2000 cost of renting the space each month. Mount Olive contributed during our host week in May. You may also help by making a monetary donation to Family Promise via the ["Donate Now"](#) button on the church website or send a check to Mount Olive. Mention Family Promise in the "other" section online or your check memo. Thank you to the Mount Olive volunteers who provided meals during our host week.



Thank you Bandage Rollers!

Thank you to everyone who has used the bandage rolling kits to make bandages for Global Health Ministries! Many rolled bandages were received! The completed bandages will be sent off to be used in places around the world where commercial bandages are not readily available. Now we will begin to resupply our bandage-making materials. Please save your white cotton or cotton blend bed sheets for our next collection time.

Lutheran World Relief

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is currently focusing on helping countries around the world that are already dealing with shortages in water and medical supplies to prepare for COVID-19. They are asking for financial support and volunteers to sew cloth face masks that will be sent to the areas in which they work. Masks are for those who don't have the option of social distancing or frequent hand washing, putting them at risk of serious illness. If you interested in learning more about how you can help, check out LWR's website, lwr.org, for more info.



We have many here in our own community who are in need of help, and our country's own struggle with Coronavirus may make it seem as though we can't help ourselves and others too. We are fortunate, however, that we are able to wash our hands with soap and water or go to the hospital when we need to; many in other countries do not have these necessities. Please keep LWR and the people they work with in your prayers.

Quilt Kits Available

Kits of fabric squares and instructions for making Lutheran World Relief quilt tops are now available for pick up at church. The kit bin is in the marked cabinet in the Gathering Area cupboard. Return completed quilt tops to the same cabinet. Contact Elaine Monson at 507-272-6404 with any questions.



Godspeed and Blessing Peg and Larry!

We recently learned that Peg and Larry Whitley will be moving to Missouri to be nearer to their family. They plan to move near the end of June, staying with their daughter until they are able to find their own place. How thankful we are for the faithful service shown by Peg and Larry! Peg was a long-time staff member, retiring in 2010 as Hospitality and New Member Coordinator. For many, Peg was the first person they met at Mount Olive and the reason they decided to join the church. After retirement, she continued leading her

Welca circle and the Prayer Shawl group and providing her famous baked treats. Larry, a retired IBMer, was critical to the reconnection with Tanzania, joining the mission trip in 2007 to provide tech support. He also provided tech support at Mount Olive, sang in the choir, and assisted in worship. Thank you and many blessings in your new venture!

CYF Updates from Luke:

Thank You Sunday School Volunteers!

A huge **THANK YOU** to our Sunday school teachers, music volunteers, and superintendent for a great year. It was definitely not the end any of us imagined. You all continue to impress me with your dedication, creativity, and flexibility. The way you reflect God's love to the youth of Mount Olive will impact them in ways you don't even know. I look forward to celebrating the good work you have done when we get a chance to be back together. Thank you!

Summer Sunday School Lessons Available

I have enjoyed producing online Sunday school. It has challenged me to bring out my mandolin, tap into my creative side, and most importantly, try to see the world in this unusual time through the eyes of our youth. Sunday school and the program year were scheduled to end, but we will continue to share the online Sunday school videos produced by SPARK while I am on my parental leave. You can access these on our website on the 'Education-Children' [page](#) or on Facebook.

Colorado Youth Trip

As of right now, the Colorado trip is still on for August 2020— I will keep you posted as I hear updates. COVID-19 disrupted our last two fundraisers, so if you are able to support these youth on what is sure to be a milestone in their faith journey, please consider making a donation. You can send a check to Mount Olive Lutheran Church and write "Youth Trip" in the memo line.

Olive Branch Centering Prayer

Mondays, 10:00 – 10:30 am

It's a tiny little contemplative service for anyone craving silence, but with some company. Pastor Lisa Janke and Richard Bruxvoort Colligan offer a short reading for meditation, followed by 20 generous minutes of rich quiet. A short song wraps it up. Zero experience necessary. Email lisa@molive.org to request the Zoom link if you'd like to join in.

