

Volume LIV  
Number 11

November 2016



# Messenger

MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## REFORMATION 2017 It's *Still* All About Jesus

The upcoming Luther Birthday party will launch a year long series of events in the Omaha area to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

- Martin Luther 533rd Birthday Party, Nov. 13, 2016, 2:00 - 7:00 P.M. at the German American Club (3717 S. 120 St.). You can anticipate children's choirs, German singers and dancers, Martin Luther impersonators, a trivia contest, food, and games for the kids.
- Organ and Choir Concert: Feb. 12, 2017, Dr. Jeffrey Blersch at Pacific Hills Lutheran Church (1110 S. 90th St.).
- The Last Supper Quilt on display at Pacific Hills Lutheran Church (1110 S. 90th St.) April 17-18, 2017, 9:00 - 9:00 P.M. The quilt is a 15.3' x 5.5' work of art composed of 51,816 half inch squares modeled after Leonardo de Vinci's famous work "The Last Supper."

### OTHER NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

- LutheranReformation.org is the LCMS website about the reformation. Lots of good things to check out here.
- Augsburg Fortress Publishers has an app featuring Lutheran's Small Catechism. The great little app has everything from the ten commandments and the Apostles' Creed to morning and evening blessings and lots of cool stuff in-between. Search the Apple store for "Luther's Small Catechism."
- Watch for a Martin Luther documentary to air on PBS in 2017. A trailer of the movie is available at LutheranReformation.org.
- Concordia University in Seward is planning a year of activities and events. See the schedule at reformation.cune.edu. The year wraps up with a final celebratory worship service at the campus Walz Arena on October 29, 2017.

**“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”** (*Philippians 4:4-7*).

Greg Anderson, in *Living Life on Purpose*, tells a story about a man whose wife had left him. He was completely depressed. He had lost faith in himself, in other people, in God—he found no joy in living. One rainy morning this man went to a small neighborhood restaurant for breakfast. Although several people were at the diner, no one was speaking to anyone else. Our miserable friend hunched over the counter, stirring his coffee with a spoon.

In one of the small booths along the window was a young mother with a little girl. They had just been served their food when the little girl broke the sad silence by almost shouting, “Momma, why don’t we say our prayers here?” The waitress who had just served their breakfast turned around and said, “Sure, honey, we can pray here. Will you say the prayer for us?” And she turned and looked at the rest of the people in the restaurant and said, “Bow your heads.” Surprisingly, one by one, the heads went down. The little girl then bowed her head, folded her hands and said, “God is great, God is good, and we thank him for our food. Amen.”

The prayer changed the entire atmosphere.

People began to talk with one another. The waitress said, “We should do that every morning.”

“All of a sudden,” said the man, “my whole frame of mind started to improve. From that little girl’s example, I started to thank God for all that I did have and stopped majoring in all that I didn’t have. I started to be grateful.”



Gratitude is an attitude. It’s an attitude that changes how we approach life and how we deal with the ups and downs we experience. We Christians even know to whom to direct our expressions of gratitude. We have come to know our gracious God and his provision through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. All good gifts come from Him, we are told. **“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him?”** (*Romans 8:32*).

In this crazy political season we can easily be distracted by things. We can easily be discouraged by the whining and fear mongering and character assassination and facile promises of politicians seeking our support. We need to be reminded of the God who still has ultimate control over this world and its daily happenings. He loves us. He forgives our sins in Jesus. He has hold of us and will not let us go. Let us rejoice and give thanks.

—**Rev. Roland A. Jank, Jr.**

Our focus for 2016's Stewardship emphasis is vocation – the work, the jobs, to which you and I have been called. Most of us spend at least 40 hours per week at our jobs. Some folks work more than 40 hours per week. Others work even longer hours. We spend more time at work than doing any other activity (except maybe for sleep, assuming you are getting a healthy 7 or 8 hours per night). This isn't even counting the work we do at home, around the house, or at church.



After creating the heavens, the earth, and all the earth's plants and animals, God created humans in His image expressly to manage his creation – the first jobs, the first work. (*Genesis 1:26-27*) However, when sin came into the world, work became a curse. (*Genesis 3:17-19*)

As new creatures in Christ, we also can have a new relationship with our work. When viewed with proper understanding, our work is actually a form of worship. This was one of Luther's most common sermon subjects during the Reformation. Luther claimed that all of our callings – stable worker, kitchen maid, or child in school – when done with diligence – are, in fact, worship.

“Not my job,” you may say. “My job sure isn't worship”.

“I'm retired. That doesn't seem like worship.”

Pay attention during the sermons on November 6 and 13. You may be surprised at what God has to say about your work.

We'll have pledge sheets available in your worship folder on the first three Sundays. We'll report on 2016 financial stewardship on November 13. Your pledges will be consecrated to God on November 20.

