

# 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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2021**

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*your pastor writes*

By REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY

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

The pandemic which has kept us in our homes, and which has kept our churches closed, is beginning to wane. Our country is beginning to "open up." I believe this message is very appropriate as we come out of the "tombs" we have been in this last year.

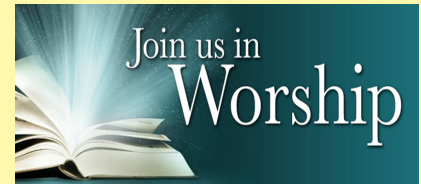
As this is our Easter issue, I pray each of you has a glorious Lenten season, and that hope springs eternal in

your heart as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Life Now (John 11:17-27; 38-44)  
Easter Message originally given at CPC  
on April 8, 2012*

Let me begin by asking this. Would anyone here this morning like a more abundant life? Would you like a more peaceful life? Would you like a more joyful life?

*Continued next page*



## **CPC to re-open for in-person worship services April 4**

**T**he Session and I joyfully announce that Christ Presbyterian Church will re-open for in-person worship services on April 4, 2021, at 11:00am. The Session and I believe it is fitting that in-person worship be resurrected on Resurrection Sunday! In addition to the in-person worship, we will continue to stream the service on Zoom for those unable to attend in-person.

Until then, we continue to hold a virtual worship Service every Sunday at 11:00am, using Zoom. 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. - Pastor Steve Baroldy

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

**On this Resurrection morning God's creation is dressed for a party. And our spirits soar as we remember that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is risen.**



Life! At this time of year, we see it all around us. The days grow ever longer and warmer. Our gardens are bursting with blooms. On this Resurrection morning God's creation is dressed for a party. And our spirits soar as we remember that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is risen.

Today, we celebrate the greatest victory known to humankind. We celebrate Jesus Christ's complete, overwhelming defeat of death. This morning, we pull back the curtain on death, and darkness, and sorrow, and we let the glorious light that comes from Jesus Christ's resurrection stream in to bring new life to every dark place.

Life! Jesus Christ is raised from death to life. And his life; life eternal; life abundant; life full of joy; that life is available to us **now**. Not just when we die, but **right now!**

Today, I exhort you: make Jesus Christ's victory over death your victory.

Today, I urge you, **come to fullness of life in Jesus Christ now!**

**Death-A Terrible Enemy:** As we turn to our passage in John, chapter 11, let me ask you a question. What is the most terrible enemy we face as human beings? It is death, isn't it?

In fact, one author, Ernest Becker, wrote about this in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Denial of Death*. Becker wrote, "one of the greatest rediscoveries of modern thought [is this]: that of all the things that move man, one of the principal ones is his terror of death."<sup>1</sup>

Becker went on to write that everything humans do in this world is an attempt to deny and overcome death. For humankind, death is the king of terrors.

Our passage this morning opens not with life, but with death. In John 11:17, Jesus arrives in Bethany to find that his good friend Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days. And Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, are in the throes of grieving.

They are grieving because death has severed the precious relationship they had with their brother Lazarus. And, as they grieve, I imagine their hearts are full of sadness, and bewilderment, and unanswered questions.

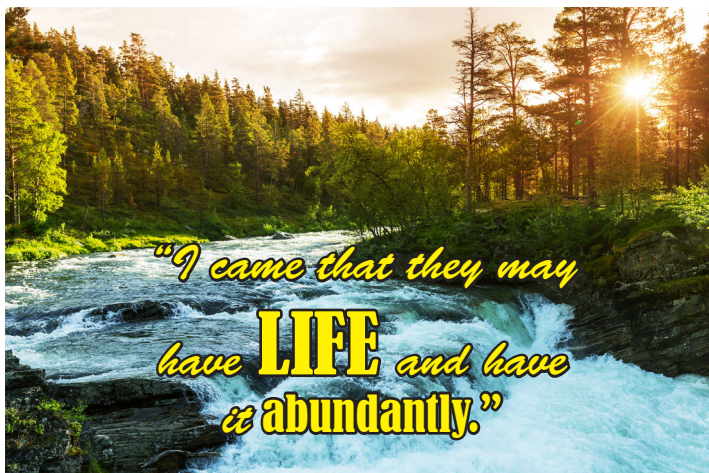
I think we all can relate, can't we? We all have experienced precious relationships terminated by death. We all have experienced the loss, and the pain, and the sorrow associated with the physical death of someone we love. I think we can all agree. Death is a terrible enemy.

And, as Martha struggles with the death of her brother, she hears Jesus is coming. So, she goes out to meet Jesus.

