



The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

September 2026

A BALANCED BIBLICAL OUTLOOK

Of all the things a pastor does, chief among these things is a pastor's calling to be a faithful teacher of the Holy Scriptures in their parish community. Consequently, with all the Bible quoting going on these days concerning the current issue of global mass migration, I would be remiss in my pastoral calling and obligations if I did not offer a balanced biblical instruction about this issue. There's a lot of Bible cherry picking, self-righteous virtue signaling, guilting and shaming going on concerning this issue right now. Also, this global mass migration issue is especially important as we observe the 25th Anniversary of September 11th this year.

In any ethical discussion, Lutheran theology always asks first and foremost, "What does God's Word within the Holy Scriptures tell us?" So, what does the Word of God say about things such as national boundaries and sovereignty, rule of law and law enforcement, hospitality to strangers and charitable service to those in need?

Acts 17:26–27 states that God "made from one blood every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the Earth, having determined the times set for them and the boundaries of their dwelling places." Deuteronomy 32:8 and Genesis 10–11 present the distinctions and boundaries of nations as deliberate God-ordained acts of divine providence. In other words, the beautiful tapestry of nations and ethnicities is not accidental but on purpose. It is divinely ordered according to God's creative and redeeming will.

Therefore, there is nothing wrong or immoral with modern ethno-states (for example: Japan, Norway, Israel, Korea, Armenia, etcetera) who seek to maintain a majority ethnic population for their nations. On the other hand, there are exceptional nation-states that are intentionally multi-ethnic "melting pot" countries in which both naturalized immigrants and native-born citizens assimilate and grow together to form a unique and united national culture. Our own United States of America is the preeminent example of a "melting pot" nation-state in which our "one nation under God" (from *The Pledge of Allegiance*) is indivisibly molded and formed according to our founding documents and

principles rooted in the worldview and traditions of Western Judeo-Christian Civilization.

Romans 13:1–7 and 1 Peter 2:13–14 describe civil rulers as God-ordained agents of maintaining law and order for the sake and wellbeing of their citizenry. So, any governing authority's primary duty is to its citizens. In addition, 1 Timothy 5:8 treats failure to provide for one's own household as a denial of the faith. Consequently, in a similar way, the nation-state functions as an extended household that maintains preferential care for its citizenry. This ordering of care is not un-Christian; it is the biblical structure of "ordered love" (*ordo amoris*). Basically, biblical ordered love and justice do not require a nation to allow mass migration at the expense of other duties, responsibilities and concerns.

It is true that the Bible clearly and repeatedly commands hospitality to the *Ger* which is the Hebrew word for "resident alien" or "sojourner" (see Leviticus 19:33–34, Deuteronomy 10:18–19, Exodus 22:21). Yet, the *ger* was expected to live under Israel's law (Leviticus 24:22 and Numbers 15:15–16), observe the Sabbath, and they could not automatically claim full citizenship rights and equal political power or supplant the covenantal identity of Israel. Therefore, the biblical virtue of hospitality was never a blank check for allowing overwhelming mass entry. Israel controlled its borders and required assimilation to its national laws and culture.

It's also important to note that the New Testament does not reverse this Old Testament pattern for the governing authorities of a nation-state. Moreover, according to the New Testament, the Church of Jesus Christ is a global and multi-ethnic spiritual body that prays and advocates for peaceful international relations, but the Church is not a political body dedicated to eliminating borders and erasing national distinctions. Interestingly, the famous John Lennon song, *Imagine*, has become a kind of globalist anthem over the past 50+ years, uplifting the 'dream' of a world without borders. However, biblically speaking, the content of this song cannot be considered to have any kind of spiritual or ethical weight for faithful Christian believers. This catchy but unbiblical song is simply not the creedal manifesto that some modern Christians have made it into. *(continues next page)*

Of course, our Lord Jesus did say, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35), and his *Parable of the Good Samaritan* addresses personal and ecclesiastical responsibility toward neighbors in need. But individual charity and communal charity do not constitute a divine command for governments to blindly follow, because any dutiful governing authority must weigh issues of scale, speed, legality, compatibility, and long-term effects on the common good. These are governing considerations that private charity does not face in the same way.

Moreover, mass migration also creates space (unholy space) for human trafficking and the exploitation of both migrants and citizens alike. So, the desire for legal boundaries, secure borders, well-ordered migration with rational limits, a process of assimilation, and a genuine refugee prioritization within capacity, is not an un-Christian desire. It is consistent with both compassion and the God-given duty of a nation-state to its citizens. For example, the Prophet Nehemiah's rebuilding of the battlements of Jerusalem is a prime biblical illustration of the good and moral responsibility of a government to its citizens before all other responsibilities.

Lastly, it is very important to say that the Holy Bible nowhere justifies indifference to refugees fleeing genuine persecution. The same biblical texts that uphold borders also forbid oppressing the resident alien who is lawfully present. All nations may (and should) receive true refugees and lawful immigrants who can be absorbed without destroying the rule of law and social trust. So, the biblical witness regarding the present issue of mass migration is a clear witness against mass scale and speed that destabilizes a host nation. The biblical witness is clearly against the elevation of global mobility over and above the rights and duties of citizenship, and it's against treating borders as morally illegitimate. However, it is also clearly not a rejection of all migration or of mercy toward the sojourning stranger who comes with well-meaning intentions and under lawful terms.

My sincere prayer is that this balanced biblical instruction will be useful and helpful to you during these bewildering times we are living through.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Tim

Annual Coin Offering Total

Each year we collect a coin offering for ELCA World Hunger Ministry. This year we raised \$367! Congratulations Mt. Olive!



