

CORNERSTONE

Jesus Christ, the living cornerstone
and you are also living stones,
built into a dwelling place of God
in the Spirit.
- Eph. 2:20-22 1 Peter 2:4,5



Irvington Presbyterian Church

Fremont, CA

August, 2020

Outreach Activities During COVID-19

Farmington, our community garden is producing. We have tomatoes,



Delivering produce to TCFBP

bell peppers, zucchini and waxed beans. By the end of this month there will be peaches and cream corn. Eggplant are expected in late September. Some of the produce go to the Breakfast Program where Chef Tom Mardirosian continues to work his culinary expertise Monday, Wednesday Friday by incorporating in breakfast. The rest of the produce are distributed at the drive thru pantry on Saturday mornings.



Picking Tomatoes

Drive Thru Food Pantry

The first drive thru started on July 11, and food distribution has now grown to 20+ bags of groceries. We have pasta, sauce, bread, rice, canned beans, canned meat, fruit and vegetables. Thanks to cash donations from our members and the Presbytery of San Francisco, we have added one dozen eggs to each bag. Fresh produce from Farmington, our community garden, are a big hit! The Presbytery of San Francisco provided a \$2K grant for purchase of additional protein that are bring added to the groceries distributed.



Car pulling up to the pantry

Kids Against Hunger

Outreach Ministry has teamed up with the local chapter of KIDS AGAINST HUNGER (KAH) to bring food packets of fortified grain to seniors and the unhoused in the local community. Recently we have expanded this program to bring the same to organizations in need. Each packet of grain will feed up to six people. The packets are now filled and boxed in the social hall by KAH volunteers and are shipped from IPC to Rancho Santa Marta in Mexico, a school for the blind in the Philippines and soon to Hope Unlimited in Brazil. The KAH local chapter also serves Haiti, El Salvador as well as local school districts in Manteca and Modesto.



Packing grain packets in the social hall

WORSHIP MINISTRY

In discerning what it means to be a Matthew 25 church, worship ministry can best follow the wisdom of our connnectional leadership by making subtle changes in our attitudes as we plan our worship. Having served our missionaries in the past, we came across a report that is a great example of what is involved in including community. In the missionary leader's own words: "What a deep, deep appreciation we have for our children at the ranch. This love for these children can only come from our Lord Jesus. Our ranch children are very difficult little creatures but OH how the Lord loves them! What a blessing it is to see Cassandra, who has a very severe speech impediment, decide to sing a song in our church service by herself. The words coming out of her mouth were indiscernible, but the "heart voice" came out so clear. Ruben, our teen with down syndrome, "spoke" out during testimony time. He can only utter sounds but again the message that He loves Jesus and he loves to sing came out loud and clear. Victor is another one who expresses such joy towards the Lord when he sings, claps and moves to the praise songs. And then Miguel who loves to play the percussion instrument "el cajón" every Sunday with amazing rhythm and such joy. What a blessing for us to experience this with our children/teens/adults. God loves them and to some of our kids that message has made it through to their hearts. Others have a way to go but their shells and defenses are being broken and they are seeing the wonderful freedom that they can have in Christ. Continue to pray for these chosen ones. They are precious in His sight, they are precious in our sight."

When we reach out to the community to look for talents to praise God; are we placing value on only the perfect and best by our estimation; or are we including God's chosen ones such as Cassandra and Miguel? We have some practice too of reaching out to include community in our worship. The direction of our church now calls for including all talent levels, as our music leader with a missionary spirit, Judy Lam has done with Dream Achiever's Band and others that are God's chosen ones.

Ministry Happenings:

Worship Ministry will provide prayer and communion services at the Drive-thru Tamale Festival

In person worship is still not allowed. Session is considering a social distancing parking-lot worship.

We are working on ideas to celebrate IPC's 134th anniversary during October.

There are plans to start a liturgical dance group under the direction of Marissa Hughes. If you are interested in participating, call 510-579-3694.

