

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

July, 2020

First IPC Church Wide Activity During COVID-19

IPC celebrated the Fourth of July with a drive thru picnic. Yes, this was our first in-person activity as a church since the shelter in place started on March 16. It was good to see so many of you. Thank you for observing all the safety protocols including wearing masks, social distancing and picnicking on the lawn in your social bubbles.

A team led by Tom Mardirosian helped with the preparations and cooking. With Tom cooking hot dogs and David Lam cooking hamburgers, we served 67 boxed picnic lunches. In addition, we enjoyed corn and a delicious raspberry tart for desert.

Twenty-four vehicles came through the drive thru. You stayed in your vehicles and ordered lunch that was packed and brought to you by servers. Several had communion and prayer with Pastor Ed before driving off. Many fellowshiped in bubbles, in white circles painted on the lawn.

To our chefs and all the servers, Sue Stanton, Judy Lam, Premkumar Neerukonda, Daxesh Patelia, Lina Choa, Marissa Hughes, Tom Mardirosian, Jonathan Jiang, Pastor Ed and Elaine Liang, sincere thanks from Worship and Outreach Ministries. Thank you IPC for making this a safe and successful event. View the picnic video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=083PHiWbBi8&t=2s>



Vehicles in the Drive Thru



Serving Picnic Boxes



Opening in Prayer

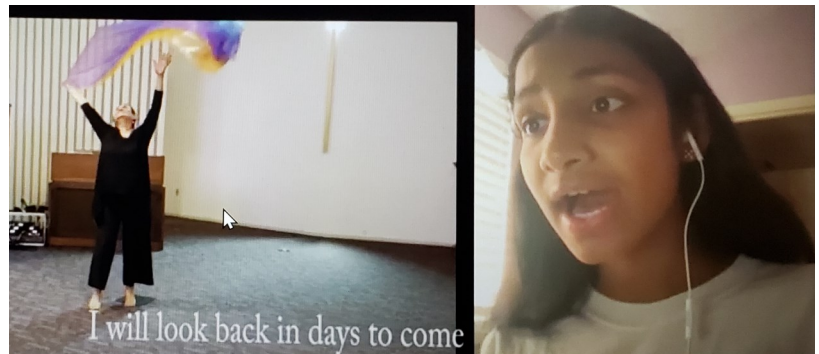


Grilling and Preparing

WORSHIP MINISTRY

The Word of God led by the Holy Spirit can change hearts and draw people to worship. Even more important than presentation and creativity is content and what we bring in our hearts as we gather to praise our Lord, God Almighty each Sunday. Our goal is not perfection; because we know that we are imperfect vessels for service. Rather, we draw nearer to God through our songs, instruments and worship forms, sermons, prayers, Scripture readings and testimonies. We cherish the tried and true and continue to look for new worship forms that keep us on our toes. We continue to count the blessings of on-line worship and look forward to when God permits us to worship in the Sanctuary.

Father's Day Worship was observed in this spirit of meeting new and exciting challenges of worship-from-home. Treats, greeting cards and elements for on-line Communion were delivered to homes of the men in the congregation. Video greetings from children, were prepared, coordinated, and presented during worship. Many of the participants were adult children who, because of shelter in place, were unable to honor their fathers in person. Thank you, Elder Elaine for leading this meaningful project to serve our Fathers and their children. In addition, Antara Raja, a student of Judy Lam and a talented and aspiring 8th grader performed a vocal of "O Shelter Me." She was joined by other singers in the congregation. Marissa Hughes performed an accompanying Liturgical dance to the vocal. These new forms of worship were welcomed, enjoyed by all and has presented us with a new challenge of forming an IPC praise dance group. If you or your children would like to learn Liturgical dance, contact the Worship Elder at 510-579-3694 or call Marissa at the Church Office. No experience needed, just love of the art form.



Heartfelt thanks to our Worship Team for your enthusiastic and unconditional volunteerism to support Tom Mardarosian, Outreach & Engagement Ministry and B&G to make the Fourth of July drive thru picnic a success. Thank you, Elder Elaine for preparing the beautiful videos of this event, including the Labyrinth walk and thanksgiving message by Myrna and Pastor Karl Shadley.

