

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

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Good News OF Great Joy

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!*

Following is the message I gave for Christmas 2020. I pray you will be encouraged.

Good News of Great Joy, various scriptures, originally given at CPC on December 20, 2020.

Introduction: The Christmas story is a story of hope. It is also the story of the relationship God wants with humanity. And we need hope and relationship, with God, more than ever, don't we? So, let's listen to the story of the birth of Jesus Christ with fresh ears and with open heart.

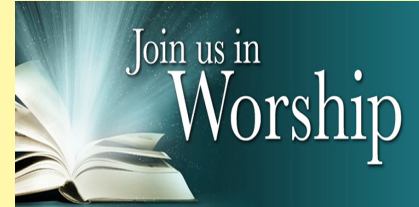
Good News of Great Joy: The gospel of Luke tells us Jesus Christ's birth is "good news of great joy." Let's listen to this good news once again.

Just over 2000 years ago, on a clear, starlit night, in the little town of Bethlehem, a wondrous event occurred that changed the course of human history forever. Just outside Bethlehem, the City of David, shepherds were keeping watch over their sheep.

I imagine the shepherds noticed it was unusually quiet that night, as if all creation was holding its breath. The shepherds pondered the unearthly calm. Their spirits were tingling. They were sensing something of the divine, yet, they didn't know why?

Then, suddenly, spectacularly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord God shone around them. Incredible glory, straight from heaven, lit up their world. I wonder what it would have felt like to be there with the shepherds, don't you? How do you think you would have felt if you were there? Awestruck, terrified, overwhelmed?

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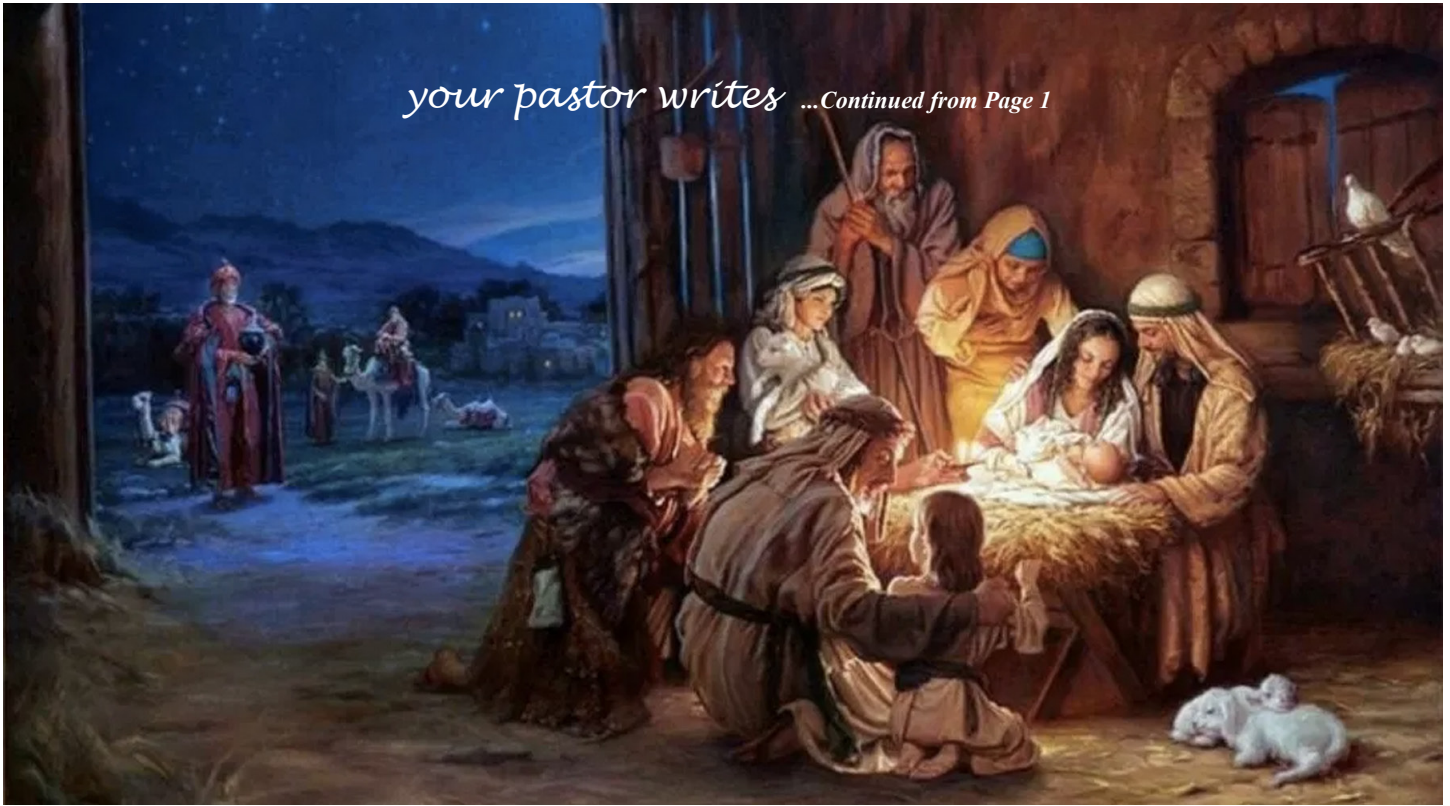


