

# The Parish VISITOR



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

Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood  
4011 Clinton St., Los Angeles, CA 90004-2298  
The REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY, Pastor

cpchollywood.org

APRIL

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# GOD is Love

*your pastor writes*

By REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY



## WELCOME BACK

### in our Sanctuary!



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

This is the month we celebrate Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday. The message below is this year's Good Friday message. I pray you will experience God's wonderful love as you read it. Happy Resurrection Day!

*God is Love, various scriptures, originally given on April 10, 2022 at CPC*

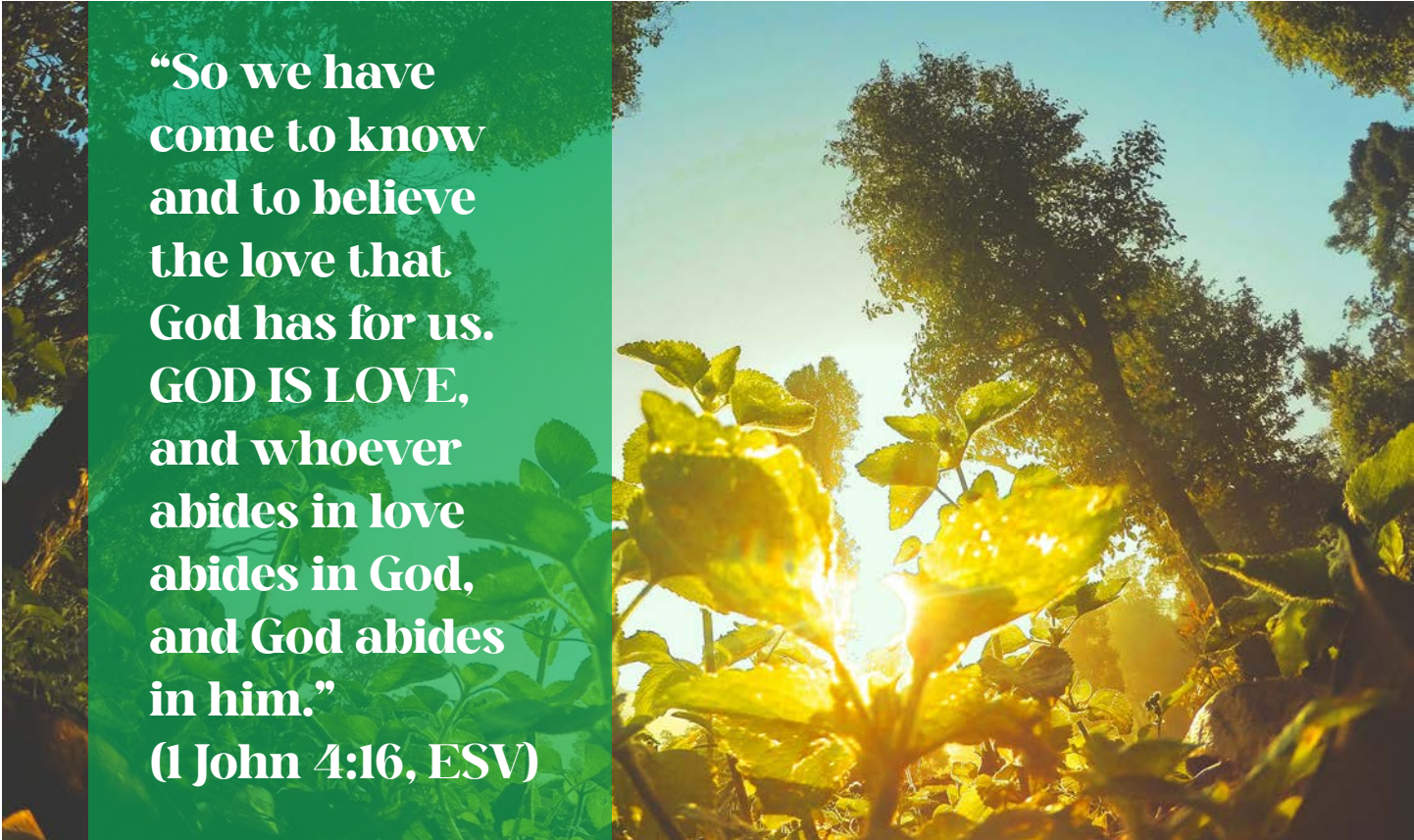
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**Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood  
is an intentional, healing community;  
proclaiming and demonstrating the wholeness  
of life offered in JESUS CHRIST.**

In addition to the in-person worship, we continue to stream the service on Zoom for those unable to attend in-person.

