

# THE OLIVE PRESS

April 2026  
EDITION 47



# CONTENTS

Cover Page.....	1
Contents.....	2
The Dawn.....	3
The Resurrection. ....	5
Cynthia Machuca.....	10
Preschool Activities.....	12
Calendar.....	14
Council Contacts.....	16





# The Dawn That Cannot Be Stopped

April carries us to the heart of the Christian story. The days grow longer, flowers begin to rise from the soil, and the world seems to whisper the same quiet promise we hear in the Gospel: life is stronger than death.

Before the celebration of Easter comes the quiet sorrow of Good Friday when we remember the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Thereafter, Easter brings us the joyful promise and good news that the tomb could not hold Jesus Christ. The stone was rolled away, and hope rose with the morning light.





Easter reminds us that God's love is stronger than fear, and life is stronger than death. Even when the world might feel heavy or uncertain, the resurrection assures us that God is still at work, bringing new life where we least expect it.

As spring unfolds around us, may we carry that Easter hope into our daily lives through kindness, faith, and caring for one another. Small acts of love become signs of the new life God continues to bring into the world and gentle reminders that the risen Christ still walks among us.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.  
Hallelujah!



# The Resurrection

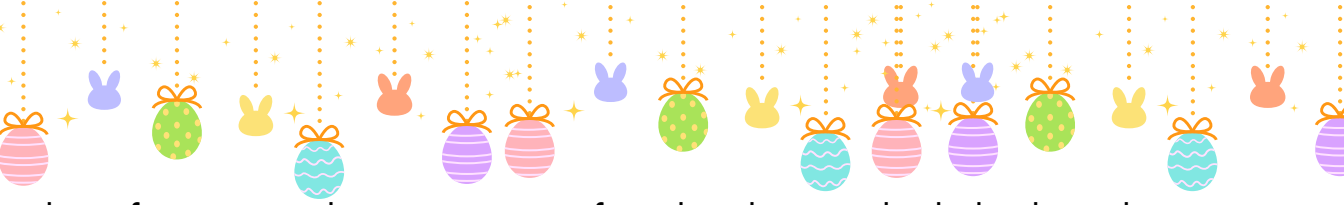
by Chief Elder, Bill Dahlgren

Many cultures and religions affirm life after death, but only one asserts that someone actually died and returned to life. This claim is made exclusively by Christianity. No one says of Moses or Muhammad that after their deaths, they were seen again in the flesh. Thus, if the Christian claim is true, it shows not only the possibility of life after death but also legitimizes the specifically Christian understanding of the afterlife. For the purpose of argument, let's treat the resurrection as a historical claim no different from any other historical claim.

Here are the historical facts that have to be accounted for. First, Christ was tried by his enemies, convicted and crucified to death. Second, shortly after his burial, Christ's tomb was found empty. Third, many of the disciples, but also one or two skeptics, claimed to have seen Christ alive in the flesh and had interacted with him, following his death. Fourth, inspired by the belief in Christ's bodily resurrection, the disciples initiated a movement that, despite persecution and martyrdom, converted millions of people to a new way of life based on Christ's example and his teachings.



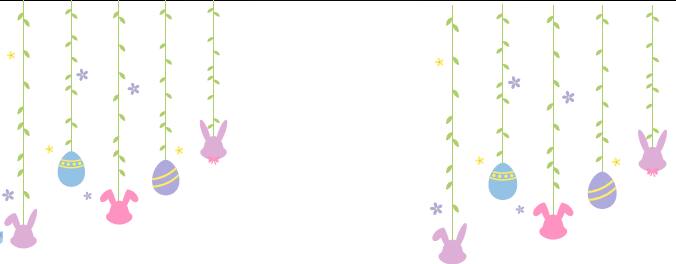
“Many cultures and religions affirm life after death, but only one asserts that someone actually died and returned to life. This claim is made exclusively by Christianity”



These facts are in the mainstream of modern historical scholarship. They are known with the same degree of reliability as other facts that are taken for granted about the ancient world, such as those that Socrates taught in the marketplace of Athens, or that Caesar crossed the Rubicon, or that Alexander the Great won the Battle of Gaugamela.

In history, we take the facts we do know, and we try to make sense of them. Historian N.T. Wright, in a mammoth study, argues that the hypothesis that Christ actually arose from the dead may sound intuitively implausibly to many, but it has great explanatory power.

In other words, if it happened, it makes sense of all other facts listed above. It would help us to understand why the tomb was empty, why the disciples thought they saw Christ after his death, and why this astounding realization motivated them to evangelicalism and strengthened them to face persecution and martyrdom without renouncing their convictions. Wright goes much further, though, suggesting not merely that resurrection is a sufficient hypothesis but also that it is a necessary one.





