

DECEMBER 2020

BELIEVING, BELONGING, BECOMING

MOUNT OLIVET
MESSENGER



mtolivet.org



M MPLS CAMPUS

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Minneapolis, MN 55419
612.926.7651

W WEST CAMPUS

7150 Rolling Acres Rd
Victoria, MN 55386
952.767.1500

If you would like to receive a large print copy of the Messenger, please contact Andrea Brown at andreaab@mtolivet.org or 612.767.2209.

DECEMBER 6

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

Luke 1:39-56

Watch the worship service at mtolivet.org. Radio Broadcast on WDGY 740AM at 11am.

SERMON Pastor Hammersten

DECEMBER 13

GABRIEL VISITS JOSEPH

Matthew 1:18-25

Watch the worship service at mtolivet.org. Radio Broadcast on WDGY 740AM at 11am.

SERMON Pastor Lose

DECEMBER 20

EMMANUEL, WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Isaiah 7:10-14, 9:6-7

Watch the worship service at mtolivet.org. Radio Broadcast on WDGY 740AM at 11am.

SERMON Pastor Ruud

DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE

Watch the worship service at mtolivet.org. Radio Broadcast on WDGY 740AM at 2pm.

SERMON Pastor Lose

DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

Watch the worship service at mtolivet.org.

SERMON Pastor MacLean

DECEMBER 27

ANNA AND SIMEON

Luke 2:22-38a

Watch the worship service at mtolivet.org. Radio Broadcast on WDGY 740AM at 11am.

SERMON Pastor Dixon

GOING GOD'S WAY

CHRISTMAS EDITION AVAILABLE 12/20

Enjoy an expanded version of our Sunday children's worship program including readings and reflections on the beloved Christmas story.

WEDNESDAYS

OPEN PRAYER TIME

M W 10am-12noon & 6-7pm, 12/30: 10am-12noon only.
Each Wednesday morning our sanctuaries will be opened for personal prayer time, reflection, and meditation.

DIGITAL ADVENT CALENDAR

Enjoy a daily moment of inspiration, joy, maybe a Christmas giggle or two, and much love from your church home, beginning November 30 through Christmas Eve. If you are currently receiving the Mon/Wed/Fri emails, you will receive this daily Advent email, if not, register at mtolivet.org. From devotions to musical videos to cultural Advent wonders, we invite you to countdown to Christmas with your Mount Olivet family!

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

This year, the Advent Devotions have been written by our beloved Senior Choir, mailed to your home, with additional booklets available at each campus. You can also sign-up to receive these devotions via email at mtolivet.org



IN-PERSON HOLY COMMUNION

M W 12noon & 7pm
On the first Wednesday of each month, a short in-person communion service will be offered. Registration is required and seating is limited to 40 persons. Register at mtolivet.org or by calling 612.767.2264.

Carols of Christmas

I love Christmas carols not just for their beauty, but also because they tell me the truth. You see, I find it very easy to sentimentalize the first Christmas. You know: Mary is beautiful and calm, the baby Jesus has cherubic red cheeks and never cries, the shepherds have colorful robes, and their animals look like they would have been better suited to a suburban petting zoo than a first-century barnyard. And then I hear a carol like “What Child is This,” and the question it asks in the second stanza – “Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?” – reminds me of the truth: Our Lord and Savior, King of the universe and Redeemer of all, was not born in a palace but a stable and was not placed in a gilded crib but a feeding trough. Jesus was born in a “mean estate,” indeed, so that we would know that there is no place God is unwilling to go to seek us out and redeem us in love.

Similarly, when we sing in the third stanza of “Joy to the World” that “He comes to make his blessings flow / as far as the curse is found,” I’m reminded that Christmas isn’t intended to make us feel comfy and cozy. Rather, Jesus was born, lived, ministered, died, and was raised again in order to save us from sin, show us a better way to live with each other, and win for us life eternal. The beautiful baby in the manger, that is, will grow up to suffer the agony of the cross in order to show us the depth of God’s love for us and will be raised again to promise us that light and love and life are God’s gift to all.

That reminder is especially helpful this year, as I find myself grieving some of the traditions I love as we look forward to a Christmas that will be so different than any in recent memory. But it’s at just this moment that the quiet affirmation tucked into the first verse of “O Little Town of Bethlehem” – that it’s both “our hopes *and* fears” that are gathered together in Christ’s birth – reminds me that while this Christmas will present us with challenges, it will also offer us opportunities.

The primary challenge will be that so much of what I normally think makes Christmas Christmas – festive meals with family and friends, holiday parties and gatherings, packed worship services with carols and candlelight – so much of this will be different or, in some cases, simply not possible. The opportunity, however, is to be reminded that none of this is actually essential to keeping Christmas. Indeed, much of it, when over-stressed, can actually distract us from the heart of the Christmas confession: that out of sheer love, God became human in the form of a vulnerable baby born to poor, no-account parents and worshipped first by dirty shepherds, all in order to be one of us and one with us.

