



# The Olive Branch

Loving Christ in Worship, Fellowship, Education and Service

December 2024

## MARY, DID YOU KNOW?

“Mary, Did You Know?” is the title of a famous Christmas song by Pentatonix, and the following is a stanza from this beautiful song:

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Is Lord of all creation?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
Would one day rule the nations?  
Did you know that your baby boy  
Is heaven's perfect Lamb?  
That sleeping child you're holding is  
the great I Am...*

Of course, the biblical answer to the question “Mary, did you know?” is a resounding Yes and No. By the angelic decree from the Archangel Gabriel and by the power of the Holy Spirit within her, as well as by the report of the Bethlehem shepherds, Mary the Mother of our Lord did know that the infant Jesus in her arms would be the Messiah and Savior of Israel. However, she could not have known at that early point the full extent of the meaning of her firstborn baby boy. In fact, it wasn't until forty days later that Mary started to get a greater awareness of the cosmic significance of Jesus' conception, birth and life.

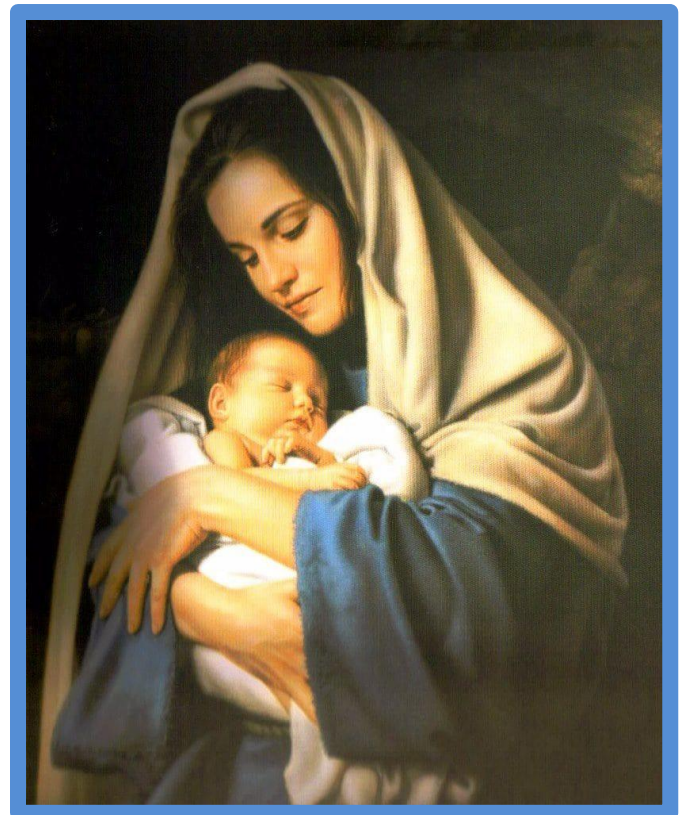
After *Yeshua* (Jesus) had been circumcised and incorporated into the Abrahamic Covenant at eight days old, Joseph and Mary later took the forty-day-old Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem “to present him to the Lord” as it says in Luke 2:22. For it was there in the Jerusalem Temple that the Prophets Simeon and Anna gave to Mary and Joseph the first prophetic glimpse of Jesus' universal mission and ministry for all humanity. As Simeon and Anna beheld the infant Messiah, it was revealed through them that Jesus would be the salvation and redemption of “all peoples” (Luke 2:31), including both the Nation of Israel and the Gentile Nations. Moreover, it was revealed that day in the Temple that Jesus would be opposed by many, and that this opposition to Jesus would be “a sword” that would pierce Mary's soul as well (Luke 2:35).

Many years later, with the events of Holy Week and Pentecost, all these prophecies came to pass. For Mary's heart was pierced as she witnessed Jesus' crucifixion as *Heaven's Perfect Lamb* every agonizing step of the way to the Hill of Golgotha. Then she witnessed his post-resurrection appearances, and she was there at Pentecost when the Universal Church of Jesus Christ was born.

This year during the Season of Advent leading up to the Twelve Days of Christmastime, we will ponder Mary's experience with Heaven's Perfect Lamb at our midweek “Holden Evening Prayer” worship services at 7pm on the Wednesdays of December 4th, 11th, and 18th.

Good Advent & Merry Christmas!!!

*Pastor Tim*



## Pam's Pearls of Prayer

### Scripture of the Month: Titus 3:4-6

*"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior."*

### Thought for the Month

Now that the holiday season is in full swing, we, as Christians, need to remember the full meaning of this holiday. Jesus' birth brought hope to the world, that through Him we are saved because of God's loving-kindness, not because of something "righteous" we had done but purely by His grace in Christ Jesus.

