

The Parish VISITOR



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

Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood
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cpchollywood.org

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JESUS CHRIST *is the* ANSWER



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*!

The following is the message given at our virtual worship service on Resurrection Day Sunday. I pray it encourages you.

Jesus Christ is the Answer, Isa 53:3-6; Rev. 5:5-6, Resurrection Day Service, originally given on April 12, 2020, at CPC.

Introduction: The title of today's message is "Jesus Christ is the Answer." And like the resurrection story, this message goes from darkness to light.

Our world continues to experience crisis after crisis. And with this corona virus crisis, the news broadcasts are becoming increasingly doom and gloom. This reflects the fact people are suffering.

I heard a sound bite on the news, about two weeks ago, from an emergency room doctor in New York city. This was at the height of that city's corona crisis. The reporter asked him, "What is it like in the ER department?" His reply, "It's hell. It's hell of biblical proportions."

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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.**

Coronavirus pandemic forces churches to adapt to new normal, embrace the digital world

Social distancing isn't going anywhere for a while, and it's caused churches to adapt to our new normal.

While some megachurches have had broadcast and capabilities for quite some time, smaller churches are also breaking into the digital world.

A lot of congregations are getting very creative, and using the full power of the internet, whether that be YouTube or Facebook.

Big churches with their vast resources are putting full scale productions to stream services online. Although smaller churches can't do the same thing, they're not letting that stop them so they, too, can bring their message to parishioners who are now forced to stay home. Because the coronavirus pandemic has made a way for congregations to gather together virtually, it had brought on a sense of closeness despite the separation, which could be a blessing in disguise

When we feel fear, when we feel powerless, when we feel helpless, because things are out of our control, there is only one answer. And his name is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the answer!

And, this hell is starting to hit close to home for some of us. Simone and I heard our son-in-law's uncle, who lives in New York, died from Covid 19. And the brother, of a friend of Simone's, was just hospitalized with pneumonia from Covid 19. And you all have your own growing stories.

This virus crisis is causing all kinds of fallout, not just health emergencies. We are at the beginning of a looming economic crisis. Non-essential businesses remain closed. Airline traffic is down 95% from this time last year.

As a result, in just the last three weeks, over 17 million people have lost their jobs, or have been furloughed, and filed for unemployment. This economic stress is rippling through communities. And, we wonder, will family members, and friends, and coworkers will have money for daily necessities like rent, utilities, medicine and food?

In addition, we've had earthquakes, and tornadoes here in the United States which brought more destruction and more death. And, all these things are on top of the other tragedies of life we experience. Again, people are suffering.

Lives have been turned upside down by this crisis. As a result, people are anxious. People are fearful. People are angry.

They realize, maybe for the first time in their life, they are not in control. There is nothing they can do to fix this crisis. And so, they feel powerless, they feel helpless, and maybe even desperate. Do you know anybody who is feeling that way?

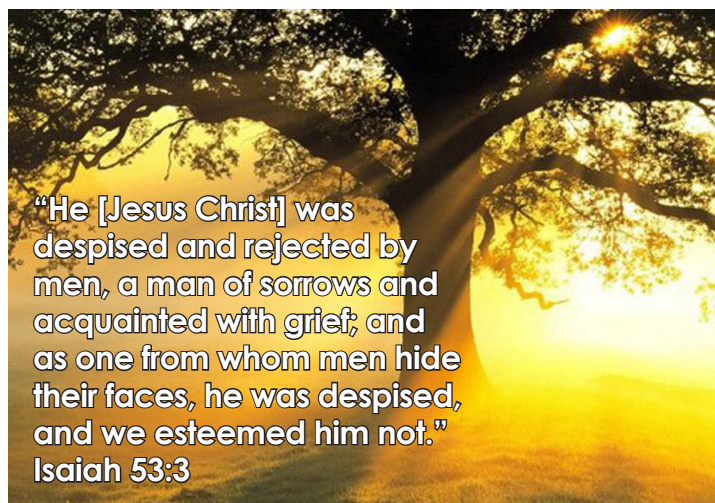
And, these people, including Christians, are asking big

questions like, "What is the answer to all the suffering going on in the world?" And, "How are things going to get set right again? And, "How can I help my family, and my friends, and my co-workers, walk through the fear, and anxiety, and anger they are experiencing?