As we seem to be coping well with the dilemma of being apart and staying together as a church body, it becomes even more necessary to build up those with whom we serve. We are called upon to sacrifice our preferences and to resolve our differences in a loving way. In so doing, we build relationships steeped in God's enduring love for us and our love for each other. Thanks to God for His guidance of our Worship Ministry.

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

At the session meeting on June 15, Pastor Ed prayed that God would show the leaders the right path. Reading from Genesis 1, that God created us in His image, we are to treat everyone with respect and dignity. In his report Pastor indicated that Ken Jacobsen will preach on June 28.

Clerk in his report noted that the insurance quote for IPC appeared excessive and will work with the SF Presbytery to try and get additional quotes since Presbytery had just addressed this issue. Clerk also reported that the IPC request for Presbytery COVID-19 grant was sent to the sub committee.

From the monthly reports there were requests to have the Hope Unlimited Valentine Cards added to the Mission Report; Communication needed to direct questions about A/V to the Worship Elder and Stewardship asked that we do another advertisement in eNews for "One Great Hour of Sharing".

Buildings and Grounds reported that beginning May, the major renters who are unable to use the facilities are continuing to pay one half of their monthly rentals. This is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The Child Leap Nursery has completed its obligation to pay rent through March. Because there is no school, they are unable to pay rent until the kids return. There were several discussions about the homeless on campus. Some members wanted them off campus while others requested a cap on the number of RVs and overnight vehicles on campus. B&G was tasked with defining a plan with guidelines for anyone wishing to park overnight on campus.

Now that the Mandarin Ministry, Fule Church, has received funding from the New Worshipping Community and a matching amount from Presbytery, a motion to have them repay the 2019 and 2020 amounts loaned from the general fund failed. Rather, the Team voted to forgive the 2019 payments of \$23,100 and instead repay the general fund the 2020 amount of \$13,100. The Fule Church's plan to start an afterschool program is on hold because of COVID-19. They are looking at other methods of generating revenue to keep the ministry fully funded for the long term.

The ongoing discussion as to when and under what conditions we can return to in-person worship was tabled for the July meeting. Not much can be done at this time with inside worship gathering greater than 50 worshipers prohibited by the County Of Alameda. The Team decided to schedule a Town Hall Meeting on July 1, for congregational feedback. Announcements for the Town Hall Meeting will be in Cornerstone, the IPC eNews, Sunday Bulletin and the church website.

Two motions were approved: One was to hold a drive thru pantry in the parking lot on Saturdays from 9:30 - 11:30 am. The second was for IPC to hold a drive thru July 4th picnic with traditional hot dogs, hamburgers, corn and desert. All attendees will be encouraged to meet up in their "social bubbles" in circles painted on the lawn.

Pastor Ed introduced "Prayer for the People", a program where session members are invited to pray for the congregation and lift up anyone who needs help and support. The Session and Pastor prayed for the TCFBP, for those who are at home living in isolation, healing for those who have medical issues and comfort for those who have lost loved ones and cannot attend funeral services to say goodbye.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm with Pastor Ed thanking God for the opportunity to serve Him during this difficult time. We gave thanks for each and everyone for doing ministry while we are apart and for advocating for human dignity.

News from the Field

During this pandemic we asked you to write and let us know how you were doing. Your responses were overwhelmingly heartwarming. Your church family that prays for you and with you were thankful to hear that you are coping and safe. Here are more excerpts, printed with your permission.

“Dear Irvington Friends,

India is in lockdown. A couple of weeks before the lockdown, all schools were closed by the government order. The 21 days allotted to the lockdown have been extended to April 30th. There are barricades on the roads to prevent travel that are manned by police. They take temperatures and check the person's purpose for being out. If people are found sick, a medical team evaluates. If necessary, people are sent to the government hospitals. All of this is without charge. Markets for food are open at specific hours. A person can go to get food, medicine or a doctor's help. The police use their batons to beat people if they do not comply. Masks are required or one is sent to jail. The virus came to India through air travelers from Europe.

Some teenagers were caught disobeying the government orders. They were made to do frog jumps all the way home, a very harsh treatment.

Humorously, a photo appeared of a policeman sanitizing his baton before using it on someone. Police in some areas have corona helmets (see photo). Cases of Coronavirus are increasing slowly. In this way a weak healthcare system faced with 1.3 billion people has been able to care for the people who get access to it.

