

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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TRUE FREEDOM

your pastor writes

By REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY



Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to all our *Parish Visitor* readers. The following is the message I gave for our country's 4th of July celebration. I pray it will bless you.

True Freedom, various scriptures, originally given on 070724 at CPC

Introduction: This past week we celebrated the fourth of July. On this national holiday, we remember our country's breaking away from the tyranny of English monarchs.

The "Declaration of Independence," adopted on July 4, 1776, declares our freedom from English rule. It says in part, "all [people] are created equal,

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Welcome



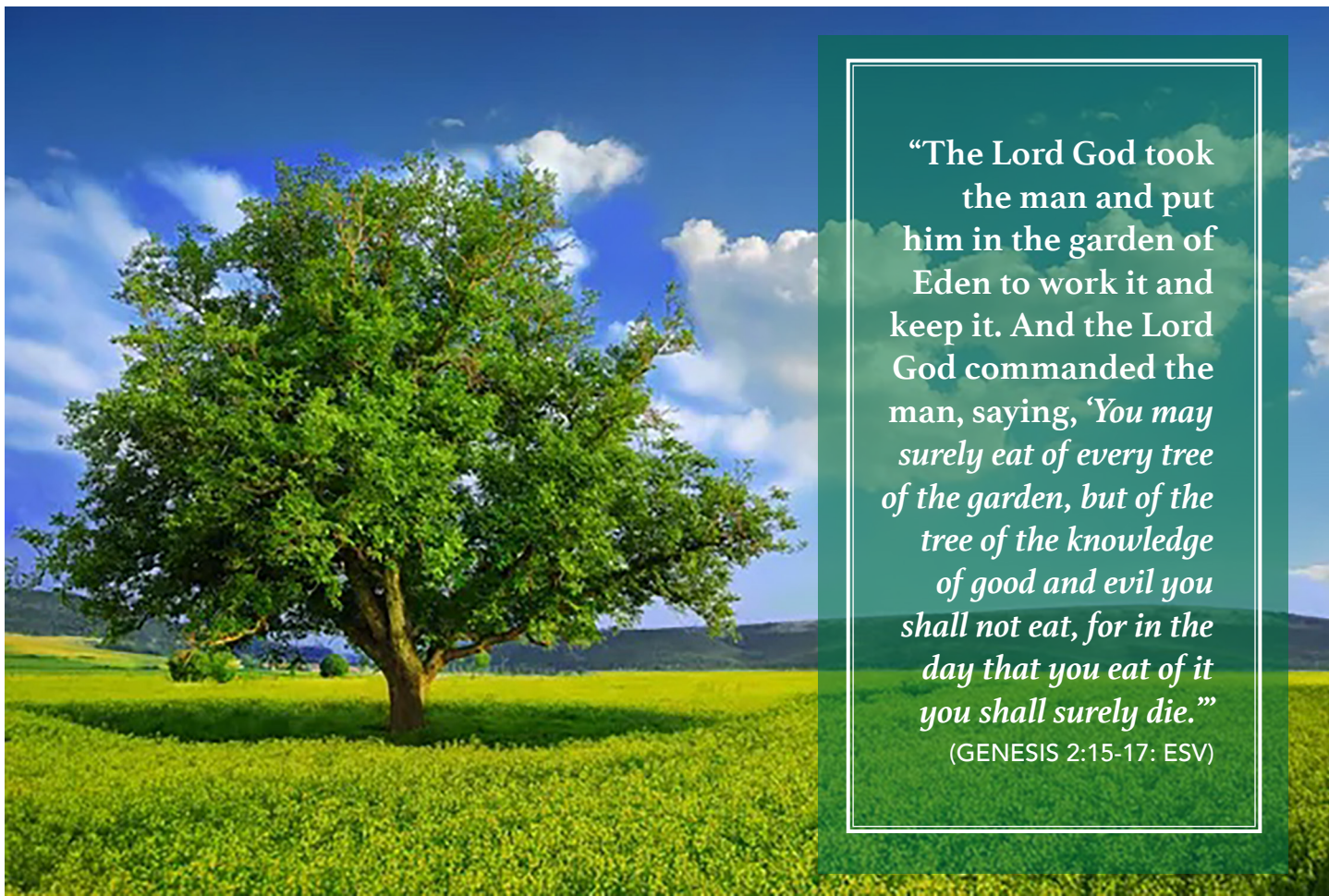
JOIN US AT
CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD

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.