Look with me at John 11:21-24 (ESV): "Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha answered, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'"

Here is one of those classic misunderstandings that so often occur in John's Gospel. Jesus is telling Martha that he's going to give Lazarus life now. Jesus is telling Martha that he's going to raise Lazarus from the dead.

Yet, Martha isn't getting it. In her human understanding, Martha knows that Lazarus has been dead for four days. Martha knows that Lazarus' body is decomposing. So, she clings to the hope of a resurrection that occurs somewhere down the



Resurrection, and the life that comes with it, is not an event to be put on a time line. Resurrection and life are found in me." Jesus is saying, "Martha, there will be a resurrection because I am the resurrection. Martha, I am the **guarantee** there will be a resurrection."

And, this morning, we confidently declare that Jesus' statement is true because Jesus himself is resurrected from the dead. Jesus' resurrection proves he is the resurrection.

And, furthermore, Jesus says, "Martha, not only am I the resurrection, I am the life. Jesus says, "Martha, that life you hope for on the last day, I am that life. The life you hope for is standing in front of you right now. Do you get it, Martha? I am life."

Now, what kind of life is Jesus speaking of here. Well, Jesus tells us what kind of life he is speaking of in other verses in the gospel of John. For instance, Jesus, in John 10:10, says (ESV), "I came that they [meaning my followers] may have life and have it abundantly."

And, in John 10:28, again speaking of his followers, Jesus says, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." (ESV)

And last, in the first part of John, chapter 15, Jesus tells his followers that they must obey his commandments. And, then Jesus says in John 15:11 (ESV), "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

What kind of life is Jesus speaking of when he says "I am the life." Jesus is speaking of life eternal, life abundant, and life full of joy. This is the life that Jesus has. And this is the life Jesus gives to us.

And here is the exciting part. We receive this life at the moment we believe. In other words, when we choose to follow Jesus, we receive this life **now**.

*Continued next page*



road, on what she knows as the "last day."

Martha, like most who lived in Old Testament times, has a limited understanding of resurrection. She believes in a resurrection at the end of time. Yet, she couldn't tell you much about it, or what it meant.

Martha just had this vague hope that something **might** happen in the future. That somehow, she and Lazarus, would be raised from the grave and be in the presence of God. Martha, bless her heart, clung to this tiny drop of hope. Yet her hope is very vague.

Do you have the same attitude towards resurrection as Martha? Do you have some vague hope that something **might** happen after you die. That somehow, you **might** end up in the presence of God.

Martha is about to learn some very good news. Martha is about to learn the true meaning of hope.

**The Hope of Life:** Speaking of hope, a few years ago a submarine sank off Provincetown, Mass. Those inside became trapped in their own tomb. As soon as possible, divers descended. They walked about the disabled submarine endeavoring to find some signs of life within.

At last they heard a gentle tapping. Listening intently, they recognized the dots and dashes of the Morse code. These were the words spelled out by the tapping: "Is there hope?"<sup>2</sup>

"Is there hope?" This is the constant cry of humanity when it comes to death. Is there hope? Yet, the only hope for death is life!

And, Jesus speaks of this hope of life to Martha. Jesus says, "Your brother will rise again." And Martha sorrowfully sighs, and says "yes, at the last day."

Jesus, then, speaks these unforgettable words that forever change our understanding of death and life. Jesus says to Martha in verse 25, "I am the resurrection and the life."

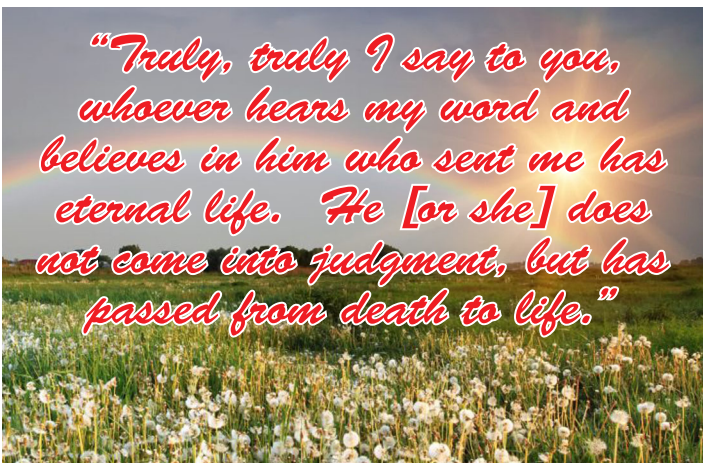
Now, I want you to get what Jesus is telling Martha. Jesus is saying to Martha, "No, not at the end of time, Martha.

Think about it. If we have eternal life inside of us, then death affects only our physical body. It does not impact the immaterial part of us. This immaterial part, which is our spirit and our soul, which I call our true self, goes on living.

