

THE OLIVE PRESS

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CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE



Emily Koo does a beautiful cello solo



Silent Night accompanied by candlelight



the Mount Olive Choir sings Christmas Carols

photos by Richard Xie, Andrew Sherwin, and Emma Carter

reflections on the past and hopes for the future



As the New Year begins, I can't help but reflect on the fact that the recent achievements at Mount Olive Lutheran Church and Mount Olive Lutheran Preschool have, and have always been, a full team effort. The year 2024 has been filled with incredible accomplishments with profound impact for our church and preschool, mainly focusing on safety and teaching.

As I reflect on 2024, I express my heartfelt gratitude for the amazing dedication, skills, and compassion that everyone contributes to our church. I am inspired by the enthusiasm and selfless

2024 Council Members

President - Ulrike Ziegner Hokanson

Recording Secretary - Michael Uy

Chief Elder - Bill Dahlgren

Treasurer - Jim Drexler (former), Julie Moe Reynolds

Pastor(s) - Craig Molitoris & Avery Hjulberg

Preschool Board - Julia Chiang, Joane Keluche, Audrey Dahlgren (chair), Julie Kurtz

Head Trustee - Richard Xie

commitment of congregation members who care deeply about our mission to spread the gospel and create hope. My special thanks to **Emma Carter**, our Administrative Business Manager, who is making a huge difference by facilitating the smooth operation of our church and improving public relations.

Looking ahead to 2025, I am filled with tremendous hope and optimism for enhancing a safe and peaceful worship environment. I am confident that we are building a foundation for an even stronger church. Together, we will continue to enhance the position of our church and preschool in the South Bay community.

Have a blessed New Year, filled with peace and happiness!

Ulrike Ziegner Hokanson

MD, PhD, President

reflections on the past and hopes for the future



from left to right: **Richard Xie,**
Andrew Sherwin, Ulrike Ziegner
Hokanson, Wendy Xie, and James Kringel

2025 Elected Members

President - Ulrike Ziegner Hokanson

Vice President - Andrew Sherwin

Recording Secretary - James Kringel

Treasurer - Julie Moe Reynolds

Head Trustee - Richard Xie

Financial Secretary - Wendy Xie

Elder - John Gragg

Elder - Case Dahlen

*Preschool Board - Audrey Dahlgren, Julia Chiang, Julie Kurtz, Joan Keluche,
Alisa Guo*

JOHN THE APOSTLE & GOSPEL WRITER



NEW TESTAMENT ACCOUNTS

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James the Greater. In the Gospels, the two brothers are often called after their father the “sons of Zebedee” and received from Christ the honorable title of Boanerges, i.e. “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17).

Originally, they were fishermen and fished with their father in the Lake of Gennesaret. Many speculate the probable explanation that the brothers served as disciples of John the Baptist for a time and were called by Christ from the circle of John's followers, together with Peter and Andrew, to become His disciples (John 1:35-42). The first disciples returned with their new Master from the Jordan River to Galilee, and both John and the others remained for some time with Jesus. Yet after the second return from Judea, John and his companions went back again to their trade of fishing until he and they were called by Christ to definitive discipleship (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). In the lists of the Apostles, John has the second place (Acts 1:13), the third (Mark 3:17), and the fourth (Matthew 10:3; Luke 6:14), yet always after James with the exception of a few passages (Luke 8:51; 9:28 in the Greek text; Acts 1:13).

Over the next few months, I will be writing about our gospel writers in the Olive Press. I have chosen John first because I feel he was the closest to Christ--even closer than Peter. From the cross, Christ told John to take care of his mother, and John took care of his Mary. John describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Luther says that John wrote his Gospel because the Heretic Cerinthus (a contemporary of the Apostles) was the first man to attack the divinity of Christ. John's gospel proves that Christ, our Lord and Savior, is the true, natural and eternal God with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. John's gospels differ from the Synoptic Gospels in several ways. The Gospel of John covers a different time span than Matthew, Mark and Luke. The Gospel of John portrays Jesus discoursing at length on logical matters.

From James being thus placed first, the conclusion is drawn that John was the younger of the two brothers. In any case, John had a prominent position in the apostolic body. Peter, James, and he were the only witnesses of the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:37), of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1), and of the Agony in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37).

