

MOUNT OLIVET
MESSENGER



JOIN US

SUNDAYS

DIAL-IN VIA PHONE
833.775.1238

11am

WATCH THE MPLS SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES AT
MTOLIVET.ORG

9, 10, 11am

HOLY COMMUNION

8:30 & 11:45am

NURSERY

9, 10, 11am

DECEMBER 1

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
GOOD NEWS FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE

Luke 1:1-4

M 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Grangaard
MUSIC Cathedral & Sanctuary Choirs

W 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Lose
MUSIC Cathedral & Sanctuary Choirs

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

DECEMBER 8

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:5-20, 57-64

M 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Cieslik
MUSIC Cathedral & Sanctuary Choirs and Brass Ensemble

W 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Dixon
MUSIC Cathedral & Sanctuary Choirs

DECEMBER 15

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
GABRIEL VISITS MARY

Luke 1:26-38

M 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Grangaard
MUSIC Alleluia, Cherub, Hosanna, Chapel & Pop Up for All Choirs

W 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Freeman
MUSIC Alleluia, Cherub, Hosanna, & Chapel Choirs & Dana Donnay, oboe

DECEMBER 22

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
MARY'S SONG
CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

Luke 2:41-52

M 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Hammersten
MUSIC Cathedral & Sanctuary Choirs and harp and flute duets

W 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Kalland
MUSIC Cathedral & Sanctuary Choirs

DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE
Luke 2:1-21

M 10am
SERMON Pastor Olson Popp

M 2-10pm
SERMON Pastor Lose

W 10am
SERMON Pastor Freeman

W 2-6pm
SERMON Pastor Dixon

Livestream the Mpls Campus services at mtolivet.org at 10am and on the hour from 2-10pm. Dial-in is offered at 2pm. Nursery offered at 2, 3, & 4pm at both campuses.

DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY
HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE

John 1:1-18

M 10am ONLY
SERMON Pastor Kalland
MUSIC Emily Gerard, harp

DECEMBER 29

SIMEON AND ANNA
Luke 2:22-40

M 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Olson Popp
MUSIC Amanda Jenkins, soprano

W 9, 10, 11am
SERMON Pastor Grangaard
MUSIC Justin Staebell, baritone

An Advent Invitation

It's December which means, among other things, that you'll want to read this month's Messenger with your calendar in hand! There are at least a dozen different special events and worship opportunities that deserve your attention. From our joyful Messiah Sing-Along and Christmas Tree Lighting to our beloved Christmas Concert, from the Day Advent Journey to the Lutefisk Dinner, and from the meaningful Service of Remembrance at both campuses to our Winter Communion and Luncheon, the choices available for you to prepare for and deepen your celebration of Christmas are abundant.

And possibly overwhelming. Indeed, while our theme for this year's Advent season is "What Child is This?" – as we focus on Luke's stories about Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, and shepherds and angels, all to prepare us to welcome the Christ Child – there are times when I wonder if the verse that more aptly describes our lives at this time of year might just be, "there was no room at the inn"! We can, that is, get so busy with our Advent and Christmas preparations – parties, worship services, buying and wrapping presents, selecting and decorating the tree, baking and visiting, sending cards and greetings near and far – that we don't preserve any room to breathe...and wonder...and simply take in the amazing, even audacious confession that in this child God joined God's very being to our mortal life. Our ups and downs. Our hopes, dreams, and disappointments. Our strength and our frailty. All of it.

Think about it for a moment: there is nothing more vulnerable than a newborn. Beautiful, for sure, but also absolutely dependent. And so Luke's tender story of Mary and her baby is also simultaneously a story of profound risk and daring, as God – the creator and sustainer of the vast cosmos – decides not simply to be *with* us, but also to become one of us in Jesus, and so to share our vulnerability completely.

That God in Jesus would trade the safety and glory of heaven for mortal, human life is nearly beyond our ability to imagine, and yet that's exactly what the Christmas story confesses, all in order to demonstrate God's profound love for us. Which means that each time you happen to see a manger as part of a Christmas crèche, you are looking not only at a baby, but at God's promise that God knows what it is like to hope and dream, to suffer and grieve, to worry and wonder.

The depth and import of that confession takes time to sink in. Which is why I want to offer you both an Advent invitation and permission. The invitation is to make space to allow the gift and promise of Christmas to sink in. Know that every service at church, each special event and concert, and the Advent devotions we've prepared are all intended to help you hear and believe this confession: that God came in Jesus to be one of us, one with us, and always for us.

