

JUNE 2020

BELIEVING, BELONGING, BECOMING

MOUNT OLIVET
MESSENGER



mtolivet.org

JOIN US

M MPLS CAMPUS

5025 Knox Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55419
612.926.7651

W WEST CAMPUS

7150 Rolling Acres Rd
Victoria, MN 55386
952.767.1500

SUNDAYS

When Mount Olivet resumes in-person gatherings our Summer Sunday schedule is as follows:

- M** 9, 10, 11am
- W** 9, 10am

Holy Communion 8:30am; Nursery 9, 10, 11am; Radio Broadcast on WDGY 740AM at 11am; Watch the mpl's worship service at mtolivet.org at 11am

COVER PHOTO

"The Sower" by Van Gogh.

JUNE 7

THE SOWER

Mark 4:1-12

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

SERMON Pastor Lose

JUNE 14

THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

Matthew 18:23-34

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

SERMON Pastor Dixon

JUNE 21

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:30-35

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

SERMON Pastor Freeman

JUNE 28

THE DAY LABORERS

Matthew 20:1-15

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

SERMON Pastor Lose

SUMMER SERMON SERIES: THE PARABLES

Would you believe Jesus told parables in order that people wouldn't understand him? Crazy, but that's what he says. On June 7th we'll hear a familiar parable and what Jesus says about them. What do you like about parables? What is challenging?

On June 14th, Jesus tells the sad story of someone who, though having been forgiven much, refuses to forgive others. When have you struggled with forgiveness? What might help you move to a different place?

There are few parables more famous than the Good Samaritan, which we'll hear on June 21st. That very familiarity makes it harder to hear God's surprising word of mercy and grace. What comes to mind when you hear someone talk about "a good Samaritan"?

June 28th brings us the parable of the day laborers, one of the most difficult of Jesus' parables. Not difficult to understand, but to accept, because it privileges forgiveness over fairness. Would you prefer God be fair or forgiving?

Detectives of Divinity

Some years ago, social scientists went to a local café a few blocks from the New York Metropolitan Art Museum, one popular with museum guests. Like many restaurants, this one had a variety of generic paintings hung on the walls as decoration. For two weeks, the researchers observed patrons at the café, counting the number of times diners looked up at the paintings. Then they took some of the most priceless works of art from the Met out of their frames and hung them in the restaurant. Again they tracked the number of times diners glanced up from their meals or conversation to look at the art. To their surprise, there was no difference. Priceless pieces of art or run-of-the-mill paintings, the diners noticed no difference. (And this was true even of those eating lunch after just having paid to visit the museum!) As a result, the researchers wondered whether the average person can recognize art work if it's not in a frame and hanging in a museum. Are we, they ultimately asked, able to detect beauty in the world if doesn't show up where we expect beauty to be?

I think we in the Church might ask a similar question: Can we detect God's presence if not surrounded by organ music and stained glass windows? Can we see God, that is, outside the walls of our church in our ordinary lives and the everyday world around us?

This isn't a new question. Jesus regularly tried to stretch the imagination of his hearers by telling stories about the coming kingdom of God using very ordinary characters and situations: a stubborn gardener who won't give up on a dying tree, a woman who searches her house all night to find something she's misplaced, dysfunctional sons both vying for their father's wealth and attention, and more.

We call these stories "parables," and because they were Jesus' favorite way of teaching, we've heard them often enough to think of them as cute morality tales, something akin to Aesop's Fables. But while Jesus parables endeared him to the down-and-out crowds listening to him, the respectable citizens and religious leaders of the

day found them scandalous, even threatening. The reason for this is hidden in the word "Parable" itself, which is made up of two Greek words: *para* (alongside) and *bole* (to throw down). Which means that telling a parable is literally throwing two things alongside each other that usually don't go together. That can be upsetting. But it can also be enlightening, even life changing.

During this time when we cannot gather at church for worship, I've been struck by how important it is to be able to discover God's presence in the ordinary elements of our life! To sharpen our skills in becoming "detectives of divinity," this summer we will immerse ourselves in Jesus' parables. Some of these stories are familiar, some less so, but each has the potential to surprise us with claims about who God is and where God is at work.

