

Volume LV
Number 1

January 2017



Messenger

MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

7301 North 28 Avenue Omaha, Nebraska, 68112 402-455-8700 www.mountoliveomaha.com

101 Ways to Show Mercy and Compassion of Christ

In Ways That Don't Cost Money

Saturday, January 28, 2017

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Atonement Lutheran Church

4530 N. 85th St.

Jesus teaches us to love our neighbors, and showing mercy and compassion to those around us is a great way to show His love.

- Who are the people who could see Jesus through your acts of mercy?
- Where are the people who are hurting?
- Where are the people who need help?
- Where are the people who are lonely?

We all hurt or need help sometimes, and there are always those around us who can be blessed by acts of mercy and compassion—both big and small.

Tim Hetzner, executive director of Lutheran Church Charities, will share specific ways that individuals and congregations can follow Jesus' example and touch those in need or pain with His love. Ideas include acts of service that anyone can start doing right away, as well as some ideas for mission organizations or congregations.

HEAR the ideas, DISCUSS the needs in your community, and BRAINSTORM ways you and Mount Olive can begin showing the mercy and compassion of Christ to those around you.

Doors open at 9:00 a.m. The workshop begins at 9:30 a.m. Lunch is provided (free will donation to help cover costs). This event is hosted by the Omaha North Circuit and the Nebraska District. Additional funds provided by Thrivent. To register, please call the church office at 402-455-8700 or email at mountolv@msn.com.

Some wise pastor once said: “You will be who you are becoming.” You are never going to wake up one morning and be something you haven’t been becoming little by little, day by day, for years. A caterpillar doesn’t go to bed as a fuzzy little worm and wake up the next morning a beautiful butterfly. That transformation from egg to larva to pupa to butterfly takes about half its life.

What are you becoming? That is a good question God would want you to ask yourself. What do you want God to say about you when your earthly life is over? What do you want others to talk about concerning your life at your wake? Those questions get us to take a close look at our lives. If the things you do now continue until your last breath, will you be regretful or pleased?

I find that more and more people live with the philosophy we find expressed in Judges 21:25: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” And whatever seems to be right is what will make that person “happy.”

How different all this is from what God’s Word tells us. In Holy Baptism, we are named God’s dear children. We are adopted into His eternal family. We are called “saints” in the New Testament, which means that we are God’s “holy ones.” That is who God in Christ has declared us to be. We know from experience that those are lofty titles and identities God has bestowed on us. Now we have some work to do to grow up into them.

Christian disciplines are those practices God’s people have followed in order to grow up into Christ. As we begin a new calendar year, we

need to utilize the wisdom of Christians through the ages if we intend to become more like Christ to our family members, to our neighbors, and to our work-mates.



One such Christian discipline is having a daily prayer time. In our busy world it is difficult to do this as a family unit, which is the ideal. To do this as an individual is still extremely valuable. Find a space that helps you to pray. Have as few distractions as possible. Decide on a set amount of time. Start with 10 minutes a day. Take a few moments to sit in silence. Then begin with a prayer like: Come, Holy Spirit, open my eyes, enter my heart, and shape my life by your Word. Then read a portion of Scripture combined with some devotional ideas about what you have read. Next offer thanks to God, make requests to God for others and for yourself reflecting thoughts that your reading inspired, and then ask God to help you live for Him the rest of the day. What would you become if you did this six times a week?

I predict you would become more and more like the Jesus who loves you and died for you and rose again for you to make you His own forever.

—Rev. Roland A. Jank, Jr.

Our 15-week Spring Adult Information Class will begin on Sunday, February 19, at 3:30 p.m. This two-hour class is for those who are new in their faith, for those who are somewhere in the middle, and for those who have been life-long Christians. No matter where you are in your faith journey, God yearns to get closer to you.



To register, please call the church office at 402-455-8700. You can also find registration forms inside the Sunday bulletin beginning January 29. Fill out the registration and drop it in the offering plate.

Update from Julie Lutz

“A change is coming . . .

