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The Greatest Gift of All The Greatest Gift of All The Greatest Gift of All

Do you ever experience a gift that makes you think, “How could I ever repay this person for what they have given me?” or in layman’s terms “*How could I ever top THAT?*”

When I first started dating my (now) fiancé Travis Reynolds, I experienced that feeling. (I should add that this was a rude awakening for me because I consider gift giving my #1 love language.) Four months into our relationship was my birthday, and for my birthday he surprised me with a *handmade electric guitar*. You heard that right—a working electric guitar made completely from scratch that I can only assume he started working on as soon as we started dating given how intricately assembled it was. With no experience in guitar building and no idea if we would be together in July, Travis chose to love me and gift me something irreplaceable as soon as he met me—kind of like Jesus.

Let me clarify, Travis is not Jesus, and unfortunately none of us will ever be exactly like Jesus because he was able to live a perfect sinless life. Likewise, Jesus was able to give us a perfect, irreplaceable gift that we could never fully pay back even if we spent our whole lives trying. How does that work when it comes to faith? How do we earn the forgiveness that cost God the life of His only son? It seems impossible because it is—**nothing we do will ever be enough to repay our Father**. Thankfully, for those who believe in Jesus as the Son of the living God who died for our sins on the cross, all we have to do is accept this as God’s gift to us.



“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, **it is the gift of God**—” Ephesians 2:8

Our faith is not measured by our deeds, so that no one can boast. I thank God daily that I do not have to spend my life working to make up for a gift that I will never come close to repaying. *How exhausting our faith would be if we were constantly required to do works that could never measure up to God’s gift to us?*

The Greatest Gift of All The Greatest Gift of All The Greatest Gift of All

Even though works do not define the *depth* of our faith, they should still be considered an *integral part* of our faith. James 2:18 addresses this in saying “But someone will say, “*You have faith; I have deeds.*” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”

Faith is complete trust and confidence in God, but there are actions that stem from that faith. The first action, which could also be considered inaction, requires us to submit ourselves to God. While submissiveness implies the lack of action, choosing to submit ourselves, our troubles, and the things we hold dear to God requires a choice from us. Continual faith in God is continual surrender to His plan. As you begin to practice this, you will find *it is actually very hard to do nothing about the things you can't control*. It rejects the laws of human nature by asking you to stop trying to do it all by yourself.

The second action in faith is in gratitude to God. He gave us the gift of grace that we are so undeserving of, and in thanks to Him I consider it my responsibility to return the same grace to others. How hypocritical would I be to withhold my forgiveness for others when God forgives me unconditionally when I ask Him? If I can deem others as unworthy of my grace, wouldn't He be right to withhold grace from me, too?

His grace is abundant, and I am responsible to show that same grace to others. The most important commandments Jesus mentioned were to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Loving others requires action, and as believers it is a part of our faith in God to do His will. I *want* to obey Him because I am so thankful for all that he has given me.

As God has given you endless grace and love that surpasses all understanding, we should submit our lives to Him and serve Him in all that we do. As it says in Matthew 10:8, “Freely you have received, freely give.” We give, not because we owe him or are working to earn His forgiveness, but because of our genuine gratitude for His gift.

We love, because He first loved us.





PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Harper practices her piano playing skills.

PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

March brings rain, sunshine, and fun activities! During Sing Sunday last month, we went through over 150 hot dogs and the weather was perfect. This month, we are hosting our Spring Fun-Run Fundraiser on March 7th for continuous upgrades to the facility.

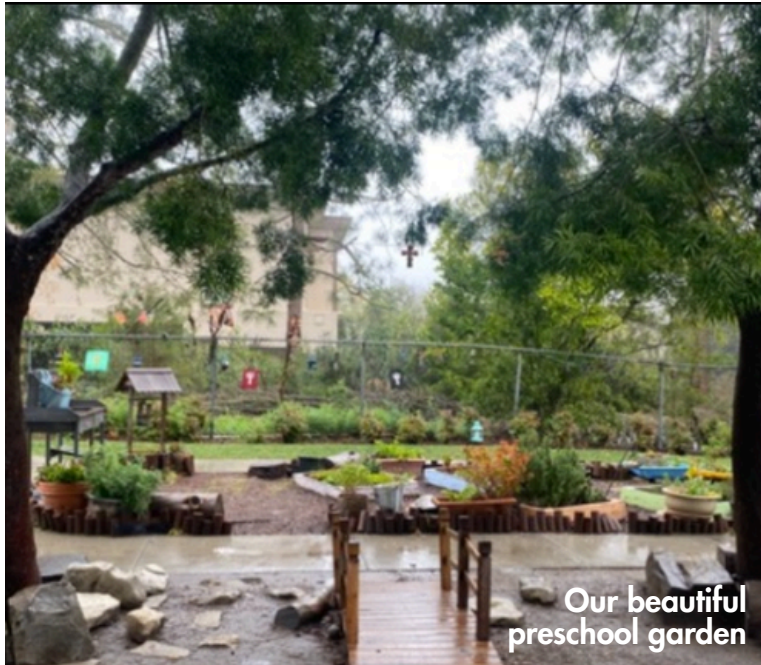
Spring season is also bringing in new families! We are starting to receive many inquiries, which, in turn, leads to tours, and with our loving teachers, Christian values, and a top-of-the-line environment, most people sign up for our program. Lastly, we are receiving registration forms for siblings who are turning two in the fall. Word of mouth is the best advertising.