**- Board of Stewardship**

## In Ministry With God's People

We remember in prayer

...**Carol Childers, Becky Day, Bob Frazer, Arnie Jacobson, Rod and Karen Lorang, Dawn Payne, Diane Schradler, Nancy Stierle, Don Weihe, Margaret Wille, and Janet Zulfer.**

...**Kenzee Ann and Madalynn Harper,** the twin daughters of **Andrew and Cindy Wheeler,** who were baptized on October 30.

...all the parents in our congregation who are struggling to do a good job.

...our college students who are surrounded by spiritual challenges.

...our need to develop relationships with those who don't know Christ.

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Our November meeting will be held Tuesday the 8th at **Liz Matson's** house. **Carol Childers** will provide dessert. The book for discussion is *Blue Shoe* by Anne LaMott.

Mattie Ryder is marvelously neurotic, well-intentioned, funny, religious, sarcastic, tender, angry, and broke. Her life at the moment is a wreck: her marriage has failed, her mother is failing, her house is rotting, her waist is expanding, her children are misbehaving, and she has a crush on a married man. Then she finds a small rubber blue shoe-nothing more than a gumball trinket-left behind by her father. For Mattie, it becomes a talisman-a

chance to recognize the past for what it was, to see the future as she always hoped it could be, and to finally understand her family, herself, and the ever-unfolding mystery of her sweet, sad, and sometimes surprising life. (from back cover)



We will hold our December meeting and cookie exchange on December 13 at the home of **Jill Clausen**. We will discuss *A Garden in Paris* by Stephanie Grace Whitson.

# Blessed!

About two-thirds of Americans say eating Thanksgiving leftovers is more important than eating the actual holiday meal. That's one of the few times people hope food is left on the table.

When it comes to giving out blessings, God doesn't want any leftovers to remain. In Genesis 12:2, God blesses Abraham so he will be a blessing to others.

Charles Stanley writes: "A hoarded blessing is never enjoyed as richly as a shared one. Using your gift to meet someone else's need glorifies God by demonstrating his grace at work in your life. Don't let his generous provisions end with you. Pass them on and discover the joy of a never-ending cycle of blessings."

Join your fellow Mount Olivers for a morning of worship to start your Thanksgiving Day blessed!

**Thanksgiving Day Worship  
November 24th, 10:00 A.M.**

Bring along those for whom you are thankful and a can of food for Project Hope.



# Canvas, Corks and Crackers!

A special THANK YOU to **Marilyn Beig** for once again leading our second annual **Canvas, Corks and Crackers** event on October 8th. We had a great afternoon of fun and fellowship while learning to paint an autumn mum! Thank you to all who joined us and those who brought guests. See you next year!



Please join your fellow Mount Olive movie buffs on Friday night, November 11, at 7:30 p.m. We will be showing the movie "Sahara."



It has become the custom for the Friday Nite Flixer's to honor Veterans in November with a military themed movie.

"Sahara" is a Columbia studios classic from 1943. This movie stars Humphrey Bogart, Bruce Bennett, J. Carroll Naish and Lloyd Bridges. It is an explosive war story about a ragtag battalion stranded in the great African desert, after the fall of Tobruk during World War II. If you have not seen this movie, do yourself a favor and check it out. The movie runs 98 minutes.

Popcorn and movie candy provided. Circle the date!

- Dixie Gerhart  
402-602-3252



Thank You

Thank you to **Sharon McDonald, Barb Stacy** and **Bonnie White** for helping with the October Messenger.

Thank you to **Barb Stacy** for taking the finished newsletter to the downtown post office.

A special thank you to **Rich Wismont** who takes care of all of the church's recyclables.

Thank you to **Rosalie Soodsma** for weekly lending a hand in the church office.

- **Teresa Kuti**

Children's Christmas Service

Mark your calendars for this year's Sunday School Christmas Service on Sunday, December 18, at 4:00 P.M. Rehearsals begin Sunday, November 27th, at 10:30 A.M. and continue every Sunday through December 18th. Parents, please make every effort to have your children at every practice to learn songs, practice speaking parts, and prepare for the program. All Mount Olive Sunday School children are encouraged to participate in this Christmas tradition!

Mt. Olive Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please call **Kristi Townsend** at 402-457-9611 or by email at [townsend.kristi@gmail.com](mailto:townsend.kristi@gmail.com)

Christmas Decorating

Join the Mount Olive Youth Group on Sunday, November 27, at 11:30 A.M., after the Christian Education Hour, to help decorate our church for the Christmas season.

Voters' Assembly

On Sunday, November 20, at 11:30 a.m. will be our quarterly Voters' Assembly. Reports will be shared about what God is doing through our congregation and our congregational budget for 2017 will be presented.