Many thanks to Judy for making a recording of a vocal rendition of The Lord's Prayer. This will be added to the on-line Sunday worship program.

Worship Elder will prepare a list of supply pastors for when Pastor Ed is unable to preach.

There are two easy ways to join us for worship

On Line Services 10:00 am on Sunday

<https://zoom.us/j/9970411553>

<https://irvingtonpres.org/sermons/>

<https://www.facebook.com/irvingtonpres>

Service on Demand

Watch anytime:

<https://irvingtonpres.org/sermons/>

SESSION NEWS & NOTES

Pastor Ed opened the July meeting stating we are all God's children who are called upon to be the salt and the light of the earth. Session prayed that we serve with humility and gladness and that God would give us wisdom and courage to work for His glory.

In his report Pastor thanked Worship and the Tech Team for putting together a compressed worship on Sundays. During the drive thru, we had an unorthodox communion that may continue since we are unable to gather for in person worship. Elder Ron inquired if we need a motion to authorize Pastor to serve communion as needed. This was already approved at the January session meeting. Pastor reported that Elder Don Carson had resigned as the Finance Elder and from session. A new business agenda item was then added to discuss who would serve as the Finance Elder.

Following approval of the June minutes, clerk reported that our initial request for a Presbytery Grant was turned down pending additional information. The survey on returning to in person worship was completed and will go out later in the week. With no questions or motions from the Ministry Reports, Moderator moved to old business.

B&G reported that all renters had made their commitments through July but were experiencing some difficulty for August and September. Elder Ron wanted to know exactly how much each renter was paying and Elder Mustapha indicated that he would have the Church Admin send this information to session. In keeping in touch with the congregation, Pastor noted that Harry is not doing well and may require hospice care; Betty fell in the parking lot and had to have stitches. She is doing better. Elder Ron indicated that most members were feeling more isolated. Elder Mustapha reminded everyone that we really need to be more deliberate and sincere in following up on church members.

The guidelines and agreement to allow RVs and other vehicles to park overnight on campus was approved after the change from "a gift to park" to "a privilege to park" was made. The team decided to postpone discussion on returning to in person worship until the survey results are received.

A motion to accept the Insurance Board insurance proposal stalled because Elder Ron reported that based on discussions with Don Carson, the penalties to cancel the program with Heffernan would be significant. A decision was taken to send this item back to committee for resolution. Elder Ron then said he has experience in this area and volunteered his help to understand the penalty if we terminate the policy. Elder Mustapha pointed out that there is no need to do this immediately since the next installment was due September 1. He also requested a copy of the binding agreement.

A motion by personnel to restore the Pastor's full salary and to pay the Pianist beginning April was unanimously approved. Elder Helen Jorgensen volunteered her services as Finance Elder following Elder Don Carson's resignation.

Based on the success of the drive thru picnic, Outreach Ministries recommended a Tamale drive thru and "bubble" get together. There would also be an opportunity for attendees to have prayer and communion during the drive thru. As suggested by Elder Ron, the drive thru was scheduled around National Senior Day and Saturday August 22 was agreed to with more details forthcoming.

Pastor Ed then led the team in "Prayer for the People" as we prayed for members who are ill, the shut-ins, members experiencing loneliness, Elder Don Carson, the TCFBP, Worship Ministry and the drive thru pantry. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

CONGREGATION NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Richard Craig

Dave King

Janti Lie

Carol Lynn

Wayne Neesham



Alexis and Joe DiMaggio

Shirley and Chuck Scafidi

A Special Birthday Wish to Clara Aston



Clara Aston celebrated her 106th birthday on Sunday, 7/26, at a care facility in Fremont. Even during this pandemic, Deacon Shirley Scafidi found a way to bake and deliver Clara's favorite treats of banana bread and lemon bars. If you would like to send Clara well wishes, please contact Shirley. We ask that you include Clara in your prayers and,

Thank you Shirley for continuing to exemplify your role as a Deacon!

