

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

**FEBRUARY
2023**

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FEB. 22, 2023

JOIN US AT
CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD

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.

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

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to all the readers of the *Parish Visitor*! This morning we start a new series on the book of Ephesians. There are so many incredible truths contained in this book. I look forward to sharing them with you.


Jesus Christ is our Lens, Eph. 1:3-14, originally given at CPC on 050822

Introduction: The title of today's message is "Jesus Christ is our lens." Jesus Christ is the lens through which we interpret scripture and, he is the lens through which we interpret our life's circumstances.

To begin, let me re-read Eph. 1:3. It says, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly*

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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.



**“Blessed be the
God and Father of our
LORD JESUS CHRIST,
who has blessed us
in Christ with every
spiritual blessing in the
heavenly places.”**
(EPHESIANS 1:3, ESV)

places.” (Ephesians 1:3, ESV) We will get back to this verse in a few minutes. First, we need some background.

A New Lens: Let’s start with this. The Apostle Paul’s encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus gave him a new lens for his life. Before his conversion, the Apostle Paul was a highly trained theologian in the Jewish scriptures. Paul was an expert in the Jewish scriptures, what we now call the Old Testament.

Yet, then, Paul had an encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Paul’s encounter with the risen Lord Jesus, on the road to Damascus, completed shifted his theology.

After his encounter with the resurrected Lord Jesus, Paul now reinterpreted Old Testament scriptures through the lens of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. After his encounter, Paul realized Jesus Christ is the central thread which runs throughout the scriptures.

And isn’t this what the risen Lord Jesus said to two of his followers on the road to Emmaus, in Luke, chapter 24. These followers knew about Jesus’ death through crucifixion. And they had heard reports he was alive. Yet, they were finding it hard to believe in the resurrection because they had not seen the risen Lord Jesus.

So, the Luke narrative tells us Jesus drew near to these followers on their way back home from Jerusalem. Yet, Jesus kept his follower’s eyes from recognizing him.

Then, Luke 24:27 tells us this. *“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”* (Luke 24:27, ESV)

And, later, the risen Lord Jesus revealed himself to these followers at which point he disappeared. This encounter reminds us of Paul’s encounter with the risen Lord Jesus, doesn’t it? The point is, Jesus, himself, said he was the central thread which tied the scriptures together.

And, here, is one last illustration to nail this point home. One of my favorite commentaries is written by Henrietta Mears, who taught at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood back in the 50’s and 60’s. Some of her famous students included Billy Graham and Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ.

The title of her commentary is “What the Bible is All About.”¹ Ms. Mears goes through each of the books of the bible and begins commentary on each book by stating what the book portrays about Jesus Christ. Chapter 1 is called “Understanding the Bible.” Underneath she writes, “The Bible portrays Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World.”²

And later in chapter 1, she writes this. “The Bible is one book, one history, one story. His story.”³ Then, in chapter 2, “Understanding Genesis,” she writes, “Genesis portrays Jesus Christ, Our Creator God.”

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

(GALATIANS 2:20, ESV)



happens to us in this life is temporary. And we realize, we have a Savior who has endured all, who has overcome all, and who still lives though he was put to death.

And, we realize, if we persevere, by faith in Jesus Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we too will overcome all, even death! Amen!

A New Understanding of our Blessing: Paul’s encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ changed Paul and his understanding of the scriptures. It also changed how Paul understood God. Paul now sees God through a new lens.

In the Old Testament, God was known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the great patriarchs of the Jewish nation. They were the “fathers” of the Jewish people.

And, every day, faithful Jews, including Paul, would

Next, in chapter 3, “Understanding Exodus,” she writes, “Exodus portrays Jesus Christ, Our Passover Lamb.” And she does this for each book, all the way through the Bible, ending with “Understanding Revelation.” For Revelation, she writes, “Revelation portrays Jesus Christ, Our Triumphant King.”⁵

And, in case you are wondering about Ephesians, she writes, “Ephesians portrays Jesus Christ, Our All in All.”⁶ So, Henrietta Mears certainly believed Jesus Christ is the central thread that runs throughout the Bible.