The invitation for joining the service can be found at the events page on our website at [cpchollywood.org](http://cpchollywood.org).

You can send in your prayer requests PRIOR to the service via email to [sbaroldy@gmail.com](mailto:sbaroldy@gmail.com) or text at 323-202-5078.



**“So we have  
come to know  
and to believe  
the love that  
God has for us.  
GOD IS LOVE,  
and whoever  
abides in love  
abides in God,  
and God abides  
in him.”  
(1 John 4:16, ESV)**

**Introduction: Outrageous events.** This coming week we will remember Jesus’ death and celebrate his resurrection.

The events of this coming week define our Christian faith. The events of this week make the Christian faith different from all other faiths. The events of this week are so outrageous, so contrary to worldly thinking, many people simply can’t accept them. They deem these events as too preposterous to even consider.

They ask, “How can we believe in a human who claims to be God? How can we believe in this God-man, Jesus Christ, who dies a horrible death on a Roman Cross, supposedly to set his followers free? How can we believe this God-man is buried in a tomb for three days, and then comes back to life, and appears to over 500 people?”

I understand their skepticism. These events are outrageous! Some will say they are preposterous! Yet, if true, these outrageous events reveal our God to be unique, to be the one and only God.

Our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,

who is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is truly one of a kind. Why? Because the defining characteristic of our God is love.

**God is Love:** In fact, scripture tells us God is love. The Apostle John, who had a very close relationship with Jesus, gives us this revelation in his first letter. 1John 4:8 says, “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” (1 John 4:8, ESV)

And then 1John 4:16 says, “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” (1 John 4:16, ESV)

I could preach whole sermons on each of these verses. But that is not for today. Today, I want to focus on these three, incredible words. God is love.

Now, how do we understand this amazing truth that God is love? Let’s begin by defining the word “love” because our English language is limited when it comes to the word “love”.

In English, we only have one word for “love.” And, it is used to mean all kinds of things, from romantic love to simply liking something a whole

lot. I often say "I love tacos." But I mean something completely different when I say, "I love my wife." The meaning of the word "love" in English is defined by its context.

There are three words for love, each with a different meaning, in the original language of the NT. The word used for "love" here, in 1John, speaks of a specific kind of love. It is best defined "unconditional love," or "committed love."

This "love" is not romantic love. This love is not the love of friendship or simply liking something a lot. This is "love" which always does what is best for the person being loved, no matter the cost. Did you get that last part?

This is "love" which always does what is best for the person being loved, even if it costs them everything. This kind of love is "committed love," or "unconditional love." God will always do what is best for us, regardless of the cost.

Now, there are two things we need to understand about God's love. First, God's love does not run hot and cold. The bible describes God's love as steadfast love. So, God's love doesn't change.

Second, and this is a big deal, God's love is not dependent on our performance. God doesn't love us more if we do something good. And, God doesn't love us less if we do something bad.

God's love is not connected, in any way, with our performance. God's love results from who God is. God's love is part of God's nature. So, please understand, we can't earn God's love. And, we can't lose God's love. God's love is, because God is love. Are you getting this?

And because God's love is, we can only respond to it. As it says in 1John 4:16, we can know God's love, and we can believe in God's love, and we can abide in God's love. Yet, we can't change God's love or control it.