With the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, CPC remains closed to safeguard the health of its members and congregants. We continue to hold a virtual worship Service every Sunday at 11:00am, using Zoom. Service ends around 12:30pm.

The invitation for joining the service can be found at the events page on our website at cpchollywood.org.

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

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



As the glory of the Lord shone around these most blessed of shepherds, the angel made this stunning proclamation. “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10–11, ESV)

The angel proclaimed the birth of Jesus Christ was “good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” The birth of Jesus Christ is good news of great joy for all people, including all you precious people listening to this message.

Now, why? Why is the birth of Jesus Christ good news of great joy? Isa. 7:14 gives us one reason. It says, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14, ESV)

This sign, this baby, born to the virgin Mary, would be called “Immanuel.” Immanuel means “God with us.” God with us. Isn’t that good news of great joy?

And, please understand what is happening here. God, in the baby Jesus, became personally present to us. Now, take a moment and let this sink in. God didn’t text us. God didn’t simply post on our Face Book page, or call us on WhatsApp. God came to be with us, in person, because God knows the power of presence. God came to share his life with us. God came because he wants a personal relationship with us.

Relationship is so important. We all desire to have someone with whom we can share life. Someone to share our joys and our griefs; our victories and our defeats, our gains and our pains. We all long to have someone to rejoice with, and someone to cry with. That is the power of presence. Jesus is God with us. Jesus is God who is present with us.

Jesus is eternal God, who agreed to take on our humanity, and come to earth, so he could relate to us. So he could see what we see and feel what we feel. Jesus comes to share his life with us, and make it possible, for us, to share our life with him. Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to have a relationship, a personal relationship, with the Lord God Almighty, Creator of all that is. Isn’t that amazing?

And, so, as a follower of Jesus, rejoice that God is with you. Revel in this good news of great joy. Remember, that through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is always right here with us, so, we are never alone. Not even in the midst of a pandemic and government ordered shut downs.

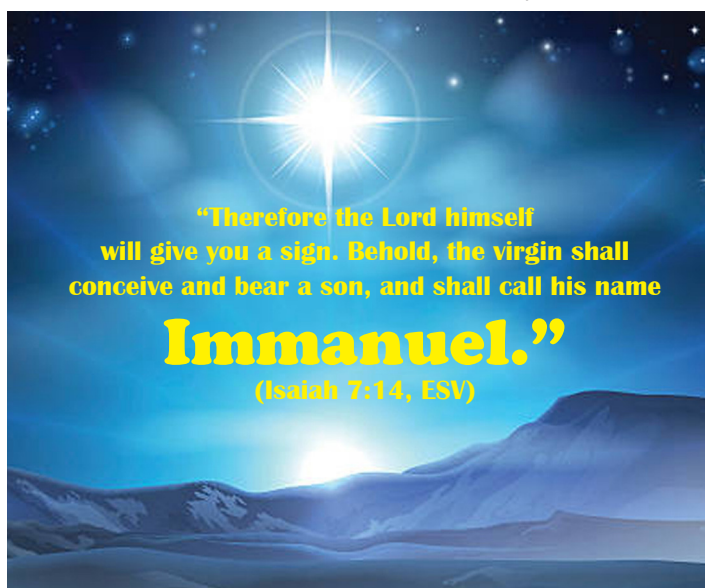
Through our faith in Jesus, God is in relationship with us. I encourage you, talk to Jesus as you would talk to a dear friend. Share everything about your life with him. Tell him about your joys and sorrows and pain. Ask him for what you need, then, trust him. For Jesus is, Immanuel, God with us.

