



## 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 I Peter 2:4,5



Irvington Presbyterian Church

Fremont, CA

December, 2020

### ***This Changes Everything***

At Christmastide we celebrate the central event in the history of the earth. What happened at Bethlehem altered the universe forever. Something really new took place when God became a human being: not an interpretation but an event.

This was far more than learning something new about the way the world is. When Pythagoras discovered that the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides, he found something that was just as true the day before, though no one knew it. But in 50 B. C. to say, "God is Man" would not have been true in the same way in which it was true in 10 A. D. This changes everything.

While Mary was pregnant, the angel told Joseph about the child soon to be born, "You shall call him Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins". (Matthew 1:21) This is why He came, not to break the yoke of Caesar and to bring in the kingdom of David, but to break the yoke of sin and set up the Kingdom of God. In His great love for us, He made the long cross-cultural journey from eternal glory to the conflict-ridden Middle East.

The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. Jesus came to change people's hearts, not just to free us from the penalty of sin and leave the bitter cause. He came to free us from the power of evil in our lives. He came 2000 years ago, before we were born to give new life, to heal us of sin within, to set us free to desire the right things in the right way. In this season of trauma, division, outrage and heartache, He provides comfort, peace and hope.

Jesus fully represents our fallen race. The genealogy in Matthew 1:2-16 lists men and women who were notorious for their evil character. "David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife." (Matthew 1:6) A sorry tale of adultery and murder lies behind that brief verse. No one can be ashamed to claim His help. No matter how far you have fallen, no matter how well you think you have done, Jesus is fully adequate to bring new life. Jesus became a human being so that we can become truly and fully human for the first time.

*Grace and Peace, Your Worship Ministry*

## Worship Ministry

During these uncertain days of the pandemic, your Worship Team continues to move forward planning at least two months ahead of events. We continue to include God in our plans, trusting that He will be our guide. We pray for a heightened sense of observation so we become aware of His signals. We stay flexible, heeding when He wants us to deviate, adapt; or when we are guided to stay on course, appreciative of an opportunity to work for His Glory.

During this Advent season we feel blessed to have families participate in lighting the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love each Sunday. On Christmas Eve, we will light the Christ candle at a candlelight worship on the quad. Pastor Ed will pray for and with us and we will rejoice with a Christmas Carol sing-along accompanied by Judy Lam on the piano. All are invited to join in, either live on the quad or streamed. Check Cornerstone and e-news to register for the live worship.

On Epiphany Sunday, January 10, Pastor Ed is considering an invitation to renew our baptismal vows. We need your prayers as we start planning for Lent and Easter. Pastor Ed also plans a fun get-together with the youth to play on-line games and visit.

Heartfelt thanks to our A/V team for working diligently on the challenges of live streaming. Thank you for your patience, understanding and encouragement as they make progress. We are preparing for the time when God will bless us with an option to return to the sanctuary for live worship.

## Fule - A Matthew 25 New Worshiping Community

On November 29, the first advent Sunday, Pastor Jonathan preached the message of Matthew 25:31-46 to both Fule Church and First Presbyterian Church in Burlingame Mandarin-Taiwanese congregation (Burlpres M-T), talking about Fule's plan to be a Matthew 25 New Worship Community during the Pandemic of Covid-19. With God's grace and IPC Outreach Ministry's support, Fule offers pastoral support and prayer to the Chinese community every Saturday morning at the same time as the Food Pantry. Even though Fule is small in size, we are blessed to be used by God to bring nourishment, comfort, connection, encouragement and faith to our Chinese community.

( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fAJXvgBII8&t=6s>)

To reach out to both Christians and unbelievers, a Thanksgiving video was created by Elder Elaine Liang. Through the story of the first Thanksgiving Sunday in US, Elder Elaine explored America's traditional cultural values, reminding people to give thanks to God even during this long and difficult pandemic and continue to trust in God. ( <https://youtu.be/Yc56b4htDXw>)



Pastor Jonathan lead a new Media project during this season of Advent. Every day, we record a ten minute video of Advent and Christmas Devotional 2020 – Since Nov. 29, 2020 we light candles to observe Advent. Besides the Chinese community at Fule Church, we also serve other Chinese Churches in California, Ohio, Taiwan, Singapore and China. You are welcome to subscribe and recommend the use this devotional. Please check this playlist for more details:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLV7LAZqfjDBz9KrWJWFURIO10EY-BnWGGQ>

## SESSION NEWS & NOTES

Pastor Ed opened the November Session by praying for healing during this pandemic; for unity and that we may be one family of the children of God. He reported a move from Social Hall worship to live worship in the sanctuary. Working the many retirees who have made the quad their Saturday gathering. The Thanksgiving Day event was postponed because of the new restriction of being in Code Purple. Pastor congratulated Elders Kamroon and Mustapha for their appointments to the Presbytery COM and Vice Moderator respectively.

Following the acceptance of the October minutes, Clerk gave a short report on the November 9, Presbytery Meeting and Elder Kamroon reported on Presbytery's progress and especially Pastor InHo's work with Crossroads on dismantling systemic racism. Clerk provided Pastor with an annual statistical report for review before giving to Session.