Now, what is the point of all this? The Apostle Paul’s encounter with the risen Jesus Christ changed everything. It changed the way he understood the scriptures. He now viewed everything through the lens of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

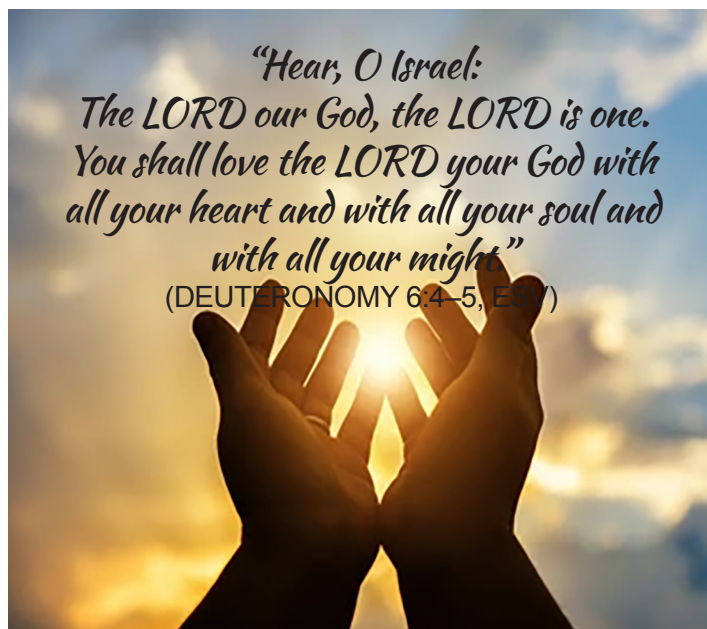
And more importantly, it changed the way he lived his life. So, in Galatians 2:20, Paul writes, *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* (Galatians 2:20, ESV)

So, let me ask you. Is the risen Lord Jesus Christ the lens through which you understand scripture? Is the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ the lens through which you interpret your own life?

For instance, do we interpret our daily struggles through the lens of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ? Do we interpret our pain, and our suffering, through the lens of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ? Do we interpret death through the lens of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ?

If we are able to see through this lens, we realize all that

*“Hear, O Israel:
The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
You shall love the LORD your God with
all your heart and with all your soul and
with all your might.”*
(DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5, ESV)



pray Deut. 6:4, which says, *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”* (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, ESV) So, the focus of Jewish worship was the One God.

This One God, Yahweh, revealed himself to these patriarchs. And in Genesis 12:1-3, God tells Abraham, then, called Abram, this. *“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless*

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those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1–3, ESV)

So, here, God promises Abraham that his descendants will become a great nation. And through one of his descendants, *“all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”* God reveals himself to Abraham as the God who blesses.

Our Lord Jesus is the descendant of Abraham prophesied in Genesis 12. And, after his encounter with the risen Lord Jesus, Paul now understands it is through Jesus Christ that all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Eph. 1:3 reflects this new understanding. Again, Paul, writes, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”*

So, Paul now understands the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, here, the Holy Spirit led me on a little side trail that is important.

It is important we know who our God is and how to describe him. Here’s why. If we get into a discussion about faith, people today will tell you they believe in “God.” And, when they say that, it is important for us to identify which god they are talking about. So, we can ask, “Who is the God you believe in?”

And they often will struggle to tell you. They will say something like, “You know, the big man upstairs.” Or they may say “Allah” or “Krisna.”

Here, Paul gives us a way to specifically identify our God. As Christians, our God is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with

every spiritual blessing.” Describing our God this way leaves no room for misinterpretation. And it gives us a way to talk about Jesus Christ.

And, please, don’t buy into the popular notion that all religions worship the same God. They don’t. Each religion makes absolute truth claims about their God or gods. And their truth claims contradict the truth scripture gives us about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen, all religions have some truth about God. They may even help point people to God. Yet, if their truth does not lead to the Truth, the Truth who is Jesus Christ, the Truth who is eternal God come in the flesh, then their truth is at best, incomplete, and at worst, leads to the worship of a false god. Does that make sense?