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



“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”

(GENESIS 2:15-17: ESV)

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that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

This biblically correct statement declares our rights, as humans, are given to us by a higher power (referred to as the Creator) And these rights cannot be taken away by any government, system, or individual.

This concept of freedom is highly valued and is sought after in our society. It is why so many people want to immigrate here. American’s love freedom. It’s in our DNA. So, we hear a lot about freedom of speech, freedom of choice, freedom of religion, and individual liberty.

Yet, there is great concern today that these freedoms are slowly being taken away. We especially saw this in the COVID lock downs where many of our freedoms were curtailed, or taken away, by an overreaching government.

So, today, I feel led to talk about freedom. Specifically, what does true freedom look like according to God’s word. And, I will give you the bottom line here at the beginning. True freedom is found in Jesus Christ.

Or another way to say it is this. You will not truly be free until you come to faith in Jesus Christ.

So, let’s jump into this topic of freedom.

The Original Freedom: At the beginning of the Bible, in the book of Genesis, we find the original freedom our God gave us. What is this freedom? God gave us the freedom to choose.

Let’s read Gen. 2:8-9, 15-17. Gen. 2:8-9 says, *“And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”* (Genesis 2:8-9, ESV)

And then, moving on Gen. 2:15-17 says, *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of*

FREEDOM, and especially the freedom to choose, carries with it an enormous responsibility. It is the responsibility to choose life or death.



it you shall surely die.'" (Genesis 2:15-17: ESV)

So, God planted two life determining trees in the Garden. God planted the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam, and later Eve, could freely eat of every tree of the Garden, including the tree of life. Yet, they were forbidden from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Here, God put before Adam and Eve the original freedom.

God gave them the freedom to choose. They could choose life. Or they could choose death.

Adam could choose life by obeying God. Adam could choose life by only eating from every allowable tree of the garden, including the tree of life.

God told Adam these trees were good for food. So, there was an incredible variety of food, of fruit, to choose from. These trees would give Adam and Eve everything they needed for a physical life full of vitality and strength.

They could also freely eat from the tree of life. Christian scholars believe that eating from the tree of life would bring healing if Adam or Eve injured themselves. It was also thought that eating of the tree of life would give them immortality. Their bodies would not decay. As long as they had access to the tree of life they would live forever. So, the first choice for Adam

and Eve was life. To obey God meant life everlasting.

The second choice was a choice of disobedience. Adam could choose death by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God said eating from this tree would bring certain death. Now, there was no physical need for them to eat from this tree. They had everything they needed from the other trees. All they had to do was trust God and obey.

So, the choice seems easy, right? Adam and Eve could choose life or they could choose death. Yet, then, darkness intervened.

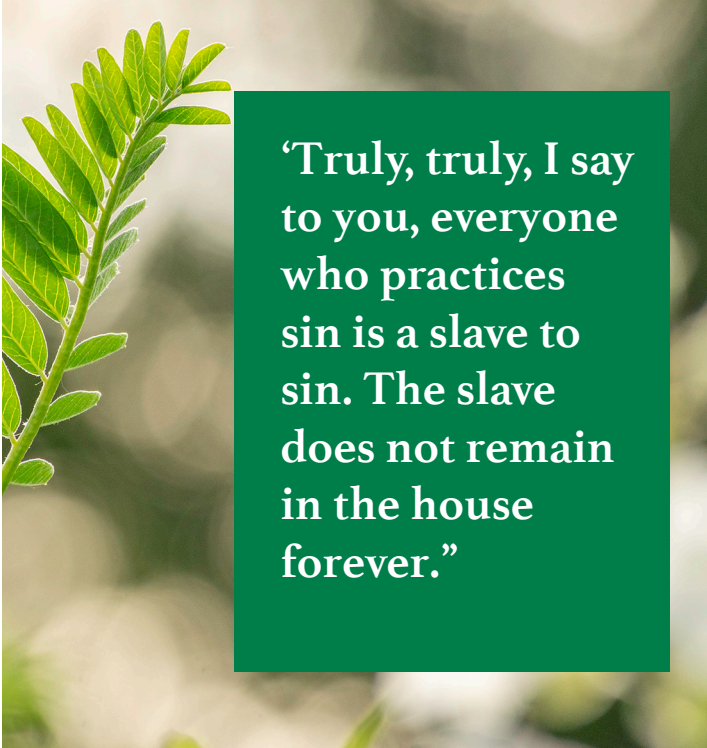
The devil, in the form of a snake, deceived Adam and Eve. The snake said God's word couldn't be trusted. The snake insinuated God was withholding something good from them. The snake appealed to Adam and Eve's pride.

