

# The Parish VISITOR



*"Be Transformed...By the renewing of your minds." - Romans 12:2 - NIV*

Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood  
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The REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY, Pastor

cpchollywood.org

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## FOUR *Unshakable* TRUTHS



*your pastor writes*

By REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to all the readers of *the Parish Visitor*!

Resurrection Day is right around the corner. Jesus Christ's death and resurrection is the greatest love story ever told. I pray the following message will show you just how much God loves you

*Four Unshakable Truths Part I: God Loves Us (Various Texts) Originally given at CPC on March 1, 2020*

**Introduction: Four Unshakable Truths:** One evening, two weeks ago, while Simone was in Texas, I watched a documentary on Billy Graham on Netflix.

In the middle of the documentary, I was prompted to pause it, and I began to reflect on my own call to ministry. As I was reflecting, I became aware of the strong

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**Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood  
is an intentional, healing community;  
proclaiming and demonstrating the  
wholeness of life offered in JESUS CHRIST.**

### *A New Way to Worship Together*



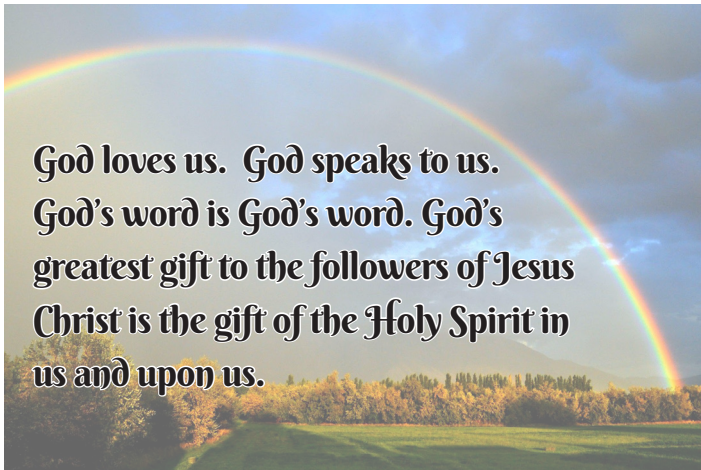
March 20, 2020

Dear Church Family and Friends,

Yesterday, a one month "stay at home" order was issued by both the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Governor of the state of California. This means we won't be able to gather for worship for at least the next month, including Resurrection Sunday on April 12th. I am saddened by this as I know you are. I miss all of you.

In light of this order, I will try to set us up for virtual worship on Sundays via the Zoom teleconferencing application. You will be able to join in worship on your smart-phone, home computer, laptop, or even dial in from your home phone. I anticipate the worship service will be shorter than normal as we work things out. The weekly message will still be recorded and posted on our website at cpchollywood.org. Please go to the website for the latest information.

Pastor Steve



presence of God with me. There was a sense of profound presence, and there was a sense of profound peace.

Over the years I have learned to pay attention when this happens. I have learned that this often happens when God has something he wants me to communicate to you all.

As I continued to reflect, this question began to reverberate in my spirit. After all my years of ministry with you, what are the most important truths about God I would want to communicate to you if this was my last sermon?

Now, relax. I'm not planning on going anywhere. There was no sense that God was going to take me home anytime soon.

Instead, what bubbled to the surface were the most important truths I have learned about God after 16 years of preaching and teaching the word of God. And so, prompted, I believe, by the Holy Spirit, this is what I wrote down that night.

Here are the four, unshakable truths. I only have time to go over the first one today. I'll get to the others at some point. Yet, here are four truths that form the foundation of my ministry and teaching.

First, God loves us, and more particularly, God loves you. Second, God speaks to us, and more specifically, God speaks to you. Third, God's word is God's word. And finally, God's greatest gift to the followers of Jesus Christ is the gift of the Holy Spirit in us and upon us.

**God loves us; God loves you:** Now, this morning, I only have time to talk about the first truth. And, the first, unshakable, truth is this. God loves us, and God loves you. God loves us. God loves the whole world. Yet, more pointedly, more particularly, God loves each of you, and God loves me.

Now, why would the Holy Spirit put this truth first? I believe this is why. If you never receive this unshakable truth, if you never internalize this truth that God loves you, you will never be able to receive what God wants to give you. What does God want to give us? Abundant life with him now. And, eternal life with him forever.

God loves all of us and God loves each of you. Understand, God is a personal being. God is **not** an impersonal force. God is **not** simply a higher power. God is not the "universe" as I have heard many people say.

God is a personal being. And God is quite invested in a personal relationship with us. And, more to the point, God wants a one on one relationship with each one of us.

God is a personal being and God has a personal name. God's personal name is Jesus Christ. And the way God expresses his love for us is through Jesus Christ.

So, let's begin with a powerhouse verse that changed my life. It is a verse that fundamentally changed how I view God and how I view myself. The verse is Eph. 1:4. I am going to read it from the New Living Translation because the NLT makes things crystal clear.

