

THE OLIVE BRANCH - DECEMBER 2018

the



OLIVE BRANCH

MOUNT OLIVET LUTHERAN CHURCH
34 PROSPECT STREET SHREWSBURY, MA 01545 (508) 842-2731

Looking Forward with Hope

By now you have likely heard the news that I have accepted a new call to be the Lutheran campus pastor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge. While I'm very much looking forward to the work that I will be called to do there, I also confess a certain nervousness about leaving my Mount Olivet family and the work I have been doing here.

At the same time, Mount Olivet is facing similarly big changes in the coming months. You likely have heard of (or were part of) the consensus reached at our congregational meeting to seek a merger partner among other nearby churches. For my part, it does make it easier to say "goodbye" knowing that we are all moving on to new things, but I expect that many of you, like me, are nervous about what is to come and sad about the prospect of leaving good things (and people) behind.

I hope and expect that these next few weeks and months will be filled with joy and remembrances. As I look forward to celebrating one last Christmas with you as your pastor, I want this holiday season to be filled with happiness, with laughter, and with praise to God as we rejoice once again in the blessings God has given to us. Undoubtedly there will be time for reminiscing, too. It is good and right for all of us in times such as these to remember the myriad of ways we have shared God's love with each other in fellowship, in worship, and in service to our neighbors. These memories are the way by which we call each other family.

As we enter this season of Advent, however, it is worth noting that it is not primarily a season for reminiscing but of hope for the future. As we remember the good of the past and worry about the future, we can open our Bibles and find a myriad of stories of God's people doing those same things. In each of those stories, though, there is also a holy expectation. In times of change, loss, or danger, God's people cry out in the hope that God will come and save them. Think of the Israelite slaves in Egypt; the Psalmists who cry, "How long, O Lord;" the prophets proclaiming the coming day of God's judgment; or Saint Paul faithfully writing words of faith, hope and love to his fellow Christians while locked in prison. In all of these cases, God heard the people's prayers and – eventually, if not immediately – revealed a future life for them filled with greater purpose and thus joy. This is what we practice in Advent: living in hope that God will again come among us to transform our struggles into blessings and our brokenness into life with Christ.

As I contemplate both my own new call and the potential future for Mount Olivet, I see plenty of reason to believe that this transformation is already beginning for us. All of us who have struggled to keep Mount Olivet going as a congregation can realistically hope for new opportunities, experiences, and blessings as we look for new partners with whom to worship and celebrate.

I will even arrogantly argue that, of all the struggling congregations in New England, we might be doing it best, because we have been coming together to be honest about our situation. We are not refusing to change or to acknowledge reality. We are discerning how we can best live faithfully, ideally together, by finding new ways for us to be church. Perhaps I am biased by my faith in you all, but I also see great potential for you become part of and contribute to other communities of faith in God. I look at you and see a family of people prepared to lay down their frustrations and weariness and to seek out new life and new opportunities to grow in discipleship. I see a people called by God not to be trapped by what has been good but instead to look forward together for ever greater ways to receive, celebrate and share God's love with an expanded church family.

In peace,

Pastor Heisen

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Update - Merger and Pledge Process

The council wants to ensure that everyone in the Mount Olivet family is up-to-date on the merger process we began at the congregation meeting on November 4th. Recall that we had an overwhelming number of marbles in the “merge with another congregation” jar. At our council meeting on November 13th, the council voted to pursue preliminary discussions with six congregations: Wellspring Methodist, Trinity Episcopal, Saint Stephen’s Lutheran in Marlboro, Trinity Lutheran in Worcester, Good Shepard Lutheran in Westborough, Concordia Lutheran in Worcester.

Pastor Andrew will contact the pastor and Don Harbert will contact the lay leadership of each of the congregations. The contacts will be exploratory to determine:

- Interest of that congregation in a merger with Mount Olivet
- How we could engage with that congregation to determine the feasibility of a merger

All initial contacts are to be completed by the next council meeting on December 11th. The “Why?” Committee and Council will determine the next steps at the December 11th meeting.

