



The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

March 2026

GOD'S GRACE & PRESENCE

There are two ways of living: one is the way of resisting Almighty God, and the other is the way of surrendering to God's eternal grace and steadfast love. Resistance to God always brings anxiety and distress, restlessness and hopelessness. Surrender to God's grace, however, brings inner peace and joy, true happiness and hope.

The worldly person is always in a state of resistance and inner conflict. The spiritual person, on the other hand, has given up the struggle through sweet surrender to God. For as St. Augustine famously stated in his autobiographical confessions, *"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."*

Therefore, true religion is about surrender, and a wonderful symbolic representation of this is the California condor. When it steps out off the cliff, it simply stretches wide its wings and floats in the rising air thermals. Likewise, yielding to God's baptismal grace by faith in Christ our Savior, we are thereby freed to no longer flap our spiritual wings to exhaustion. With the uplifting power of God's Holy Spirit freely given us through the Word and Sacraments of Christ, we are free to float weightlessly on God's unlimited atmosphere of grace and renewal.

"Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles [and condors], they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:30-31).

So, very truly, all the weight in our hearts and minds can be tied in some way to our willful and sinful resistance to the free and unlimited grace of God in Jesus Christ. The more you fight God, the lower you fall. The more you yield and surrender to him, the lighter you become and the higher you soar spiritually.

The Season of Lent is all about dying to our sinful rebellion and rising up unto the abundant Life and Light and Love of Christ. For this is what our Lord Jesus Christ meant when he said, *"Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25).*

Consequently, as we move into *Lent* (meaning "length") and the days lengthen toward Springtime, may we ever seek (by God's grace) to give up the fight, surrendering to the forgiveness and renewal of the Lord our God given freely to us in Christ. Moreover, may we also be ever mindful of God's Holy Presence with us and for us in the here and now, realizing that we stand spiritually before the amazing throne of the Eternal God each and every moment of our daily lives.

As the days lengthen and become warmer, may we come to understand more fully that the grass and flowers of the field, the trees and mountains, the rocks and rivers, as well as Christ's Word and Sacraments, are altogether amazing means of God's grace to us and for us. Truly, in/with/through Christ, we stand before the throne of God Most High right now... Right here and now, and forever... So, for this Lenten Season, and for the rest of our God-given life, may we remember our most Wonderful Lord God every single day, who is the ever-present Source of all creation and salvation, in whom *"we live, move and have our being" (Acts 17:28a).*

Blessed Lent to All of You!

Pastor Tim



Pam's Pearls of Prayer

Scripture of the Month: Psalm 51:10-12

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

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Thought for the Month

The words of these verses are very familiar to all of us since during part of the Church Year we sing them. The Season of Lent, when we think about the sacrifice Jesus made to save us, is the perfect time to reflect on these words of Psalm 51. As Jesus cast away the devil, let us cast away negative thoughts and keep our eyes on the cross and the resurrection of our Lord.

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Prayer for the Month

Heavenly Father, help us to cast away all negativity and focus on You and all that You have done for us. Thank You for sending Jesus to take it upon himself to die on the cross for us and rise again to save us. In His name, we pray. Amen.

Mt. Olive Preschool Update

The Month of February has truly flown by. It is hard to believe that we are heading into March! This month was all about celebrating Love for our friends, and Families. We kicked off our month in fairytale stories. We read and created some of our favorites, we created houses out of straw, stick, and bricks like the 3 little pigs, we tried porridge like Goldilocks and the three bears and we read about dragons, and princesses and Fairies. It is always so fun to jump into these imaginative stories. The following week was all about hearts! We made heart art, and made valentines for our mommies and daddies. Then on Friday we had a big party with pizza, and cookies, and we handed out valentines to our friends and put them in their handmade mailboxes. It was so much fun to look at our cards and know that we are loved by all of our friends at Mt. Olive! We weren't ready to stop celebrating, so the following week we celebrated Chinese New Year. We learned about the colors Red and Gold and how they mean Good Luck and Happiness. We learned that 2026 is the year of the horse, made lanterns and dragons, and one of our families treated us all to a Chinese food lunch, it was so yummy! This week we are putting our science goggles on and learning about the science of Color. We got to mix colors together to see what new color they make, we learned about rainbows, and prisms, and did some fun color experiments.

February was so much fun and we cannot wait for a new month of fun and learning that March brings!

Blessings

Mrs. Ashley, Mrs. Amanda, Mrs. Robyn, Mrs Kameny

Community Luncheon

What a wonderful luncheon experience for February! Louanna once again came through with delicious foods. Our entertainment this month was provided by Cindy Bell and her bluegrass band. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their music! We look forward to having them come again. This month's entertainment will be provided by Jane Peterson's son and next month Cindy Bell will return with another group she's in! Please join the fun!!



Cribbage Group

Because of the success of our Fun & Games day at church, several of the participants have formed a cribbage group. They are meeting at the church on the second Saturday of the month at 2:30 pm. If you are interested in learning how to play cribbage (or know how) and want to join in the fun, please do!!



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



TO:

DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

5 – Derek Zelaya	13 – Hal Beesley
8 – Kirk Kurtz	18 – Diana Plummer
8 – Sakura Tagawa	28 – Pastor Tim
10 – Dianne Osburn	28 – Kristen McVaugh
11 – Pastor Ed McGee	

SOME MEETINGS & EVENTS THIS MONTH

4 – Lenten Soup Supper & Service	6:15 pm
9 – Threads of Hope	9:00 am
10 – Church Council	7:00 pm
11 – Community Luncheon	12:00 pm
11 – Lenten Soup Supper & Service	6:15 pm
14 – Cribbage Group	2:30 pm
15 – Food Donation Sunday	9:30 am
18 – Lenten Soup Supper & Service	6:15 pm
21 – Breakfast Bible Study at Panera	8:30 am
21 – Descanso Gardens	1:00 pm
25 – Lenten Soup Supper & Service	6:15 pm

Hilary's Book Review

Our family is a Disney family, no doubt about it, and Disney princesses are a favorite of mine since my youth. So, when Tim gave me a book written by Jodi Benson (the voice of Ariel from *The Little Mermaid*) for Christmas last year, I was excited to dig in and read it.

The book is *Part of My World* and it's Jodi Benson's story of her ups and downs while trying to break into the entertainment world. She shows us the very real person behind the VERY unforgettable voice.

Her story is one of faith, friendship, love, loss, mistakes and taking chances. Jodi writes of keeping her faith front and center while going through some difficult times throughout her life, personally and professionally. As she writes, "God knew exactly what He was doing when He started me on this extraordinary journey. I just had to trust Him and follow His lead."

I really enjoyed this book and I highly recommend it!

Hilary

Impact of Fair Trade Coffee for Haiti

"Drinking fair trade Haitian coffee as a congregation is an act of social justice. With your morning cup of coffee, you are supporting fair wages for coffee farmers living in rural Haiti, a place experiencing great famine and political unrest. Each bag of coffee also plants trees to fight deforestation, bringing new life to the country of Haiti. Through your purchases, you are supporting Impactful Market's mission to alleviate poverty through job creation, education, and empowerment."

- Elisha Chan, Founder, Impactful Market

Descanso Gardens Fellowship Outing

SAVE THE DATE: March 21st

The fellowship committee has planned an outing to Descanso Gardens for March 21st. If you want to ride share please meet at the church at 12:30 pm or you can meet us at the gardens at 1:00 pm. Please join us as we tour the beauty of God's creation!