Eph. 1:4 says, "*Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.*" (Ephesians 1:4, NLT) What was God's primary motivation for creating us and creating this world? It was love.

Now, please, open your spirit, open your heart, open your mind, and receive this. Before God made this world, before God created the first human, God loved us and God chose us. How does that make you feel? Special? Precious? Valued?

This verse tells us God loved us and God chose us before we did one single thing for God. We didn't earn God's love. And, we didn't merit God choosing us.





*your pastor writes ...Continued from Page 2*

God loved us and God chose us before God made the world. God loves us, and God chose us, because God created us. And God wants to be with us. God wants to be with you. God wants to be with me.

And, this may surprise you, yet, God wants to be with you even with all your imperfections, with all your foibles, with all your anxieties, and with all your fears, God wants to be with you. Soak this in.

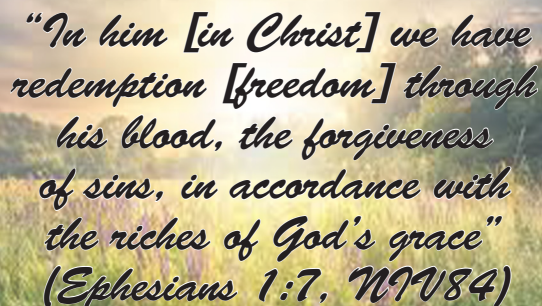
**God's love is expressed in Jesus Christ:** Notice, it says, God chose us "in Christ." This is the key to understanding God's love.

Why did God choose us "in Christ"? Eph. 1:4 says, *"God chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in God's eyes."* God chose us in Christ because this is the only way we can be with God. It is the only way we can be in God's presence.


God is holy. God cannot remain in the presence of sin. The only way we can remain in God's presence is if we are holy and without fault in God's eyes.

And this is only possible through Jesus Christ. Eph. 1:7 says, and we say this almost every week, at the end of our pastoral prayer, *"In him [in Christ] we have redemption [freedom] through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace"* (Ephesians 1:7, NIV84)

In Christ, and through the shedding of Jesus Christ's blood on the Cross, we are set free from the power of sin; we are set free from the power of death; and we are set free from the power of the devil. In Christ, and through Jesus Christ's shed blood on our behalf, our sins are forgiven; and we are holy and without fault in God's eyes.



*"In him [in Christ] we have redemption [freedom] through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace"*  
(Ephesians 1:7, NIV84)



**"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."**  
(John 3:16, NIV84)

So, please listen. Receive this truth because this truth will change your life. This truth changed my life. Jesus Christ agreed to come to earth and die for all of us, before even one of us was created.

Jesus Christ agreed to die for you before he created you. Jesus Christ agreed to die for you because you are incredibly precious to him, and because he wants to be with you for all eternity.

This is God's love in action. **And this is why we can absolutely trust God.** No matter what is happening in our lives, we can trust God because God loves us. God died for us, and therefore, God is always for us. This unshakable truth has the power to change our life. This fundamental truth puts our life in perspective.

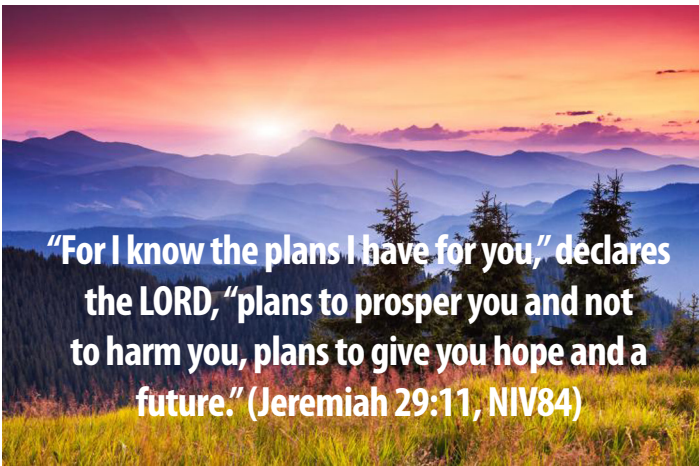
We live in a broken, chaotic world that is marred by human sin. We live in a world that groans under human disobedience to God. Human disobedience ushered in death and disease. Human sin corrupted God's perfect creation.

Yet, God knew this would happen when he created humans with free will. Which is why God's love had a plan to overcome sin, and all its dastardly effects.

Listen again to the plan. *"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes."*

**God's loving plan:** What is God's plan? God chose us in Christ. Jesus Christ is the plan! John 3:16 says, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16, NIV84)

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When we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we shall not perish but have eternal life. Eternal life is live without end. Eternal life means even if this chaotic world takes our life, we live.

God's plan is Jesus Christ. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we have eternal life with God, in a real place called heaven. This is God's love in action.