Survey on Returning to In person Worship

55% of the congregation responded either by email or mail in ballot. Thank you for participating. The results are being tabulated. A special thanks to Elder Daxesh for helping prepare the graphs. Session needs some time to pray, review and publish with recommendations on how we proceed.



Presbytery Approves a \$10K COVID-19 Grant

When the pandemic started, IPC saw a decrease in rental income and general giving. The session made some adjustments by reducing the Pastor's salary by 50% and stopped paying the pianist. In addition, several cuts were made in all the ministries; Buildings and Grounds reduced expenses by 50% and other Church Ministries stopped spending. The Presbytery of San Francisco tried to assist churches so that they would not experience undue hardships during this time and made available grants of up to \$10,000 per Church. IPC applied for and were awarded a grant of \$10K. With this blessing, we have restored the salaries of both Pastor and the pianist'.

Pastor Appreciation Day - Celebrate With Us

On September 1, Pastor Ed would have completed his first year with us. Well, we cannot meet in the social hall but we are planning a party. And if you like virtual parties, you are invited. Join us during the fellowship hour on **Sunday September 6**, for a special "Thank You to Pastor Ed".

ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Outreach & Engagement Ministries

On Saturday July 11, IPC launched a ***Drive Thru Food Pantry.*** Plans are to have



Some produce at the drive thru pantry

the drive thru every Saturday from 9:30 am to 11:00 am in the horseshoe that provides safety for our volunteers and is easily accessed from the Chapel Way entrance.

Food type options include staple shelf foods, breads/ sweets, produce, and packaged food grocery items. We started out offering staple shelf food items, bread, cakes, rice, pasta and canned beans. Thanks to the

contributions from church members, one dozen eggs, a valuable source of protein, is now added each week. With the \$2K benevolence grant from the Presbytery of San Francisco, we have added canned chicken breast, tuna and corned beef. Produce is seasonal and comes mainly from Farmington. Many of you who have planted gardens at home have extra produce that you have graciously donated to the food pantry. Thank you for your generosity that will help feed those families that need a little more help during this pandemic.

As the cars come through the drive thru, the drivers are asked to pop their trunks and volunteers deliver bags with food to the vehicle without any contact required. Several people ride bicycles or walk up to the pantry. They receive the same care and grocery bags as everyone else. Each week the number of people coming to the food pantry has grown. We now plan to increase the number of grocery bags from 20 to 35 that will be distributed each week.

One of the goals of Outreach Ministry is to teach church members how to share the gospel and to create opportunities in the community for them to do so. Well, for the past few weeks, several people who came to the pantry only speak Mandarin and the two Fule Church pastors, Elaine Enling and Jonathan Jiang have now formed a small group with these individuals. This group meets every Saturday morning for fellowship, prayer and soon, Bible study. **Thank you Fule Church.**

The miracle of God's hands is evident as these two ministries work together.

[Donate or volunteer in the Pantry by calling Outreach & Engagement Ministries or the church office.](#)

Farmington, our Community Garden continues to produce tomatoes, zucchini and corn.



From Farmington to the Breakfast

Each Saturday when guests come to the Food Pantry, fresh vegetables from Farmington are added to the bags. For the week ending August 23, we distributed about 20 lb of tomatoes, 25 lb of zucchini and 12 lb of bell peppers to the guests.



Corn, ready for reaping

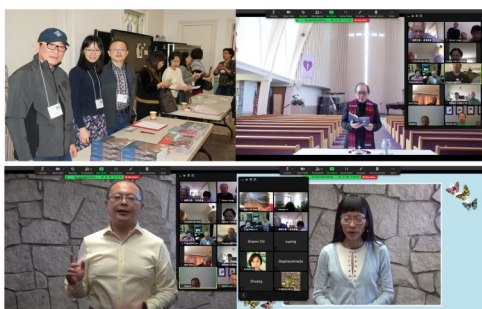
Most of our initial corn crop was attacked by moles/gophers and had to be replanted during the beginning of July. However, after working on this problem, we have started to reap corn that from the picture you can see, we expect a bumper crop. We also anticipate harvesting eggplant in late September.

