



The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

June 2025

HOMILY IN CORINTH, GREECE

The following is the sermon/homily that Pastor Tim presented on Thursday, May 15th, 2025, at the ruins of the ancient seaport of Corinth, Greece, that the Apostle Paul set sail from. This homily is based on First Corinthians 10:14-17.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as we are gathered here in the City of Corinth, we take our place on holy ground — not just because of the ancient biblical stones of the New Testament beneath our feet, but because of the living faith of Jesus Christ that unites us across time and Christian tradition. Here we are in Corinth, where the Apostle Paul once addressed a vibrant yet disordered community of Christians, many of whom were quite affluent and very worldly in their thinking. So, today, we reflect on God's message to Paul's Corinthian congregation in First Corinthians chapter 10, where Paul urges them to flee from idolatry and embrace the unlimited grace and true unity found in Christ alone.

Paul's apostolic words in First Corinthians 10:14-17 echo through the ages to our present time. St. Paul declares, **"My beloved, flee from the worship of idols..."** And then he goes on to proclaim, **"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."**

Right here in ancient Corinth, the early Christians faced a world of cultural pressures and divisions among themselves. Surrounded by pagan temples to false gods, in a city profoundly divided by worldly status and competing allegiances, Paul calls the Corinthian believers in Christ to a higher unity — a far higher unity and strength not of their own making, but of God's grace revealed in Jesus' Cross and Empty Tomb, and freely given through Jesus' Word and Sacrament. This is especially made manifest in the Holy Eucharist (the Lord's Supper), where we are not merely individuals, but

one body, bound together by the faith, hope and love of Christ our Savior, who gave his life for us all. Indeed, this sacred meal, instituted by Jesus Christ himself, is no mere ritual; it is a participation, a sharing, a communion, in the very risen life of Christ our Lord (in his body, blood, soul and divinity). The one bread and one cup bind us not only to Christ but to one another, even across all divides of culture and tradition.

As Christians from different traditions, we may worship in varied ways, but we are bound together by the same Lordship of our same Divine Messiah and King of Kings. As an ecumenical Christian tour group, we bring our unique gifts and perspectives from a variety of branches of the Church of Jesus Christ, and yet we share **"one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all"** as the Word of God states in Ephesians chapter 4.

In Corinth, Paul reminded a fractured community that the Church of Christ is not a place for worldly divisions to define us, but for holy fellowship (*koinonia*) in creed and charity. Paul reminded his Corinthian congregation (and all of us today) that any divisions — whether of loyalties or culture, wealth or status — ought to fade into the background among us and grow dim under the sacrificial shadow of the Cross and the glorious light of the Resurrection. So, let's always be quick to lay aside whatever might divide us and embrace the true unity we have been given in our Lord Jesus, who is the Bread of Life and Light of the World.

Our salvation in Christ transcends our differences. All these stones of ancient Greece we've been seeing remind us that we are living stones, built together by God's grace alone. Consequently, despite our differences, we set aside what divides us and cling to the love of Christ that unites us. So, these ruins of ancient Corinth specifically challenge us to flee the distracting idols of our day and gather around the goodness of our Lord, where we find forgiveness of sins, transcendent unity, and the strength to live as one body, always sharing the good news and

all-surpassing truth of the Universal Messiah crucified and risen for the sake of the world.

May God continue to bless our journey together, and may this Holy Communion today sustain us as we go forth in peace. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit — Amen.



This is a picture taken by Pastor Tim of the ancient seaport in Corinth, Greece. The ruins are the southern portion of the First Century Corinthian port from the time of the Apostle Paul next to later ruins of a church structure built to honor the site's significance in St. Paul's missionary journey.

Pam's Pearls of Prayer

Scripture of the Month: Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

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Thought for the Month

What is Faith? "Faith, in its most basic form, is a belief in something without absolute proof, a trust in something that is not immediately visible or tangible." We have faith in our Lord and look forward to being with Him when we pass from this life to the next. It is our hope for things to come. We are convinced of this by the Holy Spirit, even though we have never actually seen Him but have certainly seen all of the wonders He has given us.