### Prayer for the Month

Dear Lord, we thank You for all that You have done for us. Your Son came into the world to save us from ourselves. Your love sustains us through this life. Keep us in Your loving arms now and for all eternity. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Mt. Olive Preschool Update

Happy Thanksgiving, we hope you have a blessed Holiday together. This month we welcomed a new teacher to our staff, Mrs. Emily! She will be here assisting Mrs. Robyn in her classroom. We look forward to her becoming a part of the team. We have spent this month learning about the harvest season. We have learned about the leaves changing colors to red, orange, and yellow, and brown. We have learned about Harvest and how that means collecting the fruits and vegetables that have been grown. We read the story of stone soup and we all brought in a part of the soup and made soup together as a school, when we all come together with our own supplies we can put it together to make something great! But our main focus for the month was being Thankful. We have learned all the things we can be grateful for like our family, our friends, our homes, the food that is made for us, and for each and every day that we get to play and learn! We look forward to the upcoming Holiday season and all the fun it brings but we have thoroughly enjoyed taking this time to acknowledge that we have so much to be thankful for. We gathered together as a school and enjoyed a feast together, it was a beautiful day

Happy Thanksgiving from  
Mrs. Ashley, Mrs. Amanda, Mrs Robyn, Ms. Hannah and  
Mrs. Emily

## The True Christmas Spirit

by Ina G. Roberts

A long time ago, down Bethlehem way,  
A star shown in the night sky as bright as the day.  
The shepherds were watching their flocks with care  
When a host of angels appeared in the air,

Proclaiming the son of God had been born  
To deliver our souls on that cold Christmas morn.  
You will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
Lying in a manger while the cattle lows.

A few short decades later, he died on a cross.  
Without his sacrifice, we would all be lost.  
So as you're running around, buying gifts and treats  
To have a big party when your family meets,

Stop and remember why we celebrate this day,  
It's not about gifts and food and games to play.

I think of that; we all have enough.  
When you think about it, it's all just stuff.

The gift of love is what Jesus gave,  
And salvation the day he arose from the grave.

To love each other is all that he asks.  
I know that at times that can be a big task.

Just humble yourself and look all around.  
I think what you find will be profound.  
There are many who can only afford the gift of love.  
No presents, no tree with a star up above.

Look into your life, and you will find you are blessed  
By many who love you; that gift is the best.  
So when it comes time to bless your meal,  
Ask for your family to be blessed as well.

Not with gifts or money or material stuff,  
but that love and tolerance will be enough.  
Remember the loved ones who cannot be there,  
But rejoice they're in heaven and not suffering here.

And when you see someone who is down and out,  
Don't put them down or have any doubt.

Just do what you think Jesus would do.  
Give what you can to help them get through.

If they misuse it, that's between them and God.  
In Jesus' eyes you have done your job.  
God bless you and enjoy your family Christmas day,  
May peace, love, and happiness come your way.



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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**TO:**

**DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD**

**BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER**

6 – Karl Puttler                      19 – Ruth Lund  
9 – Daniel Coats                    19 – Carol Beesley  
10 – Vi Reardon

**MEETINGS & EVENTS FOR DECEMBER**

9 – Threads of Hope	9:00 am
10 – Church Council	7:00 pm
11 – Community Luncheon	12:00 pm
14 – Cookie Exchange & Brunch	12:00 pm
15 – Bailey Center Food Donation Sunday	9:30 am
21 – Breakfast Bible Study at Panera	8:30 am
24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	7:00 pm
25 – Christmas Day Service	10:30 am

**Community Luncheons**

Our community luncheons started up last month on Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. We had wonderful fellowship and were entertained by our own Sean Paxton. Please join us this month on December 11<sup>th</sup> to celebrate Christmas! Our entertainment this month will be provided by the Verdugo Hills Women’s Chorus. See you then!!



**Holden Evening Prayer Services**

This year during the Season of Advent we will ponder Mary’s experience with Heaven’s Perfect Lamb at our midweek “Holden Evening Prayer” worship services at 7pm on the following Wednesdays:

- **December 4<sup>th</sup>**
- **December 11<sup>th</sup>**
- **December 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Community Choir Concert**



We had a very fun and patriotic time at the "United We Stand" Veterans Day Musical Tribute on Sunday evening, November 10<sup>th</sup>.

This concert included church choirs of the Latter-Day Saints, the Lutherans, and the Roman Catholics.

It was a beautiful opportunity to bring a spirit of national unity and peace after a very contentious election cycle.