The point here is this. When talking about our faith, we need to make sure we specifically, and accurately, identify the God we worship. Our God is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.”

And please, this does not make us judgmental. We are not judging the other person’s faith. We are simply trying to lead them to the Truth, who is Jesus Christ. Amen!

Now, let’s move on from our side trail. In Eph. 1:3, Paul reinterprets, or rephrases, the Aaronic blessing from Num. 6:24-26. The Aaronic blessing says this. *“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”* (Numbers 6:24–26, ESV)

Eph. 1:3 is Paul’s rephrasing of this blessing. Listen again. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus*



Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”

So, the God who blesses, blesses us in Jesus Christ. All of our blessings come from being in Jesus Christ.

Again, the risen Lord Jesus is the lens through which God blesses us. All the blessings are in Christ. When we ask the Lord to bless someone, we are asking the Lord to bless them in Jesus Christ. It is the fulfillment of the Aaronic blessing.



A New Understanding of the Triune God: And finally, Paul’s encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ gave Paul a new understanding of the role each Person of the Trinity has in our salvation.

Here is what verses 3-14 tell us. First, God the Father is the One who blesses us. We are blessed according to God the Father’s will, we are blessed according to his purpose, and according to his grace.

Second, we are blessed through Jesus Christ, or because of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:3-14 tells us God chooses us in Jesus Christ; God adopts us through Jesus Christ; God redeems us through the blood of Jesus Christ; the Father will sum up all things in Jesus Christ; and, we obtain an inheritance in Jesus Christ.

And, third, God, the Holy Spirit seals us in Christ. In other words, the Holy Spirit makes these blessings real in our life.


So, God the Father blesses us. We receive the blessings because of Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit makes the blessings real in our life. This is the Trinity in action. And over the next weeks we will explore all of these blessings.

An encounter with the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ changed Paul completely. Have you met our risen Lord Jesus? Are you following him? Are you experiencing the blessings we have in him? Amen!

1. Mears, Henrietta C., What The Bible Is All About, (Ventura, Ca., GL Publications, 1966)
2. Ibid., p.13
3. Ibid, p.20
5. Ibid, p. 623
6. Ibid, p. 479

FINANCIAL REPORT

JANUARY 2023



	<u>JAN. 2023</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Receipts	\$ 8,074	\$ 8,074
Disbursements	\$ 11,645	\$ 11,645
Increase (Deficit)	(\$ 3,571)	(\$ 3,571)

The Session and I would like to thank the CPC community for your incredible support this past year. We finished the year with a surplus! We continue to give 10% of non-designated donations to Missions. Our support of the Kenya REAL feeding ministry allows them to feed over 250 kids, twice a day, in the slums of Nairobi. The number of children being fed has grown as the price of corn has increased making it hard for families to feed everybody. So, again thank you!

Pastor Steve and the Session



Join us in Worship

SUNDAYS at 11:00 A.M.

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

<https://zoom.us/j/384758031?pwd=ZnEySIBjL1VtUmhiTWRCREdmZVhJZz09>

Meeting ID: 384 758 031 • Password: 351955

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,384758031# US (San Jose)

+13462487799,,384758031# US (Houston)



¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (EPHESIANS 3:14-19)

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING:

- Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) as a people of God have entered their 100th year of community. **“A people called out to worship our Lord Jesus Christ and to witness to HIS Love for the world.”** There has been 100 years of continuous prayer for the saints near and far from CPC. And a crying out for GOD’s grace and mercy for those who are not yet saints.

- We are thankful! that “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence...” (Ephesian 1:7-8)

- We have been praying for employment for Pastor Steve’s and Simone’s friend, Will. Will started his new position Feb.6th. Michelle, his wife writes, “I can’t tell you what it means to have you in our corner praying for us. I know how powerful it is and how blessed we are to have it.”

