



MESSENGER NEWSLETTER

“The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw”...

How do you *see* a *word*? As God’s People entering the season of Advent, these are some of the first words of Scripture we hear proclaimed in worship together (Isaiah chapter 2). I view them as an invitation for us to pay attention to what this season of waiting and preparation calls to *see*.

In the first week of Advent (Nov. 27), Prophet Isaiah casts a vision in which weapons are turned into gardening tools. Coupled with Matthew 24, “Therefore...be ready, for the Son of Humanity is coming at an unexpected hour”, it seems that this call to *be ready* is connected with working for *peace* and *justice*. What might that mean? Do you *see* what God is up to?

The second week of Advent (Dec 4) proclaims hope via Isaiah 11: “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots,” and leads into the call from John the Baptizer in Matthew’s Gospel: “Prepare the way of the Lord!” Whose voices are calling us to grow new shoots from our dead stumps? What might that mean? Do you *see* what God is up to?

Advent 3 (Dec 11) opens to us Isaiah 35: “God will come and save you! ...The eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped; the lame shall leap...the tongue of the speechless will sing for joy.” Matthew’s Gospel names this as the promised Reign of God that arrives in and through Jesus. In what ways are we unable to see, hear, move, speak, celebrate? What might that mean? Do you *see* what God is up to?

And finally, the last week of Advent (Dec 18) leads us right into the reality of God’s presence amidst humanity, made known in all the limitedness and wonder of our human bodies. The hope of God’s deliverance and liberation is found in “God who is with us”, Emmanuel. If God is with “us”, who, exactly, is “us”? What might that mean? Do you *see* what God is up to?

May this Advent season and its culmination in Christmas uncover something new for you, for us, and for our world.

Pastor Paul

**Christmas
Eve
Services
4:00 pm
And
7:00 pm**

**Christmas
Day
Worship
10:30 am**

Inside:

- ◆ Youth Pageant
- ◆ Caroling
- ◆ Adventure Club
- ◆ Service Opportunities
- ◆ December Calendar

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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

- Pastor Glenn: glenn@molive.org
- Pastor Paul: paul@molive.org

Spiritual Care

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

Matching Gifts Available for “Leading Together” through year-end.

If you are like most people, you want your financial gifts to make a real difference in the lives of people. Also, year-end is a time when we often look for special opportunities to give. Both of these things come together in the initiative by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA entitled, “Leading Together.” In fact, the Mount Olive Executive Committee feels so strongly about this that they are offering to dedicate some of our designated mission dollars to match any gifts to this fund by year-end up to \$3000. Pastor Glenn and his wife Ruth have also committed themselves to a leadership gift to this initiative.

“Leading Together” seeks to raise \$215,000 in the synod by year-end to: 1) Support construction of a new worship/education/health center in Juba, South Sudan; 2) Provide for education and health care in Tanzania, our companion synod; 3) Support our education partners like Lutheran Campus Ministries, and Luther Seminary; and 4) provide for leadership training for pastors in our synod. Checks may be made out to “Mount Olive”, memo: “Leading Together.” Thank you for all your gifts.

Building an Inclusive Church

This fall the Mount Olive Church Council and Executive Teams supported a proposal to work toward becoming a more inclusive church. Specifically, this means facilitating congregational conversations on what it may mean to be open and affirming to folks who identify as LGBTQ+. Throughout the coming months we will be examining how we communicate, strengthening our relationships with one another, and working to celebrate one another as whole people. Our hope is that this process will be helpful for this conversation, our lives together as a community of Christ, and our ongoing work for justice.

The framework for this process comes from the ELCA Reconciling Works website: <http://www.reconcilingworks.org> and is called Building an Inclusive Church: <http://www.welcomingresources.org/welcomingtoolkit-preview.pdf>.

There will be more to come in 2017. The general outline of this movement will be a congregational self-assessment, opportunities for education and conversations with the goal of deepening relationships, then drafting a statement based on the our dialogues together.

You are invited to review the resources listed above and to ask any questions you may have. All are welcome to lead in ways they feel called. All perspectives are welcome. At this time these are the core team members leading this effort:

- Elmer Odland
- Jake Johnson
- Becky Lashinski
- David Johnston
- Tom Rigby
- Randi Beyerl
- Paula Freitag
- Michaela Pasch

We are hopeful this will be a time to grow closer to God and one another.