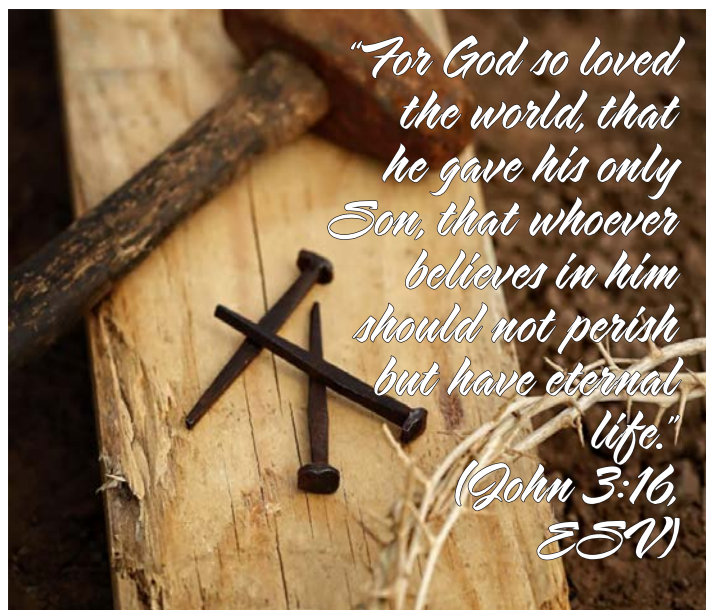
So, this forever releases us from the need to earn God's love. This forever releases us from trying to be "good enough" so that God will love us. Isn't that great news?

This may be hard for some of us because maybe we always felt we needed to "earn" our parents love.

Or, we needed to earn our friend's love, or even earn our spouse's love. We need to lay that paradigm aside because that is not who God is.

God's love is unconditional. So, please, give up trying to earn God's love. Instead, respond to it. Simply know God's love, believe it and abide in it. Amen!

**God's love gives:** The fact that God is love helps us frame the events of passion week, because these events make no sense outside of God's love. These



events make no sense outside of a committed love that gives. And that is what God does. God's love gives us his Son.

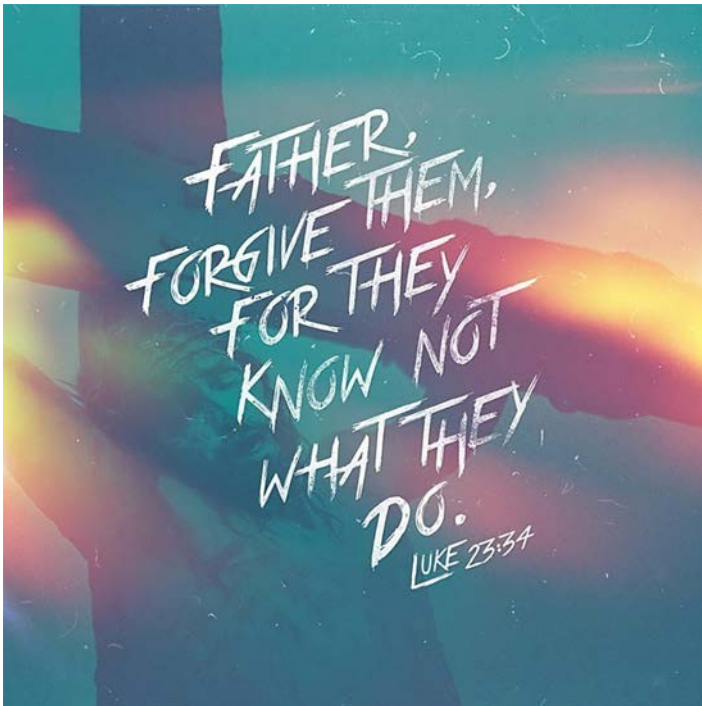
John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, ESV)

Why did God give his only Son? Because God is love and true love always gives.

How about the Son? Why did Jesus Christ willingly allow himself to be arrested? Why did Jesus Christ allow the soldiers to mock him, and beat him, and put a painful crown of thorns upon his head? Because God is love and true love always gives.

Why did Jesus Christ allow his flesh to be shredded, to be torn off his body during his scourging? Why did Jesus Christ allow the soldiers

*Continued next page*



to nail him to a Roman Cross, one of the cruelest and most painful forms of execution ever devised? Because God is love and true love always gives.