Only he and Peter were sent into the city to make the preparation for the Last Supper (Luke 22:8). At the Supper itself, his place was next to Christ on whose breast he leaned (John 13:23, 25). According to the general interpretation, John was also that "other disciple" who with Peter followed Christ after the arrest into the palace of a high priest (John 18:15). John alone remained near his beloved Master at the foot of the Cross on Calvary with the Mother of Jesus and the pious women, and took the desolate Mother into his care as the last legacy of Christ (John 19:25-27). After the Resurrection, John and Peter were the first of the disciples to hasten to the grave, and he was the first to believe that Christ had truly risen (John 21:7). The Fourth Evangelist has shown us most clearly how close the relationship was between John and his Lord and Master, by using the title he is accustomed to indicate himself without giving his name: "the disciple whom Jesus loved." After Christ's Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, John took, together with Peter, a prominent part in the founding and guidance of the Church. We see him in the company of Peter at the healing of the lame man in the Temple (Acts 3:1). With Peter he is also thrown into prison (Acts 4:3).

THE LATER ACCOUNTS OF JOHN

The Christian writers of the second and third centuries testify to us a tradition universally recognized and doubted by no one that the Apostle and Evangelist John lived in Asia Minor in the last decades of the first century, and from Ephesus had guided the Churches of that province. In his "Dialogue with Trypho" (Chapter 81), St. Justin Martyr refers to "John, one of the Apostles of Christ" as a witness who had lived with us", that is, at Ephesus. St. Irenaeus speaks in many places of the Apostle John and his residence in Asia and expressly declares that he wrote his Gospel at Ephesus (Adv. Her., III, I, 1), and lived there until the reign of Trajan (loc. Cit., II, xxii, 5). Considering Eusebius (Hist. eccl., III, xii, 1) and others, we are obliged to place the Apostle's banishment to Patmos in the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96). Previous to this, according to Tertullian's testimony (De praescript., xxxvi), John had been thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil before the Porta Latina at Rome without suffering injury. After Domitian's death, the Apostle returned to Ephesus during the reign of Trajan, and at Ephesus he died about A.D. 100 at a great age.

THE OLD HAS GONE, THE NEW IS HERE!

A set of large, shiny gold-colored balloons shaped like the year 2025. They are suspended by thin gold chains from a horizontal bar at the top of the page.

With 2024 coming to an end, it is time to embrace the coming of the New Year, but to also be grateful for what the old year has given us. Think about what goals we all have accomplished in our lives last year: personal, professional, or even spiritual ones. Setting new goals and accomplishing them is a part of life, and it is especially common during this time of year with people making a list of New Year's Resolutions. By doing a simple Google search, what appeared on the most common resolutions amongst people included better health, being more frugal on finances, having more work-life balance, and spending more time with loved ones. Just remember, however, that even though it is important and good to have and accomplish goals, it is even better that they are aligned with the will of God.

Ephesians 4:22-24 states “[y]ou were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” This should be a reminder to all of us that whatever we do and achieve this year, God’s glory should be at the center of why we want to accomplish these goals! Jesus came down and died for us so that we can be made new by being freed from the slavery of sin. In that case, what would

be the point of accomplishing new goals, that could be life changing, if we did not recognize that Jesus’ resurrection gave the whole world a chance to repent and change?

The transition from the old year to the new year is also a perfect metaphor for Jesus’ birth, not just his death. The birth of a newborn king, the king of kings, was to bring hope and ultimately change the world forever. Christ is the new creation, as written in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” Jesus is not only the reason for the (Christmas) season, but He is the reason for us to change, become better, and have new beginnings! ”

So, when we think about writing down or thinking about any New Year’s Resolutions for 2025, let the Holy Spirit guide you on whether they are biblical and righteous.

We can appreciate the lessons that the old year has taught us and apply them this year. Let's all step out in faith this year and remember to...

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed"

Proverbs 16:3

May the Lord be with you.

*Katja
Hokanson*





PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Sota & Ayato explore the garden.

PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Mount Olive Preschool is thriving with almost 70 families. Our “Friendship Lunch” was a huge success with over 50 families attending. We also had an extraordinary turnout with our “Tree Trimming” night with over 30 families who joined us to make Christmas ornaments. Finally, we had a tremendous turnout with almost twenty children for our “Parents Night Out” on December 20th, where parents dropped off their children for a few hours to do some last-minute Christmas shopping, go on a date, or prepare their homes for the holidays. We would also like to take a moment to thank **Audrey Dahlgren** for her hard work and dedication to our preschool. She spends countless hours here reading books to children, playing basketball, and supporting David in running a first-class preschool program.

Our monthly Christian curriculum consists of the stories “The Angel Visits Mary,” “Jesus is Born,” and “Angels Tell the Shepherds.” Our discovery point is that worship begins with God, who announces the good news that he sent his Son, Jesus, to be our savior.

**written by Preschool
Director David Welch**

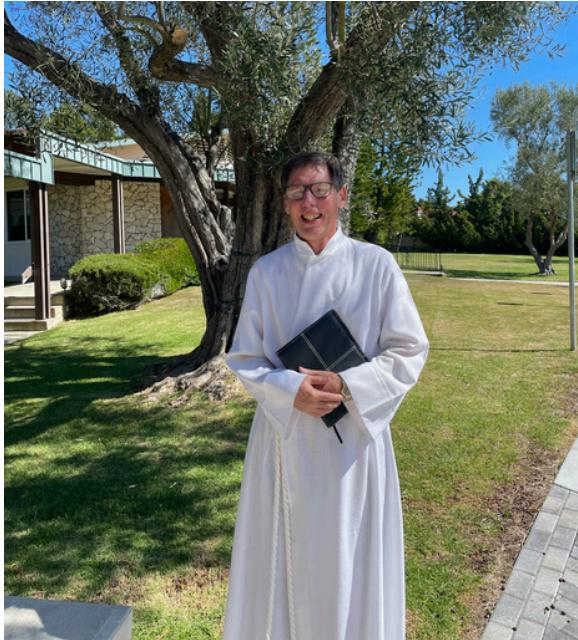


WILLIAM & ELLA



JORDAN

CELEBRATING PASTOR CRAIG



A WORD FROM CHIEF ELDER BILL DAHLGREN

After our Sunday Service on December 15th, we had a wonderful farewell lunch for **Pastor Craig** and his wife **Joyce**. The luncheon was well attended, and people expressed their appreciation for his service to Mt. Olive. The highlight of the event was Pastor and Joyce receiving a plaque honoring them for the 14 years of faithful service to Mt. Olive. President **Ulrike Hokanson** made an appreciative speech, and Chief Elder **Bill Dahlgren** presented them with the plaque. Everyone was pleased to hear how well Pastor Craig and **Pastor Hjulberg** worked together over the transition period. We welcome Pastor Hjulberg as our sole Pastor starting January 1st.



A PRAYER FROM PASTOR HJULBERG

Lord God, heavenly Father, we give thanks for all the blessings You have bestowed on this congregation through the ministry of Your servant Craig. By Your Holy Spirit grant him grace that, by his example of faithful devotion to Your Word, he may continue to be a blessing to many. In Your mercy, support and strengthen him, and grant him a cheerful spirit, peace, and blessedness; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Thank you for your service to Mount Olive, Pastor Craig!



wishing you endless blessings on
your next adventure

happy new year and epiphany greetings!

by pastor hjulberg

January 6th is the Feast of the Epiphany and marks the beginning of the season of Epiphany in the Church. Epiphany comes from the Greek word “epiphaneia,” which means “appearance” or “manifestation.” During this season we celebrate the appearance of Jesus in the world as God and man.

Epiphany is the second oldest celebration in the Church, next to Easter. For centuries it has been described as the Gentile Christmas. This is because Epiphany marks the arrival of the Wise Men from the east — Gentiles (people who aren’t of Jewish descent) who have come to worship the true King. We aren’t told exactly where they came from, but they possibly came from Babylon.