I will be traveling to Hong Kong after Christmas and will be based there for a spell. I will still be with LCMS. I will still be trying to find my way back to Papua New Guinea. In the meantime, I will be assisting with Human Care projects with Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation. And . . . that’s about all I know. This is another venture into the unknown, in which the only certainty is that God is leading, and it is His light I will be sharing.



Please pray that my service with CWEF in Asia will be blessed, that I will learn aptly and serve effectively, and that at the right time, the door to PNG would open again. Also pray for an extra measure of “bel isi” (peace) to my family, friends, and colleagues in PNG, and for reconciliation within the Gutnius Lutheran Church.”

an excerpt from a letter sent by Julie Lutz, December 2016.



2017 Pledge Results In

The final 2017 pledge results have been tabulated. Fifty-six givers pledged a total of \$219,809 for 2017. Although one fewer pledge was made (compared to 2016), the total amount pledged was 2.2% higher than last year. Thank God for the faith that these members demonstrated through their pledges and for all of you who contribute financially and with your time to God’s work at Mount Olive.

The Mount Olive Book Club will meet Tuesday, January 10, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of **Lois Barr. Jill Clausen** will provide dessert. They will discuss *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis.

Four children – Lucy, Peter, Susan and Edmund all enter Narnia – a magical world where animals talk and the White Witch who reigns as Queen always makes it winter and never Christmas. They enter at different times, but from the same place – the old Wardrobe. Lucy enters first and encounters

the Faun who is in the pay of the White Witch and tries to kidnap her. Edmund, who enters second, finds the White Witch and thinks she's kind and caring, only to later discover that she is a cruel, evil and an untrustworthy woman. Susan and Peter enter together and find Lucy and Edmund. They all meet Mr. and Mrs. Beaver who invites them to lunch at their cottage. During lunch they



realize that Edmund (who had fought and was angry with the other three) had left to join forces with the White Witch whom he believed would make him Prince.

The Beavers along with the three children set off on a long and perilous journey to find Aslan – the King and Lord of Narnia – and rescue Edmund. Together, the children join forces with Aslan's army against the heartless and wicked White Witch.

The February meeting will be Tuesday, February 14th, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of **Bonnie White. Lois Barr** will provide dessert. The February selection will be *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

Weekly Giving Needs for 2017

In 2017 our congregational needs will be \$4905/week, with an overall budget increase of .7%. As a part of our yearly budget, we distribute 10% of our weekly offerings to needs outside of Mount Olive. In the year 2017 they will be:

- \$17,000 Nebraska District and Synod Work
- \$ 250 District Convention and Circuit Assessments
- \$ 500 Crossways International
- \$ 2,000 POBLO ministry
- \$ 2,500 Project Hope (food pantry services)
- \$ 1,300 Together, Inc. (emergency human services)
- \$ 500 Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska
- \$ 1,250 "Living H2O" Campus Ministries

Mount Olive has also committed to help support two overseas missionary families - **Julie Lutz** in Papua New Guinea and **Rev. David and Mrs. Barbara Bush** in Macau. You are encouraged to periodically make additional monetary gifts toward their support. Put this cash or check in an envelope and notate its purpose on the envelope.

In Ministry With God's People

We remember in prayer

...**Carol Childers, Becky Day, Mary Hogue, Diane Schrader, Emily Standley, Don Weihe, Pearl Wiley, Roger Wilson and Janet Zulfer.**

...**Hope Lorang**, infant daughter of **Tim** and **Melissa Lorang**, who was baptized on January 1.

...**Emad and Shireen Tawadrous** in their work as POBLO missionaries in metro Omaha and the Peace International Center at 44th and Grover.

...those in our community without Christ and His church.

...those who are contemplating an abortion and those burdened by an abortion in their past.

...prospective participants for our Spring Adult Information Class which begins Sun., Feb. 19.

Please join your fellow Mount Olive movie buffs on Friday night, January 13, at 7:30 p.m. We will be showing the movie *Mr. Skeffington*.

Mr. Skeffington is a 1944 film that stars Bette Davis, Claude Rains and Richard Waring. In 1914, popular and beautiful Fanny Trellis is forced into a loveless marriage with an older man, banker, Job Skeffington, in order to save her beloved brother Trippy from an embezzlement charge. If you are a Bette Davis fan and have not seen this movie, do yourself a favor and check it out. The movie runs over two hours...so Flixers...bring your seat cushions.