This Advent and Christmas, our preparations to welcome and celebrate Christ’s birth will focus on the truths our beloved Christmas carols tell us, truths that at first may be hard to hear, as they challenge the sentimental view we have of Christ’s birth and, perhaps also, our faith. But these carols also and ultimately tell us a truth about God’s love, a love “so deep, so broad, so high,” that it can embrace all of us: our hopes and fears, dreams and disappointments, victories and griefs. Everything.

We will keep Christmas this year, but we will keep it differently, singing the truth of the ancient carols that we may be reminded that even amid “this bleak midwinter,” God comes down from heaven above in order that we might live with hope, reach out to others with compassion, and face the future together with courage. So dive into all that this different Christmas offers that you may hear again the promise that Jesus was “born to raise the children of earth, born to give us second birth” and, on hearing this good news – perhaps with fresh ears – echo the song first heralded by angels, “Glory to the newborn king!”

Blessed Christmas,



Pastor Lose

DAVID J. LOSE, SENIOR PASTOR

DEVOTION

"Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace."

Are there any words more comforting?

It doesn't really matter much if you're all alone in a new apartment far from home, in a sanctuary surrounded by your church family on Christmas Eve, or in a creaky old wooden chapel looking at a cross on a hill on a hot summer night, there is nothing that tugs at our heart strings more.

The mere thought of generations of families around the world lifting up their hearts and voices in thanksgiving, and in hopeful anticipation of a peace that only Jesus can bring, puts a lump in my throat every time.

It's going to be a tough Christmas no doubt. While our whole being longs for us to gather in person, for the most part we'll be gathering in Spirit. If you're feeling down, turn up Nat King Cole's *Silent Night*, and think on the manger all those years ago. Even though Mary and Joseph had every reason in the world to feel lonely and afraid, they were anything but.

Dear Lord, fill us with the heavenly peace that only you can give. Amen.

— PASTOR HAMMERSTEN

MOUNT OLIVET SPIRIT STORE

Looking for some Mount Olivet Swag? We've got you covered! Our Spirit Store that was featured on our Centennial Sundays is now available online! We've got everything from Mark Herman Prints, to hats, coffee mugs, apparel, and more! Orders are available for pick-up at the Mpls or West Campus. To view all the items that are available for sale or to place an order, please visit mtolivet.org/mount-olivet-spirit-store. Have questions? Contact Kris Ericksen at krise@mtolivet.org or by phone at 612.767.2207.



CHRISTMAS TREE LOT

Boy Scout Troop #110 will once again be holding their Christmas Tree Lot at the 1700 Chapel. Hours are Monday through Friday: 5-8pm, and Saturdays and Sundays: 9am-6pm.



LIFE & GROWTH

OCT 17 - NOV 16

BAPTISMS

Margaux Ann Briggs
daughter of Allison and Shawn
Everett Kipp Currie
son of Chelsey and Steve
Eliza June DeLaney
daughter of Kathryn and Kerry
Wells Jeffrey Derheim
son of Katie and Luke
James Tyler Illikainen
son of Stephanie and Tyler
Jonathan Bennett Luiken
son of Sheila and Nick
Genevieve Carole McGinty
daughter of Shannon and Donald
Charlotte Ann Meierbochtal
daughter of Mary and Adam
Lukas Jon Thomas Reddig
son of Gwen and Andrew
Ainsley Rae Roach
daughter of Katie and Shane
McKenna Quinn Roach
daughter of Katie and Shane
Nolan Lee Meyer Stamp
son of Erin and Jeff
Luke Brian Sykes
son of Jillian and Brian

WEDDINGS

Summer Harrison & Travis Tulgren, October 17
Nicole Ogborn & John Hinks, October 25

DEATHS

Thomas A. Bonneville
1939 - 2020
Hazel H. Brown
1924 - 2020
Peggy Hansen
1924 - 2020
Gerhard H. Luehmann
1929 - 2020
Doris M. Maahs
1925 - 2020
Michael B. Marth
1945 - 2020
Mildred I. Martinson
1922 - 2020
David W. Nelson
1934 - 2020
Vera J. Reed
1929 - 2020
Carl P. Teisberg
1925 - 2020
Perry T. Werder
1951 - 2020
Ruben E. Wenzel
1926 - 2020

DAILY READINGS

FROM PASTOR KALLAND
DECEMBER 2020

- 1 Matthew 5:9, Peacemakers
- 2 Proverbs 31:30, To Be Praised
- 3 2 Corinthians 3:18, Transformed
- 4 John 13:34, New Commandment
- 5 Mark 13:11, Do Not Worry
- 6 Psalm 1:1, Blessed Is The One
- 7 1 John 5:21, Dear Children
- 8 Psalm 34:10, Seek The Lord
- 9 Matthew 22:37, Heart, Soul and Mind
- 10 1 John 4:15, Acknowledge
- 11 2 Samuel 7:22, No One Like God
- 12 Psalm 145:18, The Lord Is Near
- 13 1 Corinthians 2:2, Crucified Jesus
- 14 Colossians 3:2, On Things Above
- 15 Matthew 5:13, Salt
- 16 Psalm 143:6, Parched Land
- 17 Ephesians 5:1, Dearly Loved Children
- 18 Proverbs 16:9, The Lord Establishes
- 19 Ephesians 4:2, Humble, Gentle, Patient
- 20 Ephesians 4:3, Every Effort
- 21 Galatians 5:14, Fulfilled Law
- 22 Romans 1:17, By Faith
- 23 Psalm 44:3, Hand, Arm, Face
- 24 Romans 2:12, The Law
- 25 Luke 1:30-31, Favor With God
- 26 Isaiah 60:1, Rise, Shine
- 27 Proverbs 2:6, Lord Gives Wisdom
- 28 Jeremiah 32:17, Lord Gives Wisdom
- 29 John 11:40, The Glory of God
- 30 Matthew 5:11, Blessed are Those
- 31 1 John 4:10, This is Love