Reports from Ministries were accepted. Additional ministry comments included:

B&G added that the walk through with Code Enforcement went well – no issues except for his questions on outdoor lights in parking lot and classrooms that have spotlights reflecting on parking lot. Finance Elder Helen reported income is beginning to dip, envelope offerings are also decreasing. As of the end of October, we are running a deficit of \$21,942. If giving in November and December does not increase, we will have to dip further into reserves.

A motion from Personnel to adjust the salary of the account clerk was tabled until the 2021 budget was completed.

Outreach Ministry acknowledged the \$7K from Missions but felt that Missions giving was for specific purposes and, therefore, could not accept this generosity and would seek alternate funding.

Stewardship requested we continue to promote via announcements the Christmas Joy Offering and the Birthday Party for Jesus.

There was disagreement on how the complaint filed by someone who claimed they fell on the trench dug to bring water into Farmington was addressed. Rather than being a team effort, a claim was filed with the insurance company and the individuals who were directly involved in the issue and other session members were bypassed. The discussion ended with everyone agreeing to move forward as a Team.

Pastor reiterated that the names of members of the congregation were again distributed and stressed the importance to call those who are under our care.

The plan for in person worship in the sanctuary is on hold because of the new restrictions.

B&G requested and received approval to obtain quotes for upgrading the handicap bathroom, so that it meets ADA compliance and for degreasing/painting the kitchen and the social hall.

A plan to install a walk in refrigerator may require eliminating what is now the Deacons closet and installing a 220v outlet. The final decision rests with the TCFBP steering committee on the purchase with B&G approving the location in the social hall.

The meeting adjourned with session members and Pastor praying for members in the congregation, for all those working as first responders, for those who are hurting and those who have lost loved ones. Pastor gave thanks for our session, for the time we must work together, and that God would guide us as we implement new things for our worship.

# CONGREGATION NEWS

## A report on Stewardship 2021



Pat Hughes	Pastor Michael
Don Hammack	Irene Quek
Daniel Khuc	Vijey Solomon
Minh Khuc	Jeanne Stachowiak



Kamroon and Mustapha Baksh  
Nichole and Justin Chaikin  
Judith and Vijey Solomon  
Pastors Larry and Martha Thorson

We are eternally grateful to the Irvington Presbyterian Church members and friends who have continued to sustain the church home that nurtures us. We understand that this is a very difficult time for everyone and we pray that you continue to stay safe. During this time of the year, we would have had stewardship meetings where we can share our successes, financial status and plans. We will instead, summarize in our Annual Report and at the January 24, Congregation Meeting.

Thank you for financially supporting our church during this pandemic so that we can continue to do God's work. With a reduction in income mainly from rentals, we have been able to meet our financial obligations by drawing on reserves. And as we plan for 2021, we pray that you would again pledge your financial support to IPC. Click the following link: <https://bit.ly/IPC21pledge> to make your pledge. If you prefer a printed copy with a return envelope, please contact the Church Admin. Your ministries are thankful that with your pledges we will be able to support the many programs next year. If you have not completed your pledge and are thinking,

**Should I submit a pledge?** The answer is yes.

**Does my Pledge matter?** Your pledge does matter.

**Need a pledge card?** Contact the Church Admin.

Thank you for your continued generosity.

## Advent Devotionals

Beginning November 29, Worship Ministry is providing church members devotionals for each of the four weeks of Advent. These devotionals were written by Rev Jill Duffield, editor of Outlook. They include a reflection, daily Scripture readings, suggestions for living out the Bible and a short prayer for each day. They are sent as an attachment with the weekly IPC eNews. If you prefer actual copies, please let Marissa or Kamroon know. The devotionals are not for publication on the church website, Facebook, or YouTube.





# CONGREGATION NEWS

## Hanging of the Greens

On Saturday December 5, some gathered to decorate the sanctuary and the quad for the holidays and for our streaming of worship. The Christmas tree, wreaths and poinsettias in the sanctuary make for a warm, beautiful and welcoming atmosphere taking it to the homes of our worshipers.



Thanks to the Patelia family, Sonal, Daxesh, Ethan and Stavan and to Pastor Ed, Kamroon and Prem for your help in the set up and decorating. Special thanks to Tom Mardirosian for climbing to install lights on one of the pine trees in the quad.

### Christmas Poinsettias

Thank you for participating in the annual event where we decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias. Twenty plants were placed in the sanctuary on November 30, and may be picked up on or after the December 20, worship service.

Remember to dedicate one of the poinsettias to a loved one, in memory of someone dear to you, a friend, someone who is ill, or any other occasion. Dedications will be listed in the December 20, Sunday Bulletin, so please send to Marissa by Tuesday December 15.

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, this year's Poinsettias are a gift from your Session.

### Lighting the Hope Candle

Advent, the period of preparation for the celebration of the Birth of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming, began with the IPC tradition of having families light the Advent Candles.

In each of the four weeks, and Christmas Eve, a family is invited to light one of the five candles on the wreath.