Popcorn and movie candy will be provided. Circle the date!

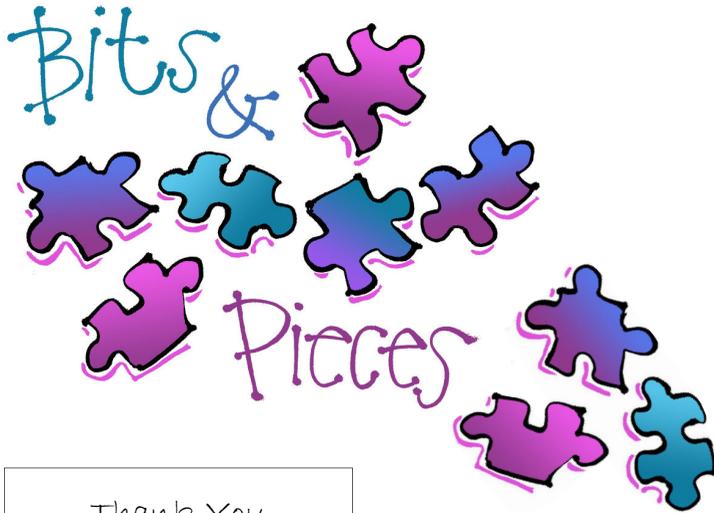
— **Dixie Gerhart** (402-602-3252)



Altar Flowers are no longer arranged by our church. Altar flowers are still welcomed and encouraged. If you would like to remember a loved one, celebrate an anniversary or birthday with flowers, please purchase the flowers at a floral shop of your choosing or maybe picked from your garden. You can either have them delivered the Friday before the chosen Sunday from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. or call the church office at 402-455-8700 to make other arrangements. Please call no later than Tuesday prior to the chosen Sunday. Always make sure to call the church office so an announcement can be included in the Sunday bulletin.



“Resolution One: I will live for God.
Resolution Two: If no one else does, I still will.”
—Jonathan Edwards



Thank You

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

Thank you to **Lorraine Irwin** 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

Ongoing Collection

During the new year we will again be collecting items for victims of domestic violence, specifically the Fred LeRoy Health & Wellness Center that serves the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska. They are in need of baby products (i.e. diapers, wipes, formula bottles, etc.), hygiene items (i.e. shampoo, razors, deodorant, personal hygiene items, etc.), socks, undergarments, hair products, and flip flops/shower shoes. A collection box is in the narthex (back of church).

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

Blood Drive

On Saturday, January 21, our sister congregation, St. John Lutheran Church (11120 Calhoun Rd.) is hosting a blood drive from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in its fellowship hall. Contact Bev Carlson at 402-689-8958 or Lily Ruff at 402-453-7201 for an appointment.



Chili/Soup Cook Off

On Sunday, January 15, join St. John Lutheran Church at the Ponca Hills Volunteer Fire Department (12919 Ponca Rd.) from 4:00—6:00 P.M. for its 7th annual Chili/Soup and Salsa Cook Off. Everyone is welcome at this mid-winter fellowship event that will benefit the St. John Building Fund for Furnace Replacement Costs.

Card Shower

Our own **Grace Gozzola** is turning 90 on January 15. Her family is hosting a card shower and invites your participation. Her address is:

Grace Gozzola
315 S. Union Rd.
Union ME 04862



Video Needed

Friday Nite Flix folks would like to watch the movie “Notorious” with Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman but are having a hard time locating a copy. Does anyone have a copy of that movie that they would lend to us? Thank you.

—**Dixie Gerhart** (402-453-6707 or 402-602-3252)

Special Presentation

During the month of January, the Adult Bible Class Hour will feature different speakers.

- January 8 — **Don Bader**, coordinator of our Omaha Lutheran Campus Ministry, “Living H2O.”
- January 15 — **Mike and Marcia Steckelberg** will talk about their work with Laborers for Christ.