Now for the permission: *you don't have to do everything*. You don't have to be at every concert, attend every special worship service, or read every devotion. Know that these things are all prepared and offered to enrich your Christmas celebration. Yet also know that they are offered as a *gift*, not a requirement.

Nor is this permission limited only to church. You also don't have to accept every party invitation or go to every Christmas social event. Nor are you under any obligation to find the absolutely perfect tree or select the ideal gift or prepare an idyllic Christmas feast. Rather, you are invited simply to be present, to give thanks for those you are able to gather with, and to bask in the knowledge and confidence that God came down from heaven in the baby Jesus in order to accept, love, save, and bless us just as we are.

My hope and prayer this Advent is that, together, we'll move from this season being dominated by a sense of "there's no room in the inn" to being able to ask, "What Child is This?" And then, with a renewed sense of awe and wonder, and confident of God's love, to hear the answer, "This, this is Christ the King," come to us once more in grace, goodness, and love.

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!



Pastor Lose

DAVID J. LOSE, SENIOR PASTOR



POINSETTIA CHANCEL GARDEN

ORDER THROUGH SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

During this special time of year, please consider honoring or remembering a loved one by purchasing a poinsettia to adorn our sanctuaries from December 22 to Christmas Day. The listing of names will be in the Sunday, December 22, bulletin. The minimum donation is \$35 per poinsettia. To place your order, visit mtolivet.org/poinsettia or contact Jody Barbee at 952.767.1501 or jbarbee@mtolivet.org.



ADVENT CALENDAR & DEVOTIONAL

We are thrilled to offer our Advent Calendar online at mtolivet.org again! The calendar begins on Sunday, December 1, through Tuesday, December 24. Also available, is this year's printed Advent Devotional, written by all of your Mount Olivet pastors along with Rev. Dr. Theresa Latini. Devotions can be picked up at church, or you may sign up to receive the daily devotional via email at mtolivet.org.



CHRISTMAS FOR ALL

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, WEST CAMPUS

Help is needed at the West Campus for the Christmas for All Store which benefits Love INC clients. Please visit mtolivet.org to sign up to volunteer. If you have questions, please contact Laurie Hancer at lhancer@mtolivet.org or 612.767.2267.



DAY ADVENT JOURNEY

DECEMBER 3, 10AM-3PM, CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER, \$20 FOR LUNCH & PROGRAM, \$10 FOR TRANSPORTATION

Join us for a meaningful day of reflection at Day Advent Journey, led by Pastor Dixon, Pastor Grangaard, Megan van Deusen (Nature Educator), and Dr. Theresa Latini, Executive Director of the Conference & Retreat Center.

LIFE & GROWTH

OCT 13 - NOV 14

BAPTISMS

Maeve Kathrine David
daughter of Kathrine and Garen

Aspen Marais Hofmann
daughter of Stephanie and Cailen

Charlotte Alexandra Luetschwager
daughter of Lindsey and Justin

Lilibet Margaret Mattke
daughter of Amy and Scott

Anders Robert Ross
son of Natalie and Alexander

Isabella Sue Ryks
daughter of Kelsey and Mitchell

Emilia Aaron Kissling Wren
daughter of Abigail and Jeffrey

Riley Jordan Yugo
son of Joanna and David

WEDDINGS

Alyssa LeMay & William Molhoek, October 12

Isabel St. Dennis & Adam Herd, October 18

DEATHS

Fan Mo Alle
1952-2024

Ruth A. Beckstrom
1941-2024

James C. Brotherton
1969-2024

Stanley D. Carlson
1940-2024

Jean Feroe
1928-2024

Elaine J. Hermansen
1943-2024

Wallace "Ted" Johnson, Jr.
1948-2024

Susan M. Kleven
1938-2024

Carol M. LaBerge
1934-2024

Carol R. Larsen
1938-2024

Orvin C. Larson
1926-2024

John O. Lindgren
1936-2024

Jackie Olson
1932-2024

Karen M. Willhite
1937-2024

Martha E. Williams
1950-2024

JOIN US AT THE 94TH MOUNT OLIVET

Lutefisk Dinner!

All-You-Can-Eat Buffet



\$25 Adults
\$5 Kids
Under 12



Tickets at mtolivet.org
or via above QR Code

Fri, Dec 6, 2024, 3-7pm, Mpls Campus

SAVE THE DATE

Ladies' Night

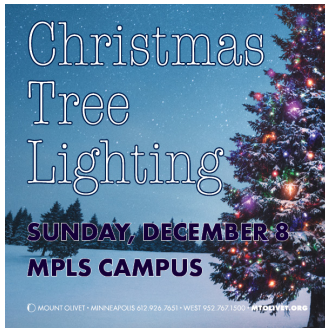
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, MPLS CAMPUS

Details and registration available in January.