This is what makes life bearable in this broken, chaotic world. No matter what happens in this life, in Christ, God has our backs. No matter what happens, we are safe with God. We know our eternal destination.

Now, God's love also has a plan for this life. Jer. 29:11 says, ***"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*** (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV84)

Understand, this promise is spoken to God's people who are in captivity. The Jewish people had disobeyed God and they ended up in captivity just as God warned them would happen.

Yet, God never intended to leave them in captivity. God's love won't allow it. God says even while they are in captivity, he has a plan to prosper them and not harm them. God says he has a plan to give them hope and a future.

God loves us and never intends for us to remain captive to this broken, chaotic world. God wants to prosper us, not harm us. Yes, there are consequences for disobeying God. But God never wants those consequences to be permanent. God gives us a way out of captivity.

God tells us to confess our sins, to turn from our sins, and begin to do things God's way. The first thing God tells us to do is to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God tells us to respond to what Jesus has already done for us.

Then, God tells us to immerse ourselves in God's word. God's word teaches us about God. God's word tells us how to live a life pleasing to God, which is now possible because, through our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit has come to live in us.

Next, God tells us to develop a prayer life. We learn the power of praying to an Almighty God who loves us. We learn the power of praying in agreement with God's word. And, we are blessed to see God answering these prayers.

Receiving Jesus Christ, immersing ourselves in God's word, developing an active prayer life gives us hope and a future. This is abundant life now. This is how we have abundant life in the future.

**Receive God's love: *"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes."***

If we are able to receive God's love, if we develop an unshakable belief that God loves us, and chooses us in Jesus Christ, then we will trust God in all circumstances.

Jesus Christ is an unmovable anchor who secures us, who sustains us, who saves us, when the storms of life hit. And there are a lot of storms these days, aren't there? The Holy Spirit is exhorting us this morning to receive God's love through Jesus Christ.

I encourage you readers of the PV to pray this prayer. "Father, you loved me and chose me in Jesus Christ before you created the world and created me. Father, you value me. I am precious to you. I receive your overwhelming love in every part of my being. I open my heart, mind, spirit, and emotions to you. I ask for your love to heal, deliver, and restore every aspect of my being. And I declare, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, I will trust you with every aspect of my life, and trust you through every storm. I pray in Jesus' name."

See you next month,  
Pastor Steve



## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

With the COVID-19 pandemic causing fear and anxiety worldwide there are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



## WORSHIP 11:00 A.M. SUNDAY SERVICE

**D**ue to the stay at home order from the Mayor of Los Angeles, we will not have worship services at the church until after Easter Sunday. In the meantime, we are exploring ways to have "virtual worship services." We are praying that our merciful Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will protect our community and our country during these uncertain times.



*So warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified. —Romans 15:7 (The Living Bible)*

Worshipping with us during the Sunday services were:  
February 9, 2020 – Mr. Nana Adowaka, of Los Angeles.  
December 22, 2019

- Danny and Jamie Yamashiro – Danny is a former seminary intern from Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada (BIOLA University) in the early 1990's. Danny is completing his doctorate degree requirements at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois. He completed his earlier requirements at Harvard University.
  - Steve and Renee Gee also visited on Christmas Sunday during the morning worship service.
- A warm welcome to all of our visitors.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### FEBRUARY 2020



	FEB. 2020	YTD
Receipts	\$ 8,544	\$ 17,616
Disbursements	\$ 11,575	\$ 27,497
Increase (Deficit)	( \$ 3,030)	( \$ 9,881)

### Gift & Offering

*Please help us continue to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and give hope to others.*

*Please consider sending a gift or donation to:*

**Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood**  
4011 Clinton Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90004

### Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive them that trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation.  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
The power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever.  
Amen.



# *In Our Thoughts & Prayers*



Let us remember to keep in our prayers the church family and friends who are in need of God's healing touch: overall healing for Kimi Fujitani, Charles Ingram, Janet Nozaki, Frank Morimoto, Stella Kenner, Karen Koranye, Lashman Johal, Pastor Steve, Martin; healing of knee and wrist of Maria Cardenas and prayers for Marley, Hunter, Cousin Dari, and Aunt Laley; overall healing and no more surgeries for Ron Jung; healing and God's blessings for Harumi Mayeda; strength to care for her Mom for Irene Mayeda; healing of back for Joan Janecek; healing of legs of Sherri Esaki; healing of back and leg pain for Yuri Sangen; healing of left foot and diabetes for Denise Albriton; overall healing and healing of cancer in nostril of Brian Albriton; healing of eye of Eric Lin; prayers for Pastor Steve, his wife Simone and their daughters Nicole and Noelle and David and Alice; revival for CPC and neighborhood, our elders, Faro de Luz Church, outreach to community, unsaved relatives and friends, and protection against major disaster.

*"Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood is an intentional healing community; proclaiming and demonstrating the wholeness of life offered by Jesus Christ."*

DATED MATERIAL

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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