



## God is With Us

It occurred to me as I settled down to write this Christmas letter to you is that the greatest thing we need in our lives, this and every season, is to know that God is with us. (Immanuel—Matt.1:23) This surely is the message of Christmas and thus the message of our faith and for our life.

Jesus is with us! This is what our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren really need to know. Jesus is not only the Babe of Bethlehem, but He is also the Son of God who was born to live for our righteousness, and to die for our sins. Christ is the missing piece to life. Without Him our lives are incomplete. With Him our lives, even in their most complex or disappointing parts, make sense.

Jesus is with us! This is what our junior high and high school youth and college age young people need to know. In the middle of their trials, identity issues, betrayals by friends, struggles to find their way in the world, and dreams for a great future, the Babe of Bethlehem, now the enthroned Christ of all creation, is with them. His salvation gives hope to them and to you.

This is the message of hope to single people, and single-again people, and young marrieds, and families with children and families without children, empty-nesters and young retired folks and senior saints. Even pastors need

this message. The light we long for is the Light we have been given. To receive Him is to be warmed by that Light and shown a new way through the trials and sorrows and even joys that we have on our journey.

Our journey as a church continues. And I am thankful to be on that journey with you. I thank God for you each and every day, especially now as our journey has become more challenging and uncertain as we prepare to celebrate another Christmas as a church family. I commend you to your true first Pastor, even the Shepherd of our souls, our dear Savior, Jesus Christ. This Christmas I want to again bow before Him in Bethlehem with you, happy and confident that in Him all things will turn out for our good and His glory. Especially now, the Christ child is with us!

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) This is our gift. This is our Christmas. This is our hope for every New Year.

Connecting  
People to Jesus,

*Pastor Jon*



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## Sermon Series

### SERIES: "Songs of the Savior"

#### December 2/3

"The Gift of Obedience"

1 Corinthians 1:3-9;

Matthew 1:18-25

#### December 9/10

"Life Disrupted--Mary and Elizabeth"

2 Peter 3:8-14; Luke 1:39-56

#### December 16/17

"When God Calls—A Shepherd's Faith"

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; Luke 2:8-18

#### December 24 AM Services

8:00 & 10:00 AM

"Wise Men Change Their Mind"

Philippians 4:4-7; Matthew 2:7-12

#### Christmas Eve Services

3:00 & 5:00 PM

"Seeing Jesus in the Nativity"

Isaiah 7:10-14; Titus 3:4-7;

Luke 2:1-20



## NOTE WORSHIP ADJUSTMENTS THIS YEAR:

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

**December 24 Worship:** 8:00 (Traditional) & 10:00 AM (Contemporary)

**Christmas Eve Worship:** 3:00 & 5:00 PM

*(Holy Communion celebrated at both services)*

### Monday, December 25

NO worship on Christmas Day

**NO 5:30 PM Saturday Worship on December 23 AND December 30**

## CHURCH OFFICES ARE CLOSED:

Monday, December 25

Tuesday, December 26

Monday, January 1

Tuesday, January 2

# BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

## • WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES •

**Hope Full Women's Bible Study:** All ages welcome. Meets every other week, 6:30-8:30 PM in the Family Center. We will begin our Bible study with "Jesus & Women, in the First Century and Now," by Kristi McLelland. Contact Carol Hoopman (763.486.9177) if interested.

**Early Morning Wednesday Women's Bible Study meeting online:** Our Women's Bible study is supporting each other in our quest for a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior. We are currently reading and discussing Elijah, Faith and Fire by Priscilla Shirer. Email Paulette Lenz at [mp.lenz@gmail.com](mailto:mp.lenz@gmail.com) to join the group or to learn more about how we do this online.

**Exploration & Discovery Bible Study - Wednesday Edition:** This study group meets 9:00-11:00 AM on Wednesdays in the Junior Youth room. The group has completed the study about death, heaven, resurrection and the new creation. There will be a concluding session in the future where each individual writes their obituary and funeral service. We spent a short time watching a video presenting a case for God's existence and the counterview. The associated discussion should be concluding shortly. The new study will be the book of Romans. Jim Rootes is the facilitator for this study.

**Senior Fellowship & Bible Study:** We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month from 9:30-11:00 AM in Cana Hall. Treats and refreshments are provided. Questions? Contact Lynn Antoine 763.777.0412.