Why shouldn't they make their own choices without interference from God? Why shouldn't they have their own knowledge of good and evil and make their own choices apart from God?

And, so they disobeyed and ate. And, thereby, brought sin, and death into the world. Their choice to disobey God took away their freedom. They were

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**'If you abide in
my word, you are
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and you will know
the truth, and
THE TRUTH WILL
SET YOU FREE.'**



“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever.”

expelled from the Garden and their access to the tree of life was blocked. They became slaves to sin and death. And, they were separated from the manifest presence of God.

Today, we continue to see the disastrous effects of people, apart from God, determining for themselves what is good and what is evil. Unfortunately, people choices of good come down to what's good for them. And their choices are made from pride, greed, lust for power, and even anger or revenge.

Freedom, and especially the freedom to choose, carries with it an enormous responsibility. It is the responsibility to choose life or death. And apart from God, our choices are often the wrong choices.

Yet, our God is a loving and merciful God. And God already had a plan in place to redeem us, and restore us, from our bad choices. God had a plan to give us our freedom back through Jesus Christ.

Set Free in Jesus Christ: So, how are we set free in Jesus Christ? Let's look at John 8:31-36. It reads, “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ They answered him, ‘We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?’ Jesus answered them,

‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’” (John 8:31-36, ESV)

So, how are we set free? First, Jesus tells us that **God's word sets us free.**

Jesus tells us that if we abide in His word, we will know the truth, and the truth will set us free. The word “abide” means to dwell or remain in something. To abide in the Word of God means to make it a central part of our lives, to meditate on it, and to let it guide our thoughts and actions. When we abide in the Word, we continually ingest truth and this truth sets us free from the lies and deceptions of the world.

Adam and Eve knew the truth of God's word. Yet, they were unable to abide in God's truth. They allowed lies and deception to pull them away from the truth.

We need to guard against this happening to us. We need be diligent to stay in God's word. If we continually refresh ourselves in God's word, then, we won't be easily deceived. We won't be pulled into falsehood and sin.

So, first, Jesus tells us God's word, which is his word, sets us free from lies and deception.

Second, **Jesus tells us that sin enslaves us, but belief in him sets us free.** Jesus tells us that whoever practices sin is a slave to sin.



So if the
Son sets
you free,
you will be
FREE
INDEED.



TRUE FREEDOM
comes from trusting in
Jesus' promise of eternal
and secure freedom. In
Christ we are promised
eternal life.

Sin traps us. Sin holds us captive. And sin keeps us from experiencing the fullness of life that God has for us. We cannot break free from this bondage on our own, but Jesus, the Son of God, has the power to set us free from the chains of sin.

Look at it this way. Imagine a prisoner who has been enslaved for years, bound by chains and unable to break free. But then, a powerful and loving king comes and pays the price for his freedom. The prisoner is no longer in bondage and can freely walk out of the prison.

In the same way, Jesus has paid the price for our freedom through his death on the cross. In Christ, we are no longer slaves to sin. Instead, we walk in the true freedom that Jesus offers. A freedom we are given when we put our faith in him. A freedom to live our life in cooperation with God.

Next, Jesus says, **"So if the Son sets [us] free, [we] will be free indeed."** In Christ, we are not only freed from sin, we are set free from the expectations of others. We are set free from anxiety, and fear. We are set free from past wounds and hurts. We are set free from everything that attempts to hold us down, to keep us in bondage. Amen! In Christ, we are free indeed!