The criteria used to develop this list were:

- Shrewsbury protestant congregations we have already worked with
- Viable and vibrant Lutheran congregations per Pastor Sara Anderson
 - We don’t want to merge with another struggling congregation
- Reasonable driving time

Help from the Synod with the Pastoral Transition and Merger Process

Pastor Sara Anderson, our assigned Bishop’s Associate, will be helping with finding a transition pastor and with the merger process. She will attend our council meeting on December 11th and will join us for worship on December 16th to answer questions.

Budget and Pledge Process

The council decided to prepare a six-month budget assuming that we will have a new plan no later than June 30th. We can obviously extend the budget if needed.

We do think we need a pledge process even for the six-month budget. We need to have some forecast of our income and we need your commitment to be with us for the work of early next year. Since most of us pledge by week or by month, the process won’t be any different than in prior years.

We will have Pledge Sunday on December 9th. You will get a letter from me and reminders after church each Sunday.

I will continue to update you on progress with the merger process as it develops.

In Peace,

Don Harbert

From the Office

As you can see, this edition of *The Olive Branch* has a slightly different look. I have finally transitioned this publication to the new computer – no small task! However, it is still a work in progress. Please be patient as I further my knowledge of our new computer!
- Eileen

Prayer List

We of Mount Olivet hold in prayer Tara Helms (friend of Andy Turpin), Stephanie Ruggiere, Nadine Argento, Linda Sharon (Holly’s sister), Ellen Fulmer and Karen Abel (Rae Koenig’s sisters), Donna Jamros, Corliss Loomer, Kal Hyrynen, Justin Lingenberg (relative of Joyce), Ryan Turner (neighbor of Don and Cathy Sheehan), Amanda Parker (relative of Vincent and Jackie Walsh), Karen Eisenhower (Nadine Argento’s sister), Kirsten Bergman, Bill Romey (friend of Andy Turpin), Meta Mueller, Cathy Sheehan, Dave Gruben, Alyssa Bianchi (friends of Cathy Sheehan), Father Dennis Gallagher (friend of Michael), Gail St. Pierre (friend of Joyce), Jennifer Bergstrom (niece of George), Eva Strachan, Jim and Ann (relatives of Stephanie Ruggiere), Becky Boutwell, Sarah and Jacob (Nina and Doug), Samantha Smith (friend of Frankie’s), Walter Johnson, Christine Webb, Lee Webb (relatives of Cathy Sheehan), Michael Argento (Nadine’s son), Liza Aston (friend of Eileen), Clarice Pavlak, Jim Vogt (Meta’s husband), Julie Dawes, Valerie Duggan (friend of Dave Cote), Brian Pihl (relative of Joyce), Diane Cyr (friend of Cathy Sheehan), Alan Johnson, Fran Johansen, Patti S. (friend of Joyce), Janine Gill, Joyce Straub, Deb Brousseau, and Michael & Eileen LeBlanc.

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Symbols of Advent: A Study

December 4th, 11th, 18th @ 7:00 PM

This is a cooperative, three-week study on the symbols and meaning of Advent between Mount Olivet, Trinity and Wellspring Churches. Each pastor will lead one night. Each night will include some interactive elements, discussion and some teaching. The study is open to everyone. Meeting dates: December 4th, 11th, 18th, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM in the Common Room (behind Lawrence Hall) at 440 Main Street in Shrewsbury, otherwise known as Trinity/Wellspring Churches. Come one and all!

Advent Bible Study, Prayer and Fellowship

December 6th, 13th, 20th, @ 10:00 AM

Trinity Episcopal Church will offer an opportunity for people to examine several Bible passages that shape our understanding of Advent. There will also be some quiet time for prayer and reflection as well as time for fellowship and conversation. These meetings will on December 6th, 13th, 20th at 10:00 AM in the Common Room of Trinity Episcopal Church, 440 Main Street and will not exceed ninety minutes. All are invited.

Pledge Sunday

Sunday, December 9th

We are not planning a brunch this year, but this will be an opportunity for us to offer our pledges together as an act of worship to God. Between now and then, council will be sharing information how you can support Mount Olivet in the coming year.