What he means is that there is no alternative hypothesis but also that it is a necessary one. What he means is that no alternative hypothesis can explain the given facts with anything approaching the same degree of plausibility, since skeptics have been advancing alternative theories for two thousand years this is quite a calm. Let's briefly review some of those alternative theories.



“Perhaps the most popular (theory) is that the resurrection is a myth; the disciples made it up.”

Perhaps the most popular one, at least since the Enlightenment, is that the resurrection is a myth, the disciples made it up. “The Myth of the Resurrection,” writes Corliss Lamont in the *Illusion of Immortality*, “is just the kind of fable that might be expected to arise in a primitive, pre-scientific society like that of the ancient Hebrews.” The disciples accepted that their leader would return, so they concocted the story that they saw him alive after his death.

While this is the view perhaps most widely held by skeptics today, it is actually the weakest attempt to make sense of the facts. First, as Wright shows, the idea that dead people don't come back to life is not an Enlightened discovery. The ancient Hebrews knew that as well as we do. Second, Christ Jewish followers did not expect him to return to life. Jews believed in bodily resurrection but not until the end of the world. The disciples were utterly amazed when they saw Christ in the flesh, and some refused at first to believe it. Third, it is one thing to be willing to endure persecution unto death for it. Why would the disciples be ready to die for something they knew to be a lie?





A second theory is that the disciples stole the body. This theory is a very old one; in fact, it was advanced by Christ's Jewish opponents to account for the empty tomb. Jewish polemics against Christianity for two centuries continued to inspire this to them. The theory, however, has several obstacles. Christ tomb barred by a stone and guarded by Roman Soldiers. How could the disciples have gotten past the guards? Moreover, if the disciples stole the body, they would know for a fact that Christ wasn't raised from the dead.



—◆—

*We will have a joyful Easter because we know Christ died for us to save us from our sins, so we will have eternal life with Christ in Heaven.”*

—◆—

We come back to the problem with the previous theory: why would the disciples' mourning turn to gladness? Why would they embark on a worldwide campaign of conversion? Why would they refuse to recant their beliefs on pain and death? If Christ died and did not come back to life, then why would the apostles suffer torture and death while proclaiming Christ is alive?





What really requires explanation here is not how the disciples stole the body, but why Christ's critics would be so tenaciously advance such an implausible explanation. The answer seems obvious: they had to account for the fact that the tomb was empty. The empty tomb is significant because we know that Christ's followers were proclaiming his resurrection in Jerusalem almost immediately following his death. If they were simply making this up, it would be easy to disapprove their claims by producing Christ's corpse. This didn't happen, and the obvious explanation is that neither the Jews nor the Romans can do this.

Now Christ is reported to have appeared many times to the disciples. Paul notes that on one occasion he appeared to more than 500 people, many of these people were reportedly alive and in position to update the veracity of Paul's account. James, who was a skeptic about Christ's ministry, reportedly became convinced Christ was the Messiah only after seeing his resurrected body; in the same manner, Apostle Thomas was also convinced. Paul himself was not his own account a persecutor of Christian until Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Never in history have so many diverse individuals hallucinated the account of the empty tomb or of why the Jews and Romans could settle the whole controversy by producing Jesus's body.

We believe in the Resurrection of Jesus because of our faith, but it is also nice to have to have this information to discuss with non-believers. We will have a joyful Easter because we know Christ dies for us to save us from our sins so we will eternal life with Christ in Heaven.



# Meet Our Preschool Teacher: Cynthia Machuca

Each month we enjoy introducing one of the wonderful teachers who serves our preschool families. This month we are pleased to introduce Cynthia Machuca, who teaches 3½ to 4-year-olds class in Room #6. Cynthia has been part of the Mt. Olive preschool community for five years, and she brings warmth, experience, and enthusiasm to her classroom each day.

Cynthia and her husband are raising two young children, ages three and five. As a family they love spending time together and when they get time for the family love at Disneyland, enjoying the fun and memories that come with sharing those experiences together. Before coming to Mt. Olive, Cynthia directed a preschool program serving 160 children, giving her a wealth of experience in early childhood education.



Cynthia was drawn to working with preschoolers because she loves watching children learn and grow. One of the greatest joys of teaching for her is seeing children develop new skills as they prepare for kindergarten. She especially loves the relationships that grow in the classroom. As the children develop a very special connection and the love they share with their teachers makes the work incredibly rewarding.



Her favorite age group to teach is four-year-olds, because they are eager to share everything they know. Cynthia laughs that many students arrive excited to announce they already know the letter of the week before it is even introduced. She says preschoolers have taught her one important lesson as well: patience.