Mission Colombia Fundraiser:

On the weekend of November 19, a Taste of Colombia fundraising dinner, silent auction and raffle were held in support of the Mount Olive members heading to Colombia in March. Those who attended the dinner enjoyed an evening of fellowship featuring Colombian food and music. Thanks to the generous support of Mount Olive members and friends of the congregation, the event was a tremendous success bringing in more than **\$4,000**. Special thanks to all the volunteers who helped with planning, food preparation, serving and clean up. Thank you for supporting us as we take the first step in connecting with our sisters and brothers in Colombia.



Reading Buddies Needed at Elton Hills Elementary



Do you want to make a difference in the life of a child? One of the best ways to do that is to help them learn to read. Right now, Elton Hills Elementary School, one of our neighborhood schools, is looking for Reading Buddies for 2nd graders. You can call Sandi Mandelko, office manager at Elton Hills, at 328-3200 and tell her what days and times work for you and she can match you up with some students. What a great way to make a difference!

John Adams Backpack Program

Once again this year Mount Olive, Channel One, and John Adams Middle School have partnered to get nutritious food to John Adams Middle School students. Drivers and packers are needed to make this program work. Each task only requires 15 – 30 minutes of your time. I know of no other program where you can make such an important and appreciated impact on a child's life in 15 minutes. Rarely, will a month go by without hearing from one of the kids about how this simple act benefits them. Questions? Contact Warren Kemplin 254-4932.

Fair Trade Coffee

Stop by the **Fair Trade Coffee** display in the gathering area to check out the varieties of ground and whole bean coffee and tea available for purchase. You can also sign up to sponsor the coffee on an upcoming Sunday. For \$15 you can help offset the cost of the coffee served during fellowship time and celebrate an occasion such as a birthday, anniversary, or the memory of a loved one.



*Fair Trade Coffee
and Tea make great
Christmas gifts.*

Altar Flowers

The 2017 schedule is now available

You may sign up to brighten the sanctuary with flowers. Place orders for birthdays, anniversaries, baptismal birthdays, births, or in memory of loved ones. Sign up in the gathering area, fill out an envelope and include payment. Place orders at least one week in advance.



EDUCATION

Sunday Adult Forum

9:15 am Grab some coffee and gather
in the fellowship hall.



December 4 Biblical Archaeology – Session #1

December 11 Biblical Archaeology – Session #2

December 18 No Forum – Children's Christmas Pageant

December 25 No Forum – Christmas Day

January 1 No Forum – New Year's Day

December Sunday Forums have Special Guest

On December 4 and 11 at 9:15 in the Fellowship Hall we will be having a special guest, Dr. Phillip Quanbeck, a faculty member at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, present forums on biblical archeology relating to both the New and the Old Testament. Dr. Quanbeck has made multiple trips to Palestine and to ancient Asia Minor to investigate the ruins of biblical sites and he will have much to share with us. Plan to grab your coffee and cookie and join us in welcoming Dr. Quanbeck.

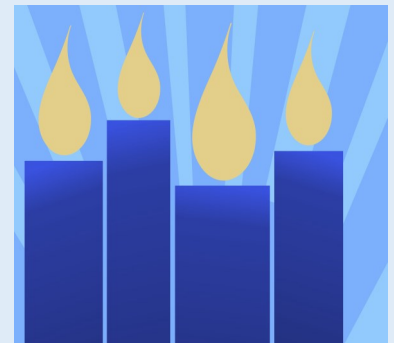
Parents of newborns through tots, not yet in Pre-Kindergarten Sunday School, come and join in conversation and fellowship **with your child!** We will meet each **FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH** in the library nook of the gathering area at 9:15. Meet December 4th at 9:15, everyone welcome!



Advent Devotionals

2 ways to engage!

Grab a printed Advent Devotional from the table in the hallway at church, and read the daily scriptures and reflection on your own or with loved ones.



Head to Pub Theology's blog each day to read Scripture and respond in the comments:
rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com

Saturday Men's Discipleship Group

What? A Bible study seeking to develop meaningful relationships and a better understanding of what it means to be disciples of Christ. This gathering focuses on scripture or a book that helps us to walk closer to the Lord and to our families, and encourages us in being disciples of Jesus. Come as your schedule allows. If you have questions, you can talk with Mark Masbruch, Paul Johnson or Mark Schoer.

Who? Men of all ages. Contact Mark Masbruch for more information:
mmasbruch@hotmail.com.

When? Saturday mornings, 8:30 a.m. (Does not meet Dec. 24th or 31st.)