I hope that spending this time wrestling with and being delightfully (and at times uncomfortably) surprised by where God chooses to show up will transform our picture not only of God, but also of ourselves, our worship, and our life together as a church. I think that most of us tend to think of worship like a performance, where the pastors and choirs hope to inspire and encourage us with their performance. But what if worship were meant instead to be the rehearsal hall, where we practice recognizing God in our lives? Or, and even more down to earth, what if Sunday worship was less like "the big game" of our faith lives and more like the practice field or even the locker room, where we come to train and then go out into life to see and share the good news? These are important questions, and I think there's no better time than the current pandemic to answer them!



Pastor Lose

DAVID J. LOSE, SENIOR PASTOR



Sanctuary Renovations

During this time away, our beautiful sanctuary at the Minneapolis campus is going through a restoration as a part of our caring for sacred spaces celebrating our Centennial Celebration. When we are able to return to church, you will notice that it has been refreshed and renewed.

STAINED GLASS:

Local company, Gaytee Palmer Stained Glass studios, removed both the window at the altar and the window in the balcony. The window, taken apart in sections, is then transported to their studio for restoration.

The first step begins with taking rubbings of each panel to document the existing glass, its condition and joint locations. The panels are placed in a soaking bath for 24 hours to loosen the old lead and grout from each panel.

Next, the workers re-lead the glass using high alloy lead, which is expected to last 125 years. Afterward, they solder all joints on both sides of the stained glass panel. Then they brush grout between the lead and glass on both sides of the stained glass. This process strengthens the panel and protects it from the elements. Once this is complete, braces are placed on the panels and they are carefully transported back to church for installation.

The old, yellowed Lexan covering the exterior windows will be replaced with clear plate glass allowing more light into the sanctuary and the beautiful stained glass to be seen more clearly from the exterior.

CHANCEL AREA:

Restoration will include removal of the side credenza shelves, communion rail, HVAC cabinets, and chancel chairs. These items, along with the pulpit and lectern, will be cleaned, stained, buffed, and lemon-oiled, to restore the original luster of all the wood in the Chancel. The reredos (intricate carvings) above the altar will be restored from years of burning candles. The exterior wooden doors facing 50th street will be refurbished to their original beauty by painting all the black iron decorative pieces, stripping the trim and door, and then re-staining and finish coating the wood.

LIFE & GROWTH

APRIL 17 – MAY 14

BAPTISMS

Nolan Leo Duling

Son of Jennifer and Bryan

DEATHS

Kathryn A. Ahonen

1951 – 2020

E. Victoria Anderson

1924 – 2020

Marlowe Chris Anderson

1948 – 2020

Mary C. Bottem

1925 – 2020

Mildred B. Deanovic

1918 - 2020

Mary M. Everson

1927 – 2020

Carolyn L. Hovelsrud

1940 – 2020

June R. Johnson

1919 – 2020

Sally R. Mooty

1932 – 2020

Mary L. Otness

1932 – 2020

Lee A. St. Germain

1948 – 2020

Joan M. Straub

1931 – 2020

Dorothy L. Woodsome

1926 – 2020

“Surely, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.” – Isaiah 12:2

DAILY READINGS

FROM PASTOR KALLAND JUNE 2020

- 1 Hebrews 10:19-20, We Have Confidence
- 2 Revelation 3:5, I Will Not Blot Out
- 3 John 12:25, Balance
- 4 2 Corinthians 4:17, Slight Momentary Affliction
- 5 Job 19:25, My Redeemer Lives
- 6 John 14:6, Way, Truth, Life
- 7 Proverbs 10:7 Is A Blessing
- 8 1 John 3:16, Imitate Christ
- 9 Isaiah 56:5, Everlasting Name
- 10 John 15:13, Greater Love
- 11 1 Chronicles 16:12, The Wonderful Works
- 12 Isaiah 46:9, No One Like God
- 13 Psalm 77:11, The Deeds of the Lord
- 14 1 Peter 4:14, The Spirit Rests On You
- 15 Malachi 3:10, Bring the Whole Tithe
- 16 Proverbs 3:9, Honor the Lord in All Things
- 17 Acts 3:6, "What I Have I Give To You"
- 18 Matthew 6:21, Where Is Your Heart
- 19 1 Samuel 2:6-7, Humbles and Exhausts
- 20 Revelation 3:17, We Don't Always Realize
- 21 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, All Done In Love
- 22 Joshua 1:9, Wherever You Go
- 23 Ephesians 5:15, Be Careful
- 24 James 1:19-20, Quick to Listen, Slow to Speak, Slow to Anger
- 25 Isaiah 40:31, Hope in the Lord
- 26 Joshua 24:15, Serve the Lord
- 27 Psalm 16:8, Always Before Me
- 28 1 Timothy 6:17, Set Our Hope on God
- 29 John 8:36, Free Indeed
- 30 Galatians 5:1, Christ Sets Us Free