Yes, our physical bodies will die, but our true self does not die. If we have Jesus' life in us, when our physical bodies die, our true self goes to be with our Lord Jesus. And, we live in fellowship with God forever.

And, it gets even better. For the death of our body is only temporary. On the last day, when Jesus Christ comes again, his followers will receive new, glorified, resurrection bodies. We will receive a body just like the glorified, resurrection body Jesus himself has now.

Therefore, Jesus can say to Martha in verses 25 and 26, "Whoever believes in me, though [they] die, yet shall [they] live, and everyone who lives and believes in me



[meaning those who are alive at his second coming] shall never die. Do you believe this?"

When we become followers of Jesus Christ, we receive life **now**. So, the question for us this morning is not, "Do you want to get into heaven when you die?" The question is, "Do you want heaven in your heart while you live?"

The question isn't, "where you will spend eternity?" The question is, "Is eternity inside of you **now**?"

Please hear this. You can have eternal life now. Now, this very second! In John 5:24, Jesus says (ESV), "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. He [or she] does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."

Did you hear that? Whoever believes that God the Father sent Jesus to give us life has eternal life **now**. If you believe now, you cross over from death to life **now**.

And to prove his point, Jesus, in John 11:39, commands that the stone be taken away from Lazarus' tomb. And, then, in verse 43, Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb. And Lazarus comes out. Lazarus is literally given life **now**.

**Roll Away the Stone:** This morning, we have read Scriptures where a stone is rolled away to reveal life. In our Call to Worship, (based on Mat. 28:1-6) an angel rolls away the stone to reveal that Jesus is no longer in the tomb because he is risen. And here, in our story in John 11, the stone is rolled away and Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb.

God loves to roll away the stones that are keeping us from the life God wants us to have; life that is eternal; life that is abundant; and life full of joy. So, let me ask this morning, what is the stone that is keeping you from the life God wants you to have?

Is it a stone of unbelief? To have life in Jesus Christ you must believe in him and follow him. If you have never come to faith in Jesus Christ, are you willing to say, "yes, Lord Jesus, I believe. I want your life in me now. Forgive me my sins and give me your life now."

Or, is your stone a stone of fear? Is fear keeping you from the abundant life God wants you to have?

Or, is your stone a stone of un-forgiveness? Are you trapped behind a stone of un-forgiveness that is paralyzing your relationships with others and that is robbing you of the joy God wants you to have?

Or, is your stone a stone of depression? Or a stone of addiction? Or a stone of financial lack? Or a stone of anger? Or a stone of anxiety?

Whatever the stone is, the power of the Holy Spirit can roll that stone away this morning and bring new life to you now.

I want us to pray and have a few minutes of silence now so we can let the Holy Spirit work. So, let's pray.

"Gracious Father, we come to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Father, we thank you for the life we have in Jesus Christ now. And yet Lord, we have stones in our life that are weighing us down, stones that are keeping us from the fullness of life you want us to have in Jesus Christ. So, Holy Spirit, would you please come in power and reveal these stones to us. And then, as we pray, would you roll these stones away and bring new life to us now. In Jesus Name. Amen

Let's sit in silence for just a few minutes.

*End of Message*

See you next month,

Pastor Steve

1. Becker, Ernest, *The Denial of Death*, (New York, The Free Press, 1973) p. 11.
2. Swindoll, Charles R., *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations and Quotes*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998) adapted from p. 275.

# City of Los Angeles *Retiree*

The March, 2021 edition of Employees Club of California announced recent retirees from the City of Los Angeles.

In the City's Alive! News, it reported that Irene K. Mayeda, retired from the city's service after working for 37 years.

Her job title, according to the news, was Senior Management Analyst in the ITA Department of the City of Los Angeles.

Congratulations, Irene, upon her retirement from the City of Los Angeles.



Join Zoom Meeting  
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Meeting ID: 384 758 031

Password: 351955

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,384758031# US (San Jose)

+13462487799,,384758031# US (Houston)

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### FEBRUARY 2021



	<u>FEB. 2021</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Receipts	\$ 5,967	\$ 14,154
Disbursements	\$ 110,660	\$ 22,478
Increase (Deficit)	(\$ 4,693)	(\$ 8,324)

## 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.

## Gift & Offering



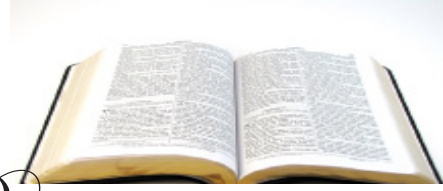
**O**ur campus may be temporarily shut, but CPC is doing all we can to serve our church, to connect people to one another, and to connect all of us to God through our online worship.

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.

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DATED MATERIAL

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