Where? Mount Olive Conference Room (by the offices/front door)



Christmas Caroling on December 11 for all ages

On Sunday, December 11 at 1:00 pm, we will gather at church to car pool to The Homestead and Shorewood Living, two senior living facilities that are home to some of our members. All ages are welcome, even non-readers are welcome, since we will be singing familiar carols. We will end at Shorewood where hot chocolate and Christmas treats will be provided for us. Please sign up in the gathering area.



Review: Trip to Swedish Institute and Luther Exhibit

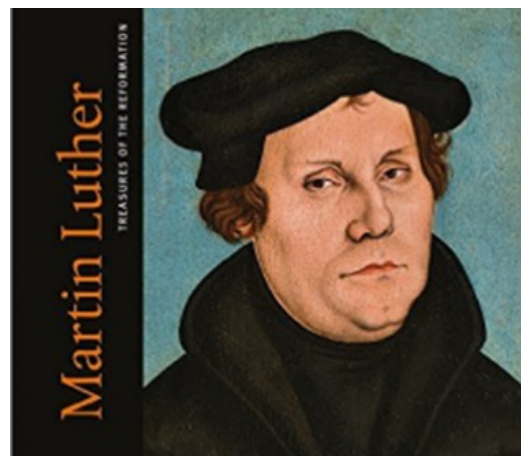


On November 11, a busload of Adventure Club members departed for Minneapolis. First stop: the American Swedish Institute, the chateau-style home of Swan and Christina Turnblad built at the turn of the 20th century. Though Swan and Christina never really lived in the mansion, preferring an apartment in their newspaper publishing office, the home became the setting for dinner guests such as President Eisenhower, who (after his term in office) likely enjoyed the richly carved wood paneling and painted sculpted ceilings, as Adventure Club visitors did.

The next stop was the Martin Luther Exhibit at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The Institute has the distinct honor and privilege of being the only museum to be granted rights to exhibit items from a collection of small museums in Germany due to a focus of interest in things Lutheran in Minnesota. Did you know Luther championed women's rights by naming his wife, Katharina, as inheritor of his estate and guardian of his children? This was a very rare act in 1542, and went against the Saxon law of the time that dictated that a wife could only inherit her dowry and personal effects.

The MIA exhibit really makes the personalities and physical environment around Luther and the Reformation "pop" with paintings, sculpture, textiles, documents, and furniture (including a magnificent, restored two-story pulpit). The exhibit runs through January 15th, 2017. Highly recommended!

Submitted by Kristine Wagner



Pub Theology

Forum with Pastor Paul. Conversation focuses on topics that connect faith, spirituality, and our world. Each week's discussion is posted ahead of time at rochesterpublictheology.wordpress.com and via email. If you would like to be included on the email distribution list, please email Pastor Paul at paul@molive.org.

Who? All are welcome.

When? Monday evenings, 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Where? at Life's Too Short Brewery - 2001 32nd Ave. NW.



FELLOWSHIP

All women of Mount Olive are cordially invited to

The Women's Christmas Party

Monday, December 5, 2016, 6:30 pm in the Mount Olive Fellowship Hall.

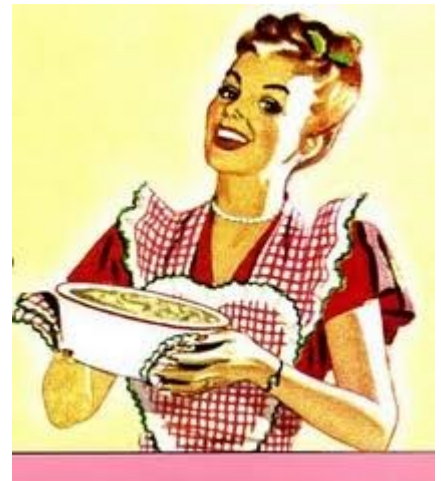
Enjoy sweet and savory treats and see the world premier of:

Christmas Revisited, Four Acts



Written and performed by our own Renee Schaefer and Karen Masbruch. You won't want to miss this play that'll warm your heart, make you laugh and bring you back to times gone by, **with a *surprise guest star*. Wear your favorite apron!** We look forward to seeing you there.