DEVOTION

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?" Matthew 6:25

Have you noticed the birds lately? We live just off 42nd and France. Most mornings we wake to airplanes rattling our old windows. Growing up in Richfield, if we were talking on the phone and a plane would fly overhead, we'd say 'just a minute' and hold the receiver down 'til the plane flew over and we could hear again!

These mornings, though, there are no planes flying overhead, so we awake to the most beautiful orchestra of birds! I've come to recognize which instrument accompanies the tiniest bit of light on the horizon, who joins in next, and which songs follow. If you listen carefully each dawn, you'll even find which birdsong signals it's time to get up!

Thank you God, for all the gifts you shower upon us each and every day. Help us to not worry away this precious gift of time, but instead, to see all your gifts that have been here *all* along. Amen. — PASTOR HAMMERSTEN



WORDS OF HOPE: OUR 2020 MOCRC MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERVICES

Our beloved Summer Midweek worship services at the Retreat Center will continue this year! As with so much of our life together, they will come to you in a slightly different form. We will record a brief service, including one of our pastors preaching on a passage of their choosing that helps them find hope, understand hope, and share hope. Look for the video to be posted on the Together @ Mount Olivet page beginning on Wednesday June 17, with Pastor Lose preaching, and then continuing each Wednesday.



Radical Connections

Connection is a radical concept lately. Birthdays are celebrated with car parades. Grandparents are kept at a very healthy distance with regular FaceTime calls. Children are distance learning. Friendships are maintained with Zoom happy hours. The camaraderie of the workplace has been reduced to Slack and email messages.

And what is church in all this? For me, so much of my pre-pandemic spiritual health was rooted in singing and communing with the Senior Choir every week. But now, that is not possible. Or, is it?

While the stay-at-home measures have been disruptive, they have presented new, unexpected ways of connecting. My mom, a widow and on her own, is self-isolating 200+ miles away. Still we wanted to celebrate with her at Easter. I could have never imagined we would be sharing church together remotely with Mount Olivet's Easter service streamed through our television and her tablet; but, there we were singing hymns with the organ and full orchestra; listening to Easter anthems; reflecting on the good news of the Easter message; and, joining together in the Lord's Prayer. He has risen! He has risen, indeed!

Since then, we have continued to faithfully tune in to Sunday services at Mount Olivet (often in our pajamas) with my mom at a distance. I am grateful for the daily email devotions that help ground my day in God's love. I am grateful for the "Unplugged" video messages from our pastors that provide a thoughtful boost mid-week. And, I am grateful for the weekly 1st Alto Zoom "practices" that allow us to share and support each other in a new way.

Let us each rejoice in all these new ways of connecting and communing with our friends and family from a distance to share in the promise of God's love, hope, and forgiveness. Let us together continue to support the efforts of our Mount Olivet leaders and staff as they work tirelessly to enhance our spiritual journey from a distance and make the connections to our church life meaningful and useful.

JAYNE DOW LARKIN, *Mount Olivet supporter and proud 1st Alto in the Senior Choir*

**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 Lebröl-Morgan in our finance office at 612.767.2255 or by email at tricial@mtolivet.org.

"Stewardship is not about raising money, but about raising Christians who trust God." – Dietrich Bonhoeffer.



Mount Olivet Motorheads Love Engines and the Lord - A Powerful Combination!

Around 2003, Pastor Kurt Kalland was approached by a few Mount Olivet car enthusiasts about forming a new kind of church group — a group that combined people’s love for the Lord and their love for combustible engines.

