



# The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

May 2026

## THE DIVINE FIRE

In every Lutheran Church sanctuary there's a special lamp (often with a red glass shell) that burns steadily in the chancel area near the altar. This lamp is known primarily as the "Sanctuary Lamp" (also known as the "Eternal Flame") and it's a quiet but powerful symbolic witness. Far from mere decoration, this lamp carries deep biblical roots and rich spiritual meaning for us today — especially as we prepare to celebrate Pentecost Sunday.

The Sanctuary Lamp is no modern invention; its origins reach back to the very commands God gave in the Old Testament. In Exodus 27:20–21, the Lord instructed Moses: *"You shall further command the Israelites to bring you pure oil of beaten olives for the light, so that a lamp may be set up to burn continually... Aaron and his sons shall tend it... It shall be a perpetual ordinance to be observed throughout their generations by the Israelites."*

This perpetual lamp stood in the Wilderness Tabernacle and later in the Jerusalem Temple. It burned as a visible sign of the Lord's abiding presence. In Jewish tradition, this lamp is called the "Ner Tamid" (meaning Eternal Light) and is still found today in synagogues near the ark that holds the Torah scrolls. It proclaims that the Holy One, the Maker of the Universe, is forever present and will honor his covenant promises.

From the beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ, Christians carried this ancient biblical symbol into the worship life of the Church. In Lutheran congregations, the Sanctuary Lamp burns in the chancel area near the altar to emphasize the real and true presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar (a.k.a. Holy Communion). Therefore, in addition to declaring the steady presence of God's Holy Spirit, this special lamp also quietly testifies to the real presence of Christ in, with and through his Holy Supper given and poured out for us.

Consequently, Lutheran sanctuaries have long cherished this symbol as part of our "catholic" (meaning universal) Christian Faith. The red glass of the lamp often evokes biblical images of God's Eternal Fire manifested to Abraham as a mystical firepot and flaming torch, and manifested to Moses as a burning bush that was not consumed. And for all those J.R.R. Tolkien fans, it brings

to mind Tolkien's fantasy writings in which he references God's "Flame Imperishable" that refers to the primordial Divine Fire of God Almighty at the center of creation — at the center of all that is, both seen and unseen. Moreover, the red glass and glow of the Sanctuary Lamp remind us of the Fire of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As we approach Pentecost Sunday in this Year of Our Lord 2026, the Sanctuary Lamp highlights rich meaning for us. On that first Pentecost over two thousand years ago, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples "with a sound like a mighty rushing wind" and appeared as "tongues of fire" that rested on each of them (Acts 2:2–3). This is the birthday of the Church of Jesus Christ! What began in the Wilderness Tabernacle and Jerusalem Temple has now burst forth as the Living Fire of the Holy Spirit poured out on all baptized believers in Christ!

So, the Sanctuary Lamp burning beautifully in our Mt. Olive sanctuary illustrates this Pentecostal reality. For indeed, the Holy Spirit sent by the Risen Christ now dwells perpetually in his Holy Universal Church. He enlightens our minds with his Holy Scriptures, kindles true faith within our hearts by his grace, and empowers us with his Holy Gospel to let our light shine in his name. The red glow of the Sanctuary Lamp invites us to remember that the same Holy Spirit who set the Apostles ablaze at Pentecost still burns brightly among us, within us, and through us, comforting the sorrowful, strengthening the weak, and uniting us as One Body in Christ.

On Pentecost Sunday, when we hear again those ancient events of wind and fire, I invite you to be sure to direct your gaze toward the Sanctuary Lamp during worship that Sunday morning. See in its steady flame the promise that God's presence is not seasonal or occasional — it is eternal. The lamplight that shone in the Tabernacle, that filled the Temple, and that shines near the altar of Christian congregations throughout the world, signifies the Living Light that shines in every baptized believer through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

May you always let the Sanctuary Lamp remind you of the long history of salvation, giving thanks that the God who commanded the lamp to first burn in the Wilderness Tabernacle is the same Lord and Savior who says to us

today, ***“I am with you always, to the end of the age”*** (Matthew 28:20). May the Sanctuary Lamp continually stir in us a deeper awareness of Christ’s presence, especially in his Holy Word and Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and may the Holy Spirit strengthen and keep our hearts burning within us with the faith, hope and love of Jesus Christ until he returns in glory.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love!