When we feel fear, when we feel powerless, when we feel helpless, because things are out of our control, there is only one answer. And his name is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the answer!

I want to read two texts this morning. Together, they reveal two truths. First, they reveal Jesus Christ is the answer to suffering. And, second, they reveal Jesus Christ has the answer to setting things right.

The first text is from Isaiah, Chapter 53:3-6. This passage speaks of the Suffering Servant who is Jesus Christ. It reads, *"He [meaning Jesus Christ] was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."* (Isaiah 53:3-6, ESV)



**"He [Jesus Christ] was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not."
Isaiah 53:3**

The second text is from Rev. 5:5-6. It also speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reads, *"Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals. Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.'"* (Revelation 5:5-6, NIV84)

These two passages give us revelation about why Jesus Christ is the answer to suffering. And, why Jesus Christ has the answer to setting things right in this and every crisis.

Jesus Christ is the answer to suffering: First, these passages reveal the truth Jesus Christ is the answer to suffering. Again, Isa. 53:3, reads, *"He [Jesus Christ] was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not."*

Isa.53:3 tells us Jesus was **"a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."** The word "sorrows" here also means pain. The word "grief" also means "sickness. So, Jesus was a man of sorrows **and** pain, and he was acquainted with grief **and** sickness.

Here is the incredible thing. Our God has not walled himself off from our suffering. God does not just stand back, and passively watch, and say, "oh, that's too bad" when he sees our suffering. Instead, God enters into our suffering.

Jesus Christ, God the Son, voluntarily left his glory in

heaven, and came to earth, as a human, so he could experience the pain and suffering that we humans experience. Have you ever thought about that? Jesus Christ, who is God, chose to come to earth and experience, for himself, human suffering.

Indeed, Jesus experienced all dimensions of suffering. First, Jesus Christ knew what was in the hearts of humans who were suffering. Jesus knew what was in the hearts of the lepers he cleansed; he knew what was in the hearts of the lame he made to walk; and he knew what was in the hearts of the demonized people he set free. Jesus was acquainted with their tears, and their fears, and their isolation. He was aware of the stress of their poverty. Jesus was aware of the shame of having to beg in order to survive economically.

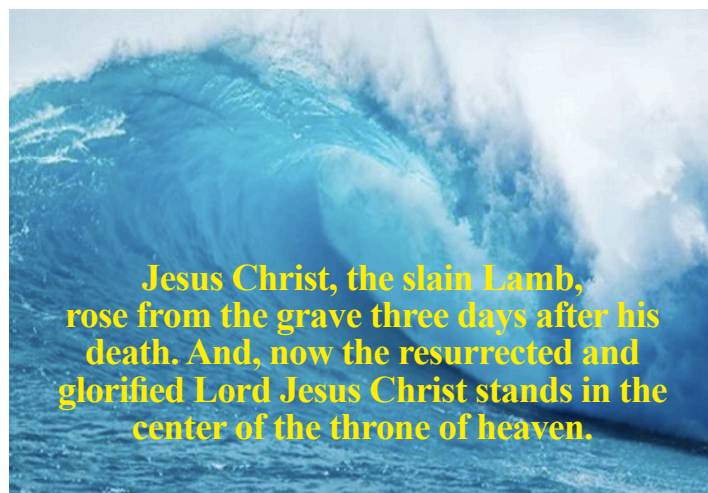
Next, Jesus Christ, himself, experienced grief when people he loved died. John the Baptist was beheaded. Jesus' good friend Lazarus got sick and died. And, when Lazarus died, the famous verse says, "Jesus wept."

Jesus Christ also experienced the pain of betrayal and abandonment. Judas betrayed him. And, his disciples all deserted him when he was arrested.