**First Place 4 Health Group & Bible Study:** This group meets in the Conference Room each Thursday from 6:30-8:30 PM. Please contact Janet Orrick (763.323.0939) if interested.

**Paschke L.I.F.E. Small Group:** This group meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. Join the group for fellowship at 6:30 PM and continue on for video and Bible study from 7:00—8:30 PM called, "Forward, Discovering God's Presence and Purpose in your Tomorrow," by Dr. David Jeremiah. Contact Janelle Paschke to sign up or for any questions [jjp1105@hotmail.com](mailto:jjp1105@hotmail.com) or 612.251.6864.

## • SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY •

**Exploration & Discovery Bible Study – Sunday Edition:** This study group meets each Sunday at 9:15 AM in the Junior Youth Room. The topic is "Stuff They Didn't Teach Me in Sunday School." The study is based on 140+ episodes from Lutheran Hour Ministries. Jim Rootes is the facilitator for this study.

**Cana Hall Adult Bible Study:** Meet in Cana Hall for a Bible study with Pastor Jon at 9:15 AM each Sunday. Finishing up the study, "Journey through God's Word—the Revelation to John".



**THANK YOU!!!** Thank you, Mount Olive Lutheran Church and Preschool, for participating in the Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes. We began collecting items for the shoeboxes and funds to ship them during VBS and continued in Family Sunday School with a Thrivent action team and additional gifts. We filled more than 29 shoeboxes and paid for shipping of more than 55 boxes. On top of that, other Mount Olive members contributed more than 330 boxes. Wow! Thanks for giving abundantly just as God has given to Mount Olive! Please pray for all the recipients of these boxes. Help them realize how much God loves them through this gift.



MMC ELECTIONS are approaching at the end of this year!

Three positions are up for election:

**President, Treasurer, and a Member-At-Large**

If you have interest in one of these positions, or have a recommendation of anyone you think would be a good candidate, please contact Vice President Jason Hoopman ([jasonhoopman@gmail.com](mailto:jasonhoopman@gmail.com)) or Brenda ([Brenda@mtolive-anoka.org](mailto:Brenda@mtolive-anoka.org)).

**Nominations are needed by mid-December for elections coming up in January.**

## **MIDWEEK MEALS WEDNESDAYS: 5:30-6:15 PM**

Enjoy a meal from 5:30 to 6:15 PM each Wednesday night! Please enter through Door F. You may park in either church lot or at the park across the street.

A big thank you to the many generous people who help make our meal possible! Your prayers and donations are greatly appreciated! Please contact Jerusha at 763.280.3047 or by email [rua\\_76@hotmail.com](mailto:rua_76@hotmail.com) with questions, or if you would like to volunteer or donate.

Please pray for fun, fellowship and joy as we gather with family, friends and enjoy the Christmas season.



## **CHRISTMAS DECOR DONATIONS**

Donations for Christmas décor are used for the purchase of live poinsettias, outdoor planters and the replacement of light strings as they expire. \$25 is suggested, but donations of any size are appreciated.

### **Christmas Décor Donations:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Envelope #: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**



THE WOMEN OF MOUNT OLIVE INVITE YOU TO

# Joyful Songs of Christmas

TUESDAY • DECEMBER 5 • 6:30 PM

*Enjoy Scripture readings, Christmas carols and light refreshments.  
Join us as we celebrate the start of Advent season.*

Sign up in the Welcome Area.



## PARENTS OF A PRODIGAL

Emotions well up. Questions come. Can it be fixed? How can I cope?  
Come join others who are experiencing separation from their child.  
Join in discussions on how emotional health can come with God's help.

**SUNDAYS**  
December 3  
December 17  
6:30 - 8:30 PM

**Embrace changing the pain of estrangement  
to engagement with others who understand.**  
*We will be using the book, "Help! I Have a Prodigal, How to Gain Hope  
and Healing When Your Loved One Has Gone Astray" by Judy R. Slegh*

Contact Anni with questions: 612.861.2934

## JOIN MIXED CHOIR!

**We rehearse on  
Wednesdays at 5:30 PM**

**Our goal is to perform  
once a month during the  
8:00 AM service**

If interested, contact  
Rachelle: [biopurduette7171@gmail.com](mailto:biopurduette7171@gmail.com)

## ARE YOU A SNOWBIRD?

Please contact Brenda Schwarz  
([Brenda@mtolive-anoka.org](mailto:Brenda@mtolive-anoka.org) or  
952.600.1274 with your winter  
address along with the dates you  
will be out of state.