CHRISTMAS FOR ALL

11/30 MPLS 4-6PM

12/2 WEST 4-6PM

Donate an unwrapped gift for Love, INC., Redeemer Lutheran Church & Southside Family Nurturing Center. A list of suggested gifts can be found at mtolivet.org.



CHRISTMAS EARLY MEAL DELIVERY

If you would like to deliver an early Christmas meal from church to one (or more) of our members on **December 5 between 11 am & 1 pm**, please contact Ann LaBree at 612.767.2288 or annl@mtolivet.org. Ann will match you with a member, and contact you with the delivery information. Please consider this opportunity during Advent to bring joy and a meal to someone!



MOCW MITTEN DRIVE

DROP OFF INFORMATION

Donate new winter hats, scarves, mittens and gloves at the Greet & Give Drive, Food Drive, and Christmas for All events, as well as during the Open Prayer Time on Wednesdays at both campuses. Donations will be accepted through December 16.



Emmanuel

"God with Us"

MATTHEW 1:23

SUNDAYS IN ADVENT

DECEMBER: GOD WITH US

Sundays in Advent introduce us to stories that prepare us anew to celebrate Christ's birth and invite us to ponder questions of the season.

DECEMBER 6 tells the story of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth and the comfort and courage they share with each other. Who has encouraged you at critical moments in your life?

Matthew's story of the birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25), which focuses on Joseph rather than Mary, falls on **DECEMBER 13**. The angel Gabriel asks Joseph to reconsider his judgment of his betrothed and trust God. When have you struggled to reconsider something in light of a fresh sense of God's grace?

We will celebrate Christmas communion and hear from the prophet Isaiah on **DECEMBER 20**. The authors of our Gospels heard in Isaiah's ancient words a promise of God's love. What will we hear?

On **DECEMBER 27**, we are introduced to Anna and Simeon (Luke 2:22-38), who behold in the Christ child the truth of their mortality and of God's promise of redemption. How does encountering God tell us the truth about our life in this world?

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

This Advent & Christmas Season, we encourage you to join us in celebrating the life and memory of your loved one(s) by attending the Service of Remembrance. This year, we are offering both an in-person, and a recorded, version of this service. Registration for in-person worship is limited to 40. You may register at mtolivet.org, or with Andrea Brown at 612.767.2209, or andreab@mtolivet.org.

THE IN-PERSON CANDLELIGHT SERVICES WILL BE HELD ON:

Tuesday, December 8 at 7pm at the Mpls Campus

Wednesday, December 9 at 1pm at the Mpls Campus

Tuesday, December 15 at 7pm at the West Campus

Wednesday, December 16 at 1pm at the West Campus

*Watch online at mtolivet.org starting on 12/8.

COMMUNION OPPORTUNITIES

IN PERSON AT MPLS &

WEST: Wed, 12/2, 12noon and 7pm. Must register at mtolivet.org.

*ONLINE AT MTOLIVET.

ORG: Pastor Kalland leads a communion service you can watch and participate in whenever you'd like.

*SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20:

This special Sunday is reserved every year for Christmas Communion. Even worshiping online at home, we will continue this tradition of communing as a family of faith.

*For the at-home communion offerings, you can commune by either picking up pre-packaged communion elements at either campus or by using wine and bread you may already have at home.

Pre-packaged elements may be picked up during Open Prayer times and at the Christmas Greetings with your Pastors and Staff on Sunday evenings during Advent.

ADVENT OPEN PRAYER

Wed 12/2, 12/9, 12/16, 12/23: 10am-12noon & 6-7pm; Mpls & West

Wed 12/30: 10am-12noon only; Mpls & West

During this season of both preparation and pause, spend some time with God in the beautiful sanctuaries of Mount Olivet that we know and love.

Christmas Eve

O, Come, Let Us Adore Him!

This Christmas will be different, but we shall honor Christ's birth just the same. We shall sing as we can. We shall praise as we can. We shall read the chapters in Luke with renewed vigor. We shall listen to and sing along to our beloved carols in our homes. We shall light a candle and know that our family of faith is doing likewise. We shall welcome the Christ Child into our hearts and homes and world once again! Love will be born. Let us not lose sight of that which is the foundation of Christmas, the reason for the season:

Christ is born! *O, Come, Let Us Adore Him!*



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - WATCH 12/24 AT MTOLIVET.ORG OR RADIO BROADCAST ON WDGY 740AM AT 2PM

Join in the celebration of the birth of Jesus by watching our Mount Olivet Christmas Eve service on 12/24. There will be familiar scripture and carols, a sermon by Pastor Lose, and a virtual choir singing Mount Olivet's beloved *Peace, Peace*.