How God has been with us through COVID: True to his word, God has been with us, God has been with CPC, through this pandemic. Let me share with you how.

Back at the beginning of November, I was contacted by Danny Yamashiro. I think most of you know Danny. Danny was an intern at CPC, and now runs Jesus Christ is Calling You, an international ministry.

Danny wanted Simone and I to be on his radio show. And, to prep us for the show, he asked Simone and I to think about this question. How have we seen the hand of God moving through this pandemic? Another way to ask the question is, how has God been with us during this pandemic?

Unfortunately, just a couple days later, I started having



problems with my lungs and we ended up postponing being on the show. Yet, that question stuck with me and I want to share what I have observed. Let this be an encouragement during this difficult time.

First, I saw the hand of God moving in provision. Right at the beginning of the pandemic, in April 2020, our church had its biggest receipts ever for the month of April.

These receipts bulked up our cash position. They took away worry about being able to pay our bills during this crisis. They also allowed CPC to not charge Faro de Luz rent for two months, and then only charge half rent for the next several months. This was a huge blessing for Faro de Luz as their receipts dropped about 80% because their people weren't able to work. Again, remember, this happened at the beginning of the pandemic. God provided for us **before** we needed the provision. Amen! God is with us.

There is another way God prepared us for the pandemic before it happened. Around October 2019, I began to feel a persistent nudge from the Holy Spirit to finally get a website for the church up and running. So, by the first of the year 2020, we had our website up.

We, then, signed up with Podbean. Podbean allows us to upload our recorded messages, and then, post them to our website with an embeddable podcast player. So, when the pandemic hit, and the church was closed, we were still able to post

a weekly message that was easily listened to on our website. Again, this all happened a several months **before** the pandemic hit. Just like with provision, God went **before** us and paved the way. God is with us!

So, let me stop and ask. Look back over the past nine months. How have you seen the Lord God go before you and pave the way? Has God provided for you before you needed it?

Now, a third way we have seen the hand of God moving through this pandemic is through our Zoom worship services. Yes, we all long to worship in person. Yet, because we were forced to use Zoom, we now have members in Assisted Living Facilities, and members at home with care givers, who are able to join us for worship. And they will continue to join us on Zoom even after we restart our in-person worship services. Again, God provided unexpected blessings. God is with us!

On a more personal note, I saw the hand of God moving in my sister's family during this pandemic. If you remember, my sister's entire family (except for her granddaughter) came down with COVID 19. Her son, her husband and her mother in law were all hospitalized. My sister Lorrie, and her daughter, Brianna, were not hospitalized, but they both felt really bad for several weeks. So, it was a miserable time for them. Yet, you all prayed for them, and they all came through it, praise God!

After they came through it, my sister was praising Jesus, and not just because they were all okay. She was praising Jesus because she said the experience drew her family closer together than they had been in years. The family was praying together daily, including her husband who never prayed with them before. God met them in the midst of their crisis. God was with them!

So, again, let me ask you. How have you seen the hand of God moving through the pandemic? How has God been with you? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you revelation on this. This will encourage you. This will give you hope.