FRIENDS FOREVER - HELLO FRIENDS!

Are you looking for ways to meet new friends at church? Or for fun gatherings that you and your friends can come and enjoy without having to do any planning? Come join us! We're a group of friends in our 60s and 70s that love getting out and socializing each month. Upcoming events include the magical Mount Olivet Christmas Concert, a gathering at Kinkaid's, the musical "Grease" at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and more! We'd love to have you join us! If you'd like to receive information about upcoming events, please contact Pastor Hammersten at monicah@mtolivet.org or Gail Breen, at gbreen@mtolivet.org and we'll add you to our email list. We can't wait to meet you!

SPREADING CHRISTMAS CHEER



CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 3-5PM GATHERING,
5PM TREE LIGHTING, MPLS CAMPUS ON JAMES AVE**

Join us as we light the Mount Olivet Christmas Tree on 50th and James Ave in Mpls! We will gather around our tree, share a song, and light up our small corner of south Minneapolis with grateful anticipation of the Savior and light of the world. There will be music, treats, crafts, and even Santa and reindeer will be available for pictures!

In addition, you can pick up your pre-ordered Gingerbread House Kits at this event. For more information about ordering a Gingerbread House Kit, please see page 14.



MESSIAH SING-ALONG

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 3:15PM REHEARSAL,
4PM PERFORMANCE, MPLS CAMPUS**

Get ready for Mount Olivet’s annual *Messiah* Sing-Along! This festive December tradition brings the community together in a powerful celebration of music and joy. Warm up your voice at the 3:15pm rehearsal, then prepare to join hundreds of voices singing together at the 4pm concert. The large community chorus will perform the four uplifting choruses with our Sanctuary choirs from both campuses. In addition, enjoy the exceptional talent of our outstanding featured soloists, performing the most cherished Christmas pieces from *Messiah*. This year, we’re increasing participation by inviting community string players to help bring the iconic *Hallelujah Chorus* to life! Come join us! For more information, contact Beverly Claflin at beverlyc@mtolivet.org. Don’t miss out on this spectacular holiday event!



CHRISTMAS POP-UP CHOIR FOR ALL!

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 9:30AM REHEARSAL,
11AM SING IN WORSHIP, MPLS CAMPUS**

Do you feel the Christmas spirit calling you to sing? If so, we’ve got just the spot for you! Grandparents, parents, youth, siblings, and friends – let’s all “carol” together and fill the air with joyful Christmas carols. Wear your favorite festive attire and join us; no chilly weather or walking from door-to-door required! On Sunday, December 15, at 9:30am we will come together to enjoy some hot chocolate, coffee, and treats before warming up our voices and preparing for the 11am service. Whether you’re a seasoned singer or just joining in for fun, it’s always better when we sing together, young and old alike. Invite your friends and family, and let’s create a special Christmas memory through singing!

THE SEASON OF GENEROSITY

Christmas Offering Match

Thanks to the generosity of several Mount Olivet households, we are able to match all Christmas gifts again this year! That means each dollar you give to Mount Olivet as a Christmas gift (beyond your pledge) will be matched dollar for dollar. Your gifts will go to Mount Olivet's General Fund that supports all our ministries, including the weekly Community Meals, other Community Outreach partners, Cathedral of the Pines, and the Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center. Thank you for your support!

WAYS TO GIVE

Christmas Offering Envelope: Mailed to you in December

Online: onrealm.org/mtolivet/give/Christmas or use the QR Code to the right

Contact Us: Tricia Lerohl-Morgan in our finance office at tricial@mtolivet.org or 612.767.2255.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS



FULFILL YOUR 2024 PLEDGE



Fulfill Your 2024 Pledge

If you have not yet completed your 2024 pledge to Mount Olivet, please do so before year-end. One convenient way to make a payment is via the QR code to the right. However you fulfill your pledge – thank you! Questions? Contact Tricia Lerohl-Morgan, Coordinator of Financial Records, at tricial@mtolivet.org or 612.767.2255.

Maximize Your Year-End Giving: Make a Difference with Your IRA!

Are you 70½ or older? Here's your chance to make a meaningful impact while reducing your tax burden! Consider a tax-free Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Cathedral of the Pines, or Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center. By doing so, you can:

- **REDUCE YOUR TAXES:** Enjoy the benefits of tax-free IRA distributions.
- **SATISFY YOUR RMD:** Your QCD will fulfill your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), ensuring your generosity supports our vital ministries.

Your contribution can transform lives and strengthen our community. It's a true win-win!

READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Simply ask your IRA administrator for guidance on initiating your QCD to Mount Olivet.

