

MVCE

November 2025 Newsletter

2650 Melbourne Drive San Diego CA 92123 | Phone: 858.278.2633 | www.missionvillage.church

Pastor's Pen

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:8-10).

I am thankful for many things as we enter November and set our sights on Thanksgiving at the end of the month. I am thankful for my family. I'm thankful for our church family. I'm thankful for God's provision in our lives. And I'm thankful that I'm nearing the end of my doctoral program (I can see the finish line just a few months away!).

But in recent weeks, I have become increasingly thankful for God's grace in my life. The more I reflect on God's grace, the more I am thankful for it. Grace is one of those things that many Christians believe in but don't have a full appreciation of what it actually does in our lives. And so as we approach Thanksgiving this month, I want to share a few thoughts on this beautiful thing called grace, and invite us all to take time to thank God for his amazing grace in our lives.

Grace is foundational to the Christian faith. Paul writes that we are saved by grace alone through faith: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). We cannot earn our salvation; we must accept the free gift of God. This message of salvation is commonly understood in evangelical Christian circles.

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Worship Schedule:

- 8:30am Sunday Adult Sunday School
- 9:30am Sunday Worship Service
- 10:00am Sunday Children's Bible Adventure

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What is less commonly understood however, is how God's grace continues to work in the lives of believers beyond the point of their initial salvation. Paul makes it clear that God's grace not only saves us, but shapes us for our ministry and service to God: "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10). And yet God's grace is typically not thought of as foundational to the rest of the Christian life. Author and pastor Timothy Keller highlights this misunderstanding of God's grace when he speaks of the gospel message:

"The gospel is not just the ABCs but the A to Z of the Christian life. It is inaccurate to think the gospel is what saves non-Christians, and then Christians mature by trying hard to live according to biblical principles. It is more accurate to say that we are saved by believing the gospel, and then we are transformed in every part of our minds, hearts, and lives by believing the gospel more deeply as life goes on" (Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*, 48).

When the gospel message of God's grace is not emphasized beyond the message of salvation, Keller rightly points out that Christians end up trying to live the Christian life and serve in Christian ministry out of their own strength. This self-effort in spiritual growth and ministry service always ends up in frustration and failure, because we are trying to do something that only God's grace can do in us. If the gospel is only understood as a ticket to heaven as it commonly is, then the burden of both spiritual growth and ministry service fall to the self-effort of believers, which is the death-knell of one's spiritual growth and ministry. I can tell you from personal experience that I have tried to serve God in my own strength, and have tried to grow closer to Jesus through self-effort. It doesn't work.

However, when we accept God's grace in our lives as we do when we are first saved, then spiritual growth and ministry flow from that grace. How? Think about what happened to the prophet Isaiah when he was commissioned as a prophet by God in Isaiah 6:1-13. Isaiah has a vision where he is caught up into the throne room of God. He is devastated because he knows that being that close to the presence of God should kill him, just like one dies if they get too close to the sun. And yet a seraphim (angel like creature) takes a burning coal, touches his lips, and says "your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for" (Is. 6:7). This is an act of grace. Isaiah is not destroyed by God's holy grace, he is transformed by it. And then, being transformed by God's grace, Isaiah is then ready to receive his commission as a prophet (Is. 6:8-13).

What does that mean for us? Well, it means that the way that we grow closer to Jesus and serve Jesus in ministry is not through self-effort and trying harder, but by coming into God's presence, staying in God's presence, and being transformed by God's grace. It means that every day, our ability to love Jesus and serve Jesus begins and ends with us staying close to Jesus. God's grace will equip and enable us to do what we need to do. We just need to stay close to the one who transforms us by his grace.

There are any number of things we can do to get close to Jesus and stay close to Jesus to experience his transforming grace; practices that theologians call "means of grace." But there are two means of grace that I think are particularly important. First, we can have a regular time of reading God's Word. Jesus prays to the Father that his disciples would be sanctified by the truth, noting that God's Word is truth (John 17:17). The more time we spend in God's Word, the more we are shaped and formed by God's transforming grace.

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And second, we can pray. The more we come close to the Lord through prayer, the more God's grace transforms us. I find that my best times of prayer are when I am out taking a walk, but I have also learned over the years that it is good to pray at all times and in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:17-18). Even as you talk with someone you can be simultaneously praying quietly "Lord, how can I help this person, how can I love this person?"

There are many more means of grace by which we can draw closer to God so that we are transformed by his grace. But if you are not in a regular practice of taking in God's Word and praying, try adding these practices into your daily routine. Come close to God. Experience his grace. And then watch as that grace transforms you.

The more we grow in grace, the more thankful we will be for that grace. God's grace does not just save us, God's grace also transforms us from the inside out. And as we look towards Thanksgiving this month, I am so incredibly thankful that God not only saved me, but still continues to graciously work in my life, drawing me closer to himself, and transforming my heart so that I can serve him well. I hope you will join me this month (and every month!) in giving thanks for God's amazing grace!

By His Grace,

Pastor Steve



May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our
Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us
eternal encouragement and good
hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in
every good deed and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Youth Ministry

The sound of children's laughter will bring a smile to anyone one's face, eh?

Last Wednesday, Our Youth Group assisted to pull off a successful Mini Harvest Festival. The newest idea was to combine but minimize VBS and our huge Harvest Festivals in the past - in a similar way. NEW: adding a most powerful people attractor: a DJ!