Jesus saves: Now, before we finish, let's look at a final scripture, Mat. 1:21. This verse tells us why Jesus came to earth. In this verse, an angel appears to Joseph, Mary's husband, and says this. "She [Mary] will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21, ESV)

The name Jesus means "God saves." The angel tells Jo-

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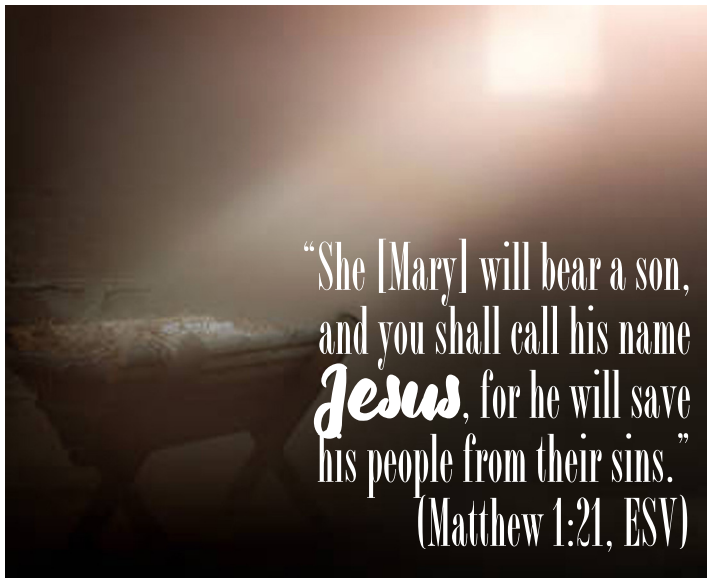
And, so, as a follower of Jesus, rejoice that God is with you. Revel in this good news of great joy. Remember, that through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is always right here with us, so, we are never alone. Not even in the midst of a pandemic and government ordered shut downs.

seph that Mary's son will save his people from their sins. This is why Jesus came. This is indeed good news!

Yet, being saved from our sins is only part of the good news. Please understand, when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we become entirely new creations, and begin living in an entirely new spiritual realm.

This is so exciting. When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, our spiritual address changes. Listen to Col. 1:13. It says, "He [God] has delivered us [in Jesus Christ] from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son."

Understand this. If we are **not** in Jesus Christ, we are in the domain of darkness. The domain of darkness is the domain of death in all its forms. In the domain of darkness, our understanding is darkened. Our thought life is darkened. In the domain of darkness, thoughts of fear, doubt, anxiety, depression, discouragement reign supreme.



In the domain of darkness, we are unable to break free from our negative mind set because the powers of darkness energize these negative thoughts. Trying to break free from our negative thoughts on our own is like trying to swim through a riptide current.

Yet, the good news of great joy is this. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, God delivers us from the domain of darkness by transferring us to the kingdom of the beloved Son. God literally plucks us out of the domain of darkness and places us in the kingdom of the Son. Our spiritual address changes.

This verse reveals our physical address is not nearly as important as our spiritual address. We may own a beautiful mansion, with a physical address in Beverly Hills, yet still have a spiritual address in the domain of darkness. On the other hand, we may rent a rundown studio apartment, with a physical address in South Central LA, yet, still have a spiritual address in the kingdom of the beloved Son.

Your physical address is determined by how much money

you have. Your spiritual address is based on whether you have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Your physical address is temporal. Your spiritual address is eternal. So, let me ask? What is your current spiritual address?

The good news of great joy is this. You don't need money to change your spiritual address. All you need is faith in Jesus Christ. This change of address is life changing because the kingdom of the beloved Son is a kingdom of **life**. It is a kingdom of abundant life. Life in its highest and most blessed form.

The kingdom of the beloved Son is also a kingdom of **light**. So, in this kingdom, our understanding is enlightened. We are able to think God's thoughts about who we are and how much God loves us. We understand God is for us.

The light of this kingdom helps us grow. And as we grow, we discover the kingdom of the beloved Son is a kingdom of righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit. This doesn't mean we will never fear, or doubt, or be depressed or anxious. Yet, it means this will not be our norm.

The Holy Spirit, over time, transforms our thinking. And as our thinking is transformed, we better understand who we are; we understand how much God loves us; we understand the Holy Spirit dwells in us to give us the power to rise above our fear and doubt and discouragement.

In the kingdom of the Son, we are never left alone in darkness. God is always there to help us and to shine his light into whatever darkness we are experiencing.

In Jesus Christ, our spiritual address changes now and for all eternity. This is what it means to be "saved." So, let me ask again. What is your spiritual address? Is it the domain of darkness or the kingdom of the beloved Son? Would you like to change your address?