**SNOWBIRDS<sup>ST</sup>**





**MEN: JOIN US FOR**

# BREWS

*and good news*

**2nd and 4th Thursday of each month  
6:30-8:00 PM**

**Each meeting at rotating homes**

*Look for the sign-up sheet in the Welcome Center*



PLEASE JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023**  
**10:30 AM SERVICE**

**PRACTICES:**  
Wednesday, December 6, 6:00-7:00 PM (sanctuary)  
Sunday, December 10, 9:15 AM (family center)

## Are you interested in Handbells?



### BELL CHOIR

Handbell Ringers and Director Wanted!

REHEARSALS ARE WEDNESDAY'S @ 6:30 PM

Are you interested in playing Handbells, particularly for Christmas Carols? We'd love to have you!

Sign up at the Welcome Center with your contact information if you are interested. Questions? Contact Jan Block at 763.421.7987.

## NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."  
Hebrews 11:1

# MEET ALLYSON GOETTCH

## Director of Church Administration



As the DCA, it is Allyson's responsibility to oversee the day-to-day operations at Mount Olive and serve alongside Pastor Jon and the MMC to carry out the strategic vision for our congregation. Additionally, she is responsible for oversight of Human Resources, Risk Management, Finance and Facilities.

Allyson and her husband Josh became new members of Mount Olive this past summer. They have two kids, Olivia (4) and Owen (2) and live in Anoka. She has worked in the nonprofit sector for the past 14 years, most recently with Family Promise in Anoka County as the Community Engagement Manager. She is passionate about supporting mission-based organizations and supporting our local community.

"I am so grateful to be a member of this congregation! I absolutely love the mission of this church—Living to love people to Christ—it is so simple and resonates with my personal mission. I see so much potential at Mount Olive and I'm excited to help move us further in this post-covid era!"



Hi Sunday School Families! Can you believe Christmas is only a few weeks away? We hope you and your family are loving this Christmas season.

Here is a quick recap of this month's activities:

### **DECEMBER 3, 4:00-6:00 PM: FAMILY ADVENT EVENT**

Meet a character from the Christmas story at the Main Entrance at 4:00 PM. You will be led to various crafts, movie and a light supper.

### **DECEMBER 3, 10, 17, AND 31, 9:15 AM: FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Family Sunday School will go on a "Christmas Vacation" a 4-week series studying the Gospels on Christmas. Note December 31 will be a shorter time because worship starts at 10:00AM.

### **DECEMBER 10, 10:30 AM: STELLAR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

Please save the date for the Stellar Christmas Program. We would like to invite you and your extended family to enjoy this service. We will practice the songs during Sunday School and we will rehearse the program on Wednesday, December 6, 6-7:00 PM in the Sanctuary and Sunday, December 10, 9:15 AM in the Family Center.

### **DECEMBER 24: NO FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Please worship with your families at one of our services: 8:00 AM traditional, 10:00 AM contemporary, 3:00 PM Christmas Service, or 5:00 PM Christmas Service.





# MOUNT OLIVE CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

'Tis the season for our annual preschool Christmas Boutique! This is an event where the children get to “go shopping” in our school Christmas Boutique. Each child has a volunteer help them shop for their family members and then they excitedly wrap each of their gifts. The children look forward to shopping for their loved ones! Thank you to everyone who donated gifts this year. We wouldn't have had a successful boutique without your help!



## YOUNG ADULT

L.I.F.E.



Please keep the following young adults in prayer this month and stop to sign a card for each of them on **Saturday or Sunday, December 2, 3.**

Prayer for God's calling on the lives of our young adults:

Lord, I lift \_\_\_\_\_ up to you and ask that you would move in their life. Reveal your calling for their life and give them the courage to obey it. Help them pursue the desires of your heart and your will for their life with fervor and tenacity. Help them to press on with endurance regardless of the obstacles. Help them to pursue a close relationship with you so that they don't wander off your path. Help them to grow and be stretched in new ways so that they are better equipped for the next challenge to come their way. Raise up young people all over the world that are willing to step out in faith and pursue your calling for their life. Help them to become close together as the body of Christ, to support and love each other, and encourage each other through every circumstance. Amen .



Matthew Larson	Jordyn Risse	Mya Briese
Lily Homan	Albert Breitwaser	Layla Alm
Angelina Collins	Sophie Bruun	