Finally, Jesus Christ experienced crushing physical pain, and brutal emotional anguish as he went to the Cross. After his arrest, Jesus Christ was beaten mercilessly. Flesh and muscle was ripped off his body with bone-tipped whips. And, he was nailed to a Roman Cross, one of the cruelest implements of death ever invented. And there, on that Cross of shame, Jesus died. Naked, alone, and forsaken.

Yes, Jesus Christ understands suffering. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Yet, the Apostle John tells us this in Rev. 5:6. *"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne"*

Continued next page



Jesus Christ, the slain Lamb, rose from the grave three days after his death. And, now the resurrected and glorified Lord Jesus Christ stands in the center of the throne of heaven.



Jesus Christ, the slain Lamb, rose from the grave three days after his death. And, now the resurrected and glorified Lord Jesus Christ stands in the center of the throne of heaven. The slain Lamb stands, alive, in the center of reality.

Jesus Christ is the answer to suffering because the slain Lamb understands suffering. The slain Lamb has experienced suffering. And the slain Lamb has overcome suffering. And, because he suffered as one of us, we realize we are never alone in our suffering.

Jesus Christ knows, he knows better than anyone, the suffering we experience in this broken world. And Jesus Christ promises he will stand with us in our suffering. He will weep with us in our suffering. And he will comfort us in our suffering. 2Corinthians 1:5 says, *"For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."* (ESV)

We cannot escape the suffering of this world. In fact, Darrell Johnson wrote, "the closer we get to the heart of the slain Lamb, the closer we get to a heart that aches for a suffering world."¹

When we suffer, we receive comfort from the slain Lamb who heart aches for the world. And then, we are called to extend that comfort to those around us who are suffering. We are called to point them to the only answer there is for suffering. The only answer for suffering is the slain Lamb whose name is Jesus Christ.

Whom do you know that is suffering right now? Pray for them. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an opportunity to point

them to the slain Lamb who will come alongside of them and bring them comfort.

Jesus Christ has the answer for setting things right:

Jesus Christ is not only the answer to suffering, our texts show us that Jesus Christ has the answer for setting things right in this broken world.

Rev. 5:5 refers to Jesus Christ as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah." Yet, then, Rev. 5:6 calls Jesus the "Lamb standing as though it had been slain." The change of imagery here is startling! In one verse, Jesus Christ goes from conquering Lion to slain Lamb.

Why did the conquering Lion become the slain Lamb? This is the heart of the gospel message. The Lion conquers through being slain. The Lion wins by sacrificing his life.

The Lion, who is Jesus Christ, demonstrates to us the power of "sacrificial love." It's the power of sacrificial love that sets things right in this world.

We see this sacrificial love displayed in our Isaiah text. Isa. 53:4-6 says, *"Surely he [Jesus Christ] has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."* (Isaiah 53:3-6, ESV)

Here is the power of sacrificial love. First, the conquering Lion became a slain Lamb **for us**. Jesus Christ bore **our** grief, **our** sickness, **our** sorrows, and **our** pain, on his own body when he was nailed to the Cross. The conquering Lion became a slain Lamb for us.

Second, the conquering Lion became a slain Lamb **because of us**. Jesus Christ was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities. The conquering Lion became a slain Lamb because of us.

And third, the conquering Lion became a slain Lamb instead of us. Isa. 53:7 says, *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."* Jesus Christ became our substitute, and died in our place, for our sins.

¹ Johnson, Darrell W., *Discipleship on the Edge*, (Vancouver, B.C., Regent College Publishing, 2004) p.149

The conquering Lion became a slain Lamb for us, because of us, and instead of us. Why? So that **“with his wounds we are healed.”** With his wounds, our sins are forgiven and we are made right with God. With his wounds, we can be healed physically, spiritually and emotionally. **His** wounds heal **us**.

This is the power of sacrificial love. What can set things right in this time of isolation, and fear, and anxiety, and suffering and death. The power of sacrificial love.