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Prayer for the Month

Father God, our faith has made us strong. We look forward to joining You in Your heavenly kingdom one day. Let us rejoice in what we have here on Earth. Thank You for sending Jesus to show us the way. In His name we pray, amen.

Mt. Olive Preschool Update

Hello!

It is so hard to believe that we are finishing our last full month of our Academic year!!!! We kicked off our month celebrating our biggest supporter MOM! We threw a brunch for our moms with yummy food, a handmade gift, and a song that we learned just for her. It was so nice to make our moms feel special and loved for all that they do for us. The following two weeks we learned all about plant and animal life cycles. We even have our very own caterpillars, Ladybug dome, and Ant farm so that we can watch how they grow and change throughout their life cycle. It has been so fun to watch how God made these creatures to grow in their own special way. We are heading into June in full preparation mode for Graduation!!!! Though we will be sad to see our Butterfly class go off to TK and Kindergarten, we know that there is a lot of special stuff in store for us for the summer and for the next school year.

Blessings

Mrs. Ashley, Mrs. Amanda, Mrs. Robyn,
Ms. Hannah, Mrs. Emily

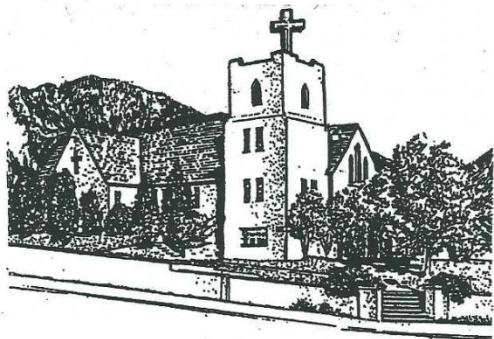
Community Luncheons

Our last community luncheon of the season was on May 14th. We had a delicious potluck of salads and desserts provided by members of the congregation. The Verdugo Hills Women's Chorus provided the entertainment. We had a wonderful time! Come join us in October when we kick off the new community luncheon season.



**FROM: MT. OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD

BIRTHDAYS

5 – Alma Zelaya	18 – Kaye Coats
6 – Joe Cody	21 – Mickey Meeker
6 – John Cody	21 – Jerod Plummer
15 – Todd Meeker	

ANNIVERSARIES

25 – Berni & Larry Hovland	No. 59
28 – Bill & Vi Reardon	No. 67

SOME MEETINGS & EVENTS

6 – Church Council	7:00 pm
8 – Music Ministry Party	TBD
10 – Breakfast Bible Study at Panera	8:30 am
12 – Threads of Hope	9:00 am
29 – Annual Meeting Part 2 (following the service)	

**Baptismal Remembrance at St. Lydia's
Sacred Stream & Baptistry**

Here's the brief meditation Pastor Tim shared for a service of baptismal remembrance at St. Lydia of Thyatira's sacred stream and baptistry near the ancient ruins of Philippi...

"Dear brothers and sisters, when challenges in life shake our confidence and knock us down, please remember that we disciples of Jesus Christ have access to a different kind of confidence. Sealed by God's Baptismal Covenant in Christ, strengthened and kept in true faith by the Word and Sacramental Supper of Christ, we can live under a transcendent confidence and blessed assurance that is born of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God!"

Then, as everyone in turn entered the waters of the small river where Lydia met the Apostle Paul and became the first documented European to be baptized, Pastor Tim traced the sign of the cross on each of their foreheads

three times with the river water, saying the following:

"+ Always remember that you have been baptized into Christ and his Church. + Always remember that you have been marked with the cross of Christ forever. + Always remember that you are a baptized child of God."



**Footsteps of St. Paul Group Picture
in Ephesus, Turkey**




Happy Father's Day!