Pastor Kalland lovingly called the new group “Motorheads” and championed the idea with Senior Pastor Paul Youngdahl. Both pastors saw Mount Olivet Motorheads as a unique way to share our church with a wider community.

Since then, Motorheads events have reached an ever-widening circle of people — many who normally would never set foot in a church.

There are four Motorheads’ events each year ...

(1) THE MOTORHEADS @ LE CHATEAU CACHE EVENT IS HOSTED BY WARREN HERREID & JEANNINE RIVET AT THEIR SPECTACULAR “GARAGE” COMPLEX. This

event started in 2009 with 60 people in attendance. This past March, the event drew over 300 people with at least half of the attendees being non-members of Mount Olivet.

(2) THE MOTORHEADS @ MINNETONKA DRIVE-IN EVENT HELD ON THE 1ST TUESDAY IN JUNE AT 6:30PM. The drive-in is open because social distancing is naturally maintained while eating in cars. So our plan is to proceed with this event and hold devotions in a big circle where we can maintain a 6ft social distance between each other.

(3) IF SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES ARE RELAXED, THE AUGUST 16, 2020 MOTORHEADS SHOW / BLESSING OF THE MOTORS & DRIVERS WILL BE THE 16TH YEAR OF THIS EVENT THAT ALTERNATES LOCATIONS BETWEEN THE MPLS AND WEST CAMPUSES. If the show is on, it will be at the West Campus this year. The summer show draws over 300 people who enjoy popcorn, hot dogs, and treats while they ooh and aah at the fantastic vehicles on display. The evening ends with a service to bless the motors and drivers and a FREE raffle drawing. A go / no-go decision will be made on August 1, 2020.

(4) THE MOTORHEADS’ FALL ROAD TOUR IS TYPICALLY HELD ON THE FIRST SUNDAY IN OCTOBER. This event starts with worship at either the Mpls or West Campus and is followed by a road tour to enjoy fall colors and a fun destination (e.g. the Viet Automotive Museum, Chankaska Winery, Stone Barn Pizza, etc). Plans are underway for how we can hold this event with or without social distancing rules.

One thing that will never change is that all Motorheads’ planning meetings and events include the Lord’s Prayer spoken by a bunch of Motorheads. You can feel the power!

The Mount Olivet Motorheads’ mission is to enhance believing, belonging, and becoming by providing spiritual and social opportunities and by encouraging seekers to connect with Mount Olivet, so they can come to know the good news of Jesus Christ who cares about every aspect of our lives – even our love for engines!

DEB KIND, *Mount Olivet member and Motorheads lay leader*



NOW ACCEPTING! VENDOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE & HOLIDAY MARKET

Calling Local Vendors for the Mount Olivet Mpls Holiday Boutique and the NEW West Holiday Market! **VENDOR REGISTRATION OPENS 6/1** for the Mpls Holiday Boutique to be held Saturday, 11/7, 9am-2pm and the NEW West Holiday Market to be held Saturday, 11/21, 9am-1pm at the West Campus in Victoria. You may apply for either or both at mtolivet.org.



Trust in God... Trust in Your Questions

What is God up to these days? I have moments lately when I think about the new and challenging circumstances and question all that is happening. Perhaps you do, too. If so, know that you aren't alone.

Consider Martin Luther, for instance. Luther was an astute biblical scholar, committed in faith, diligent in study and devotion, and always attempted to live out the Gospel. Yet he continued to grow in his understanding of God throughout his life, often through his questions.

Interestingly, Luther wrote two extremely different prefaces to the book of Revelation. In the first, written in 1522, Luther said, "I can in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it. Christ is neither taught nor known in it." In 1530, however, he wrote a decidedly different preface: "We shall not doubt that Christ is at our side and with us, even when things are at their worst. As we see here in this book, through and beyond all plagues, beasts, and evil angels, Christ will nevertheless be with his saints and obtain the final victory."

What happened in those eight years which made Luther change his tune? Probably many things. He continued to wrestle with questions, garnered new experiences, encountered new joys and sorrows, and kept turning to prayer and study. He also lived through the Peasant's War and witnessed the ravages of the Plague first hand when it came to Wittenberg. Through it all, he developed new insight and a new openness to seeing God at work in ever-surprising ways.