For more details, reach out to Tyler Hauser in the Development Office at thausert@mtolivet.org or call 612.767.2214.



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

I saw *It's a Wonderful Life* for the first time as a college sophomore while taking a break during finals. I immediately fell in love with the characters, the plot, and the especially poignant focus on what we Lutherans call "vocation," or calling. George Bailey is called to make a difference in the lives of his neighbors by extending them fair credit, accompanying them on their journey to first-time home ownership, and standing up for them. The sacrifices he makes to fulfill that calling are many and, at one point, do not seem worth it. It's only when he has a chance to see how different the world would be without him that the importance of his calling hits home. If the primary action of the film were not set on Christmas Eve, it probably wouldn't be considered a Christmas movie at all — but Christmas is definitely the time to watch it, as it emphasizes the greater gifts we can give each other of friendship, loyalty, and love as we hear God's call to take care of each other! —Pastor Lose



A CHRISTMAS STORY

There are many Christmas movie classics that I've never seen in their entirety. Some so quintessential I won't even put in print that I haven't taken the time to enjoy them (*It's a Wonderful Life*). But *A Christmas Story*, Bob Clark's adaptation of Jean Shepherd's book *In God We Trust: All Other's Pay Cash*, is one that my family watched many times every Christmas season. It's equal part comedy gold and nostalgia. It's a movie that prompted me to live with a certain amount of trepidation that I might, one Christmas, receive a giant pink bunny costume from my Uncle. And above all, in its subtle way, it reminded me that Christmas can still be a little magical and a little surprising. —Pastor Cieslik



RUDOLPH THE RED NOSED REINDEER

Growing up, watching Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer signified the official start of the Christmas Season. Back in the 60's, it was a big deal. Kids everywhere gathered at home, curled up inches from big old wooden console TV's, bowls of popcorn in our laps, anxiously waiting for the movie to begin. From young Rudolph being ostracized and laughed at, to beautiful Clarice, Hermy the Elf, Yukon Cornelius, and the Abominable Snow Monster, we were enthralled! And when the big storm hits, threatening to ruin Christmas for children everywhere, Santa looks over the crowd on the Island of Misfit Toys, sees Rudolph's red glowing nose, and asks "Rudolph won't you guide my sleigh tonight?" There wasn't a dry eye in the house! Throw in Burl Ives' deep, mellifluous voice and we were puddles. Like Jesus, Santa knew that our true gifts are found in what others might see as imperfections. —Pastor Hammersten



ELF

Elf is a lighthearted comedy. It's a touching story about an elf named Buddy who doesn't fit in. As an infant, Buddy was accidentally brought to the North Pole in Santa's bag on Christmas Eve, where he is raised to adulthood among Santa's elves. Eventually he finds out that he really isn't one of Santa's elves and has an overwhelming desire to find his biological father. Buddy travels from the North Pole to New York City, in search of finding his dad. Along his journey, he is faced with many adventures and obstacles, but always finds a way to bring the joy of Christmas to so many. This movie makes me laugh and smile (especially the scene at the dinner table) as I am reminded that even as adults, and among the holiday chaos, we can always pause, find joy, and rejoice in the story of the newborn king that brings light and joy into the world! —Pastor Kalland





YOUR PASTORS' FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MOVIES

KLAUS

Christmas is the most nostalgic holiday, and so I am astonished to report to you that a film released in 2019 (shortly after I turned 35) has become my favorite movie of the season. *Klaus* is a story of transformations. A selfish young man becomes a more generous, compassionate version of himself. A withdrawn older man becomes a more engaged, warmer version of himself. Without fail, I cry at the final bit of dialogue. The moral of the story (“a true selfless act always sparks another”) reminds me of a bit of scripture from our baptismal service: “Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). When we reflect and extend God’s love to our neighbors, they might reflect and extend it further, and this world becomes more like the kingdom of God! Watch *Klaus*!

—Pastor Dixon



WHITE CHRISTMAS

I was initiated into my husband’s family by watching *The Sound of Music* for the very first time—while everyone else sang each note and word. This prepared me for the main event: Thanksgiving, which was not over until we watched *White Christmas*. You know the story: two war buddies take their show on the road; they meet two sisters who need to get out of town. Some good old-fashioned arm twisting lands the foursome at a resort in Vermont, which is suffering without any snow; a metaphor for Bob’s love life. The resort owner happens to be the General, for whom these army buddies would do anything. They call in the troops and save the day. In the end there is snow and love and dancing and music. Now, our kids stand and sing *White Christmas* along with Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney. It wouldn’t be Christmas without it.