I communicate regularly with the leaders. The United States faced difficulties ahead of India so I could encourage them with good practices. Education Director Rajesh Dharmi wrote a song about practicing cleanliness and through faith being victorious. It was sung to a teacher in the Awagarh Center. He learned it over the phone and then picked up his drum and beautifully sang the song as a recording that then went to everyone. People learned the song and pastors kept in touch with their congregations by cellphone. As they could, they gave them bars of soap, the song, and encouragement. Everyone was so appreciative. People would say, “No one would ever come to our outcaste villages, but you come and ask if we are okay. You pray for us. You care about us. We are so grateful.” In the congregations, there is a great sense of caring for others and that is the church.

Easter includes nine days of disciplines for the Exodus Presbyterian Church. In March, a policeman showed up asking Evangelism Director Vijay Niayi Pradhan what his intentions were. Vijay was well prepared, having had a couple of weeks of planning in place.

“What are you doing about your Easter pilgrimage?”

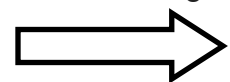
“It is cancelled,” Vijay calmly replied.

Having expected a problem, a surprised policeman then asked, “When will you have it?”

Vijay answered, “Next year.” The policeman had nothing to do, but leave.

Meanwhile, Vijay and his pastors, connected with each congregation, preaching, teaching and praying by cellphone. The pastors in turn connected to their congregations in the same way.

Construction was shut down in the big cities. Without work, the city day laborers from the villages had nothing to eat. The government began to provide food as an afterthought, but the lines were long and impossible so people began to walk home to their villages many miles away where they believed they could survive more easily. Some of them had families and small children. As another afterthought, the government began to offer government buses to help them get to their villages, but many were already on their way.



News from the Field

It was through the laborers returning to the congregations that our pastors found an excellent time to connect with them and help them gain faith. We thought it was a great opportunity to teach them. When they do return to the cities, they can go with an understanding of practicing their faith more intentionally and spreading the gospel message.

Everyone realizes this is a different time, a time to work well on things not done and plan for the future of the church and school system. How will they plan to teach if there is a resurgence of the virus next year and another lockdown prevents students from being in school? Indeed, there is much work to do. They realize that a daily routine is important including, morning cleanup of houses and campuses, morning and evening worship, exercise, spending time with the family for education since the children are not in school, and ministry work. There are always so many things to do when we are in the Lord's hands. Prayerful response in all things is vital.

*Sincerely,
Elizabeth J. Prasad
Witnessing Ministries of Christ"*

Staying Busy...

"Life outside the gates of the ranch has slowed down, but life inside is alive and well. With an abundance of March and April rain there are plenty of weeds to be pulled. The kids are out every morning doing their daily chores of weeding and cleaning. They are doing an excellent job. The construction/agriculture guys continue to come in and work the projects that need to be completed. The pads for our new media center are taking shape, the trades school classrooms are slowly being completed and our fruit trees and habanero peppers are looking healthy. We are very thankful that our stay-at-home home is a 450-acre ranch!! There is plenty of work to be done and room to ride bikes and take walks. Stay safe and thank you for your prayers for our kids. We are doing well.



*Blessings,
Rod and Tina, Rancho Santa Marta"*

News Flash

"Due to the pandemic, it has been difficult to buy bulk items for the ranch houses both in San Diego and in Ensenada, MX. Stores are limiting certain items in order to discourage hoarding and to allow these items to be available for more people. The stores could not understand we were buying flour, rice, beans and fish for over 50 people. But thanks to Jim and Rhonda from Redding, CA, we were able to order items from Costco and Walmart, and have them specially delivered to our El Cajon office. From there we transported the food to the Ranch. If you would like to join them in these special deliveries, you may send the items to our office at:

Bethesda Teaching Ministry, 8000 Shir Mar Place, El Cajon, CA 92021 or call 1 619 258 1358"

CONGREGATION NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Marion Bade	Carrol Kinslow
Bonnie Burger	Judy Lam
Nicole Chaikin	Tessy Mathew
Joe DiMaggio	Sonal Patelia
Helen Jorgensen	Colleen Ridley



Tessy Mathew and Nibin Geevarghese
Alexis and Joe DiMaggio

TOWN HALL MEETING

At the Town Hall Meeting on Sunday July 11, there were multiple inputs on when and if we should return to in person worship. With the changing county guidelines for Houses of Worship, planning becomes difficult.