Sacrificial Love in Action: And we are seeing this power of sacrificial love demonstrated daily, especially by the brave doctors and nurses and other health care workers who are at the front lines of this crisis. Let me read to you a story that comes from an Italian doctor. This is from Dr. Julian Urban, a 38 year-old serving in a hospital in Lombardy, Italy.²

He writes, “Never in my darkest nightmares did I imagine that I would see and experience what has been going on in Italy in our hospital the past three weeks. The nightmare flows, and the river gets bigger and bigger. At first, a few patients came, then dozens, and then hundreds. Now, we are no longer doctors, but sorters who decide who should live and who should be sent home to die, though all these patients paid Italian health taxes throughout their lives.

Until two weeks ago, my colleagues and I were atheists. It was normal because we are doctors. We learned that science excludes the presence of God. I laughed at my parents going to church.

Nine days ago, a 75-year-old pastor was admitted into the hospital. He was a kind man. He had serious breathing problems. He had a Bible with him and impressed us by how he read it to the dying as he held their hand. We doctors were all tired, discouraged, psychologically and physically finished. When we had time, we listened to him.

We have reached our limits. We can do no more. People are dying every day. We are exhausted. We have two colleagues who have died, and others that have been infected. We realized that we needed to start asking God for help. We do this when we have a few free minutes. When we talk to each other, we cannot believe that, though we were once fierce

God’s call to us today is to receive Jesus Christ’s sacrificial love into our own life daily. And then, to turn around, and be the hands and feet of his sacrificial love to others, through our prayers, and through helping, as we are able, other struggling human beings.

atheists, we are now daily in search of peace, asking the Lord to help us continue so that we can take care of the sick.

Yesterday, the 75-year-old pastor died. Despite having had over 120 deaths here in 3 weeks, we were destroyed. He had managed, despite his condition and our difficulties, to bring us a PEACE that we no longer had hoped to find. The pastor went to the Lord, and soon we will follow him if matters continue like this.

I haven’t been home for 6 days. I don’t know when I ate last. I realize my worthlessness on this earth. I want to use my last breath to help others. I am happy to have returned to God while I am surrounded by the suffering and death of my fellow men. Please pray for Italy.”

This is the power of sacrificial love. God’s call to us today is to receive Jesus Christ’s sacrificial love into our own life daily. And then, to turn around, and be the hands and feet of his sacrificial love to others, through our prayers, and through helping, as we are able, other struggling human beings.

Jesus’ sacrificial love and our sacrificial love will help set things right. Amen!

See you next month,

Pastor Steve

² This story was forwarded to me so I don’t have the original reference.

HEALTH ADVISORY

- Stay home if sick. Avoid shopping if you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19, which include a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- Order food and other items online for home delivery or curbside pickup (if possible).
- Only visit the grocery store, or other stores selling household essentials, when you absolutely need to.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- If possible, use touchless payment (pay without touching money, a card, or a keypad). If you must handle money, a card, or use a keypad, use hand sanitizer right after paying.
- After leaving the store, use hand sanitizer. When you get home, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- At home, follow food safety guidelines: clean, separate, cook, chill.

For additional health information and updates, visit www.cdc.gov

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



WORSHIP 11:00 A.M. SUNDAY SERVICE

Due to the stay at home order from the Mayor of Los Angeles, our worship services at the church are suspended until further notice.

In the meantime, we are having "virtual worship services," via the Zoom teleconferencing application.

You will be able to join in worship on your smartphone, home computer, laptop, or even dial in from your home phone.

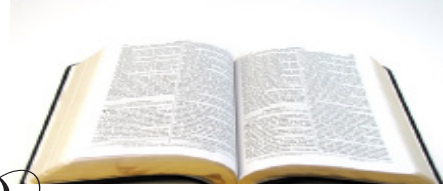
The weekly message are still being recorded and posted on our website at cpchollywood.org. Please go to the website for the latest information. We are praying that our merciful Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will protect our community and our country during these uncertain times.

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

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