—Pastor Grangaard



NATIONAL LAMPOON’S CHRISTMAS VACATION

You may be surprised with this choice, so let me explain. My family of origin could have been the Griswolds. We often wondered if the National Lampoon movies were parodies of my family, the Wolds. Particularly relatable is the Griswolds’ search for the perfect Christmas tree. Rather than trudge through open snowy fields to select our tree, however, we’d simply step into our front yard and choose a tree from the many my dad had planted. And just like the Griswolds, the tree would regularly be too large for our living room. Clark Griswold says, “The most enduring traditions of the season are best enjoyed in the warm embrace of kith and kin. Thith tree is a thymbol of the thpirit of the Griswold family Chrithmath.” National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation represents the spirit of the Wold family Christmas, and it is the spirit of Christmas that really makes life sing! —Pastor Freeman



MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET

An Olson family classic is *Miracle on 34th Street* – the 1947 version in black and white. When my brother and I had control of the remote, we would always stop on the channel if this movie was on, but we also had it on VHS for backup. I see a lot of myself in Mr. Gailey, because I’m always trying to bring people into a deeper love of Christmas and spread the spirit to believe! I also resonate with Susan (the little girl), who is an adult in a child’s body. Christmas allows her to just be a kid, and the same is true for me. *Miracle* is a movie that will always bring me nostalgia, just like *Home Alone* and *A Christmas Story*, but the plot line of taking Santa to court simply cannot be beat. —Pastor Olson Popp





WORSHIP WITH US!

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 6:30PM, MPLS CAMPUS & LIVESTREAMED AT MTOLIVET.ORG

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 6:30PM, WEST CAMPUS

This service features a time of healing and reflection with peaceful harp music, a vocal soloist, and a time to light a candle in memory of your loved one. **If you would like the first and last name of your loved one read during the service, please visit mtolivet.org to register or contact Julie Goodman at 612.767.2208 or julieg@mtolivet.org.**

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT: GLORIA!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 3 & 5PM

MPLS CAMPUS & LIVESTREAMED AT MTOLIVET.ORG

Join us for a spectacular celebration of the Christmas season featuring over 500 singers and instrumentalists! This beloved annual concert is a must-see, filled with the beauty and joy of the holidays. Alongside the choir's beautiful voices, you'll experience the joyful sound of the handbells, the elegance of a string quartet, the excitement of four-hand piano accompaniments, a thrilling organ solo, and the lively rhythms of a talented group of percussionists. The congregation is warmly invited to sing the traditional Christmas hymns, culminating in the beloved closing anthem, *Peace, Peace*, sung together by the entire church in the glow of candlelight. These free concerts are our heartfelt gift to anyone seeking an uplifting and inspirational Christmas experience. *Lift up your voice, shout the good news: Behold, your Lord comes to you!*

WINTER COMMUNION SERVICE AND LUNCHEON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 11AM-1PM, MPLS CAMPUS

Please join us for a worship service with Christmas readings, carols, and Holy Communion, followed by a festive lunch in the Fellowship Hall. This service is designed for members and family who are often unable to come to church. To register, please contact Nancy Nelson at 612.767.2288 or email at nnelson@mtolivet.org. If transportation is needed, please let Nancy know.

CHRISTMAS DAY

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25
10AM, MPLS CAMPUS**

Celebrate the joy of Christmas with us in a peaceful and meaningful Christmas Day worship service. Join in singing beloved Christmas hymns and partake in the sacred tradition of Holy Communion. As an added blessing, the soothing sounds of harp solos will fill the sanctuary, creating a heartwarming atmosphere as we rejoice in the birth of Christ.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31
7PM WORSHIP SERVICE, MPLS CAMPUS**

Mark the transition into the new year with a time of worship and prayer. This reflective service will include hymns, scripture, and being guided through the Examen, a centuries-old spiritual practice that helps us notice how God shows up in our past, present, and future. After the service, gather in the lower Narthex for coffee, cookies, and community.



CHRISTMAS EVE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING WORSHIP

10AM, MPLS & WEST CAMPUSES

Join us for a joyful Christmas Eve morning service as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. This special service will include the lighting of the Christ Candle on the Advent wreath, symbolizing the arrival of Christ's light in the world. We'll sing our favorite Christmas hymns and reflect on the scripture readings that recount the miracle of Christ's birth. This morning worship offers a perfect opportunity for those traveling or families who prefer an early service on this busy day. Come and prepare your hearts for the true meaning of Christmas, surrounded by the warmth of family, community, and faith.