Final Choir for 2018

Sunday, December 9th @ 9:00 AM

Our last choir Sunday of the year will be on Sunday, December 9th. We will rehearse at 9:00 AM and sing during morning worship. All are welcome! No musical experience required!

Synod Visit

Sunday, December 16th @ 10:00 AM

The Rev. Sara Anderson, our bishop’s associate, will attend, preach, and be available to answer questions after our worship service on Sunday, December 16th. She will also be attending our church council meeting on the prior Tuesday.

Christmas Decorating

Sunday, December 16th following morning worship

Many helpers = more fun and less work!

Confirmation Sunday

Sunday, December 23rd

We will celebrate with Victor Szabo as together we join him in the Affirmation of Baptism.

Christmas Eve Service

Monday, December 24th @ 5:30 PM

Christmas Hymn Sing

Saturday, January 5th @ 7:00 PM

The Worship Committee invites all to join together on Saturday, January 5th at 7:00 PM for a Christmas Hymn Sing. Come on out for one last chance to sing Christmas carols, and bring your leftover Christmas cookies to share!

Undecorating and Catered Brunch

Sunday, January 6th

Pastor Heisen's last Sunday leading worship at Mount Olivet will be Epiphany Day, January 6th. The church council is planning a catered brunch to follow the service in celebration of both Epiphany and his seven years of service among us. Pastor Heisen's last day in the office will be Friday, January 11th.

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Diversity Tree

Come help us decorate our tree and celebrate the diversity in our town on Sunday, December 16th at 12:00 noon. Bring an ornament that reflects your culture, favorite holiday, or anything else that is important to you and your family to hang on our tree. There will be supplies to make a simple ornament if you don't have one to bring. Cookies and hot cocoa will be served. Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, 34 Prospect Street. Hope to see you there!

October Council Minutes Summary

The council meeting this month focused on preparing for the upcoming congregational meetings on October 14th and November 4th. Holly and Bill reviewed the findings of the "Why?" Committee and their reports and presentation of the options before the congregation as we move forward in faith and our community.

Mount Olivet on SPAC

Mount Olivet's worship services are broadcast on Shrewsbury Public Access Channel (SPAC), channel 28 during the following time slots:

- Wednesdays – 8:00 PM
- Thursdays – 1:00 AM
- Thursdays – 10:00 AM

Online Calendar

To keep up with our ever-changing calendar, you can check <http://www.mountolivetlutheran.org>.

From the Financial Secretary

Financial update and status of 2018 pledges

As illustrated in the Financial Results Chart below, Mount Olivet's operating deficit is close to \$31,000.00 as of the **end of October** and is greater than anticipated for this point in the year due to significantly lower than planned income. Fourteen out of our forty pledges for 2018 are in arrears for an amount of about \$5,000.00. Offsetting this to some extent are nine pledges that are being exceeded. But unfortunately, along with amounts received from non-pledging contributors and special offerings both being lower than expected, the result is an approximately \$9,000.00 gap between planned and actual income.

Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2019 will be available for distribution in mid-December. They will be arranged on a table in the narthex in alphabetical order and can be picked up at any time through the end of the month.

Donating Securities

A donation of securities is a great way to contribute to Mount Olivet. If you are interested in finding out how to donate securities, please see me for more information. Mount Olivet has a **securities donation form** that we ask you to complete and send to me prior to donation. Use of this form simplifies things for both the donor and the financial officers, but more importantly, it provides the financial officers with the expected date of the donation.

Reminder for all shoppers

Mount Olivet is enrolled in the Smile Amazon program and is eligible to receive .5% of all purchases made on Amazon. Participating in this program is very simple. Go to www.smile.amazon.com to shop and you will be asked what organization you would like to support. Choose Mount Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church and then you are good to go. Be sure to spread the word to your family and friends!

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pavlak, Financial Secretary

Net Operating Income October, 2018			
	Month of Oct	Year to Date	Budget (Planned)
Our Ministry Income	\$ 10,017.35	\$ 98,099.15	\$107,096.67
Our Ministry Expenses	\$ 13,476.34	\$ 128,954.25	\$133,821.81
Income Net of Expenses	\$ (3,458.99)	\$ (30,855.10)	\$ (26,725.14)

Remember the Number 20!!

