

MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

March 15th 2015

It often takes a step through a door to get to know someone, or even some group. That first step is usually the hardest. It is not possible to figure out “the other” while passing by in a car. This fact pertains to any group. Once entering into Mount Olive Lutheran, there is an ease, comfort, and welcoming presence. As with so many other places of worship in the Christian tradition, the tenets of compassion and love-thy- neighbor surround and embrace.

Within the sanctuary the organ pipes lining the back wall swell with the sounds of praise and worship.

A reading from the New Testament book of the Ephesians tells of the Christian view of God’s Saving Grace through Jesus Christ. “The word of God, the word of Life.”

The pastor reads from the Gospel of John, 3:16, one of the most well-known and quoted verses from the Christian Bible.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

During the following sermon, the pastor urges the congregation not to stop reading there, but to continue to John 3:17.

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

The message of the sermon is that one must take both of these verses to heart. Of course in the Christian tradition the true way is towards Christ, but at the same time a Christian should not condemn those of other traditions and other interpretations. A loving friendship should be extended to all.

This idea of balance in beliefs must ring true for the congregation of Mount Olive since this harmonizing notion was extended to the non-Christian observer present.