Pam's Pearls of Prayer

Scripture of the Month: Romans 8:38-39

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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Thought for the Month

What a powerful message! This shows that nothing around us can keep us away from God's love. We must remember that even in times of trial, His love for us is always there, something we can rely on. We must strive to respond to this with our love and devotion to Him, keeping His commandments and walking in His ways.

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Prayer for the Month

Heavenly Father, thank You that nothing in all creation can ever separate us from Your great love. When life brings fear, pain, or doubt, remind our hearts that we are safe and held secure in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mt. Olive Preschool Update

Summer has officially come to a close and we have kicked off our brand new year at Mt. Olive Preschool! The last couple weeks of summer was spent learning about the beach, and sea animals we played in lots of fun water tables. Did a ton of hands on art. And ended our summer making Lemonade, blowing bubbles, and splashing in our mud and water tables. It was so much fun! in the midst of the fun we had to say some good byes. We sent our butterfly class off into TK and Kindergarten. They were ready to spread their wings and we know they will soar with flying colors in their next school journeys

We cannot wait for this new year! We are excited to make new friends, play fun games and to dive deeper into learning. Please help us say Goodbye Summer and Hello New School Year!

Blessings

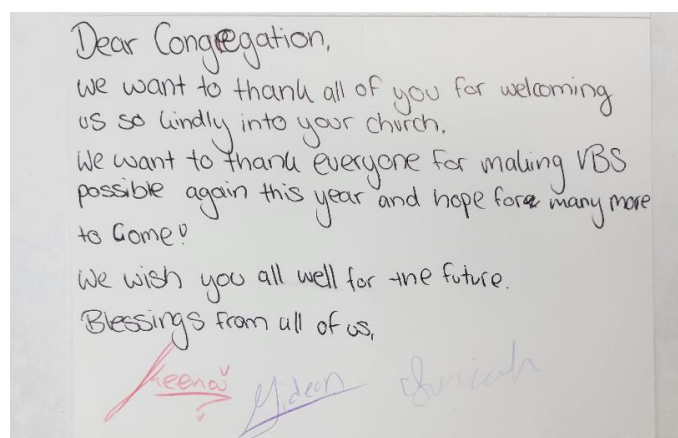
Mrs. Ashley, Mrs. Amanda, Mrs. Robyn, Mrs. Emily

From Brother Martin

"This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified." – Martin Luther

2026 VBS at Mt. Olive

We had another successful week of vacation Bible school at Mt. Olive, August 3-7. Our counselors (Gideon, Sheena, Suriah) were great and the children had a wonderful time!



Tanzania Mission Trip Presentation

Mark your calendar!!! On Sunday, September 6th, 12:00 pm, Pastor Jeff & Judy Blain will provide us with slides from their Tanzanian mission trip. Judy is Bill and Vi Reardon's daughter and Pastor Jeff is their son-in-law. Food and refreshments will be provided!



Clarion Choir

Clarion Choir will resume practicing on Thursday, September 17th at 7:30 pm. We are always looking for new voices. Please join us in making a joyful noise to the Lord! If you have any questions, contact Sean Paxton. We'd love you to join us!



Calling All Bell Ringers!

The Bells of Joy will begin practicing on Sunday, September 13th following the service. We are looking to increase our numbers. If you can count to six and love music, this group is for you. Please contact Angela Zelaya if you are interested. It's a lot of fun!



Annual Church Picnic

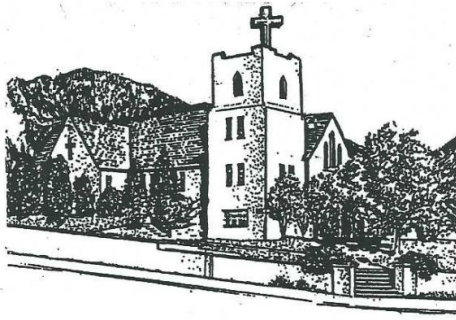
SAVE THE DATE: September 27, 2026

Our annual church picnic is coming up on Sunday, September 27th at noon. Joining us will be the Korean Presbyterian Church, as well as our Mt. Olive Preschool. Games will be provided for the children and the young at heart! Hope to see you there!



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD

BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH

4 – Bill Reardon 9 – Cindy Bitz
5 – Dona Thanstrom 19 – Heather Pinchbeck

ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH

3 – Mickey & Don Meeker No. 66
26 – Kenny & Louanna Kurtz No. 45
30 – Joel & Karla Ness No. 10

MEETINGS & EVENTS FOR THE MONTH

6 – Tanzania Mission Presentation 12:00 pm
8 – Church Council 7:00 pm
12 – Breakfast Bible Study at Panera 8:30 am
14 – Threads of Hope 9:00 am
20 – Food Donation Sunday 9:30 am
26 – P3 Theatre Company “MGM in Concert” 1:00 pm
27 – Church Picnic! 12:00 pm

Congratulations Arlene!!!



Happy 90th Birthday!!!



Here is a simple poem written from the viewpoint of a little girl trying to understand the day of 9/11/2001...

The sky was blue and wide and clean,
The nicest morning I'd ever seen.
Mom turned the box with the glowing light,
And her face went gray and stark and white.

She pulled me close and held me tight,
And whispered things that weren't quite right—
'Bout giant towers touching the air,
And big black smoke that shouldn't be there.

I didn't know what a plane could do,
Or why the adults were crying, too.
I just knew the hug was extra strong,
And Mom was scared the whole day long.

Now years have passed and I am tall,
I read the names upon the wall.
I know the world changed on that day,
When childhood smoke just blew away.