

# THE Messenger

Mid-April 2020

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

*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

## A note of Introduction from Richard:

Christ is risen! Hi. It's Richard Bruxvoort Colligan. I'm the new guy and my title is Cantor of the Olive Branch community. More on that later.

Let me describe for you my first two weeks on the job at Mount Olive. No, there is too much. Let me sum up: 1) Brilliant, supportive colleagues; 2) lots of music and worship video editing (who knew?) and 3) a rich sense of belonging to you all. Thank you for your welcome via emails, calls and encouraging comments.

Though I've had the chance to meet many of you, here are my vital stats. I'm a husband to Trish, a dad to 18-year-old son Sam and a son to Eva Colligan whom you may know. Our family lives in a little town in NE Iowa called Strawberry Point. My favorite things: autumn, laughter, blue, Star Wars, the Beatles, mango lassi, Thursdays, naps, and a good cheeseburger with fries and a strawberry malt.

My seminary degree is in Theology and the Arts from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. I am currently on the finishing half of a Doctor of Ministry degree from Eden Seminary of St. Louis. My main area of study and personal enthrallment is in the Psalms— specifically, the laments.

Anyway, I'm delighted to be with you. As with everything in this pandemic time, nothing is as we thought it would be. Whereas months ago Pastor Lisa and I imagined convening in-person Olive Branch gatherings, it looks like we'll be initiating this venture online for now. Kind of disappointing, kind of exciting!

My title is Cantor, and it has a deep, old tradition. Though it sometimes means "that singing person," the larger vocation of Cantor can mean a leader of community song. Here's hoping that title will allow me to lead not only sung prayer but also, someday, Beatles sing-along nights.

Peace and health,

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan



## Retirement Announcement

I want to thank the many volunteers of Mount Olive for your service to others over the last three years, while I served as Director of Missions and Service. It has been awe inspiring for me to see how much you give without expecting anything in return. I truly appreciate each and every one of you. I want to let everyone know that I am taking an early retirement from my position as Director of Missions and Service, effective April 15, 2020. I came to this decision through much prayer and conversation with my family. It has been a real pleasure serving the people of Mount Olive, and I greatly appreciate all the support I have received during this time. Together we have accomplished so many incredible things for our community and the world. When this pandemic is over, I look forward to seeing each of you in worship, and behind the scenes as a volunteer. God's blessings to each of you. ~Sherry Will

## Our Ongoing Life Together in this COVID-19 Time

We have great news! The Mount Olive faith community has remained strong through the first weeks of this COVID-19 time. Members have been keeping in contact with one another, offering encouragement, running errands, sharing stories, praying for one another, all in the spirit of our identity as Ambassadors for Christ. Many have also reached out to help in the community by delivering Meals-on-Wheels, serving at Channel One, making masks for Olmsted Medical Center, rolling bandages for Global Health, and providing generously for Mount Olive and many of our ministry partners. Thank you to everyone!

The staff at Mount Olive has also been busy: producing online worship, online Sunday School, online Bible Study and meditations, and meeting through Zoom technology with groups like Pub Theology, WELCA small groups, Monday book group, and others. A big shout-out goes to Intern Luke Hollander for his many, many hours of editing for our online worship services. Well done!

Going forward, we will continue to pursue the goals that we set at the beginning of the year, even though we had no idea at the time that we would be living together as we are now. The five goals we set were as follows:

- **To grow our Children, Youth and Family Ministry.** Intern Pastor Luke, with help from our Little Leapers/Nursery Coordinator, Carrie Fletcher, will continue to connect with families with children, providing resources and inspiration for growing in faith.
- **To successfully launch the Olive Branch.** Pastor Lisa and Cantor Richard Bruxvoort Colligan will be planning an online launch of this alternative worshipping community. Who knows? Perhaps the Olive Branch was conceived of for a time such as this.
- **To draw more people to Sunday worship.** Deacon Travis, Cantor Richard, and the pastors will continue to explore creative ways of drawing people into a rich worship experience. Music, visual arts, and creative preaching will all be part of this ongoing work.
- **To broaden our cadre of servants and leaders.** Already, through the leadership of Sherry Will, our retiring Director of Missions and Service, we have seen people step up to serve our community during this COVID-19 time. We will continue to look for ways we can connect people with community needs.
- **To grow this community of faith.** Online meetings of Pub Theology, Faith Seeking Understanding book group, WELCA small groups, Men's Saturday morning Bible study, and Monday Book Group are already happening. We will continue to offer growth opportunities as they emerge.

Please continue to pray for the people, the staff, and the leaders of Mount Olive. We continue to be Ambassadors for Christ, rooted to grow and serve.

