



# The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

July/August 2026

## NATIONAL MATURITY

The Apostle Paul states in First Corinthians 13:11, *“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.”* So, as we are in this extra-special summer of the 250th Anniversary of our United States of America, I find myself thinking of this Bible verse in relation to where we are at in the overall life cycle of our exceptional democratic republic. For I am convinced that the basic process of maturation also applies to entire nations, not just to individual persons.

Generally speaking, when we were little children, we viewed our parents through an almost entirely positive lens. They could do nothing wrong in our eyes. Later, when we became adolescents and young adults, we tended to view our parents through an almost entirely negative lens. They could do virtually nothing right in our teenage and young adult eyes. And periodically during adolescence, teenagers will slip in and out of a childlike orientation toward their parents as they grow. However, if we had a loving and faithful set of parents, we then matured to realize in our full adulthood (usually around 25-30 years of age) that our parents are basically good and decent people (despite their various imperfections), and that they actually know a thing or two regarding the most important matters of life.

In a similar way, our United States of America has been in its adolescent phase of development for decades now as our national life has been marked by a great deal of adolescent-like angst about our national history, heritage and identity. So, while some Americans maintain a childish view of the USA as virtually doing no wrong in the world, there are many Americans who view the USA through an almost entirely negative adolescent lens.

Of course, the truth is that there’s no such thing as a perfect nation. All nations have negative aspects to their histories and present realities. Yes, our United States of America is not perfect, but our history and heritage are not a horrible travesty either. As my longtime colleague and friend, Pastor Jeff Spencer, recently wrote: “There is much to lament in American history, to be sure, but there is so much more to be grateful for.”

I would argue that the USA has been (by far) and continues to be (by far) a great blessing within our world. Therefore, it is indeed right and salutary that we should have a healthy sense of patriotism for everything that is good and laudable about our national founding, history, heritage and identity. While acknowledging the bad historical aspects, and learning lessons from these without falling into a kind of national self-loathing, we can make sure to uplift and give thanks for the great many good aspects of our nation. Moreover, it’s these numerous good aspects of our nation that our national symbols point toward and represent, particularly the US Flag. So, as we celebrate a quarter millennium of nationhood, I believe it is important to be mindful of the fact that our national inheritance is truly a great good overall — although we have at times failed to live up to our highest ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Federalist Papers.

I call this perspective a *mature patriotism*, and it is my hope and prayer that our country is heading out of our time of national adolescence into a time of national maturity concerning our founding, history, heritage and identity. While the far right and the far left of our sociopolitical spectrum both continue to agitate for a national culture of envy, victimhood and grievance that’s based upon false histories and conspiracies, I pray for a spirit of national wisdom and maturity to win the day.

***“The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD...”*** – (Psalm 33:11-12a)

Happy Birthday America!  
God bless the USA!  
All glory be to the Lord God Almighty!

Grace & Peace,  
*Pastor Tim*



## Pam's Pearls of Prayer

### Scripture of the Month: Psalm 113:3

*"From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
the name of the LORD is to be praised."*

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### Thought for the Month

Summer is here! It's a time to relax and enjoy the wonders that God has given us. We tend to take so many of these things for granted. Let's remember that everything is a gift from God and it is through His grace that we are able to enjoy them. Praise God!

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### Prayer for the Month

Heavenly Father, we ask You to watch over us as we enjoy Your Kingdom on Earth. Be with those who travel on vacations, whether by car, bus, train or plane. As the Scripture says, let us praise Your name from the rising of the sun to its setting. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Mt. Olive Preschool Update

Summer is Finally Here!!!

We love the month of June because we get to celebrate all month! The first week of June we celebrated all of our students at Mt. Olive Preschool with a Promotion party and Graduation. All of our families came and we each got a Moving up certificate or a Graduation diploma! After we received our certificates we performed a song for our parents. Each class performed their own song, it was so sweet to celebrate each major milestone these kids had this year. It was a year of growth and fun, and we are so glad we got to be a part of it. Although it is hard to say goodbye to some of our friends at the end of the summer we know they are going to accomplish BIG things in Elementary and beyond! Following our celebration, Preschool was closed for a week so that the teachers could plan and reset their classrooms for the Summer and students got to spend some special time with their families to kick off summer. When we came back to school we jumped into Fathers Day week, we spent the week making homemade cards, filling out questionnaires about Dad and put together a special gift for Dad. It was fun to celebrate the person who works so hard for our Family. The last week of June is dedicated to author and illustrator Eric Carle. To celebrate his birthday we spend the week creating art inspired by his illustrations and we read all of his fun books. Maybe we will have some future authors and illustrators from our school!

We know that next month is going to be even more summer fun and we can't wait!!!

Blessings

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

## Day After Day

P3 Theatre Company performed "Day After Day" at Mt. Olive on Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. This musical is a charming and family friendly musical that tells the dramatic personal life story of Doris Day through her music. All who attended truly enjoyed it. P3 Theatre Company is planning a Christmas offering at Mt. Olive in December!



## Annual Meeting & Potluck

Our annual meeting, part 2, was held on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup> following the worship service. We had a wonderful potluck prior to the meeting and enjoyed the delicious food provided by our congregation members. The council members who were up for reelection ran unopposed. We closed with the Lord's Prayer in contemporary English. Our next annual meeting will be in January 2027.