CHRISTMAS EVE EVENING WORSHIP

Join us in celebrating the birth of Jesus by worshipping in-person at either campus or online. These joyous services will feature an inspiring sermon and the cherished reading of the Christmas story, interwoven with beloved congregational carols. Choirs of all ages, along with special instrumental music, will fill the evening with beauty and meaning. The final candlelight service concludes with the singing of *Silent Night*, as the congregation lights individual candles and shares the light of Christ with one another.

This will be a truly special and meaningful evening of worship.

MPLS CAMPUS

HOURLY 2-9PM & 10PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

- 1:40PM:** Instrumental Prelude
- 2PM:** Cherub and Cathedral Choirs and Orchestra
- 3PM:** Alleluia and Cathedral Choirs and Orchestra
- 4PM:** Hosanna and Cathedral Choirs and Orchestra
- 5PM:** Chapel Choir and Piano Solo with Orchestra
- 6PM:** Chancel Choir and Piano Solo with Orchestra
- 7, 8, & 9PM:** Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra
- 10PM:** Candlelight service with Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra

WEST CAMPUS

HOURLY 2-5PM & 6PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

- 2PM:** Cherub, Alleluia, and Cathedral Choirs, String Quartet, and Harp
- 3PM:** Hosanna, Chapel, and Cathedral Choirs, String Quartet and Harp
- 4PM:** Chancel and Sanctuary Choirs, String Quartet, and Harp
- 5PM:** Sanctuary Choir, String Quartet, and Harp
- 6PM:** Candlelight service with Sanctuary Choir, String Quartet, and Harp

Welcoming Youth, Inspiring Wellness, and Growth in 2024

This year, the Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center welcomed over 350 groups and 7,000 guests to our 151 acres of serene woods, prairie, and marshland. Here, people of all ages found rest, peace, and renewal in a setting that radiates God's grace and the beauty of God's creation. A key part of our outreach included four engaging programs for children and youth.

NATURE CAMPS

One-hundred-twenty-five elementary-aged kids participated in two Mount Olivet Nature Camps. They embarked on guided hikes through five miles of trails and engaged in outdoor art that inspired their creativity. From singing joyfully in our outdoor chapel to enjoying the thrill of gaga ball and relaxing in hammocks, each moment encouraged exploration and growth in a nurturing environment.

OVERNIGHT AND DAY RETREATS

More than 50 youth groups gathered for retreats. From confirmation students learning about their faith to college students developing their leadership skills, they experienced personal growth, strengthened friendships, and spiritual development in a nurturing setting.

AT-RISK YOUTH RETREATS

With support from generous donors, we launched our first retreat for young people facing significant challenges. Led by trained facilitators in violence prevention and conflict transformation, these youth gained skills in navigating conflict and developing resilience for life in a complex world.

NATURE EDUCATION DAYS

One-hundred-eighty middle school students explored the wonders of the outdoors while learning in a hands-on, immersive environment. From nature meditation to interactive lessons about honeybees, they learned the importance of environmental stewardship and the restorative impact of nature.

Each program reflects our commitment to welcoming all, including youth, nurturing their well-being, and fostering a deep connection to faith and God's creation.

REV. THERESA LATINI, *Executive Director of the Conference & Retreat Center*

"We had a GREAT time at the Conference & Retreat Center. Our kids commented on all the various activities they could do. Your staff did an awesome job of helping organize the group trip. Having a naturalist discuss bees was an added bonus. We appreciate all the help in making a great field trip!" – Robby, Goodhue Middle School

WOMEN'S WEEKEND: BRAIDING OUR LIVES WITH LOVE

Friday, January 24 through
Sunday, January 26,
Conference & Retreat Center

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love is the center of our lives, yet if we are honest, it can be difficult to love others in the midst of polarizing discourse; it can be challenging to find time to connect with God meaningfully; and it's easy to forget ourselves in the midst of our busyness and care for others. Together we will explore how to weave together these three strands of love without neglecting one for the other. We will have opportunities to be renewed by spending time walking in the woods, relaxing in the whirlpool, scheduling a massage (extra cost), journaling and reading. Led by the women pastors of Mount Olivet Church and the Conference & Retreat Center Director, Theresa Latini. Register for single occupancy (\$395), double occupancy (\$275), dorm occupancy (\$220), or as a commuter (\$155). Registration opens December 2 at 8am at mtolivetretreat.org/events.



LIVING THE MESSAGE: EIGHT ESSENTIAL BIBLE STORIES

This Living the Message series is taught by Pastor Lose and runs the first Tuesday of the month through May 2025, 6:30-7:30pm or via emailed videos. All are welcome at any time.

MARK 7: GOD BECAME ONE OF US. REALLY!