Please understand, Jesus **allows** all this torment to happen. Jesus could have stopped his torture and execution at any moment. Yet he didn't. Why? Because committed love always does what is best for the people being loved, regardless of the cost.

God knew Jesus' death and resurrection was the only way for God to set us free from the power of sin, and death and devil. God knew Jesus' death and resurrection was the only way for God to be reconciled to us. God knew Jesus' death and resurrection was the only way for God to be with us and in us. God knew Jesus' death and resurrection was the only way for us to have eternal life with God forever.

God is committed love. The events of this coming week are outrageous because the love behind them is outrageous. Do you see that?

Now, what are we to do with God's outrageous love? We are to know it, believe it and abide in it. We abide in God's love through repentance, and putting our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

**Committed Love modeled:** Jesus models this outrageous love in his statements from the Cross. And we only have time to look at three of his seven statements.

Jesus first statement, from the Cross, is found in Luke 23:34. It reads, "And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34, ESV)

Father, forgive them? Again, this is outrageous. Jesus is innocent of all charges which led to his crucifixion

The Jewish leaders have accused and convicted Jesus, in a rigged trial, in order to maintain their worldly power and status. Jesus' sentence of death is outrageous. Yet, Jesus asks the Father to forgive the Jewish leaders.

The Roman authorities believe Jesus is innocent. Nonetheless, they bend to the desires of the Jewish leadership, and condemn Jesus to death, again to preserve their own worldly standing. Yet, Jesus asks the Father to forgive the Roman authorities.

The Roman soldiers have abused Jesus terribly. They have mocked Jesus. They have beaten Jesus with their fists. They have whipped Jesus' body to shreds. They have driven 12 inch spikes through his hands and his feet, nailing a naked Jesus to a Cross of shame. This is all so outrageously unjust. And it makes me angry just to think about it.

Yet, what is Jesus' response? Jesus' first statement is, "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**" An outrageous statement that comes from outrageous, committed love.

Jesus second statement we want to look at is from Luke 23:43. It says "And he [Jesus] said to him [a criminal], "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43, ESV)

Jesus makes this statement to a criminal who was crucified next to him. Unlike Jesus, this criminal is guilty. Yet, this criminal is, now, a fellow sufferer on a cross of agony. And in the midst of his unspeakable suffering, the criminal cries, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. (Luke 23:42, ESV)."

Jesus, remember me, because I am abandoned.  
Jesus, remember me, because I am in great pain.  
Jesus, remember me, because you are my only hope.

Jesus does not reject this criminal even though the criminal is guilty. Just like he has done his whole ministry, Jesus embraces the guilty. Jesus welcomes the unlovely. Jesus stands ready to forgive the sinner whenever they repent and put their faith in him as Lord and Savior. Why? Because Jesus' love is outrageous.

And Jesus responds to the criminal, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Or today, you will be with me in heaven.

Just like the criminal, we are all guilty of something. We all have fallen short of how God wants us to live our life. We, like the criminal, may feel abandoned. We may be in great pain. Yet, Jesus' outrageous, committed love does not reject us.

Jesus welcomes us, if we will simply respond to his love and tell God we are sorry for what we have done, and put our faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins.