## Special Music Musicians Wanted

Stuck at home and need a distraction? Enjoying our worship videos and wondering if there's anything you can do to help? Travis is looking for any musicians willing to record some special music at home that we can include in our virtual worship. It could be a flashy solo or simply a single verse of a hymn; it could be accompanied or unaccompanied; it could even be just audio if you don't want to appear on camera. Get the whole family involved if you want! Whatever you can do from home, we want you to be a part of making virtual worship happen. If you're interested, email Travis Beck at [travis@molive.org](mailto:travis@molive.org).

## Holy Communion in a Time of Exile

Dear People of Mount Olive,

As you know if you've been "attending" online worship over the last month, from the outset we have offered Holy Communion as part of worship. It seemed natural for us to do this since it is our practice to offer communion at every service as we normally gather.

What you may not be aware of, however, is that not every congregation has offered communion online as we have, and in fact some church leaders, notably ELCA Churchwide bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, have suggested that this might a good time to "fast" from Holy Communion and refrain from enjoying it until we can meet in-person once again.

An increasing number of pastors in the ELCA have now entered the discussion regarding Holy Communion in this time of online worship and the staff of Mount Olive has also entered into this discussion. We have listened both to the pros and cons regarding offering Holy Communion during this exilic time, and we offer the following thoughts regarding our practice:

- To be a community is certainly enhanced and deepened when we are physically present with one another, yet community is present "whenever two or three gather" even via screen, telephone, or by other means.
- In a time when we are absent physically from one another, the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament becomes that much more meaningful.
- To fast is certainly commendable under certain circumstances, and if worshippers wish to fast from Holy Communion on a given Sunday, they may.
- The idea that our own kitchen table can serve as the Lord's Table only enhances Holy Communion as a gift given to us using ordinary means.
- Being invited to serve one another Holy Communion highlights our identity as a "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9), and highlights the role of the laity as worthy ministers in the Lord's service.
- Home communion offers a teaching opportunity for parents who can help children understand that communion is both "holy" (set aside for God's use), and "common" (of ordinary means). (Parents wanting additional resources may turn to this website from the author of the teaching book, *Baptized, We Live*, used at Mount Olive for communion classes : [danielerlander.com](http://danielerlander.com) )

We continue to be in dialogue about this important subject. We invite your comments and concerns and pray that this time is both a blessed and a learning time for you all.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Glenn Monson



## Offerings

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

## Fabric Mask Updates

**Thank you** to everyone who has been sewing masks, you are making a difference! Keep the masks coming! Mask patterns, tutorial videos, and more information is available on the Mount Olive website, [www.molive.org](http://www.molive.org). The Mount Olive quilters have made some of their fabric available for mask sewers. Bags are available to pick up at a table in the entry at Mount Olive. You may drop off completed masks M-F, 8:00 am-12:00pm at: Olmsted Medical Center Marketing and Foundation offices. (102 Elton Hills Dr. near Bruegger's Bagels) **Include a note with the following information:** From: Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 2830 18th Ave. NW, Rochester, MN 55901, [office@molive.org](mailto:office@molive.org), and include “# of masks = \_\_\_”.

**Lutheran Social Services** is also in need of masks for their staff and volunteers. Masks may be dropped off in Rochester on Wednesdays from 3-5 pm at 1610 14th St NW Suite 300. Go to [lssmn.org](http://lssmn.org) for more information.

### If You Need a Mask:

If you would like a mask for yourself or a family member, please contact Elaine Monson at 507-272-6404.

## Channel One Regional Food Bank- COVID-19 Response

Channel One is helping people facing food insecurity and poverty by taking a \$25 donation and turning it into 100 meals! The best way to help now is to make a monetary donation by clicking the [“Donate Now”](#) button on the church website. Please indicate Channel One in the “other” category. Channel One is also looking for **volunteers** to pack emergency food boxes and to help fill the gaps of its current volunteers who are now unavailable. If you are a healthy, low-risk individual, sign up for a shift by going to [helpingfeedpeople.org](http://helpingfeedpeople.org), click on COVID-19 Response. Volunteers are crucial to maintaining Channel One’s operations, and with many individuals practicing social distancing or self-quarantine, extra hands are needed.

## 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. During our upcoming host week in May, volunteers will be needed to provide meals via a no-contact drop off to Bear Creek. You could team up with another family, pool money together, cook or order food. You can sign up by using the link on the Mount Olive website. You may also make a monetary donation to Family Promise via the [“Donate Now”](#) button on the church website (mention Family Promise in the comment) to help cover the added cost of rent to house up to 6 homeless families. Rent is \$2000/month

## Family Service Rochester

Family Service Rochester coordinates Meals on Wheels for Olmstead County clients. As a part of their COVID-19 response, they are also offering a grocery shopping service for those that are homebound and need assistance. You may go to their website, [familyservicerochester.org](http://familyservicerochester.org), for more information and to register as a volunteer. You will be contacted by e-mail when your background check has cleared. Other opportunities to volunteer including yard work, errands, and other odd jobs.