Tuesday, December 3, *7:30-8pm, Mpls Campus Room 207 *Please note time change.

At first glance, the story of Jesus and the Syrophenician Woman doesn't sound like a Christmas story, but when you dig into this story with care (as we'll do December 3) you quickly realize it really is about Christmas or, at least, about the central affirmation of the faith that Christmas represents: that in Jesus, God – eternal creator and sustainer of the cosmos – became fully and really human. So come join us as we read the story of a courageous woman; a genuinely human messiah; a missing, or at least misunderstood, part of the Creed; and more!



GENESIS 3: GOD WILL NOT GIVE UP ON US.

Tuesday, January 7; 6:30-7:30pm, Mpls Campus Room 207

Genesis 3 – also known as “the Fall” – has been the source of so much literary and theological inspiration over the year: think John Milton's *Paradise Lost* or the number of paintings of Adam, Eve, and the Serpent. It's also been the source of some pretty questionable theology across the centuries and even in later parts of the Bible. So, what's going on with “the Fall”? As I read it, this age-old story tries to wrestle with some of the most important and enduring questions there are. Why is there evil in the world? Why do we often hurt ourselves and others? Why is there so much pain and suffering? But I also believe that, hidden in the details of this narrative is the story of a God who loves humanity with a fierce and parental love, a God who will not give up on creation or on us, a God committed to redeeming and loving us through all things. So come out this January as we start a new year and discover together a story that is about so much more than loss or sin but is full to overflowing with God's tenacious, indefatigable love for all of us.

SONGS OF LUKE

Songs have a unique and special way of taking hold of our hearts. We often remember song lyrics easier than written words. A loved one will often come to mind when their favorite song is played. We are eager to pass down favorite songs from generation to generation, connecting us with people in many times and places.

This love of song is well known to us at Mount Olivet, a church who sings the faith and holds a collection of songs and hymns that unite us as a worshiping community. The Bible, though coming to us through the written word, is also filled with songs, many of which are found in Luke's Gospel. From Mary's song of praise after visiting Elizabeth to Zechariah's prophetic proclamation after an extended time of silence, and more, these songs of scripture have become a cornerstone to our own life of faith, even though we might not even be aware of them.

Join Pastor Olson Popp and Pastor Grangaard this winter as we take a deep dive into these beautiful songs in Luke, songs of praise and God's faithfulness that sustain us along our journeys and invite us to sing our songs of faith.

Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30am, Mpls Campus

Thursdays, 10:30-11:30am, West Campus

Also available via video

JANUARY 22/23:

Intro: Songs in Scripture with Pastor Olson Popp

JANUARY 29/30:

“My Soul Magnifies the Lord” — Mary's Song with Pastor Grangaard

FEBRUARY 5/6:

“In the Tender Mercy of our God” — Zechariah's Song with Pastor Olson Popp

FEBRUARY 12/13:

“Your Word has been Fulfilled” — The Song of Simeon with Pastor Grangaard

REGISTER FOR ALL ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES AT [MTOLIVET.ORG/EDUCATION](https://www.mtolivet.org/education) OR BY CONTACTING
KATIE STEVENSON AT [KATIES@MTOLIVET.ORG](mailto:katies@mtolivet.org) OR 612.767.2232.

JOIN US!

ACRYLIC POUR ORNAMENT

Tuesday, December 3, 6-8pm, Mpls Campus

Pour painting is an innovative way to use acrylic paints to create a work of art. In this class you will learn the process of mixing acrylic paints with other mediums to give it a more fluid consistency so that it can be poured directly over a globe ornament. Each painter will get two ornaments which make beautiful holiday gifts. This class is perfect for a young artist - 12 years of age and up! Register at mtolivet.org.

FLYING SOLO SERVES

Saturday, December 7, 10am-2pm, Mpls Campus

Help serve at the Winter Communion Luncheon! You can set tables from 10-11am or serve the meal and clean up from 11am-2pm. Sign up to volunteer at mtolivet.org.

BUTTER BRAID PICK-UP

Sunday, December 8, from 9-11am, Mpls & West Campus

If you ordered Butter Braids, please remember to pick up your orders on Sunday, December 8, at the campus you designated on your order.

TAKE-HOME GINGERBREAD KITS AVAILABLE TO ORDER

Pick-up on Sunday, December 8, 3-5pm, Mpls Campus, \$30 (During Christmas Tree Lighting Event)

We're taking orders for our annual take-home Gingerbread Kits. Each Gingerbread Kit includes a house, extra treats and frosting for decorations, and a few activity ideas for the whole family! Please preorder your Gingerbread Kit at mtolivet.org. There will be a few available for purchase the day of the event. If you have any questions, please contact Amy Porthan at 612.767.2285 or amyp@mtolivet.org.

