

The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

November 2026

DIVINE THANKSGIVING

As November arrives and our thoughts turn toward Thanksgiving dinner tables on our national day of gratitude, it is fitting to remember that the Christian Church is a community of thankfulness. In fact, in Martin Luther's 1539 treatise *On the Councils and the Church*, he uplifts the "seven marks" by which Christians can recognize the Church of Jesus Christ, and he highlights God's graciousness and our thankfulness as central to the identity and life of the Church.

Rather than obsessing over numerical growth, impressive programs, cultural relevance, or beautiful buildings, Martin Luther's seven marks of the Church identify the places where Christ himself is graciously present and active for the salvation of sinners through his good gifts. So, the Church exists whenever and wherever the pure Gospel of Christ is proclaimed and the Sacraments of Christ are rightly administered. Therefore, the Church of Jesus Christ is defined by the following seven marks of the Church…

[1] Proclamation of the Word of God
(both Law and Gospel)
[2] Administration of Holy Baptism
[3] Administration of Holy Communion
[4] Confession of Sins and Absolution
[5] The Office of Ordained Ministry
[6] Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving
[7] Bearing the Cross of Christ

Notice that the sixth mark of the Church explicitly includes giving thanks. The Sunday Divine Worship Service is not an optional religious activity; it is the very place where all seven marks converge together for us every week in a spirit of thanksgiving. At weekly worship on the Lord's Day, the Word (both Law and Gospel) is preached, the Sacraments of Christ are given, confession of sins is spoken and absolution declared, duly ordained pastors rightly administer Holy Communion, and the people of God thankfully respond in prayer and praise. Liturgy is theology in action, therefore. When we gather, we are not primarily offering something to God; we are receiving from him. And the natural, Spirit-wrought response to those gifts is a grateful and thankful heart.

Certainly, a general cultural gratitude can be found almost anywhere in America. People of many faiths (and none) can feel thankful for harvest, family, health, and our shared Constitutional freedoms as citizens of the United States of America. But Christian thanksgiving is deeper, for it flows from our sins forgiven in, with and through Jesus Christ our Savior. Therefore, the greatest thanksgiving meal is not the one on the last Thursday in November each year; rather, it's the Holy Communion Meal, the *Eucharist* (literally meaning "thanksgiving"). Every single Sunday of the year, the Church of Jesus Christ already celebrates a Divine Thanksgiving. We come empty-handed, confess our sins, hear God's forgiveness declared, receive the Word, then eat and drink the mystical presence of the crucified and risen Messiah. Then, and only then, do we go forth to serve our neighbors with the concrete acts of love that flow from a set-free and grateful heart.

Even the seventh mark — Bearing the Cross — belongs to this Divine Thanksgiving. The Church is recognized not by worldly prowess and earthly standards of success but by the willingness to suffer for the sake of the world by taking up the Cross of the Truth of Jesus Christ. Yet because we possess the Gospel of our salvation, we can also (by God's grace) give thanks even in the midst of the many hardships of truly bearing the Cross of Christ within this fallen and sinful world. For Philippians 2:5-8 states: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be wielded, but emptied himself… and he became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross." And Colossians 2:6-7 states: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

This November, as we prepare for Thanksgiving Day on November 26th, let us give special attention to Luther's sixth and seventh marks of the Church. So, come to the Divine Worship Service, receive God's good gifts that make true gratitude possible, and then carry that thanksgiving out into your daily lives and vocations. The Church is not hard to find when we know what to look for: the people of God gathered together in Divine

Thanksgiving and sent out to bear the Cross of Christ in their lives by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Together in Christ, Pastor Tim

Pam's Pearls of Prayer

Scripture of the Month: Colossians 3:16-17

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

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Thought for the Month

In this verse, Paul is encouraging the Colossians to let gratitude shape every aspect of their lives, including worship and service. So too, we must rest in gratitude for all that our Lord has done for us, even in the hard times.

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Prayer for the Month

Heavenly Father, although we don't always show it, we are grateful for all that You have done for us. Help us to remember, especially when we struggle with difficulties, how we can always rely on You to see us through. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

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Mt. Olive Preschool Update

Happy Halloween!

It is crazy that we are int he last two months of the year. October flew by because of all of the fun we have had. We learned about pumpkins, how they grow, the parts of the pumpkin, and even baked our very own pumpkin muffins together. Preschool hosted our Pumpkin Patch, Trader Joes in Montrose was kind enough to donate enough small pumpkins for each student at our school. We set them out in the yard and the kids got to pick their pumpkin and then paint it and add stickers. It was a great kickoff to our month. The following week we learned about Nocturnal Animals, there are so many animals that stay awake at night and they all have important jobs and have cool ways of seeing in the dark. The last two weeks we spent making cute Halloween crafts, Reading fun Halloween stories, and getting ready for our Halloween party where parents get to join us and we play fun Halloween games and do a craft and get temporary tattoos with our family! It is such a fun month and a great jump into our Holiday season!

This month we were lucky to bring on our new Teachers Aide, Serenity! IT has been fun getting to know her and watching her work alongside all of our students. She is a great addition to our preschool Family!

Blessings,
Mrs. Ashley, Mrs. Amanda, Mrs. Robyn, Mrs. Emily, and Ms. Serenity

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Community Luncheons



Our community luncheons are back! First luncheon is Wednesday, November 11th at 12 noon. Great food will be provided by Louanna Kurtz, inspiring devotional by Pastor Tim, and nostalgic music provided by *db Duo*. Please come and join us!!

Threads of Hope Quilts

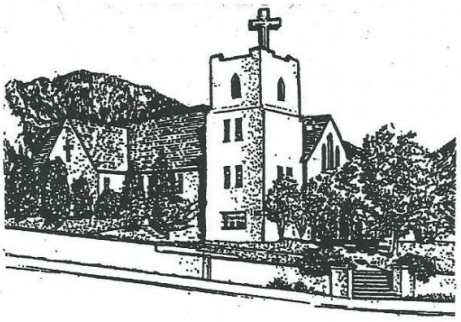
Our Threads of Hope have been busy this year. The quilts they made were displayed at church on October 19th. They were then packed up and taken to Lutheran World Relief. Beautiful job, ladies!!



Happy Thanksgiving!!!

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD

BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH

5– Ethan Aluzri	17 – Keith Cody
15 – Alec Puttler	20 – Christopher Turner
15 – Drew Puttler	21 – Amelia Zelaya
16 – Joel Ness	22 – Jan Cody

MEETINGS & EVENTS FOR THE MONTH

9 – Threads of Hope	9:00 am
10 – Church Council	7:00 pm
11 – Community Luncheon	12:00 pm
15 – Food Donation Sunday	9:30 am
18 – Worship & Music Committee	7:30pm
21 – Breakfast Bible Study at Panera	8:30 am
24 – Christ the King Sunday with VRIM	10:30 am
24 – Advent & Christmas Decorating	6:30 pm
25 – Thanksgiving Eve & Pie Social at LCIF	7:00 pm

Trunk or Treat

Thanks to all who participated in our annual Trunk or Treat. A fun time was had by all!









Grateful in Christ

IN CHRIST we are…

TOO BLESSED
to be distressed,

TOO GRATEFUL
to be hateful,

TOO ANOINTED
to be disappointed.