## Open Table Food Truck- Zumbro Lutheran Church

Open Table is a mobile food ministry that serves a free meal every Thursday evening to guests in SE Rochester. It is a partnership between Zumbro Lutheran Church and People of Hope, but all volunteers are welcome. Food donations needed include: white rice, canned black beans, canned corn, shelf stable fruit cups, and granola bars. Donations are received at the west doors of Zumbro Lutheran on Thursday mornings. Place prepackaged food on the food cart. You may also sign up to be a volunteer for preparing or serving at: [zumbrolutheran.org/mission/open-table/](http://zumbrolutheran.org/mission/open-table/)

**Temporary volunteer restrictions:** Age limit up to 65 for volunteers. Folks of any age, with chronic, moderate to severe respiratory or cardiac disease, or diabetes are asked to refrain from signing up.



## Bandage Rolling Kits Available

Bandage rolling kits to make bandages for Global Health Ministries are available in the entry at church. Follow the directions posted to check out a roller and supplies. This might be the perfect project to keep those home schoolers busy! The doors of the church are open during the daycare's hours—6:30 am-5:30pm.



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

## Updates from our Global Missions Partners

We received word from Kevin L. Jacobson, ELCA Manager for Relationships, East and Southern Africa who asked that we please continue praying for our companion synods of IELCO in Bogota, Colombia and the Central Diocese in Singida, Tanzania. In times like this, it is these gestures of accompaniment that, although they seem small, mean so much. It fosters community and brings a great sense of comfort through mutuality and intentionality. These companion relationships are critical to our witness to the love of God through Jesus Christ in the world and to strengthening our call to minister here in our country.

Please, also add prayers for ELCA mission personnel who had to make very difficult decisions whether to leave their country of service and return to the United States or stay with the people whom they serve. Each individual had to discern what is best in his or her or family situation. Some chose to remain and some returned. It was tough and whether they stayed or returned they are feeling the anxiousness of these unknown days like the rest of us. For more information on what's going on in the ELCA go to [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org).

## News from Kijota, Tanzania

Thomas Yusuph, headmaster at Hull High School in Kijota, Tanzania, sent word that all schools and university in Tanzania have been closed since the middle of March, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the students at Hull are from other towns, so they were all sent home, and each town has been closed off to outsiders. (At the time of this printing, there have not been any cases of COVID-19 reported in the state/province of Singida, where the village of Kijota and the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is.) Headmaster Yusush has been able to stay on campus to allow continued construction on the new dining hall that Mount Olive has partially funded. \$26,000 of the \$30,000 needed have been raised. Thank you to everyone who had a part in this big fundraising project. We're almost to our goal with just \$4,000 to go.



Progress on the dining hall at Hull High School.

## News from Bogota, Colombia

Though the Mission Colombia 2020 team was unable to travel to Colombia in March, we have continued to stay in touch. The country of Colombia has only a few cases at this time. Like Minnesota, the entire country of Colombia, South America has closed down schools with a stay at home order. The 25 Lutheran Churches that make up the Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO) are divided into four regions, and because they cannot worship in groups, each of the four regions is taking turns each Sunday to broadcast the worship service like Mount Olive has, through the internet. They are also doing Sunday school online. They, along with the members of Kijota Parish in Tanzania, appreciated the mask pattern that was sent by a Mount Olive member, because masks are in very short supply in both these countries. You can visit their website at [ielco.org](http://ielco.org).

## Olive Branch Centering Prayer

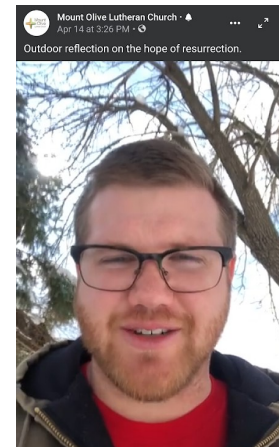
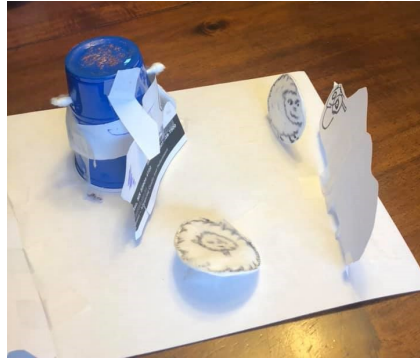
**Mondays, 10:00 – 10:30 am, beginning April 20, 2020.**

In stressful and anxious times, it is important to take pause. You are invited to join us on Zoom for a time of silent prayer that focuses on the presence of God. Pastor Lisa Janke will begin with a short introduction to Centering Prayer and reading of scripture, followed by 20 minutes of silent meditation. We will be sent out in song with Richard Bruxvoort Colligan. Email [lisa@molive.org](mailto:lisa@molive.org) to request the zoom link if you are thinking of participating.