- Pastor Steve and Simone give thanks that granddaughter Alice’s UC (Ulcerative Colitis) has been in recorded remission since 9/16/2022! Alice has not grown since August of 2022. It is common for growth to stop when there is an auto immune flare-up. Praying Alice’s body would grow once again and remain in remission.

- We all are thankful for provision for another year both monetary and relationally. GOD’s goodness and grace toward CPC community has, as always, been abundant.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVING:

In 2023 we experience grief as we mourn our sense of loss for those who have died in 2022.

“¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

- Mary Trans’ father died January 10,2023. Please pray for Mary to have the wisdom and strength as well as courage to navigate all the family implications.

- Ida’s cousin died in January, 2023

FOR SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR HEALING:

- Sueko, is healing well. Please pray for renewed strength in her legs so that she can walk steadily. And that she would be able to return to in person worship at CPC soon.

- Brian has done well with his first 2 rounds of chemotherapy and thanks you for your prayer support. Please continue to pray for tolerance of chemo and “healing from the inside out.”

- Irene, in caring for her mother Harumi, is vulnerable to twisted back and ankles. Please pray for repair and strength for each day. Harumi, relief from headaches and the strengthening of her legs.

- Many in our community are having to endure covid, flus, and colds. Please pray that we receive the repair we need and for the strengthening of our immunity against further assault.

- Alison Puzio, Young Life area coordinator/director, got a minor concussion at the YL Winter camp for teenagers. The following week she got the stomach flu which landed her in the ER. Please pray for healing, strength of immunity, and protection from any new biological/ assault.

- Maria's esophagus and surgery for her dog Hunter.
- Yukika's vocal cords would be healed.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE HOME BOUND OR IN A CARE FACILITY:

Teresa Peteric (in extended care. Asked for pastoral care.) Leland Hayashi, Joan Janecek, Barbara Kashiwagi, Kimi Fujitani, Karen Koranye, Frank Morimoto, Janet Nozaki, Jean Sakai, Irene Mayeda caring for her mother Harumi. May each one daily know the comfort and care of our Lord Jesus Christ. And may they each be filled with hope and strength needed for each day.

GENERAL:

- Denise, Brian's wife, please pray for wisdom for how to best to care for advocate for Brian in this season of Chemo. For courage that comes from trusting in our Father in Heaven. For strength that comes with the hope that Holy Spirit provides.
- Alison, Young Life Area Coordinator, is responsible for programming and fundraising. Please pray for wisdom, strength, and guidance.
- Matty, Alison's Young Life assistant, has a part time job with Helen Bernstein High School as an aid. Please pray for him favor with the kids, and administration. Pray for wisdom and discernment for speaking "life" to the kids. (Specific words, timing for those words, and tone of the words)
- Kristi and Bob Rice and our brothers and

sisters in Christ who live in Sudan and South Sudan, who are advocating by the power of the Holy Spirit for reconciliation between warring tribes. Pray for wisdom, strength and courage to persevere in their witness of the healing, life, and hope, we have in Christ Jesus.

- Stella's travel and time with family in Hawaii.
- From Joy's trip to Mexico with dentists and doctors may the gospel seeds planted grow and produce much good fruit.
- Mako is still living at home alone. Thanksgiving for those who come alongside of her to make living at home possible. And thanksgiving for Mako's clarity of mind.
- For family and friends to hunger for righteousness: David, Frank, Caylee...

MISSIONS FOCUS:

- The Kostov family arrived safely home in Bulgaria. Their trip went smoothly and with much joy. We are thankful for their sharing GOD's word and work with us her at CPC. Teresa's mom, Maria, is on hospice. Teresa has been busy with assisting women and children refugees from the Ukraine. Viktor's legal work is mostly pro-bono and often for freedom from persecution because of one's Christian faith. Dan, the eldest son is moving from the Hollywood scene to Minnesota. Matthias lives in Minnesota and works in construction and renovation of buildings and homes. Noah who is finishing up high school has applied to colleges in Minnesota. He is very active in the Christian teen community. Please cover this family in prayer.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

(Ephesians 3:20 & 21)

(February 2023)

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.



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
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DATED MATERIAL

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