LIVE-STREAMED CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE-LIGHTING - WATCH AT 11PM VIA MTOLIVET.ORG

At 11pm on Christmas Eve, you are invited to join in the live-streamed Christmas Eve Candle-lighting. What a joy to know that thousands of us will gather as we can, see our pastors live as we all light a candle, and sing *Silent Night* together. May the spirit and joy of Christmas fill all our hearts in this treasured moment.

COMMUNITY CANDLE-LIGHTING AND SINGING - 6:30 PM

Join with Lutherans around the metro and country, step outside your home, light a candle, get ready to sing *Silent Night*, and pray for God's peace and goodwill to fill the hearts of all!

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" — Luke 2:1-14

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



11/29-12/30, beginning at 5pm daily; Mpls

One of the best parts of the Christmas season is all the lights... lights on our trees... lights as we drive about town... lights on our homes... and this year there is a 1,000,000+ drive-thru light show at the State Fair!

Mount Olivet wanted to get

in on lighting up the world so, beginning 11/29 and running through 12/30, the Minneapolis Campus will be decked out with a Christmas glow. We hope these lights brighten your hearts and give you a joy-filled moment this season... and you might see an angel or two! Come and see!

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS WITH PASTORS & STAFF

Advent Sundays: 11/29, 12/6, 12/13 & 12/20, 5-7pm; Mpls
On these Advent Sunday evenings, your pastors and staff want to greet you and yours as you drive-through and enjoy the sparkling illumination of the Christmas Festival of Lights. At these Christmas Greetings, you can:

Pick up your communion elements for Christmas Communion on 12/20

Pick up a candle for the 11pm live-streamed Christmas Eve candle-lighting

Drop off donations for our community partners:

New socks (wool preferred)

New underwear (for bodies of all sizes)

Paper grocery bags with handles for our Community Meals

Drop off your Christmas offering gift.

Our greatest wish is to see YOU and wish you a Merry Christmas!



BEHIND THE NATIVITY STORY

Tuesday, 12/1, available at mtolivet.org/education

It's a story we know so well – the census at Bethlehem, Joseph and Gabriel, shepherds, angels, Mary, magi, and more. Except... except that no single Gospel holds all these beloved scenes. In fact, they actually present quite different accounts of the nativity. Yet when we read these stories together, we're blessed with a much richer understanding of Jesus' birth. Pastor Lose will share insight into Two-and-a-half Nativity stories found (or not found) in the Gospels.



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, 12/13, available at mtolivet.org.

Last year was the first time our annual Christmas Concert was filmed professionally from beginning to end. Providence, one might say. Pastor Lose and Dr. Beverly Claffin will share new thoughts about the beauty and importance of this concert that is so loved by standing-room-only crowds, and how the 800+ musicians cherish this opportunity to praise the new-born Christ child each year through the glory of music. You will also hear all of our pastors share the familiar readings.



CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

Saturday, 12/19, 4-7pm, Mount Olivet Conference Retreat Center.

Enjoy an evening full of Christmas activities, crafts, and food! See your favorite Mount Olivet Pastor dressed as Sinterklass as they read a Christmas story on the outdoor patio. Take your picture with live reindeer at the Christmas sleigh. Take a short walk to the cross to light a candle and say a prayer. After making your own Tomten craft, grab a warm bowl of chili, a hot drink, and a Christmas cookie to enjoy. And don't forget to take a swing at the Christmas piñata! Social distancing and safety protocols will be practiced.



VIRTUAL CHOIR PROJECT

As a fun Christmas project and gift for our singers, the Senior and Cathedral Choirs will be working on a Virtual Choir recording to be used for the Christmas Eve online worship service. The project requires each singer to record themselves while listening to a practice track and following along with a video of the score. Once accomplished, each singer uploads their recording and the video editing and audio mixing begins. A project of this kind is an arduous project which requires much technical knowledge, equipment, and hours of time. Fortunately for Mount Olivet, we are being assisted by some experienced choir member music educators, the music staff, the communications department, and our own sound engineer who will be utilizing the new sound equipment that has been recently installed in the Sanctuary of the Minneapolis Campus. The project is a collaborative undertaking between departments and one that we hope will result in a beautiful and musical Christmas gift for all!

ZING-A-ZING-A-ZOOM!

Over forty Senior Choir members of both campuses participated in a ZOOM sing-a-long. It was the first time the group has tried to meet collectively to sing. It was exciting to see so many familiar faces and to be together again if only for a short time and in a different manner than most rehearsals. Unfortunately, the limits of ZOOM while singing requires the singer to hear only themselves rather than the entire group. The piano was played by Richard Owen, and just seeing him on the bench and hearing the accompaniments was a welcome and familiar sight for the singers. After singing through some beloved hymns and a rousing verse of Joy to the World, the final song was a new setting of the Prayer of Courage which has been recited by the congregation as a part of the online worship services since choirs stopped meeting in person. The text of the prayer is so comforting during this challenging time and to be able to apply the lyrics to music and sing them is especially meaningful for singers. The choirs look forward to being back in the loft when it is safe to do so, until then we keep the music in our hearts and minds knowing God is listening.

