



The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

November 2024

STEWARDSHIP & THE MIRACLE-MAKER

In chapter 12 of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus addressed the subject of temple offerings. The following is from Mark 12:41-43...

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury."

Of course, Jesus is not saying that we should give to the work of God's Kingdom to the point of financial hardship. Rather, he is saying that those who give out of their abundant wealth are not giving as much as those with far less wealth who give a lesser amount. In other words, Jesus is simply praising the generous spirit of the poor widow over and against the less generous spirit of the rich elite of Jerusalem.

While Jesus is not advocating for our impoverishment in Mark 12, he is certainly advocating for us to be as generous as possible (without material injury to ourselves) for the work of the ministry of God's Kingdom for all people. Because of God's unlimited grace for us in Christ Jesus our Lord, we are free to joyfully and cheerfully give whatever it is that we have pledged to the mission and ministry of our "temple" congregation, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church. For that's what it says in Second Corinthians 9:7, where it says, "Each of you must give as you have made up your own mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

ALL that we have and ALL that we are (absolutely everything) comes from God and belongs to God. From the Christian perspective, we are not owners but only stewards of all that the Creator gives to us — our lives, families, possessions, labor, income and talents. Therefore, everything that we have and everything that we are is to serve the glory of God for the sake of the world.

So, it's not that we give a certain percentage to the work of God, and the rest is ours. No, it's that 100% belongs to God, and we are to be good stewards of his 100%, including our offerings to our congregation. It is all from God anyway, and so it's all in service of God's Kingdom here in our earthly lives as a sweet foretaste of our heavenly lives to come. In other words, stewardship is everything we do after we say we believe. And stewardship is also the first things that we do. It's the first-fruits of our lives; the first-fruits of everything.

"First-fruits" means that we dedicate a certain amount of our time, talents and income to the work of God first thing — right off the top. For example, our Sunday worship service is the first-fruits of our time each week, which is the morning of the very first day of the week. For another example, the Lord's Prayer prayed each morning as we're still sitting on the side of our bed (first thing) is a powerful first-fruits practice. And of course, cheerfully giving a pledged amount of our income every pay period (first thing, right off the top) is a fundamental first-fruits spiritual discipline.

Giving a set pledged amount to the work of God within our community of faith first thing off the top — rather than the last thing from the bottom dregs — is an act of worship that is multiplied by the offerings of others. As our Lord Jesus miraculously multiplied the loaves and fishes, we need to remember that it's not for us to perform the miracle but it's only for us to offer the five loaves and two fish. From everlasting to everlasting, the Lord God Almighty is the Miracle-Maker and the Source of all that is, both seen and unseen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, eternal world without end! Amen!

Together in Christ, *Pastor Tim*



Pam's Pearls of Prayer

Scripture of the Month: Psalm 100:4

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name”

Thought for the Month

Although each month of the year should be a celebration of thanksgiving for all that our Lord has done for us, we look to November as our month of giving thanks to God for His bountiful blessings. As we enter the holiday season, we are reminded of all that we should be grateful for. Let us turn our attention to God and praise His Holy Name!

Prayer for the Month

Lord, thank you for all that You have done for us. Forgive us for taking so much for granted. We ask for Your continued blessing on us and on all of Your creation. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Mt. Olive Preschool Update

Happy Fall!

We are so excited for our new season as it represents the beauty of change. And our students are learning and growing by the day! This month has been full of learning new routines, meeting new friends and having fun as we kicked off our academic year. Students did an all about me segment where we learned about ourselves, how we are special and who the people are in our families. The following week we out on our science goggles and had fun with experiments! Mixing oil and water, using gravity to paint, and had a fun experiment making elephant toothpaste! From there we jumped into our rocket ships and learned about the sun, moon, stars and planets. This week we are heading back to earth and learning about some of the countries and their cultures that make up the world we live in. We are excited to jump into the magic of fall and to see what October has in store for us.

Blessings

Mrs Ashley, Mrs Amanda, Mrs Robyn, and Ms Hannah

Community Luncheons

Our community luncheons are starting up this month on Wednesday, November 13th. They continue to be on the second Wednesday of the month. Please join us for fabulous food, fellowship and entertainment!

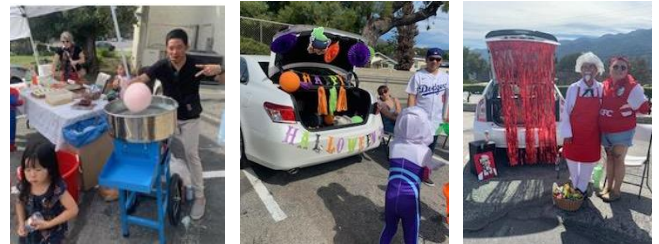


Threads of Hope



Here's a look at our quilts for 2024.
Way to go Threads of Hope!

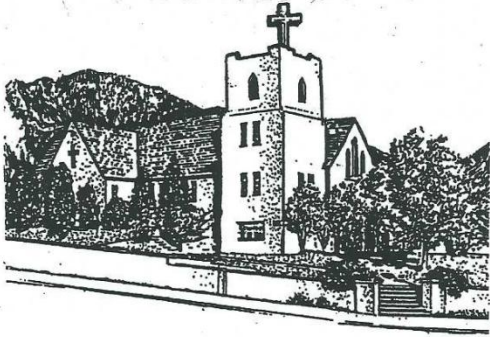
Trunk or Treat



Trunk or Treat was a great success!!

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD

BIRTHDAYS IN NOVEMBER

15 – Alec Puttler	21 – Amelia Zelaya
15 – Drew Puttler	22 – Jan Cody
16 – Joel Ness	24 – Stacy Geck
17 – Keith Cody	30 – Jerry Fuller
20 – Christopher Turner	

MEETINGS & EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER

3 – All Saints’ Sunday	9:30 am
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 – Bailey Center Food Donation Sunday	9:30 am
24 – Christ the King Sunday with VRIM	10:30 am
27 – Devotional & Pie Social at LCIF	7:00 pm

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, on Thanksgiving Day
We bow our hearts to You and pray.

We give You thanks for all You've done
Especially for the gift of Jesus, Your Son.

For beauty in nature, Your glory we see
For joy and health, friends and family,

For daily provision, Your mercy, and care
These are the blessings You graciously share.

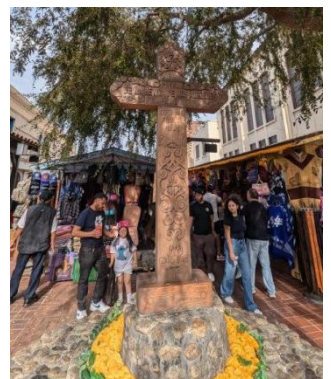
So today we offer this response of praise
With a promise to follow You all of our days.

—Mary Fairchild

Bailey Center Food Donations

The Bailey Center is desperately in need of groceries. It provides bags of groceries to the needy in our midst. It's a small way to make a difference for Christ by donating bags and/or non-perishable groceries. They are also in need of hygiene products. **We have designated the third Sunday of the month as our **Bailey Center Food Donation Sunday!****

Olvera Street Trip



**Celebrating at Olvera Street
The food was yummy!**