You can change your spiritual address right now. I am going to pray. And if you want to commit, or recommit your life to Jesus, if you want Jesus to save you from your sins, if you want to be delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of the beloved Son, then pray along with me.

"Heavenly Father, I thank you for your great love for me. I acknowledge that I am a sinner. I acknowledge I have broken your commandments. Father, I ask that my sins be forgiven through Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus died for my sins, and through him, my sins are forgiven. Father, I ask Jesus to be my Savior. I want my spiritual address to be in his kingdom. Father, I also ask Jesus to be my Lord. I turn my heart, my mind, my will over to Jesus.

And, Father, I ask you to fill me, right now, with your Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit come upon me in power, so that I may follow Jesus and obey him. In Jesus name. Amen."

See you next month,
Pastor Steve

2020 Christmas Sunday

Pastor Steve Baroldy conducted a special Christmas celebration during Sunday worship via Zoom on Sunday, December 20, at 11 a.m.

It began with Mrs. Simone Baroldy reading the Christmas story from the Gospels.

Brian and Denise Albriton sang "Mary's Boy Child" and "Go Tell It On The Mountains."

Tom Chinen sang and played on the ukulele "Home For The Holidays" and "Hallelujah Christmas" by Cloverfield.

Pastor Steve then gave the pastoral prayer.

Kris Lin presented a worship hula dance.

Eric and Jordan did a piano duet of "Jingle Bells."

Jimi Yamagishi sang a Christmas song.

Sunday worship closed with the singing of "Emmanuel."

FINANCIAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2020



	DEC. 2020	YTD
Receipts	\$ 41,261	\$ 137,727
Disbursements	\$ 14,996	\$ 137,308
Increase (Deficit)	\$ 26,264	\$ 419

Dear Church Members and Friends,

The Session and I are overwhelmed by God's faithfulness as demonstrated through your generous giving in December. We were running an unusually large deficit in 2020 because of the Covid crisis. You responded and we ended the year with a small surplus. Praise Jesus!

Thank you for your support of CPC's ministry.

Pastor Steve and Session

In Remembrance of Mrs. Kyoko Nakano

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son that you may know that you have eternal life.—I John 5:13—ESV

* * *

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. —John 11:25-26 – ESV



Family services were conducted by our Pastor Steve Baroldy at Rose Hills Memorial Park for Mrs. Kyoko Nakano, 100, who went to be with the Lord on December 23, at Kei-Ai in Lincoln Heights.

Mrs. Nakano celebrated her 100th birthday in June, 2020. Mrs. Nakano joined Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 21, 1999 through the Sacrament of Baptism and Profession of Faith during the ministry of the Rev. Ted Esaki, then pastor.

She was born in Watsonville, California. She enjoyed cooking. Mrs. Nakano was invited to church by Mrs. Shizuka Oawa. On May 18, 2012, Mrs. Nakano participated in Pastor Steve's Bible study at Keiro Intermediate Care Facility. Earlier on

March 18, 2012 Pastor conducted the first worship service and first communion at Keiro I.C.F. This facility later became known as Sakura Gardens.

When Mrs. Nakano first entered the Keiro I.C.F. she would still come to church on Sunday for a few weeks.

Shortly after coming to church Mrs. Nakano filled and sewed the red and green zabutons (seat cushions) as her gift to the church. There were more than 100 cushions that she sewed for church.

May God be with her loving family Ernest, Kazuko, Eugene and each of their families, grandchildren and great grandchildren and nephews Francis Nakano, Melvin Nakano and Milton Nakano and each of their families.

Gift & Offering



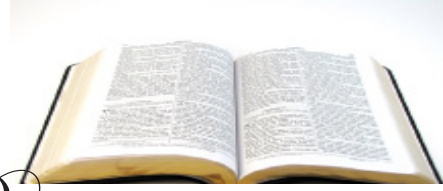
Our campus may be temporarily shut, but CPC is doing all we can to serve our church, to connect people to one another, and to connect all of us to God through our online worship.

Now more than ever we need your help for us to 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**

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 for Ron Jung; healing and God's blessings for Harumi Mayeda; strength to care for her Mom for Irene Mayeda; overall healing 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; 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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