The deadline for all submissions to *The Olive Branch* is the 20th of the month. **Submissions for the January 2019 edition are due in the office no later than Thursday, December 20th.**

Thank you!

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Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Outside Groups, Holidays in United States							Dec 2018 (Eastern Time - New York)						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	1	2	3	4	5		
Eileen - Vacation Christ the King 9:45am - Morning Worship @		6pm - Girl Scout Troop #10087	10:30am - Russian Play Group 7pm - Prayer Shawl Christmas	Organ Tuning 7:12pm - Bible Sharing @ Mount		7pm - Al-Anon meeting							
10am - Morning Worship @ Mt 11:15am - Nominating 1pm - Schoolhouse Quilters 7pm - AA Meeting		6pm - Weight Center Support	10:30am - Russian Play Group 7pm - Prayer Shawl Christmas	6pm - Girl Scout Troop #30093 7:12pm - Bible Sharing @ Mount		7pm - Al-Anon meeting							
Pledge Sunday 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Morning Worship @ Mt 7pm - AA Meeting		6pm - Girl Scout Troop #11087 7pm - Congregation Council	10:30am - Russian Play Group	6pm - Celestial Stitchers 7:12pm - Bible Sharing @ Mount		7pm - Al-Anon meeting							
10am - Morning Worship @ Mt 11am - Christmas Decorating 12pm - Diversity Tree Decorating 7pm - AA Meeting		6pm - Weight Center Support	10:30am - Russian Play Group 7pm - Prayer Shawl Ministry	6pm - Girl Scout Troop #30093 7:12pm - Bible Sharing @ Mount		7pm - Al-Anon meeting							
Confirmation Sunday 10am - Morning Worship @ Mt 7pm - AA Meeting		Christmas Eve 5:30pm - Christmas Eve Service	10:30am - Russian Play Group	7:12pm - Bible Sharing @ Mount		7pm - Al-Anon meeting							
Guest Preacher: Rev. Rafaela 10am - Morning Worship @ Mt 7pm - AA Meeting		New Year's Eve	10:30am - Russian Play Group 7pm - Prayer Shawl Ministry	6pm - Girl Scout Troop #30093 7:12pm - Bible Sharing @ Mount		7pm - Al-Anon meeting 7pm - Christmas Hymn							

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Worship Assistant Schedule for December, 2018

If you are unavailable on your assigned dates, please find a substitute for yourself.
Thank you for your continued service.

December	2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th
Cantor	Kris Sheehan	Frankie Morelli	Karilyn Heisen	George Bergstrom	Frankie Morelli
Lector	Holly Pavlak	Rebecca Hanson Richardson	Kris Sheehan	Frankie Morelli	Bill Robbins
Usher 1	Rob Erickson	Nancy Cowan	Barbara Schuh	Nancy Cowan	Barbara Schuh
Usher 2	Ginny Aikens	Sue Whalen	Carolyn Skoglund	Rob Erickson	Carolyn Skoglund
Coffee/Snack	Nancy Robbins	Peg Harbert	Stephanie Ruggiere	Gabriela Szabo	Eileen Straub LeBlanc
Altar Guild	Holly Pavlak				
Counters	Don Harbert & Bill Whalen				

the Olive Branch



As recipients of God's gracious love shown through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are called in faith to:

- Receive God's love in Word and Sacrament
- Celebrate God's love in Christian community; and
- Share God's love in inviting, caring and service toward one another and the world

PASTOR

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OFFICE SECRETARY/ORGANIST

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OFFICERS

Don Harbert.....President
 Don Sheehan.....Vice-President
 Kathleen Keohane.....Secretary
 Cathy Sheehan.....Treasurer
 Holly Pavlak.....Financial Secretary

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

George Bergstrom	Kathleen Keohane
Don Harbert	Holly Pavlak
Nadine Argento	Carolyn Skoglund
Lina Dickey	Rebecca Hanson- Richardson
Rob Erickson	
Don Sheehan	

Church telephone: (508) 842-2731
 Website: www.mtolivetlutheran.org



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