Some in attendance wanted to return to in person worship, others preferred to wait. An alternative was to live stream the Sunday service so that we can address the needs of those who want an in person service as well as those who preferred to wait until they feel safe to return.

Based on the many inputs, a recommendation from Darlene Neesham was for a short survey to poll every congregational member for their feelings. Clerk was tasked with producing the questionnaire via email and to distribute to those who do not have email access.

Once we have the published results, the Session would meet and come up with a plan that would be communicated to everyone.



Please Note: July 29 is the deadline for our August 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.

ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Outreach & Engagement Ministries

On Saturday July 11, IPC launched a *Drive Thru Food Pantry*. Plans are to have 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 with offering staple shelf food items, bread, cakes, canned meats and canned beans. Eggs, a valuable source of protein, will be offered when available. Produce will be seasonal and will be obtained mainly from Farmington.

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.

If you would like to be part of this exciting ministry, call Outreach Ministries at 510 579 3694 or the church office. Volunteers would be required to have temperature checks, wear masks, practice social distancing and take a food safety handling course on line. All the training you need will be provided on site. In addition, if you have the gift of hospitality and love talking to people you can use your talents to pray with and engage those who need the love of Jesus.

At this time we are accepting donations of eggs or funds for purchase. Donations of canned goods will also be gladly accepted. Donate by either calling Outreach & Engagement Ministries or the church office.

Farmington, our Community Garden celebrates its first year in existence. What a journey!

Because of COVID-19 and the many restrictions implemented to prevent the spread of the virus, we got a late start for our planting season. However, our Community Garden is growing with eggplant, corn, tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, cucumbers herbs and first time gardeners. There are seedlings ready for transplanting; planter boxes filled with soil and water is readily available. Come in ready to work with your hands and feel physically connected to the earth. Bean plants planted by Joe DiMaggio have been regularly providing delicious golden wax beans. Most of the produce from Farmington are either going to the Breakfast Program or the drive thru pantry.



Plans for Farmington this year will be to cover the area behind Classroom 8 with wood chips creating a sanctuary where Farmingtonians can meet, fellowship and rest. There will be tables and chairs as well as a storage room for Farmington tools.

The Saturday Bible Class that was suspended in March will resume when it is safe for us to do so.

Join in on Saturday mornings and be part of this rewarding ministry.

CONGREGATION NEWS

Drive Thru Tamale Picnic - August 22

Mark the date. Following our successful drive thru July 4th picnic, we have scheduled another event for Saturday August 22. This will be a Tamale and ice cream drive thru. Enjoy an authentic, delicious, leaf wrapped Guatemalan Tamale with your family and friends.

You will be asked to register for the event and if you feel safe you can meet up with your bubble on the lawn where circles will again be painted. Pastor Ed will have a station if you would like prayer and communion.



Watch your eNews, announcements and the August Cornerstone for more information.

Celebrating Four Years of Service

Our Ministry Assistant, Marissa Hughes, is vital to the work of IPC, its ministries and to the Kingdom of God. Marissa expedites the administrative responsibilities of the church and provide a wide range of support for the pastor, elders and staff. Her responsibilities include: answering phone calls, managing the church calendar, generating the bulletin and program for our Sunday Worship. She orders office supplies and takes care of the church and TCFBP correspondences. Her many tasks also include some accounting and coordinating space usage of the many churches and organizations that use our facility. At Sunday Worship on June 21, Marissa shared one of her many talents, performing a liturgical dance. She sees her ministry at IPC as an opportunity to be a witness for Christ and ultimately serve Him.



Thank you Marissa for four years of dedicated service.

Survey on Returning to In-Person Worship

Dear Church Family,

You should have received or will soon receive a short questionnaire on returning to in-person worship in the sanctuary. Please complete and return to the Clerk. Your Session Team needs your feedback as we discern when and under what conditions we will return to in person worship.

Simply click on the survey answer the questions and when you are finished, hit send.

We are aware that several of our members do not have access to email. The questionnaire will be delivered to them at home with a stamped return envelope.

If there are more than one members in your household, please distribute so that everyone will have an opportunity to comment and decide on the in person worship plan.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Mustapha Baksh
Clerk of Session.