With the arrival of the Wise Men, we are reminded Jesus came to save all people. In Christ you and I are united as one. As Galatians 3:28 says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

We see the arrival of the Wise Men (also called the Magi) in the Gospel according to St. Matthew:

“And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way”

Matthew 2:9-12

These Wise Men followed the Star of Bethlehem to find the Christ Child. The Wise Men had first arrived in Jerusalem looking for Jesus, but when they did not find Him there, they traveled to Bethlehem to seek Him. Now, we are not exactly sure when the Wise Men arrived to see Jesus. It is possible they arrived when Jesus was around two years old, because King Herod, in fear of losing his position as king, killed male infants two years old and younger (Matthew 2:13-16).

Light is a common theme throughout the season of Epiphany, because the Wise Men followed the light of a star to find Jesus, the true light of the world. Christ shines in our darkness, and the darkness has not overcome His light (John 1:5).

happy new year and epiphany greetings!

by pastor hjulberg



With the arrival of the Wise Men to worship Jesus, we learn that Jesus came for all people. We are also taught about humility from the Wise Men. These grown men humbled themselves to worship a child, who they recognized as King. They presented him with kingly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Not only that, but we see how Jesus humbled himself for you and me by His Incarnation, entering the world as a little baby.

The season of Epiphany ends the day before Ash Wednesday, so that means we can celebrate the season of Christmas all the way until March 5 this year.

Blessings,

Pastor Hjulberg

Youth Ministry Newsletter

"The season of Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth and His promised return."



This year we celebrated Advent with midweek Advent Services on Wednesday nights during December. We also had family friendly activities prior to the Advent services. Each week was a different activity including a Hymn sing, Christmas Cookie Decorating, and Christmas Ornament making. Families enjoyed singing together, making beautiful cookies and adorable nativity ornaments. It was a good opportunity to slow down, get together as a church family and focus on the reason for the season. The family friendly activities gave children and families a chance to be a part of our Advent focus. Advent is marked by a sense of quiet reflection and joyful anticipation, centering on God's fulfilled promises in Christ.

Youth Director,

Julie Kartz



**Children and church
members craft before
Advent Service**

Editor's Message



SAVE THE DATE

Movie Night

January 9th at 6 PM

Preschool Board Meeting

January 23rd at 10 AM

Council Meeting

January 23rd at 7 PM



Interested in Participating?

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are provided through individual's \$80 donations, which cover two beautiful arraignments. Sign up anytime in the church entry way!

Coffee Fellowship

Coffee Fellowship is provided through individuals donating food, setting up, and hosting the coffee fellowship after service on Sunday. Sign up to host one Sunday in anytime in the church entry way!

Writing in the Press

If you love to write, are passionate about ministry, or simply have a unique story to share, we want to hear you!

*Contact
mtolive.ecarter@gmail.com
with any questions*

Emma Carter

CALENDAR



JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	30 9:30am ESL Class	31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	6 9:30am ESL Class	7 2pm Zoom Bible Class 7:30pm 祷告会	8 6pm Movie Night	9	10	11
12 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	13 9:30am ESL Class	14 2pm Zoom Bible Class 7:30pm 祷告会	15	16 9:15am Parents Chapel 6:30pm Awana	17	18
19 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	21 2pm Zoom Bible Class 7:30pm 祷告会	22 10am Preschool Board 7pm Council	23 6:30pm Awana	24 7pm Youth Group	25
26 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	27 9:30am ESL Class	28 2pm Zoom Bible Class 7:30pm 祷告会	29 7pm Elders	30 6:30pm Awana	31 Homemade GIFTS MADE EASY	1

Holidays and Observances: 1: New Year's Day, 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Inauguration Day

*For further calendar updates, please visit www.mtoliverpv.com

MOLC WEBSITE

SCAN ME



COUNCIL CONTACTS

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Chief Elder: Bill Dahlgren apache1223@aol.com

Treasurer: Julie Reynolds moejmr@gmail.com

Pastor Craig: Craig Molitoris mtolivepastor@aol.com

Pastor Hjulberg: Avery Hjulberg pastorhjulberg.mtolive@gmail.com

Preschool: Julia Chiang chinlin29@gmail.com

Trustee: Richard Xie rchdx@hotmail.com

Administrative Business Manager: Emma Carter mtolive.ecarter@gmail.com

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MT. OLIVE PRESCHOOL INSTAGRAM: [@mtolivepreschoolrpv](https://www.instagram.com/mtolivepreschoolrpv)