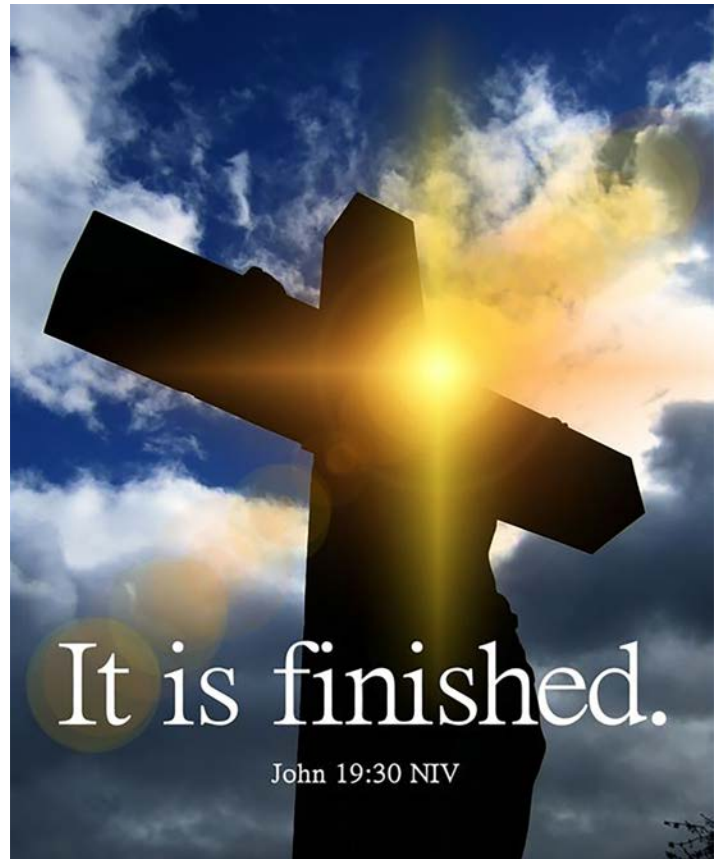
Jesus' response tells us Jesus' love is steadfast. Jesus is present to us in our loneliness and our pain. His love is always there for us to receive if we will call out to him.

Jesus' response to this criminal also shows us that even if it is in the last moments of our life, it is never too late to repent, and ask for forgiveness, and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. Of course, it is better to receive Jesus now and enjoy the blessings of salvation in this life. Yet, better late than never. Amen!

Jesus' final word on the Cross comes from John 19:30, Jesus says, "It is finished" and then he bows his head and dies.

"It is finished" These are not words of defeat. These are words of completion, words of fulfillment; words of victory.

It is finished but it is not over. What is finished is our old, self-centered way of life. What is finished is a world in which we live captive to anxiety, and to fear, and to our need to control things.



It is finished, but it is not over, because in three days, God's power will raise Jesus from the dead. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ defeats the power of sin, and death, and the devil. They no longer have the final word. Instead, committed love has the final word.

The question for us this morning is, "how do we respond to this outrageous love?" Will we receive it? Will we invite Jesus Christ into our lives?

Next, will we let this outrageous love flow through us and so impact the world around us? Will we love our family, and neighbors and co-workers with the same committed love Jesus has for us?

Will we ask for forgiveness when required, and extend forgiveness to others when asked? The world cannot comprehend God's outrageous love. We must show them. Will we show them? Amen!

See you next month.

Pastor Steve

# Helping Ukrainian Refugees

*I would like to share with you this letter I received from our sister in Christ and missionary partner, Teresa Kostov:*

Dear Simone,

I have inserted an update that I wrote in the beginning when we first started helping with the refugees from Ukraine. Our first approach was to help those who could not leave Ukraine but needed to flee from villages and cities being bombarded – a pastor friend of ours has a sister church in Kyiv. They are helping provide up to 300 people with a safe place to live by giving them a bed and warm meals in their church building. They are also serving food to those who cannot buy food through pop-up tables in various locations around the city of Kyiv.

A second approach is helping those who are seeking refuge in Bulgaria. We have pastor friends in the Eastern part of the country where the largest group of refugees are entering into Bulgaria. They are helping between 10-15 people a day by finding them temporary housing, providing them with phone cards, getting them clothes, hygiene supplies and food. They are also helping them find apartments in the long term since a month has gone by and most that are in temporary housing cannot stay permanently with those that are housing them. Those entering into apartments need help with the same types of items, including housing items for sleeping and kitchen goods. When we are able, we also assist with the first month/s of electricity.

In Vidin I am assisting a local business man who has generously allowed his business to be used as a warehouse for clothes and hygiene donations. His business is in computer repairs, so we are

also collecting laptop donations for the kids so that they can study online. He repairs them and then gives them to the families to use. We invite the ladies (Ukrainian refugees) to come to the “warehouse” and organize the clothes. They take what they need and then the leftovers we send to Sofia to be given to refugees there or to be sent on to other parts of the country. The ladies are very happy for this little bit of work that they are able to do...