Finding the Light in Scripture

By the time the Messenger is printed, hopefully, you have already seen the Christmas Festival of Lights at Mount Olivet's Minneapolis Campus. What a beautiful display and a perfect and tangible example of the light that comes to our world through the birth of Jesus Christ. Throughout scripture, light has often served as a symbol of holiness, goodness, wisdom, and hope.

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." Matthew 4:16.

"I am the light of the world. Those who follow Me shall not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." Psalm 119:105

"The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear?" Psalm 27:1

It is lovely to see the Christmas Festival of Lights at Mount Olivet and to be reminded of this light of Jesus and the hope that is brought to the world through this gift. It is also interesting to look at the texts of some of the familiar Advent and Christmas carols to see how the authors use the descriptiveness of light to reflect the hope and goodness that comes to us through the birth of Christ.

Savior of the Nations, Come

Now your manger, shining bright, hallows night with newborn light.

Night cannot this light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings Ris'n with healing in His wings

Silent night

Silent night, holy night!

Son of God love's pure light.

Radiant beams from Thy holy face

With dawn of redeeming grace,

May the Christmas Festival of Lights give you hope during this season and remind you of God's holy light which is with you always.

DR. BEVERLY CLAFLIN, *Director of Worship & Music*

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE (BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK...)

LIVING THE MESSAGE 2020-2021 SERIES



December Question: Is the Bible the Word of God?

300+ new people have signed up for this year's Bible study on "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the Bible... but were afraid to ask," joining a hundred and fifty "veterans." Which is fantastic! And, this month's edition is another provocative

and engaging question that most of us have asked at one time or another: "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

Now, I know, I know, that sounds like a questionable, well, question (if not downright heretical!) So maybe we should ask it differently. When someone says, "The Bible is the Word of God," what do they mean? Because it feels like different people mean really different things with that phrase. Some claim that the Bible is "inerrant," while others say it's "inspired," and still others talk about it as "the norm of norms." Are these all the same? And what do we, as Lutheran Christians, believe?

And that's, really, what we'll be exploring. How is the Bible God's Word and, more importantly, how does it function – that is, work on us! – as the Word of God? If we can get at these questions, I think we'll experience the power and possibility of Scripture all the more powerfully!

— PASTOR LOSE

It's not too late to join this year-long monthly series! Register at mtolivet.org/education.

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION

This group meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7pm. Currently the group is meeting via Zoom and is facilitated by Mary Slinde. New members are always welcome. The only requirement is that one loves to read! Upcoming books:

December 9 - *Bethlehem* by Karen Kelly

January 13 - *Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead

February 10 - *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins

Register at mtolivet.org or contact Katie Stevenson at katies@mtolivet.org or 612.767.2232.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AVAILABLE ONLINE

These adult education videos are now available to watch and explore online. Learn what the Bible has to say about hell (spoiler: not much!)... come to know and understand one of the most written about Kings in the Old Testament (flawed, but faithful!)... and catch up (and then perhaps join!) the Living the Message series and be challenged to ask questions (faithfully and honestly).

JOURNEY THROUGH HELL

A walk-through of 'hell' with Pastor Lose

Who Is Satan? with Pastor Dixon

Antichrist as anti-Christ with Pastor Ruud

RALLY IN THE VALLEY - A STUDY OF KING DAVID

Overview with Pastor Ruud

David and Goliath with Pastor MacLean

David's Anointing as King with Pastor Lose

David and Bathsheba with Pastor Freeman

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE... BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!

Living the Message 2020-2021 series

October Question: *What Is the Bible, Anyway?* with Pastor Ruud

November Question: *Is the Bible True?* with Pastor Lose

CHECK THEM ALL OUT AT MTOLIVET.ORG/EDUCATION!

"THE STORY BEHIND THE NATIVITY STORY" WITH PASTOR LOSE

DECEMBER 1

It's a story we know so well – the census at Bethlehem, Joseph and Gabriel, shepherds, angels, Mary, magi, and more. Except... except that no single Gospel holds all these beloved scenes. In fact, they actually present quite different accounts of the nativity. Yet when we read these

stories together, we're blessed with a much richer understanding of Jesus' birth. Available at mtolivet.org/education starting December 1.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

CHRISTMAS EARLY MEAL DELIVERY

If you would like to deliver an early Christmas meal from church to one (or more) of our members on **DECEMBER 5** between 11 am & 1 pm, please contact Ann LaBree at 612.767.2288 or annl@mtolivet.org. Ann will match you with a member, and contact you with the delivery information. Please consider this opportunity during Advent to bring joy and a meal to someone – while social distancing. **Thank you!**

MEAL DELIVERY

The Pastoral Care Team is looking for drivers in the months of January, February and March to drop off meals to people in need. This could be a weekly or monthly commitment. If interested please contact Julie Goodman at julieg@mtolivet.org or 612.767.2208 and leave your contact information.