Thank you to the following who purchased poinsettias for the chancel at Christmas:

- Galen & Marsha Behr**
- Ruth Benish**
- Marge Eastman**
- Becky Hurt**
- Ron & Annette Hurt**
- Tim & Melissa Lorang**
- Liz Matson**
- Victor Padron & Jody Wells-Padron**
- Frank Sabatka**
- Rosalie Soodsma**
- Gloria Sorensen**
- Barb Stacy**
- Don Weihe**
- Bonnie White**
- Paul Whitmore**
- Max & Linda Williams**



The entire Sunday School staff would like to thank the children and parents for their practice and preparation for the Sunday School Children’s Christmas Service, “The Most Important Part of Christmas.” Thank you to our amazing narrators: **Aryanna Hogue**, **Kailyn Townsend** and **Isabella Wegner** and stage manager: **Austin Wegner**. We are thankful for our Mount Olive families and friends for their continual support and encouragement provided to us throughout the year.

A special thank you goes to the Sunday School Teachers and staff, the Board of Christian Education, **Pastor Jank**, **Suzan Jank**, **Anne Wegner**, **Paul Kosch** (music), the Board of Church Properties, the Board of Lay Ministry, and the Board of PF/PR. We would also like to thank the ushers that helped and all those that assisted with the decorations and props. Thank you to the Kitchen Coordinators, all who provided refreshments, and all who donated treat bags for the children. Special thanks to Thrivent Financial for supporting the mitten drive and to everyone who donated mittens, gloves, scarves and hats for the mitten tree.

The Most Important Part of Christmas



Ten Reasons Why Many Churches Aren't Evangelistic

1. **They don't really believe people need Jesus.** Unless church members and leaders really believe in the lostness of humanity without Christ, they will not be evangelistic. John 14:6 is a clear biblical statement on the exclusivity of Christ for salvation. Too many leaders and members only give lip service to it.
2. **Evangelism is spiritual warfare.** In the most carnal sense, life is easier without being evangelistic. Spiritual warfare is tough. Sometimes it seems to be easier to go AWOL from the battle than to fight in the trenches.
3. **It's hard work.** From time to time someone will ask me, "What is the easiest way to get our church to do evangelism?" The answer is "none of the above." Too many churches have become self-serving country clubs rather than obedient and sacrificial vessels of God.
4. **Evangelism requires intentionality.** God did not say, "Share the gospel as you stay where you are." He said, "Go" (*Matthew 28:19*). When you "go," you have to know where you are going. That requires intentionality.
5. **Effective evangelism often requires we pray for the opportunities.** Consider this challenge. Begin each day with a prayer that God will bring people in your path (or help you to see them) where you can be a gospel witness in word and deed. I have been amazed (though I shouldn't be) how God has answered that prayer in my own life.
6. **Too many people have too many excuses.** One church member told me the entire county where he lives was fully churched. In fact, he said there are too many churches. There are, he said, no gospel opportunities. I then showed him demographics that showed his county was 62% unchurched. His response? "I don't believe that."
7. **Too many churches are too busy to do evangelism.** If your church has so many activities, meetings, and programs that your members never have time to develop relationships and share the gospel, your church is too busy. Some times Satan's most powerful tool is to get us doing good things to the neglect of the best thing.

(Continued on page 10)

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 2017 our missionaries abroad are:

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

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

(Continued from page 9)

8. **Church leaders are not evangelistic.** If the pastor, staff, elders, deacons, and teachers are not evangelistic, it is unlikely the church will be evangelistic. The church members will follow that disobedient example.
9. **Many church leaders and members don't know their field or ministry area.** Jesus said, "the harvest is abundant, but the workers are few" (*Matthew 9:37*). So where is the harvest field? Too many churches neglect their community because they are really ignorant of who is there and what their needs are.

10. **Evangelism is counter-cultural.** If you want to be a people pleaser, don't be evangelistic. Culture hates the gospel that says there is only one way of salvation. But if you want to be a God-pleaser, share the gospel. You may die doing it, but what an honor to pay such a price!

So what are most of our churches in North America communicating to the world with our self-centeredness and lack of evangelistic fervor? It's simple.

We are telling the world to go to hell.

May God convict us of our evangelistic apathy.