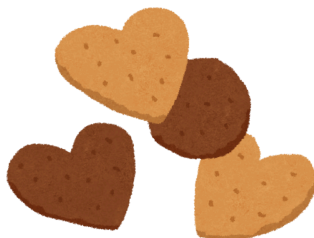
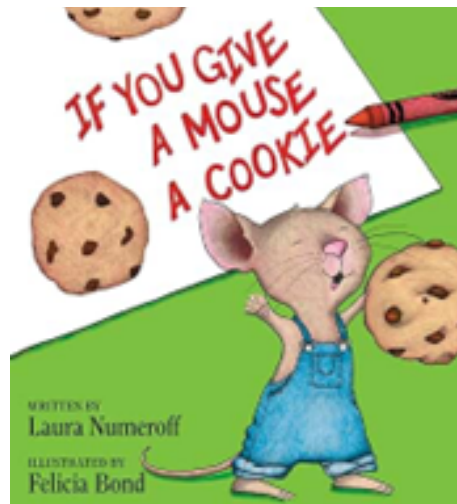
What makes teaching at a Christian preschool especially meaningful for Cynthia is the opportunity to share the love of Jesus throughout the day. She enjoys connecting everyday learning to God's love—sometimes even through something as simple as a yellow block. She believes that sharing God's love helps children feel calm and reminds them that they are never alone.



Cynthia's favorite part of the day is circle time, when students have their chance to shine and share. She strives to bring positive energy into the classroom so children feel safe, welcomed, and loved. She also hopes parents know how deeply she cares about making each child feel comfortable and valued.

Cynthia hopes the children in her class will remember the fun ways they learned and discovered new things together. Her favorite children's book is "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" by Laura Numeroff and she describes her teaching style in one word: Open. If her classroom had a theme song, it might just be the cheerful Bluey theme song.

As a way to connect our church community with the preschool, please keep her family in prayer, as they continue to grow together and share life and faith as a family. We are grateful for the care, joy, and faith Cynthia brings to our preschool each day.



# PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES



David makes these one-of-a kind air plant designs to help fund the preschool.



# PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Written by Preschool Director David Welch

March brings rain, sunshine, and fun activities! The spring season is also bringing in new families! We are starting to receive many inquiries, which, in turn, lead to tours, and with our loving teachers, Christian values, and a top-of-the-line environment, most people sign up for our programs.

Lastly, we are receiving registration forms for siblings turning two in the fall. Word of mouth is the best advertising, so keep spreading the love!



Mira enjoys reading books at her preschool



The kids are happily painting and expressing their creativity

Our monthly Christian curriculum is unique and engaging. It includes the stories of Mary and Martha, Jesus Heals a Deaf Man, Zacchaeus, and Children Praise Jesus.

These stories are not only educational but also teach important values. Our discovery points this month are particularly significant explaining that Jesus loves everyone and took their sins for us. We praise Him for His love.

# CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1	2	3 9:15am Preschool Chapel GROVE 6:30pm-8pm	4
9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship Happy Easter	5 ESL Class @ 9:30am	6 7	8	9	10 9:15am Preschool Chapel GROVE 6:30pm-8pm	11 Youth Group 7pm
9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	12 ESL Class @ 9:30am	13 14	15	16	17 9:15am Preschool Chapel GROVE 6:30pm-8pm	18
9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	19 ESL Class @ 9:30am	20 21	22	23	24 9:15am Preschool Chapel GROVE 6:30pm-8pm	25 Youth Group 7pm
9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	26 ESL Class @ 9:30am	27 28	29	30	1	2 <i>Homemade</i>

Holidays and Observances: Easter Sunday (5), Easter Monday (6), Tax Day (15)

\*For further calendar updates, please visit [www.mtoliverpv.com](http://www.mtoliverpv.com)



# Editor's Message

# Thank You

*Greetings, Mount Olive!*

Blessings to you, MOLC congregation! Thank you for taking the time to read the 47th Edition of the Mount Olive Press.

I hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter. For anyone who would like to contribute to next month's newsletter, don't hesitate to send an email to [office@mtoliverpv.com](mailto:office@mtoliverpv.com)

Additionally, if you are perhaps new to the congregation, or have not had the chance to introduce yourself, don't be shy! We would love to hear from you.

Thank you for all of those who contributed to this newsletter: Chief Elder Bill Dahlgren, Preschool Director David Welch, President Ulrike Ziegner Hokanson, and Youth Director Julie Kurtz.

It is always nice to get a newsletter and learn something new each time.

God Bless!



*Lauralee Lapid*





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