FRIENDS CONNECT

During this time of physical distancing, some of us may be experiencing increased feelings of loneliness or isolation. If you would like to receive a friendly phone call from a volunteer or know someone who would like to receive a call, please leave a message with the individual's name and number at 612.767.2210. Be advised this is a call of friendship, by a volunteer.

Staying Healthy, Safe, and Sober during the Holidays

The holidays are here, usually a season for parties, family dinners, work functions and celebrating with loved ones. This holiday season will be different with social distancing, mask wearing and various other COVID-19 related guidelines and restrictions. The time from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day also poses special challenges for those in recovery from alcohol, drug or food addiction. The holidays can be one of the most challenging times of the year to stay healthy and sober.

This year may be even more challenging for those in recovery. Our families, our places of employment and places of worship may choose to celebrate differently or not at all, due to the virus concerns. These changes may bring about added feelings of loneliness, isolation, anxiety and increased stress, which are all very common during the holiday season. These feelings can often times lead to the desire to use alcohol, drugs or over eat to cope.

Here are some tips to help maintain sobriety during this time:

1. Create new holiday traditions for yourself or your loved ones that do not include alcohol or drugs.
2. Have an exit strategy or backup plan in the event you find yourself at a holiday gathering where you are being triggered and need to leave or say "no" to food or beverages being offered.
3. Know your triggers and limits. Triggers can be emotional, environmental or social. Prepare for being offered a drink and managing difficult family interactions and family expectations.
4. Don't attend functions alone: ask for a family member or a friend to join you for support or accountability at a holiday gathering.
5. Remember to utilize your coping skills during this time through regular exercise, meditation/deep breathing, prayer, self-care activities, seeing a therapist, attending virtual support groups and engaging with virtual church.
6. Stay in contact with your sponsor, faith community and peers in your recovery group. Have open and honest dialogue with them about fears, triggers and potential relapse. Ask them to help keep you accountable during this time by checking in with you.
7. Be creative in ways to celebrate with loved ones, even if not in person, to avoid isolation and loneliness via Zoom video calls, FaceTime or Skype.
8. Reach out and help others through volunteering and giving. This can help you stay busy, foster feelings of gratitude and give you a greater sense of purpose.
9. Keep a daily gratitude journal and/or practice a daily devotional to help focus on the less stressful aspects of life.

Please contact the Mount Olivet Counseling Center at 612.927.7335 to discuss any concerns or struggles you or a loved one may be experiencing.

Wishing you and your loved ones a very joyous and safe holiday season.

NIKKI KNUDSON-DALAL, MA, LMFT, LADC, Mount Olivet Counseling Services

Join Us at the Outdoor Christmas Festival

Saturday, 12/19, 4-7pm,
Mount Olivet Conference &
Retreat Center.

Come visit the Retreat Center and celebrate Christmas traditions from near and far, old and new. It will be an evening full of Christmas activities, crafts, and food! See your favorite Mount Olivet Pastor dressed as Sinterklass as they read a Christmas story on the outdoor patio. Take your picture with live reindeer at the Christmas sleigh. Take a short walk to the cross to light a candle and say a prayer. After making your own Tomten craft, grab a warm bowl of chili, a hot drink, and a Christmas cookie to enjoy. And don't forget to take a swing at the Christmas piñata! Social distancing and safety protocols will be practiced. Learn more and register at mtolivet.org.



Choosing Joy: A Virtual Mini-Retreat for Women

Saturday, 1/30, 9-11am, via
Zoom.

Join Pastor Hammersten, Pastor Freeman and Dr. Theresa Latini for a time of connection, discussion, and prayer. Together we will explore how to choose and cultivate joy. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit – a sign of our abiding in God's love – and it enables persons, relationships, and communities to flourish. It decreases stress and enhances mental and physical health. The contagion of JOY is one we all need to share these days. Learn more and register at mtolivet.org.



SAVE THE DATE: WOMEN'S WEEKEND

June 11-13, 2021 at the Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center