Together in Christ, Pastor Tim

## Pam’s Pearls of Prayer

### Scripture of the Month: 2 Timothy 1:9

*9[God] who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, and this grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...*

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### Thought for the Month

We are well into spring! As the beauty of nature surrounds us, we look forward with hope. This verse reminds us that our hope is in Jesus and it is through God’s grace that we have that hope. It’s not something we’ve earned by anything that we have done, but a gift from our Lord. Let’s show Him that we are grateful for His undeserved grace for us.

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### Prayer for the Month

Father, we thank you for the sacrifice Jesus made for us. We realize that by your grace we are saved through Him. Help us to be guided in Your true path and follow in His footsteps. We ask this all in Christ’s name. Amen.

## Mt. Olive Preschool Update

Happy Spring!

April has been a beautiful start to Spring. We kicked off our month welcoming 3 new students. And celebrating Easter. We had our annual Easter egg hunt. The kids had so much fun hunting for Easter eggs, getting their face painted and applying fun Easter temporary tattoos. It was a great kick off to the celebration of Jesus and all he did so that we can be with him in Heaven someday. The following week we learned about the season of Spring. How this is the time of new growth in both flowers and in baby animals. And that all the rain that is fun to splash in is also to help all of the new flowers grow. After we learned about spring we learned all about bugs and insects and made cool bugs like grasshoppers, ladybugs, butterflys and fireflies. Then we celebrated Earth week. We collected recycled goods and made all

kinds of art projects using newspaper, cardboard, glass jars and more! It felt good to make beautiful art and take care of our Earth The last week we are getting into our Garden for Garden week! We cant wait to watch our Garden grow.

Looking forward to more Spring Fun next month and to celebrate our teachers for Teacher Appreciation week, they have worked so hard and its always so fun to thank them for all that they do

Blessings

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

## Community Luncheon

Our April luncheon was another huge success. We were regaled with music from the ensemble group Sugar in the Gourd, which included our own Cindy Bell. We look forward to our final community luncheon of the season on May 13<sup>th</sup> with the entertainment once again provided by P3 Theatre Company.



## Easter Sunday!!!

Our Easter Sunday this year was highlighted with musical contributions from the Clarion Choir, Bells of Joy, Crossroads, and the amazing Cross Street Kids! Following the service was the annual Easter breakfast and the Easter egg hunt. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



**FROM: MT. OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
3561 FOOTHILL BLVD.  
LA CRESCENTA, CA 91214**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**TO:**

**DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD**

**BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH**

5 – Justin Tagawa      28 – Rebecca Pinchbeck  
7 – Larry DeBoer      29 – Matthew Ness  
7 – Jennifer Kubela

**ANNIVERSARIES THIS MONTH**

Pastor Tim & Hilary Singleton      No. 33  
Wendy & Kevin Fragosa      No. 13

**SOME MEETINGS & EVENTS THIS MONTH**

1-3 – Via de Cristo Weekend  
9 – Spring Luncheon & Silent Auction      12:00 pm  
11 – Threads of Hope      9:00 am  
12 – Church Council      7:00 pm  
13 – Community Luncheon      12:00 pm  
16 – Breakfast Bible Study at Panera      8:30 am  
17 – Food Donation Sunday      9:30 am  
24 – Pentecost Sunday      9:30 am  
29-30 – Synod Assembly  
31 – Holy Trinity Sunday      9:30 am

**Spring Luncheon & Silent Auction**

This year's Spring Luncheon & Silent Auction will be held on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 pm. All are welcome to attend. Tickets are on sale following the worship service each Sunday. Cost is \$15 per person.

There's still time to bring your slightly used treasures. Please bring them in by Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please, no clothing.

This year's auction proceeds will go toward the mural installation and continuing traffic safety education for our community. The mural will be placed at the corner of Foothill Blvd. and Oro Vista Ave. in Sunland.



**A Godly Mother Is a Treasure**

A Godly Mother is a treasure –  
A gift more precious than gold...  
Her children rise up, and call her blessed,  
And in high esteem do hold.  
Her love is like that of our Savior  
Who sacrificed His own life...  
That we might live joyful, Godly lives  
In a troubled world of strife.  
Her heart is like His, holding us close  
No matter how far we roam,  
And her arms are always open wide...  
To forgive and welcome home.  
Her hands are busy molding our lives  
From the moment we are born...  
Planting seeds, loving, disciplining,  
Even when weary and worn.  
Her feet are always careful to go  
Where her child can follow there...  
How could we thank our Mother enough  
For her tender loving care?  
A Godly Mother fervently prays  
For that child she loves so much,  
For she knows the fruit of her vineyard...  
Depends on the Master's touch.

**-- Connie Campbell Bratcher**