[Join in on Saturday mornings and be part of this rewarding ministry.](#)

Outreach and Engagement Ministries - Fule Church

God continues to lead our ministry to build strong relationships in the Mandarin speaking community here in the Bay Area and connecting with those in China as well. During these turbulent times in the world, now more than ever, the love of our savior, Jesus Christ is needed. We are thankful to be available for serving the needs of our Fremont Community and pray for the time when we can return to in person worship. We are honored to serve God and are grateful for the support of Presbytery. We are also honored to serve on the leadership team of IPC and grateful for their support as well.

Pastor Stephen Koh, the Mandarin Pastor at Burlington Presbyterian Church has kindly offered to share the pulpit with us for a joint Sunday Worship. This arrangement has allowed us to continue preaching and pastoring to the Mandarin/Taiwanese community. Our taped sermons are accessed



by the Mandarin speaking community in China. We also hold a joint Friday Bible Study. We thank you, Pastor Stephen, for your help in mentoring us and promoting our ministry.

To help serve those in our community during this pandemic, the Presbytery of San Francisco generously granted Fule a \$2K benevolence. This will be used to help many in need of food, and rent, in particular for those in the Mandarin congregation who are waiting to go back to work in the restaurant and service industries.

As of this writing, the Fule Church applied and was approved for a \$10K COVID-19 grant as a new worshipping community. These funds will be used to help with a consultant who was brought in to prepare online worship and programs that now reach the local as well as international communities in China and Taiwan. When the pandemic hit, Fule church as so many other small churches did, went out and either borrowed or secured a loan to purchase electronics so that they can prepare online worship. This grant will help repay this loan. Fule Church will be eternally grateful to the Presbytery for their understanding and support with this grant that will allow the ministry to continue.

Preparing for 134 Years of Ministry and Service

This year IPC celebrates its 134th anniversary. Worship Ministry is now working with B&G to plan a Parking Lot Sunday Service with coffee and doughnuts on **Sunday October 4**. A parking lot service will be a live service where you will remain in your parked vehicle and participate by listening to the service on your FM radio. You will be able to see the Pastor and wave to your fellow congregants. Yes, you may pick up your coffee and doughnuts before you park.

If you feel unsafe to participate in this parking lot service, you will still have the option of viewing from your living room since the service will be live streamed. [Details will be announced soon!](#)



Please Note: August 30 is the deadline for our September issue.

All articles are to be delivered by email to: kandmbaksh@gmail.com. Cornerstone is the medium to keep your current and past congregation members informed of all the activities and events at IPC. Your timely submissions are important to everyone.

“True-love” Guatemalan Tamales and Drive Thru

“Carmella is part of the family that is making “true-love” tamales for the Tamales for Oakland Project each week. Carmella and her husband tell a delightful story about how our traditional Guatemalan Tamales brought them together.

Carmella and her family, like so many others, had to move from their home high up in the beautiful mountains of Guatemala for better opportunities in southern Mexico. As one of the many ways that families made ends meet, Carmella’s mom made and sold tamales on her front porch many nights. These Tamales were more than just a way to make money and had been part of a traditional way of life for Carmella’s family for as long as they can remember.

Now Carmella helped make and sell the tamales; and during one summer all but Carmella noticed that one of their most regular customers seemed to be interested in more than just tamales. People in Carmella’s little town had many choices of where to buy tamales but Juan came night after night to buy Carmella’s tamales saying: “these are the best tamales in town.” Juan always blushes when Carmella tells the story again, remembering the day when her mom whispered to her saying: “that boy there loves something more here than my tamales.”

So now you too can buy these wonderful Guatemalan tamales. We don’t guarantee they will help you find your true love but if you buy a dozen and share them, we do guarantee you will make some new friends.

Our tamales are just like the tamales that Carmella sold on her front porch but with an East Bay twist. These are deluxe premium Guatemalan tamales bigger with more meat than Carmella’s family ever sold on their porch.