What are the questions you're asking these days? Luther's example encourages me to trust in God's relationship with us, and to trust that we don't need to have everything figured out. Faith finds us, and Jesus meets us, exactly where we are. And while Jesus receives us just as we are, he also continues to lead us into new life and deeper insight, in part through our faithful questions.

My prayer for all of us who have questions these days is to believe these questions are faithful, to keep engaging in worship and prayer, to cling to the promises of Christ, and to await with patience the new insight God is granting along the way.

— PASTOR RUUD

ADULT EDUCATION UPDATE

Questions about hell, Satan, and the anti-Christ aren't often heard in Lutheran Churches because we are so oriented to God's grace. But they sure seem to be prominent in the popular religious culture. For this reason, Pastors Lose, Dixon, and Ruud are offering a brief "Journey through Hell" via video presentations and overview.

"The Grace of Dogs," a Book Study with Pastor Lose. Ever wonder about the spiritual side of your canine pal, or the spiritual importance of your relationship with your pets? Join Pastor Lose in a Zoom conversation about what he thinks is one of the most interesting books of the past several years connecting faith to our everyday life.

If you are interested in receiving more information about either of these offerings, check out the Adult Education page at mtolivet.org/education.

NURSES NOTES

DID YOU KNOW?

Time lost is brain lost.

Every minute counts when you or someone you know is having a stroke.

Act **F.A.S.T.** and **Call 911 RIGHT AWAY** if you spot signs of stroke.

IF STROKE HAPPENS, ACT F.A.S.T.

F- FACE DROOPING

Ask the person to smile. Does one side droop?

A- ARM WEAKNESS

Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S-SPEECH DIFFICULTY

Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred?

T- TIME TO CALL 9-1-1

If the person shows any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

God is Greater than the Highs and Lows

Each day, whether watching the news, following social media or having conversations amongst family, friends, and colleagues, we are hearing more about bad things that are happening for people. We hear about individuals' lows, their negative seasons or their mountains to climb.

We hear about these more often because people are comfortable sharing and being vulnerable with people in the places where they feel safe and supported. I am so grateful Mount Olivet can be one of those places- where people have listening ears and words of unconditional support.

There are difficult things that happen to all of us at one time or another. Unfortunately, we are all facing some type of loss during this uncertain time; we're all making sacrifices. Whether it's not being able to attend church in the physical space, or going to your place of employment or risking your health and well-being as an essential worker. Maybe you're looking out for someone in your family who is at high risk, and taking precautions to keep them healthy. Perhaps you've lost a loved one, temporarily lost a job, or you have children missing school; the list goes on.

In life, there are lows, but there are also a lot of highs. No matter what the situation is, and no matter how hard the path may seem, you can always turn to your faith. Sometimes we forget to pray when we are climbing those difficult mountains. God is there to help us climb, walking beside us.

A positive reminder for my family has been something I have on a t-shirt (see image). The symbol translates- "God is Greater than the highs and lows." This phrase reminds us all to have faith not only in the happy times, but in the trying times, too. Trust in God, He has our backs!

ANDREA BROWN, *Director of Pastoral Care*



MOUNT OLIVET FEEDS AND SHARES!

The Community Meal that was transformed into a "grab-and-go" event each Thursday and has become so popular (averaging over 400 meals a week) and clearly meets a critical need in our community. For this reason, we are adding a second meal on Tuesdays, beginning on June 2nd. Help us get the word out and always let us know if you want to support these efforts.

Also, because of the dire shortage of food at our community food banks, we will be starting a "reverse grab-and-go" Food Drive, held at the Minneapolis Campus on the first Monday of each month (June 1) and the 3rd Monday of each month (June 15) at the West Campus. Look for more detail in the Friday Together @ Mount Olivet email. The food drives will be safe, convenient opportunities to share our blessings with those who are in need and will benefit our partners Bountiful Baskets, VEAP, and Community Emergency Services.



A GEOGRAPHY OF GRACE

TERESA LATINI, *Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center Executive Director*

PHOTO

The glorious prairie land of the Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center.

The Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center was established in a time of national uncertainty and economic instability: the oil crisis of the 1970s. Pastor Paul Youngdahl worried that steeply rising gasoline prices would hinder travel to Cathedral of the Pines in northern Minnesota. How could Mount Olivet Lutheran Church continue its ministry of faith formation nearby?

With vision and inspiration, in 1976 the church purchased 154 acres of farmland, just 35 minutes south of Minneapolis. Pastor

Youngdahl wrote to the congregation at the time, “I am personally convinced that the Mount Olivet Lutheran Church Retreat Center will be a continuation . . . of spiritual growth on a year-round basis. People of all ages from our congregation and from the community will now have a place close by to go, to be still, to grow in the Word of God, to enjoy Christian fellowship . . .” As a result, for over forty years, Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center has nurtured the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional growth of Mount Olivet members, other communities of faith, and non-profit organizations through caring and creative ministries, quiet reflection, and reverence for all life.



GROWTH & ADAPTATION

Since the original purchase of land, the retreat center has grown and adapted with the times. The Ruth Youngdahl Lodge, named after Pastor Reuben Youngdahl's wife, was built with a full-service kitchen, a dining room seating over 150 people, four meeting rooms, and administrative offices. By early 1977, the retreat center received its first day guests and held its first day camp for kids.

A generous donation in 1980 from Mount Olivet member, Herbert Cornell, enabled the retreat center to build an overnight accommodation building. Named for his beloved wife, the Ruth Cornell House features eighteen hotel-style rooms, four dormitories, two large lounges, a game room, pool, whirlpool, and sauna.

Pastor Youngdahl's vision for a dedicated worship space at the retreat center was realized in 1999 with the construction of the chapel. A multifunctional space for worship, rehearsal, prayer, meditation, and meetings, the chapel overlooks Chub Lake and provides panoramic views of the beautiful grounds.

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The initial building of the Retreat Center, the Chapel built in 1999, the beautiful woods on the property, and an aerial view of the Retreat Center today.

"The Mount Olivet Retreat Center is such an amazing place. I am so grateful for space and support the staff offers to every group that spends time there. Their work allowed me to grow as a youngster when I would attend a weekend retreat with my confirmation class. As a young adult, I started bringing lacrosse teams down over spring break for training camp. Later, the non-profit I lead started hosting annual board retreats and staff training sessions there. Each visit was marked by a warm welcome, a tremendous sense of peace and quiet, phenomenal food and coffee, and most importantly, space to be present, connect, and grow." Aron Lipkin, Homegrown LaCrosse Minneapolis

"Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center has become for us a place of re-creation, a moment to take a deep breath, reflect, and find renewed perspective and energy for ministry. It's the presence of God we encounter here that makes this possible." Pastor Dale Steele, North Central Region Church of God

"For the past five years, Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs has been holding its annual Snow Days retreat at Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center. We have over 300 singers in grades 2-12, and our weekend singing retreat is consistently mentioned as the most beloved activity by our graduating seniors. Mount Olivet provides us with beautiful spaces for bringing groups of kids together not only to sing but also to connect, build memories, and fellowship. Everyone loves the natural setting, and the tradition of s'mores at the stone fireplace on a sunny January afternoon is especially remembered by our singers." Andrea Dittmer, Choir Manager



MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center carries out its ministry of hospitality and care in a place of exceptional beauty. Rolling hills, prairies, and woods invite guests to connect with nature as the theater of God’s glory and grace. Guests hike on five miles of trails, venture out on the marsh walk (a 425-foot floating walkway overlooking Chub Lake), meditate in the gazebo, pray in the outdoor chapel, walk the outdoor labyrinth, spy on the cranes in the bird observatory, or enjoy conversation over a fire on the patio.

In 1991, the retreat center undertook a prairie restoration project by restoring twenty-five acres to their natural state. The prairies of the retreat center are a diverse ecosystem and home to a multitude of plants, fungi, and insects. Guests who roam through these “seas of grass” feel a mixture of spiritual wonder, openness, and possibility.