**Faith Seeking Understanding**

We wrapped up our program year with the book *Barking to the Choir* by Father Gregory Boyle. It was a wonderful reminder of Christ's invitation to the margins, that we might find our kin there and remember that we belong to each other. If you are looking for an inspiring and important, yet relatively easy read – this is a great option. You can check out Gregory Boyle and Homeboy Industries on YouTube to get a sense of the stories that make up this book. Now it is time to start thinking about our book list for 2020/21. Please send your ideas for topics or book titles to Pastor Lisa in the coming weeks so we can select readings that interest you. If you would like to be added to the email list for FSU we would be very happy to include you. lisa@molive.org

Pub Theology

We continue to meet weekly on Mondays, 5:30 – 6:30 pm on Zoom and have been enjoying this time of connection with each other. While we long to see each other face-to-face, we are taking advantage of this time to try new things like having guest presenters over Zoom and venturing into the world of podcasts! Weekly topics, announcements, and the link to our Zoom gathering continue to be posted at rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com

Zoom Utilized Often

Zoom, a video conferencing format, has been used frequently by Mount Olive groups! Group leaders may contact Bill Hollander or Nancy Britson in the church office for details on getting on the schedule to use the church account for meetings or to connect with volunteers for tech support.

Creative Fellowship

This unusual time has forced us to connect in unique and innovative ways. Birthday parades, school staff drive-bys, and parking lot weddings and graduations have become the norm. A number of Mount Olive families helped Lydia Sinnwell and Olivia Hafeman celebrate their birthdays by driving by and waving, singing, honking, displaying signs and even playing a trumpet! We encourage you to continue to find creative ways to stay connected; community is so important in stressful times! Please let the Mount Olive staff know if there are ways we can help.



Youth Letter Exchange

Who doesn't like getting letters in the mail from your friends?!?! 23 Mount Olive youth recently participated in a letter exchange. They wrote to one another and sent each other pictures. It was a fun way to stay connected! So, again, we encourage you to keep staying connected. Reach out to one another, write each other letters, and pray for your Mount Olive family especially in this time.

Monday Book Group

The Monday Book Group recently began their summer break. Their last few meetings occurred via Zoom. They have chosen their book list for the next program year. Watch later in the summer for the opportunity to order the new book selections. If you would like to be added to the email list, contact Jodi Schoer at mjschoer@charter.net.

Women of the ELCA Update

Spring is finally here, although not the spring many of us were expecting. I hope that you and your family are well and safe and that you remain optimistic. The Mount Olive Women of the ELCA have been active in supporting our fellow congregants, our Rochester community, and our global community this year and we continue to do so even in the midst the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to acknowledge the Mount Olive Quilters for sewing masks for Mayo Clinic and others in need. We know that when we commit to wearing a mask when shopping or running errands, we reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This contributes to the saving of lives and communicates a message of deep care for our fellow human beings. As God's beloved children, we are all essential.

We are also learning new ways to fellowship and learn together. Bible study for many circles has been occurring online via Zoom. As the year ends, please continue to find time to meet as a circle via Zoom and to grow together and to uplift one another in faith. Practicing physical distancing and staying home can be a lonely experience. May we all continue to find healing and restoration in the small acts of kindness and care that we extend to one another through friendship.

Our first board meeting for next programming year will be August 19. We will reschedule two special events that would have occurred this spring: the Homemade Market fundraiser and the gathering with Pastor Heidi Heimgartner focused on the ELCA social statement "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action". We hope to reschedule these events for early this fall. We will keep you updated once dates have been finalized. The Triennial Gathering scheduled for July has been postponed until August 5-8, 2021. If you would like to attend, please let us know.

Thank you for sharing your time and your gifts.

Regina Seabrook, Mount Olive Women of the ELCA President

High School Graduate Recognition

We would like to extend our congratulations to all Mount Olive members who graduated from high school, college, or graduate school this year! Graduating high school seniors whom were recognized in online worship on May 24 with a blessing included: (pictured from left to right) **Megan Anderson, Matthew Olson, Thomas Schad, and Allison Smith.**



Prayers and Prayer Chain Update

As you have watched our online worship services, you may have noticed that we are including prayers for Mount Olive members and friends in a more general way and not including the specific names. This is due to privacy concerns since the service is now broadcast widely on YouTube. Rest assured, however, that people in need of prayer are still being remembered by the prayer chain members and the Mount Olive staff. If you have not already, now may be the time you would want to join the Mount Olive prayer chain. Prayers requests are sent along 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. You may also contact any of the pastors with requests via phone or email.

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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