In Vidin, there are mostly women and children. They are being accommodated in two hotels with free breakfast, lunch and dinner. There are about 100 of them; 50 in one hotel and 50 in the other. There are some men but not many. One man is a professor at a university in Ukraine. He is still teaching online but came to Bulgaria only with a phone. Noah donated his laptop and now he is teaching his online course on Noah's laptop! He was very happy – and I think Noah will strongarm his dad for a new laptop! There are also two male trainers who came with their rowing team – a group of 18 youth between the ages of 12 and 18 (both boys and girls). What I understood is that bombs were falling as they were practicing or competing in a different part of the country, so the parents of the children asked the coaches to evacuate the children to safety. The children are here without their parents.

I am mostly working one-on-one with a group of 25 mothers and children. I have gone to meet with them several times to assess their needs. I have dropped off donations of undergarments and hygiene supplies/toiletries. Tomorrow I will take all the mothers to buy new bras...they were so sweet. I went with the business man last week and asked them: “Do you need anything?” “No,” they said, “We have everything we need.” I thought

*We have pastor friends in the Eastern part of the country where the largest group of refugees are entering into Bulgaria. They are helping between 10-15 people a day by finding them temporary housing, providing them with phone cards, getting them clothes, hygiene supplies and food.*



to myself, "Everyone needs more socks and underwear...especially if you've been somewhere for a month and you came with only one small bag!" So, I went and bought sizes S, M and L in underwear, undershirts and socks. I dropped them off and they were so happy! Then I wrote to them today and asked, "Need anything else?" And they said, "Well, we're a little embarrassed to ask but a few of us are a little larger women and we can't fit into those sizes you got us. Could we get some larger underwear? And also, I only have one bra and it is now falling apart...could I get one new bra as well?"

They said they were too embarrassed in front of the man to ask for such things...which makes sense. So, tomorrow I will take them on a bra and undie super shopping spree! I hope they have fun. They are not used to getting so many handouts and feel bad, but I told them, "In your situation I would want someone to be kind and generous with me. Plus, I am using money from friends who want to help but live far, far away. They are concerned for you and want to help you in your time of need. So, this is not me. This is a whole lotta people who want to care for you." They just sat there, staring.

BTW, they speak Russian to me and I Bulgarian

to them...we use Google translate...it's funny!

These 100 will receive accommodations for a month or so – I don't know what will happen after that time is up. Nobody knows really. They are worried about this fact and I don't blame them. All the mothers left their husbands behind to evacuate to safety (or fathers, uncles and brothers). Men between the ages of 18 and 60 cannot leave the country unless they have 3 or more children. The men are not working and people either have to live off of their savings (if they have any) or live off of the goodness of others (and how long will that last?). These ladies here have very little money with them....and they are constantly worried for their loved ones they left behind. You can see the pain in their eyes. But God is good and I know they feel His love....

That's it for now. Let me know if you have any questions.

Hugs,

Teresa

If you feel led to give, please use code S-15/ Ukraine through **Door of Hope International** ([www.dohi.org](http://www.dohi.org)).

*May your first thoughts each day be prayer; may you have deep and intimate conversations with the Lord as you turn to Him in prayer; and may you eagerly watch for His responses. Grace and Peace*

## PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

### **Praise and thanksgiving:**

- Christ Presbyterian Church as a people of God have entered their 100th year of community. A people called out to witness to and worship our Lord Jesus Christ.

- We are especially thankful for Ron Jung's life. We experienced through Ron, GOD's saving grace, generosity, kindness, and beauty.

- We are grateful that GOD has given Tom a strong heart to endure surgery mid-April.

- The buzz sound on zoom and recording is better!
- For GOD's gracious provision and the privilege to bless others in His name.