The evening offering will benefit the Mission Colombia Trip in March 2017. There will be a few silent auction items and some Mount Olive cookbooks for sale; proceeds will benefit Mission Colombia. This event is hosted by Mary



Saint Lucia Celebration

On Sunday, December 11th, we will celebrate the Festival of Saint Lucia. This popular Swedish tradition, and a long standing tradition at Mount Olive, is rooted in an ancient story that has meaning and relevance to us today. Officially celebrated on December 13th during the darkest days of Advent, Saint Lucia is a symbol of the Light that Christ brings to the world. A legend tells that Saint Lucia came to Sweden during the great famine. She appeared in a halo of light on a ship sailing across Lake Vanern bringing food for the starving people.

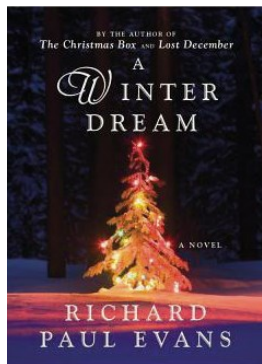


The custom in Sweden on Saint Lucia Day is for the oldest daughter in a family to be up long before daybreak to serve coffee and "Lussekattor" buns. She wears a long white dress with a red sash, and on top of her head is a wreath with lighted candles.



Born in Syracuse, Sicily in the year 284, as a young girl Lucia was known for her strong faith, charity and love for people in need. In thankfulness, when prayers for her critically ill mother were answered, Lucia gave her dowry to the poor and vowed to dedicate her life to the service of God.

The Ruth and Naomi Circles are busy preparing for the procession of Saint Lucia and her "star boys" which will take place during the worship services. After the services you are welcome for coffee and the traditional "Lussekattor" buns in the Fellowship Hall. **All worshippers are encouraged to bring an offering of non-perishable food to worship that day. Those gifts, as well as any cash gifts for the hungry will be given to Channel One.**



Monday Book Group

The Monday Book Group will be meeting Monday, December 12 at 6:30 in the library. We will be discussing *A Winter Dream* by Richard Paul Evans. This book is a modern version of the story of Joseph and the coat of many colors. We will also enjoy treats and a book exchange. New readers are welcome to join us anytime!! If you have any questions please notify Jodi Schoer at mjschoer@charter.net

Adventure Club Going to "A Christmas Carol"

In December the Rochester Civic Theatre will be staging "A Christmas Carol", the well-known tale by Charles Dickens. The story is billed as **"A holiday classic for all. Gather for this beloved Christmas story, guaranteed to thrill, amaze, and delight this holiday season"**. Mount Olive members, Jim Haase and his daughter Emily, are part of the cast. The Adventure Club of Mount Olive has reserved a limited number of tickets for the performance on Friday, evening, December 16th at 7:00 pm. Adults are \$29, Seniors (65+) are \$26, and Students (under 21) are \$21. Please sign up and pay for your tickets in the Gathering Area at church. Tickets are limited.



LWR Layette Promotion

The Lutheran World Relief (LWR) layette promotion begins Dec. 1st. Our gifts of layettes convey our caring and give hope to mothers with newborns as they face a life under extremely trying conditions.

Look for the layette display in the narthex. Check out the world map for locations that received LWR layettes in 2016. **Pick up a card listing an item** needed for the completion of a layette. You provide the needed item. Complete instructions are included.



Ripe Olives meet Friday, December 9 9:30 am at Charlie's Eatery

The Ripe Olives is a group of Mount Olive's more experienced adults who meet monthly for fellowship. On the 2nd Friday of each month (Sept. – May) at 9:30 am, seniors from Mount Olive will meet at Charley's Eatery (1654 US Hwy 52, Hillcrest Shopping Center), for coffee and a roll. Attend as often as you can. No need to call or sign-up, just come. The more the merrier!

Volleyball

The church volleyball league continues through March. If you would like to join the team, it isn't too late.

Please sign up in the gathering area. The schedule is available on the church calendar. Games are played on Tuesday evenings at Zumbro Lutheran

Church or the National Volleyball Center and last 45 minutes. Gina Rislow is the team captain this year. You may contact Gina at rislow29@gmail.com



SERVICE

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

December 17th or December 22nd

The following dates, time and locations are available for Mount Olive bell ringers to raise funds for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign. Bring the whole family!!!

Saturday December 17th at Fareway Foods off of 41st Street: 10am-12pm (1/2 hour or hour shifts available)

Thursday December 22nd at HyVee North: 4pm-6pm (1/2 hour or hour shifts)

Please **sign up in the gathering area** and contact Erin Sinnwell with questions--etracy515@hotmail.com or 507-990-6079

Other dates and times are available.