The retreat center exists in a reciprocal, nourishing relationship with its land. As retreat center staff and volunteers from Mount Olivet church care for the land, it yields a plentiful bounty. Led by Dan Kahl, Director of Operations and Site Naturalist, the retreat center has initiated a number of green initiatives. It maintains an onsite garden that includes twelve raised garden beds and fruit trees. Guests enjoy meals with fresh vegetables, fruit, and herbs feet from where they grew. Meal preparation scraps are composted and that compost is used in the garden and flowerbeds at the retreat center. Each fall and spring, volunteers spend a day planting flowers and tending the land together.

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Women’s Weekend hike led by Dan Kahl, Marsh Walk, a volunteer tending to the garden, worshippers in the Chapel, and fresh vegetables from the onsite garden.

PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE

Aerial shot of the woodlands and cross



PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center supports the spiritual growth of Mount Olivet members and non-members alike. Thousands visit each year for meetings, conferences, seminars, and retreats. Many say that they experience much more than meeting, eating, and sleeping. Tim Barnes, Executive Vice-President of the International Association for Refugees, writes, “As people who give our heart and soul to our work, we at IAFR have found Mount Olivet to be a wonderful place to gather and seek refreshment. Their beautiful, well-kept grounds, nutritious and well-presented meals, and staff that serve attentively and with a genuine interest in our work, together create an environment that nourishes our bodies, hearts, and spirits for our continued service.”

In its opening years, the retreat center hosted day retreats organized around the church calendar. These continue today in our Day Lenten and Day Advent Journeys, which invite Mount Olivet members and non-members into seasons of reflection, prayer, penitence, and hope. For over forty years, Midweek Summer Worship services have cultivated fellowship over a nourishing, freshly prepared meal, participation in nature talks, and inspirational worship led by Mount Olivet pastors. The first Mother’s Day banquet was held in 1980. Today, over 300 people join us annually for this celebration.

“Our charge, as Mount Olivet Church and as Christians, is to bring God’s word into the world. The retreat center allows us to not only bring God’s word to people who come to us, but it also allows us to send them back changed. We are sending disciples into the world.”

Carol James, Retreat Center Executive Director, 1999-2018

LEADERS NURTURING LEADERS

The retreat center has been led by a group of creative, caring leaders since its inception. Tom MacNally, the first executive director (1976-1980), expanded retreat center offerings to churches and groups throughout the Twin Cities, and hired its first program director. Kay Olson Divine (1981-1994) exuded hospitality with her big heart and big smile. Reverend Terry Morehouse (1995-1999) led adult education at Mount Olivet Church and directed the retreat center at the same time. He cultivated spiritual growth in a host of new retreats. Under the strong administrative and welcoming leadership of Carol James (1999-2018), the retreat center expanded its amenities and received groups from around the world. Today, we have received a grant to establish new programming that nurtures mindful, resilient leaders for a changing church and world.

In our current time of high anxiety, unrest, and upheaval, the retreat center also has launched a new online initiative, “Retreat Where You Are.” It includes resources for all ages – prayers, meditations, mindfulness practices, poems, music, nature videos, and other activities – to help people at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church and beyond. Whether you have time to retreat in five-minute increments, an entire day, or something in between, Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center welcomes you into connection with God, nature, and one another.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1977, groups slept on the meeting room floors for \$1 per person. They paid \$6.75 per person for three meals.

The Retreat Center has an eleven-circuit outdoor prayer labyrinth fashioned in the style of the Cathedral in Chartres, France. Guests can meditate and pray along with the saints who have been walking labyrinths as part of their journey with God since the Middle Ages.

Since 2018, Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center has been a certified Monarch Waystation Site. It is one of the tens of thousands of designated locations that provide resources necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration.

Today the retreat center welcomes over 250 groups and 7000 guests and serves over 21,000 meals each year.

Since 1977, the retreat center has hosted day and overnight camps for 1st-6th graders. Initially called “King’s Kids,” this camp is now the Mount Olivet Lutheran Church Day Camp.

Between 1980-1983, MOCRC hosted annual events for seminary students and Sabbath retreats for pastors. Today we welcome groups from Luther Seminary (St. Paul, MN) multiple times each year.