**For those who are grieving:** Grieving is a long process. Let's keep remembering:

- Marilyn Lee, Ron Jung's sister and her husband Tom Lee, and their two sons.
- Hazel McElfresh who lost her daughter, Dee, and is parenting her teenage grandson.
- Stella Kenner lost her son.
- Maria Cardenas lost her longtime dog companion, Marley.
- Tom Chinen has lost his brother.

### **For those who need physical healing:**

- Dora, Sueko's sister, general healing and tumor in her mouth.
- Pat, Sueko's brother, general healing and respiratory.
- Tom Chinen who is having surgery April 18. And for his wife Noreen.



- Yuri lives with extreme chronic pain and her daughters Aya and Umi.

### **For those who are home bound or in a care facility:**

- Joan Janecek, Barbara Kashiwagi, Kimi Fujitani, Karen Koranye, Frank Morimoto, Janet Nozaki, Jean Sakai, Irene Mayeda caring for her mother Harumi, Esther Ingram caring for her husband Charles.

### **General:**

- For emotional healing for Bill Wilkins and his wife Judith who experienced a traumatic assault.
- For our Russian and Ukrainian brothers and sisters in Christ to have strength and courage to persevere in their witness of the hope we have in Jesus Christ.
- For a deeper and more intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ for us all.

### **Our Missionaries:**

The Kostov family pastor in Vidin, Bulgaria. The Zebley family pastor in Tokyo, Japan. The Rices pastor in South Sudan. The Mason's also pastor in Japan. Please pray for financial support, favor with the community, spiritual and physical protection, and renewed strength for the ministry.

### **For the shepherds:**

- Pastors Ernesto and Juana Salguero, Maria Cardenas and her speaking ministry, and Pastor Damon and Guia Woods, our neighbor church, Church on Melrose. And of course for Pastor Steve and Simone.

## *How can we pray for you?*

If you have prayer requests, you can send them via email or text PRIOR to our service each Sunday.

My email is sbaroldy@gmail.com.  
You can text me at 323-202-5078.







## Resurrection Sunday

Whether it is called Easter or Resurrection Sunday is not as important as the event and purpose of the resurrection. However, the timing of the crucifixion and resurrection is significantly meaningful. The resurrection of Jesus is the culmination of all things meaningful, faith and fact, in establishing a relationship with God.

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are God's provision for the perfect and final sacrifice for man's sins. God requires no other payment for sins! With this provision, mankind is granted opportunity for new life by the forgiveness of sin and escape from its bondage. It is ours for the mere acceptance of this gift.

This is the key event in the New Testament where it is proclaimed throughout. All four Gospels report the miraculous event. In Matthew 28:6 the angel declared "He is not here: for he is risen!" Mark 16:6 reports "'Don't be alarmed,' [the angel] said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.'"

In Luke 24:46-48, the risen Jesus gave His disciples a greater understanding of the resurrection when He told them: "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." Jesus foretells of His resurrection in John 16, then to one of the doubting witnesses, Thomas, He says the following in John 20:29: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." - Crosswalk.com

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to Tom Chinen having surgery April 18th the Sunday morning Ukulele lessons will be on hiatus. We should be back in a couple of months. In the meantime, keep practicing!



Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/384758031?pwd=ZnEySIBjL1VkuMhiTWRCREdmZVhJZz09>

Meeting ID: 384 758 031

Password: 351955

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,384758031# US (San Jose)

+13462487799,,384758031# US (Houston)

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### MARCH 2022



	<u>MARCH 2022</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Receipts	\$ 8,595	\$ 28,458
Disbursements	\$ 13,350	\$ 44,100
Increase (Deficit)	(\$ 4,756)	(\$ 15,641)

## Gifts & Offering



*We are grateful for your continued generosity in supporting our ministry.*

*Please consider sending a gift or donation to:*

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

# CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD



**SUNDAYS at 11:00 A.M.  
IN-PERSON OR ON ZOOM**

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/384758031?pwd=ZnEySjBjL1VkUmhiTWRCREdmZVhJZz09>

Meeting ID: 384 758 031  
Password: 351955  
One tap mobile  
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*"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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