ADVENT GREETINGS

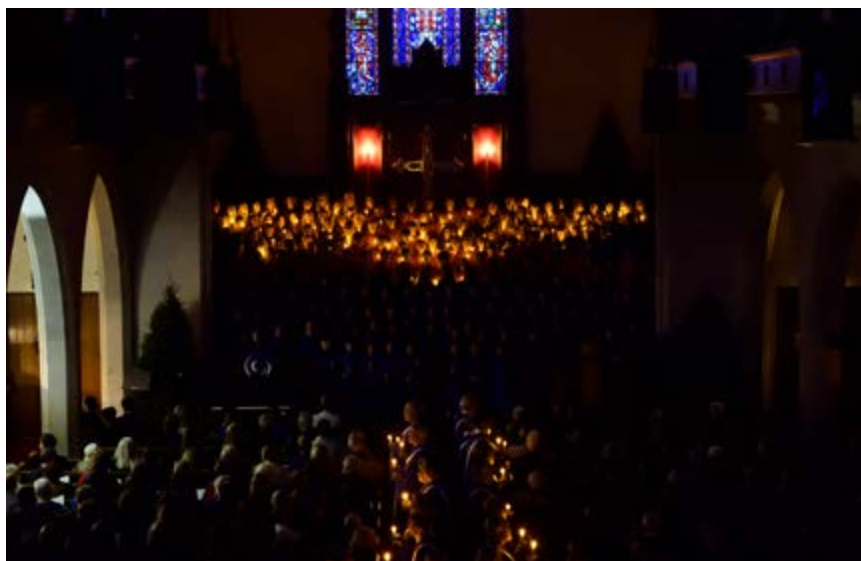
"Shalom, Eleanor. Shalom, Zakaria. Shalom, Lena:" that's how my daughter's first-grade teacher began class on November 4. Each student reciprocated, "Shalom." They had been learning to greet one another in different languages. This greeting stopped me in my tracks not only because of the timing but also because the Hebrew word "shalom" is woven throughout the Old Testament. Often translated as "peace" in English, shalom means more than personal serenity. Shalom is communal wellbeing; a social existence marked by wholeness, health, and security where the needs of all matter to all. Shalom is a divine gift; we cannot bring it to fruition. That much is evident daily. Yet we can glimpse its presence in our lives and we can flourish in fellowship with each other because we are connected to Jesus, the Prince of Peace. In many ways, the retreat center exists for the sake of shalom, a place where weary souls find rest in God and joy in connection with each other and the land. During this season of Advent, when we wait for Christ's coming in our midst, join us in greeting each other in the spirit of shalom and praying for its fullness in all creation.

REV. DR. THERESA F. LATINI, *Executive Director of the Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center*

MURAL PAINTING PROJECT

All of us on the Youth Staff have really been missing the kids and their creativity during this time of Covid. Because of this we came up with the idea to have a few murals painted in our office! We thought about all the church places, programs, and opportunities that are so special to our kids. In the end we decided on making four murals; one of camp, one of all the sanctuaries, one of the service projects and one of choir. After that we set out to find Hi-league artists to paint them! Once the topics were set, Geoff and I met with small groups and let them take it from there! It has been so fun to watch these kids work together on something they care so much about. I love learning new painting skills from them and I am so thankful to be able to spend some time with the Hi-leaguers who would have been counseling our Junior High events this year. We will be featuring the finished murals in the Messenger this spring. Our groups have been working hard and can't wait to show off their talented artwork!

— Anna St.Dennis,
Coordinator of Junior High Youth



Christmas at Mount Olivet

One of the hardest parts of COVID-19 has been the lack of in-person church. While I am thankful for the online sermons and continued communication from the youth staff, I miss seeing the faces of those who make Mount Olivet special. So when I heard that Geoff Arenson and Anna St. Dennis were putting together a mural project, I jumped at the opportunity to join in. A series of murals were arranged to be put up in the youth office, each depicting different aspects of Mount Olivet. Mid-summer, I got a group of my church friends together and we met at the Minneapolis campus to start our work. It was the first time I had been inside the church since early March.

Geoff explained how what we painted was up to us, but it had to be about the choir. The first thing I thought of was the Christmas Concert. Memories of gray skies speckled with snowflakes and the crowded parking lot filled with families racing to find a spot in the Sanctuary. I feel a rush of nostalgia when I recount the sounds of the ringing bells that kick off the ceremony. To me, Christmas at Mount Olivet is one of the best times of the year. The sense of community felt throughout the Sanctuary is overwhelming.

I knew our mural had to depict the finale of the Christmas Concert, which to me, has always been the highlight of the service. The warm glow of candlelight against the sound of the choirs coming together is not only a beautiful sight, but it reminds me of the sense of home at Mount Olivet. We wanted to capture the serene nature of the Sanctuary as everyone comes together to sing *Peace, Peace/Silent Night*.

This year, the holiday season will undoubtedly be different than those of the past. However, as my friends and I have worked on this mural, I am reminded of the unwavering strength of bonds built at Mount Olivet. Nowhere else have I found a community that is full of such support, a place where everyone is welcome. Christmas is a time for joy and love, and there is no shortage of either within our church.

ABBY MEITRODT, Senior at Edina High School & Mount Olivet member

UPCOMING EVENTS



THURSDAYS

PARENTING GROUP

Designed with parents of elementary students in mind – please join Jessica Smith, LMFT, and fellow parents. Drop in as you can, these groups are free 6-7pm Thursdays 12/3 and 12/17. Register at mtolivet.org



DECEMBER 12

GINGERBREAD TAKE HOME BOX!

\$15 per kit. Bring our beloved gingerbread tradition home with you this year! A box full of holiday cheer for your family. Register at mtolivet.org.



DATES VARY

NEW! OPEN ART STUDIO

We're curating space and time for your family to come to church and enjoy the arts! Painting, crafting, and art activities will be available for families. Much like Open Gym, you'll be able to reserve the space/supplies for your quaran-team/pod/family. More information at mtolivet.org.