## Sunday School Lessons Available

Intern Pastor Luke has been offering a weekly video Sunday School lesson. We look at a Bible story and do a craft/activity together using regular household items. These videos can be accessed on our website: [molive.org/index.php/children](http://molive.org/index.php/children) or the Mount Olive [Facebook](#) page.



## Outdoor Moments with Luke

Intern Pastor Luke has an online family faith formation tool accessible as regular short videos posted on the Mount Olive [Facebook](#) page. The videos feature some spiritual reflection, time outside, encouragement and ideas for interactive fun. Check-ins and comments are especially appreciated.

## Pub Theology News

We will continue to gather every Monday via Zoom (see more info about Zoom below). The link and password will be posted on the WordPress site just prior to the meeting each week (see link below). If you are subscribed to this blog you will receive it by email.

We will gather at 5:30 pm for information, conversation, and our check-in question. We plan to begin our discussion/presentations around 5:45 pm. We will formally conclude at 6:30 pm, however some may stick around to chat longer.

We have also started a Facebook Group - "Rochester Pub Theology" - to continue discussions through the week and suggest topics/readings/pod casts/presenters/etc. It is a private group, however anyone can find it through a Facebook search and can request to join. Please do!

See further updates about Pub Theology at [rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com](http://rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com).

## Zoom Utilized for Classes and Meetings

Mount Olive has purchased a license for Zoom, a video conferencing format. So far, this has been utilized for Pub Theology, the Lenten Bible study, and women's circle meetings and even the bell choir. Participants are invited to join the meetings via email or codes may be shared via a text message or other means as well. You can help expedite this process by downloading and installing Zoom on your computer, phone, or tablet, either from Zoom's [website](#) or from your app store. Group leaders may contact Bill Hollander or Nancy Britson in the church office for details on using the church account for meetings.



## Connecting Helpers with Those in Need

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

<https://tinyurl.com/tga8yxu>

## If You Are In Need of Pastoral Care, 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 or meals, or simply would 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](mailto:nancy@molive.org). If you leave a message, we will return your call. In-person pastoral visits will only be done in the case of emergencies.

## 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](mailto:ignatius.kimberlie@charter.net). You may also contact any of the pastors with requests via phone or email.

## Elder Network Needs Your Help to Support Seniors

Loneliness is a killer. The long-term effects of loneliness are profound: increased rates of depression, clinical dementia and higher mortality rates.

At this time, when many seniors are even more isolated, Elder Network needs caring volunteers who will commit to making a weekly call to an isolated senior. We are also looking to support caregivers who are providing 24/7 support during this time. If you know a senior who needs support, or a caregiver providing 24/7 care, Elder Network can help. Call Elder Network at 507-285-5272 for more information.



## Scam Reminders

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

## Welcome Back Pastor Lisa!

Pastor Lisa returned from her maternity leave on April 6. How wonderful to have her presence with us during Holy Week!







A special thank you to all of the musicians, worship leaders, and technological experts for helping to make the Holy Week and Easter services so meaningful! The Mount Olive staff also appreciates all of the kind comments, notes, and feedback that has been received! Thank you again!

## Daily Devotions Available

Pastor Glenn has written devotions for each day of the week. These, along with the bulletin for the week have been sent by mail to homebound members, emailed to the congregation, and are also available on the front page of the Mount Olive website, [www.molive.org](http://www.molive.org). If you would also like to receive a devotion or the weekly bulletin in the mail, contact Nancy Britson in the church office-507-288-1580 or [nancy@molive.org](mailto:nancy@molive.org).

## Lutheran Social Service (LSS)

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota requests that we pray for the safety and health of all people – especially LSS employees and other essential support providers who continue to serve in person. For more information about LSS and volunteer opportunities, visit their website:

[www.lssmn.org/get-involved/volunteer/opportunities-covid-19](http://www.lssmn.org/get-involved/volunteer/opportunities-covid-19)

facebook



Like us on Facebook to see pictures of recent events, links to sermons on YouTube, devotions, news from the ELCA, and more!

[www.facebook.com/MountOliveRochester/](http://www.facebook.com/MountOliveRochester/)

## Links to Sermons

A reminder that links to weekly sermons and Sunday School lessons may be accessed directly from Mount Olive's YouTube channel. If you have a smart TV, you can subscribe to the channel to watch the sermons on the big screen. YouTube link:

[www.youtube.com/user/MountOliveELCA/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/MountOliveELCA/videos)

## 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

## Mount Olive Staff

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