Visit the website, www.registertoring.com, to sign up.



Family Promise (IHN) will be hosting 4 weeks in 2017, please mark your calendars with these dates:

Jan 15-22

March 5-12

**Nov 19-Dec 2nd
(2 weeks back to back)**

"Second Sunday Service" Event

On the Second Sunday of each month, we are focusing our education hour on "service". This month, on the 11th, we will be making ornaments for shut-ins and to take home.

In November we assembled 84 Personal Care packages for the LINK Program.



The Alternative Learning Center

The Alternative Learning Center (ALC) of Rochester Public Schools' mission is to inspire, challenge and empower students with the knowledge and skills to become involved members of a global community.

A variety of circumstances has led students to the ALC. Some students benefit from a smaller learning environment with a student/teacher ratio of 15/1. Others are working for their high school diploma while caring for their children and or working up to 20 hours a week.

Our congregation has made a significant impact at the ALC by providing personal care items, clothing and other necessities that help these students achieve success. Look for the table with information on ALC needs in the front hallway during December and January.

Many thanks for any donations! They will be greatly appreciated!

Service and Social Outreach Ministry Team

Mount Olive Quilters

Thursdays at 9:00 am

You are invited each week to enjoy quilting and fellowship.

**Quilters do not meet
Dec. 22 or 29.**



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Tuesday, December 13 9:00 am

All knitters and crocheters are invited. Yarn, treats, guidance, wisdom, support, and humor are shared! Gather in the front conference room.

WORSHIP

Saturday Worship to Return to Traditional Setting

When the Worship and Music Team met in their quarterly meeting in November they reviewed the Conventus worship format for Saturdays which we began in September. After a thorough discussion it was determined that Conventus is a fine service for occasional use, but not well-suited for weekly use, so the decision was made to return to the Traditional Setting beginning in Advent. We will continue to seek ways to use the Conventus model on an occasional basis. Thank you to all who have been willing to try this new, yet ancient worship format. We hope that you were enriched by the experience.

Youth Christmas Pageant

Celebrate the holiday joy with a magical performance by Mount Olive's youth ministry! Awaken the child within you as you experience the Spirit of Christmas through the eyes of our children.

Join us in Fellowship Hall on
Sunday, December 18, 2016
beginning at 9:15 a.m. as the story unfolds.



Mount Olive's Christmas Tree

The Christmas Tree found in Mount Olive's Sanctuary has been provided in Memory of Martha "Marty" Zerbe Ludtke a devout Christian who lived her beliefs through loving and caring for people, animals and nature. Of German ancestry, she especially expressed this at Christmas in giving to others and decorating her family's home. The Christmas tree was the focal point and remained so until mid-January. She was a blessing to her family and many friends. Marty was the mother of Darlene Vowels.



Worship Volunteer Update

At each worship service at Mount Olive, volunteers serve in many roles: greeters, ushers, communion assistants, assisting ministers, acolytes, nursery volunteers and more. More volunteers are always needed. Training is available for new volunteers. You may turn in a Volunteer Interest Form, available at the Welcome Desk, or contact Nancy Britson, Volunteer Coordinator.

December Worship Volunteer Schedules have been sent to all participants. The schedule is also available on the church website under "Service".

A few volunteers are still needed for services in December including the Christmas Eve services (4 and 7 pm). Contact Nancy if you are available.

Volunteers have also been invited to help at worship services in January via the online sign up site: **Sign Up Genius**. If you did not receive the email invitation or "don't do computers" but are willing to serve, please contact Nancy Britson, Volunteer Coordinator, and she will help you: nancy@molive.org 288-1580 ext. 210.

Mount Olive Brings Sweat Equity to Baton Rouge

On Sunday, October 30, four Mount Olive members, Gene Ostrom, Chris Miller, Jim Halling, and Pastor Glenn headed to Baton Rouge, LA for a week of flood relief work. Three months ago Baton Rouge was literally underwater as 31" of rain fell in less than 48 hours! Tens of thousands of homes were damaged, some beyond repair. At this date much of the mucking out is complete, and now the restoration of homes has begun. Our team



worked on hanging sheet rock in one home all week. They stayed with other Lutheran volunteers from Minnesota and Kansas at Camp Restore, a facility set up

especially to house and support relief workers. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), an ELCA agency, helps fund this camp. Your gifts to LDR are active in this ongoing work. Thank you!



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