We had Tony Q blasting his music during our Harvest Festival which attracted many new faces from the community. What a special event! A very special thank you to all who contributed. Our church may be 'small' but we contribute immensely to offering our Serra Mesa community neighbors a fun safe place for their children to play and learn about God!

Our church family volunteered their time and successful efforts for our Harvest Festival!

Jo Anna & Michelle Q.	Co-Captains for Harvest Festival
Terri C. & Youth Group	Assisted with the Games
Matt & Kristine & Alivia	Game leaders
John, Ladina & Claire & Alana	Game leaders plus they fixed up our games!
Tony Q.	Super good DJing and Bounce House Hit
Jenni & Food team	Made Delicious tacos & pumpkin pie
New Moms	Set up a Craft Table
Frank & John	Security to keep children in our safe area
Jensen Family	Set up a smores table & Special Bible Pumpkin Video
Andy Carver	Electrician to get Bounce House re-inflated & re-started
Youth Group	Prize table where children redeemed tickets-less candy!

A special 'shout out' to the Jensen family! We have been trying to get ideas to attract more of the people that attend our Wed. Community dinners to come to church and learn about Jesus. At the Harvest Festival not only did the Jensen's make smores for us but Ray set up his lap top to be able to tell the children the Bible Story or as they call it: The Pumpkin Story! Sharing God's Good Word while waiting for their smores! What a beautiful idea. It was very well received! I heard many comments from others' of how wonderful it was, to listen to, especially from our own Youth Group mom. They all went over there to smell (an actual real fire pit to make smores), a Video to see and hear; the biggest hit was: taste (smores)! Yum! What a joy it is to serve the Lord with our secret God given talents.

Jenni Fiori went all out and made fresh taco's this year! So delicious! What a wonderful surprise instead of hot dogs and chips. Even though that would have been much easier!

The Courtyard was filled with so many games. The basketball game is always a bit hit. A big shout out John for 'fixing up' – modifying the games Chris French created long ago. Chris was there in spirit with us – as he is for each Festival we have. The modified games were genius - as some described. The dance area was around the tree; it was a 'rockin' area as many people danced or swayed. Even when the Bounce house blew a fuse – the children were having so much fun getting out. The community electrician: Andy Carver came to re-set the braker and rescue us! All in all – the night went very smoothly – it was a wonder Holy Spirit filled event. We love sharing our church and praise God everyday for the opportunity!

During **November** we focus on Thanksgiving and collecting canned and boxed goods for our Serra Mesa Food Pantry. Same as always; collecting in the church foyer. We will get you more information in the church weekly announcements.

Angel Tree is right around the corner, be ready to offer any help! More updates In December
God Bless! Terri Carver, Y. G. Ministry Leader

Photographs courtesy of Terri Carver

Harvest Festival



NOVEMBER CELEBRATIONS



Jayson Stone & Rebecca Schnarr 11/04
Steve & Joanna de Vos 11/06



Happy Birthday

Samuel Miller 11/01
Briahna DeLaCruz 11/09
Ernie Garcia 11/13
Carl Jensen 11/16
Scott Fiori 11/21
Mary Jo Cooper 11/22



Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and *now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and* overflowing with gratitude.

Colossians 2:6 -7

Small Groups:

Monday

1:00 p.m. Afternoon
Bible Study at MVCF

7:00 p.m. Women's
Bible Study at MVCF

Tuesday

9:30 a.m. Bible Study at
MVCF

6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting
Online

Wednesday

5:00 p.m. Picnic

7:00 p.m. Youth Group at
MVCF

Church Work Party
Every Fourth Saturday
of the month

8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
refreshment will be
provided.

For more contact:



November 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Daylight Saving 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service	3 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	4 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	5 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 5:00pm Picnic	6	7	8
9 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service	10 1:00pm Bible Study 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	11 Veterans Day 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	12 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 5:00pm Picnic	13	14	15
16 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service	17 1:00pm Bible Study 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	18 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	19 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 5:00pm Picnic	20	21	22 All Church Work Party
23 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service	24 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	25 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	26 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 5:00pm Picnic	27 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	28	29 All Church Christmas Decoration Party
30 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service						

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col. 3:12

Mission Village Christian Fellowship

2650 Melbourne Drive

San Diego, CA 92123

Phone: 858-278-2633

Email: missionvillage1@sbcglobal.net

Council Members

Pastor	Steve de Vos
Moderator	Ronda Adams
Clerk	Joanna de Vos
Financial Secretary	Tony DaVee
Treasurer	June McCollough
Children's Ministry	Open
Youth Ministry	Terri Carver
Adult Ministry	Open
Stewardship	Frank Romeo
Fellowship	Jenny Fiori
Service	Open
Missions / Evangelism	Matt & Ellen Davis
Finance Ministry	Open
Worship	Hannah French

Sunday Schedule

Worship & Children's Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.

Nursery & Toddler Care is Available During Worship Service

Service will be live on YouTube or Facebook

Elders

Pastor /Elder.....Steve de Vos
Administrative ElderTony DaVee
Elder..... Carl Jensen

Staff

Administrative Assistant.....Judy Jacob
Nursery Attendant.....Hannah French