CAREER & CALLING VIRTUAL MEETING

Tuesday, December 10, 4:30-6pm

Join us for an online conversation as we network, learn, and grow together! Mount Olivet's Career & Calling ministry offers our members and friends an arena for nurturing our careers and supporting each other. We aim to grow professionally through networking, learning, and supporting each other as we balance work and life. Register at mtolivet.org.

YOUNG IN HEART & FRIENDS

Tuesday, December 17, 12noon-1:30pm, Mpls Campus, \$10

Young in Heart and Friends invites you to join us for lunch, fellowship and a special musical treat, "The Bells are Back!" Join us for a festive afternoon that combines the history of handbells at Mount Olivet with the joyful sounds of Christmas bells. Our current handbell director Dr. Jordan Buchholtz and founding director Holly Widen, will demonstrate various bell ringing techniques, and will perform some classic Christmas tunes. Register by December 13, at mtolivet.org or by contacting Tricia Asuncion at 612.767.2210 or tasuncion@mtolivet.org.

HI-ER LEAGUE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLES AND COOKIES

Tuesday, December 24, 9:45pm, Mpls Campus Lounge

Join Pastor Dixon in the Lounge before the candlelit service on Christmas Eve, to catch up with your church friends and grab a quick cookie before heading into the Sanctuary to squeeze in one last bit of church on this Holy night. "I really hope to see you there to tell you in person, *Merry Christmas!*" –Pastor Dixon



CATHEDRAL OF THE PINES CAMP & SUMMER DAY CAMPS

Registration for Summer is just around the corner! Just like last year, we will have two registration periods for both Cathedral of the Pines Camp and Summer Day Camps. Mount Olivet members will receive an early access link via email to register for camps.

If you would like to know your membership status, please contact Gail Breen at gbreen@mtolivet.org or 612.767.2289.

Grade eligibility is determined for both COP and Day Camps by their grade as of September 1, 2025.

CATHEDRAL OF THE PINES CAMP

**MOUNT OLIVET MEMBER-ONLY REGISTRATION WILL OPEN JANUARY 13 AND CLOSSES JANUARY 15
OPEN REGISTRATION BEGINS JANUARY 21**



GRADES 6, 7 & 8

Week 1: Fri, 6/27–Wed, 7/2

Week 2: Mon, 7/14–Sat, 7/19

Week 3: Wed, 7/23–Mon, 7/28

9TH GRADE CONFIRMATION CAMP (MOUNT OLIVET MEMBERS ONLY)

Week 1: Sun, 6/22–Fri, 6/27

Week 2: Mon, 7/28–Sat, 8/2

GRADE 10

10th Grade Starter: Thur, 6/19–Sun, 6/22

GRADES 10, 11, & 12

Hi-League Retreat: Wed, 8/6–Sun, 8/10

GRADES 11, 12, & GRADUATES

Summer Starter: Sun, 6/15–Thur, 6/19

LOTTERIES FOR ADULT & FAMILY SESSIONS

Lottery Registration for adult and family sessions will be open January 21 through February 3 via Campbrain.

All lottery results were communicated by email by February 10.

SUMMER DAY CAMP

**MOUNT OLIVET MEMBER-ONLY REGISTRATION WILL OPEN JANUARY 14 AND CLOSSES 16
OPEN REGISTRATION BEGINS JANUARY 22**

MPLS CAMPUS DAY CAMPS GRADES K THROUGH 5

June 9-13: Splash into Summer

June 16-20: *God's Kids Sing!*

June 23-27: Going Wild

June 30-July 4: No Camps

July 7-11: Nature Camp at the Retreat Center

July 14-18: Imagination Creation

July 21-25: Super STEM

July 28-Aug 1: Cooking Week

Aug 4-8: Out of this World

Aug 11-15: No Camps

Aug 18-22: Games Galore

MPLS CAMPUS DAY CAMPS GRADES 6-8

June 10-12: Mini Camp: *Outdoor Adventures at the Conference & Retreat Center*

June 24-26: Mini Camp: *Cooking Camp*

July 14-18: *Summertime Players!*

Aug 19-21: Mini Camp: *Games Galore*

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL PRE-K THROUGH 2ND GRADE

June 9-12: Minneapolis Campus

July 7-10: West Campus

WEST CAMPUS DAY CAMPS GRADES K THROUGH 5

July 21 - 25: Imagination Creation

July 28 - Aug 1: Going Wild





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Christmas Eve

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

MPLS

10am

2-10pm

WEST

10am

2-6pm