Keeping Up With Each Other

Toward the beginning of the government issued Stay at Home order, my church friends and I quickly started missing each other and texting constantly about how much we miss the weekly activities at church. We were talking about how much we miss Table Talks on Sunday nights and my friend Maddie Schnell had the idea to Zoom on Sunday nights to check in on each other and maybe read a bible verse or two! Usually we do the classic Mount Olivet highs and lows, and talk about everything from college stress and camp memories to how the coronavirus is affecting our lives. We read some bible verses and relate it to this crazy time or we talk about the devos the Youth Staff have been sending out weekly! This has been a really good way to connect to church friends and see how everything is going in everyone's lives. We all were very upset about missing out on big church activities like the choir trip, Easter morning at Perkins, Hi-League, and the Seven Last Words of Christ worship service. Although our Zoom calls don't make up for it, it helps us feel like we aren't totally disconnected from each other. Everyone needs support and people to lean on during this time and I am so thankful for my church friends!

GRACIE WEIKLE, *Junior at Edina High School*

7th Grade Confirmation Retreats

One of our favorite activities as a Youth Staff is our 7th grade Confirmation retreats at the Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center. We meet the kids at church for check in, then we load the bus and we are off to Farmington! When we arrive at the Retreat Center we head to our assigned dorm rooms, get to know the high school counselors, and then eat dinner together in the main lodge. The food is always great and the fellowship and hospitality is even better! After dinner we play games and discuss a story from the Bible with a classic skit from the counselors! We gather in the beautiful chapel for a communion service led by one of our Pastors. The activities end with us swimming in the pool, sitting in the hot tub or sauna, as well as playing pool and foosball in the game room. The last event of the night is our favorite, Sacred Ground! We gather on the blue couches by our dorm rooms to sing together, share a meditative devotional, and do open prayer. God is good! We love our 7th grade Confirmation retreats at the MOCRC!

ANGIE ST. DENNIS, *Coordinator of Confirmation, Mpls Campus*



PICTURED FROM TOP LEFT TO RIGHT

Gracie Weikle, Maddie Schnell, Sylvia Otteson, Alexandra Ensrud, Grace Loveland, and Cadi Streetar

VIRTUAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: MISSION DEEP SEA- EXPLORING THE DEPTH'S OF GOD'S LOVE

LINDA MOON AND KELLY GENTRY, *Authors*

Join the Children & Family Ministry staff for a virtual VBS experience! Daily videos will guide your child through Bible stories, crafts, songs and activities to bring all the fun of VBS to your home! Check the Facebook page for a list of suggested materials for crafts and activities. We'll be posting daily videos the week of June 22nd - 25th.



**BIG IDEA OF THE DAY -
PEOPLE CAN HELP OUR
FAITH GROW**

Moses & the Red Sea
Agent Badge Craft



**BIG IDEA OF THE DAY -
FAITH GROWS DEEPER
WHEN WE USE OUR GIFTS**

Jesus Feeds 5,000
Lunch is Served Craft



**BIG IDEA OF THE DAY -
FAITH GROWS DEEPER
WHEN WE SPEND TIME
WITH GOD**

Paul and the Philippians
Deep Sea Coral Painting Craft



**BIG IDEA OF THE DAY -
FAITH GROWS DEEPER
WHEN WE SHARE OUR
STORY**

Jonah and the Big Fish
Swimming Fish Craft

GOD'S KIDS SING ANNOUNCEMENT

Although we can't play together at GKS this year, keep your eyes and inboxes open for some virtual GKS material including dance videos, art projects, music games, and read alouds!



WHY WE TEACH... FEATURING BILL AND LAURIE BEISE

"Throughout the years, it's been our joy to be part of Mount Olivet's vibrant Sunday School program.

Each Sunday, we sing together with our five year olds the beloved hymn *Jesus Loves Me* and affirm these words through the Bible stories we share. The children inspire us as we teach them about God's love.

Along the years, it strengthens our faith and deepens our commitment as we witness their involvement in the remarkable youth programs our church offers as they grow in their faith journey."

Please check out and follow the Mount Olivet Children & Family Ministry Page on Facebook - You'll find regular updates on lessons, devotions, activities, songs, messages from the Pastors and more!



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Together @ Mount Olivet is a webpage filled with spiritual resources during this time of crisis. There is also information about how to support our Mount Olivet affiliates and partners in community outreach. Visit mtolivet.org.