DATES VARY

OPEN GYM

Mondays/Saturdays at Mpls, Wednesdays/Saturdays at West. Sign up with your quaran-team (up to 10 people) and burn some energy! Reserve your spot at mtolivet.org!

5 Tips for Parents Coping with the Holidays

The holidays can be a time of joy, beloved traditions, and time spent with loved ones. It can also be a time of stress! The 2020 holiday season has caused many families to make challenging choices and face big emotions. My hope is that the following tips provide you encouragement and practical advice for coping as a parent during this season:

- 1. Breathe.** If you notice tension in your shoulders, if you feel overwhelmed or your patience grows thin, breathe deeply. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, slowly, for at least one minute. Deep breathing helps relax our bodies and sends blood to our brains to help us make good decisions. The beautiful thing about deep breathing is that it's a coping tool we always have with us.
- 2. Set realistic expectations.** If you are concerned that you aren't handling the twists and turns of 2020 very well, that is okay! As a global community, we've never dealt with this exact situation before. How can we expect ourselves to be experts at something we've never done? If we set realistic expectations of ourselves and of our loved ones it can prevent irritability and resentment.
- 3. Set limits.** It can be difficult to set limits with others when we are concerned they won't accept the limit, that they will be hurt or that they will become angry. It can also be difficult when we are on the receiving end of a loved one setting a limit. In either situation, remember to be fair to yourself and to others, by sticking to your values and maintaining a calm demeanor.
- 4. Make new traditions.** If there are specific traditions or rituals that your family has maintained in the past that are meaningful to you, consider ways you can still recreate them in a different way. While circumstances may be different with social distancing, this year could offer an opportunity to do something new.
- 5. Show yourself grace.** As parents we often forget that we also need understanding and kindness as we pour that into others. Remember to speak kindly to yourself and lean into your support.

JESSICA SMITH, LMFT, Mount Olivet Counseling Services

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A GIFT TO MOUNT OLIVET

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

WAYS TO GIVE

Give Online: with your credit card or bank information by visiting mtolivet.org/online-giving. Scroll until you see the "Give Online Now" button.

Realm Connect App: login using your Realm username and password and click "Giving."

Text to Give: text "MTOLIVET" to 73256 and follow the instructions provided.

Contact Us: we are here to help! Contact Tricia Lerohl-Morgan in our finance office at 612.767.2255 or by email at tricial@mtolivet.org.

Donor-Advised Funds & Charitable IRA Rollover: Contact Mari Carlson, Director of Development, at 612.821.3150 or by email at mcarlson@mtolivethomes.org.

Stocks: Contact Deanne Nelson in the finance office at 612.767.2280 or by email at deannen@mtolivet.org.

THANK YOU MOUNT OLIVET

2020 is the first year of Mount Olivet's second century of witness and service, and the message we share about God's commitment to be with us through all things has never been more important. Your gifts to Mount Olivet enable us to continue sharing God's word of love, acceptance, hope, and healing.

As we approach the close of this most challenging year, I want to share several heartfelt messages:

- Thank you to those of you who have pledged! Your faithfulness is inspiring and has never been more important.
- If you haven't pledged, please do so now. We are the beneficiaries of the faithful generosity of previous generations and now it's our turn to ensure the future of Mount Olivet's ministries.
- Your Christmas offering allows us to strengthen our vital outreach to those in need. In addition to our weekly Community Meals – we now share more than 2000 meals a week at a cost of \$7500 weekly – we have also partnered with VEAP, Love INC, Bountiful Basket, Urban Ventures, and Community Emergency Service to care for the most vulnerable in our community. This is your faithful generosity at work!

2020 has not been the year we imagined or wanted, but it is a year where we see God's grace in action through the love, outreach, and support Mount Olivet offers its members and the larger community. For 100 years, we have been a place of hope, help, and healing, and your faithful generosity allows us to continue to share the Christmas promise that God is with us through all things. Thank you! Even more, thank God for you!



Pastor Lose

DAVID J. LOSE, SENIOR PASTOR



PHOTO Stewardship Drive Through Dinner September 2020



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Emmanuel

"God with Us"

MATTHEW 1:23

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - WATCH 12/24 AT
MTOLIVET.ORG OR RADIO BROADCAST
ON WDGY 740AM AT 2PM**

Join in the celebration of the birth of Jesus by watching our Mount Olivet Christmas Eve service on 12/24. There will be familiar scripture and carols, a sermon by Pastor Love, and a virtual choir singing Mount Olivet's beloved *Peace, Peace*.

**LIVE-STREAMED CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE-LIGHTING -
WATCH AT 11PM VIA MTOLIVET.ORG**

At 11pm on Christmas Eve, you are invited to join in the live-streamed Christmas Eve Candle-lighting. What a joy to know that thousands of us will gather as we can, see our pastors live as we all light a candle, and sing *Silent Night* together. May the spirit and joy of Christmas fill all our hearts in this treasured moment.

COMMUNITY CANDLE-LIGHTING AND SINGING - 6:30 PM

Join with Lutherans around the metro and country, step outside your home, light a candle, get ready to sing *Silent Night*, and pray for God's peace and goodwill to fill the hearts of all!