And finally, Jesus says, **true freedom in Christ is permanent and secure.** Jesus tells us that the slave [to

sin] does not remain in the house forever, but the son remains forever. This speaks to the eternal and secure nature of the freedom that Jesus offers.

When we are adopted as children of God through our faith in Jesus, we have a permanent place in God's family. Nothing can steal our freedom or separate us from God's love.

Another way to think about it is this. We once again have access to the true tree of life. In Jesus, we are assured of eternal life. And, once again, in Jesus, our original freedom is returned to us. The freedom to choose life or death. Life in Jesus, or death outside of Jesus.

Again, where do we find true freedom? Jesus tells us in John 8:31-36. First, true freedom comes from abiding in God's Word.

Next, true freedom comes from surrendering our lives to Jesus, which breaks us free from the bondage of sin, death and the power of the devil.

Finally, true freedom comes from trusting in Jesus' promise of eternal and secure freedom. In Christ we are promised eternal life.

May we continue to build our relationship with Jesus and experience the fullness of the freedom He offers. And may we tell others about this freedom. Amen!



LET US PRAY WITH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER:

Simone reports such joy to be with her granddaughters, Evelyn in Riverside and Alice in New Jersey.

Our church family, with trust in the resurrection, continue to celebrate the lives of Joan Janecek, Sueko Arakawa, Brian Albriton and Carol Ng, and Barbara Kashiwagi.

In the last two months we have had 3 more deaths, Karen Koranye, Kiwi Burch, and Janet Nozaki. We are so grateful for their lives and how they encouraged each of us with their gifts, talents, and most of all loving fellowship.

Susan Rosal: finished the school year in victory. Survival was victory enough but she also experienced the power of prayer to bless the kids she had charge of. Please pray for health, financial provision, and job security.

Stella Kenner: Healing from cancer. Strength and endurance for the medical process.

Alice Pourrat (Pastor Steve's granddaughter): Please keep praying for healing from Ulcerative Colitis. She is now handling the regular injections very well. With each assault of cold or common childhood ailments, Alice is challenged with dealing with a flare.

Alison Puzio (Young Life Hollywood Director who's ministry we support): Release from multiple autoimmune conditions. Alison is transitioning to a Pastoral position with Thrive LA church. Also,

Alison is recently engaged to be married to Dean. Please pray for supply for all she needs in the major life changes that are taking place.

Matty Miranda: Has departed to NYC to be on the staff of a summer camp program. Please pray for wisdom, inspiration, and endurance. Especially pray for the kids to have open hearts and to experience the loving LORD JESUS.

Philip Nozaki, is grieving the loss of his mother. Also, has the difficult task of closing up all the affairs of a life. Philip continues to travel back and forth to the East Coast for an experimental cancer treatment.

Hazel McElfresh: continues to join us on Zoom every Sunday. Pray for her health, release from back pain, and for the new community she is in.

The **Zebley family** have returned home to North Carolina. They have been deeply wounded and need spiritual and mental and relational healing.

We always remember all those who are homebound or in care facilities:

Yuri Sangen, Kimi Fujitani, Frank Morimoto, Jean Sakai, Irene Mayeda caring for her mother Harumi, Alicia, Michiko Yamazaki, and Mako Harada.

We pray with love, trust and hope.
(Simone Baroldy July 2024)

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father,
Who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done,
On earth as It is In Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom and
the Power and the Glory forever.

Amen

FINANCIAL REPORT

JUNE 2024



	<u>JUNE 2024</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Receipts	\$ 12,781	\$ 71,627
Disbursements	\$ 14,930	\$ 89,893
Increase (Deficit)	(\$ 4,409)	(\$ 18,267)

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**

The Cheerful Giver

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully[a] will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency[b] in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

- 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

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=ZnEySlBjL1VkUmhiTWRCREdmZVhJZz09>

Meeting ID: 384 758 031
Password: 351955
One tap mobile
+16699006833,,384758031# US (San Jose)
+13462487799,,384758031# US (Houston)

*"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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