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 in explaining that Jesus loves everyone and took their sins for us. We praise Him for His love.

written by **Preschool
Director David Welch**



**Volunteer Audrey Dahlgren
and Zenta read outside**



**Our beautiful
preschool garden**

JOHN MARK THE GOSPEL WRITER



John Mark was a disciple of Peter, and many scholars believe that the Gospel of Mark is mainly the preaching of Peter put into writing. It is believed the Gospel was written in Rome between 60 and 70 A.D. In examination of the four Gospels there are many features in common, but Matthew, Mark and Luke have many specific similarities and is why they are called the Synoptic Gospels. The Majority of New Testament scholars believe that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a major source. Mark can be distinguished from the other synoptic Gospels (Matthew & Luke) by the absence of the birth of Christ and Genealogy and by a similar amount of material containing the teachings of Jesus. In studying the Gospels, I recommend you start with Mark, Matthew and Luke. John was written last and covers a different time span.

The message of Mark is that Jesus is the Messiah and son of God, whose death and resurrection paid the penalty

for our sins and achieved victory over Satan, sin and death. Jesus is a savior who is truly divine, truly man and who gives his life uniquely as substitute atonement for our sins. I like what Mark says about prayer 11:24-25 “therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your father in heaven may forgive your sins.”

Not much is known about Mark. The Apostles used his mothers house for meetings. Mark would have been a teenager when Christ walked this Earth. Mark was not an Apostle as he was not chosen by Christ. Mark made a trip with Paul and Barnabas in Asia minor but Paul and Mark had some friction and Mark was not asked to join Paul on his second missionary journey. Mark and Paul started working together at a later date as Mark was with Paul when Paul was martyred in Rome.

Mark was probably the first bishop of Alexandria, Egypt. He may have founded the church of Alexandria. The Pagans of Alexandria resented Mark taking away people from their pagan gods. The pagans tied a rope around his neck and drug him through the streets until he died. In 828, relics of Mark were stolen from Alexandria and taken to Venice, Italy. They are on display in St. Marks’ cathedral in St. Mark’s square.

Editor's Message



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Movie Night - CANCELLED
until further notice

Zoom Bible Study -
CANCELLED until further notice

Friday Night Bible Study -
CANCELLED until further notice



Interested in Participating?

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are provided through individual's \$80 donations, which cover two beautiful arraignments. Sign up anytime in the church entry way!

Coffee Fellowship

Coffee Fellowship is provided through individuals donating food, setting up, and hosting the coffee fellowship after service on Sunday. Sign up to host one Sunday in anytime in the church entry way!

Writing in the Press

If you love to write, are passionate about ministry, or simply have a unique story to share, we want to hear you!

Contact

mtolive.ecarter@gmail.com
with any questions

Emma Carter

CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
23 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	24 9:30am ESL Class	25	26	27 9:30am Preschool Chapel 7pm Council	28 6:30pm Awana	1
2 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	3 9:30am ESL Class	4	5 7pm Ash Wednesday	6 9:30am Preschool Chapel	7 6:30pm Awana	8 7pm Youth Group
9 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	10 9:30am ESL Class	11	12 6pm Soup Supper & Service	13 9:30am Preschool Chapel	14 6:30pm Awana	15
16 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	17 St. Patrick's Day 9:30am ESL Class	18	19 6pm Soup Supper & Service	20 9:30am Preschool Chapel 10am Preschool Board 7pm Elders	21 9:15am Parents Chapel 6:30pm Awana	22 7pm Youth Group
23 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	24 9:30am ESL Class	25	26 6pm Soup Supper & Service	27 9:30am Preschool Chapel 7pm Council	28 6:30pm Awana	29
30 9am Confirmation 9am Bible Class 10am Worship	31 9:30am ESL Class	1	2 6pm Soup Supper & Service	3 9:30am Preschool Chapel	4 6:30pm Awana	5 <i>Homemade GIFTS MADE EASY</i>

Holidays and Observances: 17: St. Patrick's Day

*For further calendar updates, please visit www.mtoliverpv.com

MOLC WEBSITE

SCAN ME



COUNCIL CONTACTS

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