Thank you

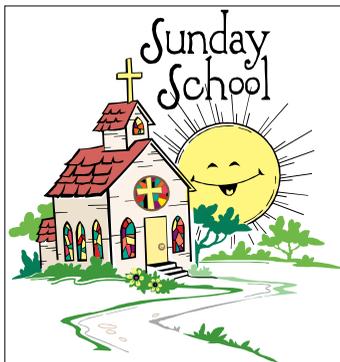
Thanks to all that came out Saturday morning, October 8, for the church fall clean-up. The helper's ages varied from 5 years to 80 plus years of age. Everyone was a big help. Most of the help seemed to want to work outside instead of inside with the nice weather. If you could not make this cleanup but would like to help out in some way, just ask **Ron Hurt, Gloria Sorensen** or **Kelly Wegner**. There is always something that needs work. Again, thanks to all who helped. They were **Galen Behr, Annette Hurt, Gary Jacobson, Nancy Jacobson, Noah Lorang, Samuel Lorang, Tim Lorang, Mike Townsend, Sr., and Rich Wismont**.

Many thanks,  
**Ron Hurt and  
Gloria Sorensen**



Thank you

A part-time position is available at Bethany Lutheran Preschool (5151 Northwest Radial HWY): Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., November 1 through mid May. Assist the preschool teacher in supervision of the children. Ask for an application in the office. The church office phone number is 402-558-6212.



### Sunday School

On Sunday, November 13, in celebration of Reformation, we will hold a group Sunday School to celebrate Martin Luther's birthday. Cake and punch will be served.

## OUR MISSIONARIES ABROAD

Mt. Olive is helping to support two missionaries and their families who live abroad. We remember them periodically in our public prayer. We ask that you continue to support them financially with your regular gifts. Information about their work is shared on the north hall bulletin board and in our Sunday worship. May it serve as an encouragement for your continued interest and support. For the year 2016 our missionaries abroad are:

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**Julie Lutz**  
Box 803  
Mt. Hagen,  
Western Highlands  
Province  
Papua New Guinea  
lutz.travel@gmail.com

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**Rev. David & Mrs. Barbara Bush**  
1333 S. Kirkwood Rd.  
Attn: Amy Schaefer  
St. Louis, MO 63122  
david.bush@lcmsintl.org



## Special Advent Service

*Service of Advent  
Carols and Readings*

Thursday, December 1st, 7:00 P.M.

*Soup and Sandwich Supper*

Before the Service, beginning at 5:30 P.M.

Make your Advent season memorable this year and bring your family.

To help everyone attend the *Advent Carols and Readings* service on Thursday, December 1st, we are serving supper at Mount Olive from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. that evening. What a great way to begin the Advent season - sharing a meal with your Mount Olive family and friends! We plan to have a smorgasbord of hearty soups and sandwiches as well as desserts to polish off the meal.

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...our desire to grow as stewards of all that belongs to God.

# Julie Lutz Banned Entrance to Papua New Guinea

*An excerpt from a letter from our Mount Olive supported missionary, **Julie Lutz**. If you would like to read more, the full article is posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.*

**And there are inexplicable roadblocks, even after 30 years in PNG.**

Quite notably for me today, **I am facing an Entry Ban, blocking my immediate return to PNG.** I am in the U.S. striving with others to open the road for my return to Papua New Guinea.

I came to the U.S. for a family vacation last spring and found I was not allowed to board a plane to return to PNG. It's a complicated situation. Suffice it to say: **I need your prayers.** I have enjoyed my extended stay with family - who would complain of time with grandchildren and my mother. I've been able to travel around to visit some of you who support me - those times are wonderful! I am able to participate in some PNG ministry-related projects from the U.S. However, I am well ready to return to PNG. The work to which I have been called by the Lutheran Church awaits.

I thank God for your prayers, encouragement, and support in so many ways. May God continue to bless you! With joy and peace in serving our Savior.  
**- Julie Lutz**

# Open Hands, Open Heart

For some of us, when uncertainty and worry creep into our lives, we hold tightly to our resources. We cling to our earthly possessions believing it is the only way we can guarantee financial security.

The concept of living with open hands goes against both what we may have been taught and what we may think of as plain old common sense, but there can be great rewards in living with our hands open.

Throughout scripture we are encouraged to share what we have with others. In Deuteronomy 15 it reads, “You shall not ... shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him.” This idea is great in theory, but becomes uncomfortable when it’s time to put it into practice in our own lives. Perhaps it’s worth considering how keeping open hands may enrich our own lives.

Need a few ideas to help you get started? Embrace gratitude: Writing in a gratitude journal can be a fulfilling spiritual practice. Many studies have shown that writing three things you are grateful for each day has the power to transform your outlook and help you appreciate the fullness of your own life.

Value contentment: Be on the lookout for things that bring a smile to your face. Maybe it’s waking up to birds singing, the sound of a baby’s laughter or watching God’s daily artistry in the sunrise or sunset. None of these things can be bought or owned, yet they bring joy to your life in awesome ways!

Live generously: The art of giving may take a while to learn, so here’s an idea: Try adding a “giving” line item in your monthly budget to help make it a normal part of your monthly expenses. The more consistently you give, the more natural it will become.

By living in response to God’s grace with an open hand, you can look forward to experiencing an emotional and spiritual return that will come your way, pressed down, shaken together and running over!

This article provided compliments of Thrivent Financial and **Sarah Jank**, Financial Associate, 402.905.4229, sarah.jank@thrivent.com.