The tamales for our “drive-thru” tamale festival are made by folks at Primera Iglesia Presbyteriana Hispana of Oakland (PIPH). PIPH serves the Spanish speaking community of the East Bay as our Presbyterian presence in the community. East Oakland is home to many Central America immigrants who have been deeply impacted by the pandemic. PIPH has a rich history of reaching out to the community meeting physical and spiritual needs.

The Tamales for Oakland Project is helping folks in many ways. For the families making the tamales it is a way to make ends meet as they have for generations, selling tamales to their friends. This is a small cottage industry that we pray will last past the pandemic. A small amount of the tamale money goes to support the delivery team and the tamale project coordinator, Cynthia, who lives in Palin Guatemala. All tips received go to help people in East Oakland and Guatemala whose lives have been so impacted by the pandemic”.

On Saturday August 22, IPC will sponsor a Tamale Drive Thru and fellowship on the lawn. Each registered guest will receive a pre ordered pork or chicken tamale plate with rice, beans, salad and a cookie. Guests may then gather for fellowship in their bubble circles painted on the lawn.

There will be a special area set up where Pastor will be available for prayer and communion. This is the second drive thru and we are looking forward to many of you joining us.

Pastor's Reflection

How time flies! It's been a year since Irvington Presbyterian Church became my home. I remember your warm welcome the first Sunday in September 2019. There was a feeling of excitement coupled with fear and trembling. This was a transition from a small church setting to a larger one; from a predominantly ethnic church to a multicultural church; from a large city to a smaller city in the suburbs.

It was a pleasure getting to know each member of the congregation. The stories and faith journeys of each person makes IPC an intricate, colorful, and meaningful piece of quilt that God has woven together. The first six months was a time to learn the culture and inner workings of IPC. What I find is a loving and accepting congregation willing to serve the Lord.

Thanksgiving and Christmas were some of the highlights of my first four months as I participated in the rich traditions of the church. I celebrated with the congregation as the community filled our church. Christmas concert attendees gathered to celebrate the season honoring the Christ Child and their own children who were performing in the Fremont Youth Symphony. In the spring we hosted the Presbytery of San Francisco quarterly meeting. It was wonderful to see the church come together to host a very successful Presbytery meeting.

Soon after meeting to discern God's direction for the church, we faced new, and unexpected challenges for worship brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Shelter in place directives closed the campus on March 16. God in his wisdom led us in a direction to help our congregation embrace the virtues of technology. Zoom became the medium for providing on-line worship. At first, this transition was challenging for all. With much prayer and God's guiding light, we continue to provide a full liturgical worship followed by a time of fellowship on Sunday mornings via zoom.

Announcements keep parishioners informed about our ministries that continue to thrive with some modification. The Tri-City Free Breakfast Program still serve a hot breakfast in a take-out box, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. CleanStart continues to provide showers to the unhoused on a slightly reduced scheduled. Farmington, our sustainable community garden yields produce that supplement the provisions for a pandemic-related free drive-up food pantry. We continue to donate use of the church facility to Kids Against Hunger and work with the group to help distribute food to seniors, the unhoused and Missionary Ministries. Fule Church is growing and meeting the needs of the Mandarin speaking in the local community as well as in China and Taiwan. We thank God for the opportunity to serve and be a beacon of light in our community.

Each session member was given a list of members to care for and maintain regular communication. These assignments serve our congregation well especially during the current pandemic. Regular communication help our church family stay in touch and care for each other.

Looking back this past year, I can surmise that IPC is a community of authentic faith that is alive with caring followers of Jesus Christ. My summation is based on our faith journey and our willingness to serve our community. God has blessed us with many spiritual gifts to use for His benefit. Our challenge is to encourage each other to bring our gifts to the table and work together for His glory.

For 134 years, God continues to work in and through IPC. We continue to follow the path He has set for us, embracing opportunities to use new technology and other necessary changes while still maintaining connection with our deep traditional roots.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ed