Its circle reminds us of God's unending love and the eternal life He makes possible.

Geevarghese family lighting the Hope Candle.



### Christmas Joy Offering

When you give to the Christmas Joy Offering you are providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need; and develop future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools that equip communities of color.

**Please mail or deliver your offering to the church office by December 24.**



# ACTIVITIES UPDATE

## Weekly Dive Thru Pantry

Each Saturday from 9:30 am -11:00 am Outreach Ministries sponsors a drive thru food pantry in the horse shoe. Food items distributed include, pasta, sauce, canned beans, canned meats, bread, eggs, vegetables and fruit. In place of vegetables from Farmington, carrots, lettuce, milk, spinach and kale are sometimes donated by Peninsula Food Runners.



Preparing to distribute bags of groceries

Outreach Ministries is thankful for the many High School students who come to pack and help distribute to the guests. Thanks to Sherry Hsu for these volunteer referrals. We also appreciate the help from Peninsula Food Runners who provide drivers



Vegetables for Pantry

with vehicles to transport the donated items for the pantry. Thanks to Marissa Hughes and Pastor Dave Chiolero we receive USDA Food Boxes from Harbor Light Church to include in our weekly distribution. Next delivery will be 12/19.

Since the pandemic started, Outreach Ministry has served over 2400 bags of groceries to church members and those in the community who need some help. If you are unable to shop or know of some in the community who needs some help, contact us at **510-579-3694**. We will bring groceries to you if you are unable to come to the pantry.

Financial support for the pantry comes from the Presbytery of San Francisco, church members and friends. Last week the pantry received another \$2K benevolence grant from the Presbytery. We continue to seek funds and food supplies from outside sources.

This has been a year of much pain and sorrow; some have lost loved ones; others have lost jobs and financial stability. During this time, God has called and gifted volunteers to serve in the right area of service.

[We thank Him for allowing us to labor in His vineyard.](#)

## Archived Deacon News - The Bell

In reviewing the Deacons' archives we found that nine years ago the late Mary Wolfe announced that "Let the Bell Ring Again Fund" had met its goal of \$3,904 and the bell was installed. The same bell that once called the congregation to worship prior to 1959 when the Little White Church was razed, was re-installed in the new church in 1964. After church renovations were completed in 2000, the bell was put into storage. In December 2011, it was again reinstalled. Our own Peter Mock built new electronics that now allows the bell to ring by turning on a switch. Before this pandemic each Sunday our youth participated in "plugging in" the switch that rings the bell.

Thank you Deacons for the sweet, nostalgic peals that called us to worship each Sunday morning. We look forward when the bell will again be rung to signal the start of in person worship.



## Community Activities

### Annual Labyrinth Walk

Weather permitting, our annual labyrinth walk is planned for New Year's Eve. Due to the current Alameda County recommendations on outdoor gathering, we are able to accommodate up to 12 individuals for the walk. We will start at 7:00 pm so that you can return home before curfew.

Please register by phoning or texting 510 579

3694 to let us know that you plan to attend.

Should the county restrictions change and we can accommodate more people for the walk, you will be notified via eNews.



### Tri City Free Breakfast Program

During the pandemic, the Tri City Free Breakfast that has served guests for over 23 years in the social hall, continue to provide this service to the community. Beginning March, we switched from a "Diner Style" sit down breakfast where guests were waited on to a walk thru take out breakfast.



The same hot, nutritious breakfast is served each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. With the recent changes in indoor and outdoor gathering, the breakfast will continue with some changes. Guests will come into the social hall ask for any additional bread, cakes, fruit; then pick up a boxed breakfast

and exit. All guests and volunteers wear masks and observe social distancing. Masks are provided for guests who come unprepared. There are hand sanitizers at the entrance and exit doors.

Sincere thanks to all our volunteers who make this a successful program. We pray that God would continue to bless and give each volunteer the measure of the strength that they will need to accomplish what He has called them to do.

### Clean Start - Outreach to the Community

It has been over one year and Clean Start, The City of Fremont Hygiene Truck continue to provide hot showers and laundry facilities to many of the unhoused and seniors in the community. The truck is on campus Monday and Wednesday from 7:30 -10:30 am.

We average 10 showers and 10 loads of laundry each day the truck is on campus. There are more than 120 registered guests who use either the showers, laundry facilities or both.



Volunteers from Irvington Presbyterian Church and the surrounding churches assist the city employees in checking in guests, handing out towels, amenities kits and bagging clothing to be laundered. The weather has turned cold and rainy but our guests show up and are taken care of with dignity and compassion.

If you would like to volunteer, simply be there in the morning and we will provide all training needed.

## ***Check Out What's Happening in December***

Saturdays	9:30 - 11:00 am Drive Thru Pantry
December 5	Hanging of the Greens
December 6	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent
December 13	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Annual Birthday Party for Jesus
December 20	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent
December 24	A Special Christmas Eve candle light Service at 6 pm when we light the Christ candle and sing Christmas Carols. Weather permitting, this service will be on the patio with masks and social distancing in effect. You may also join in your vehicle on the parking lot. <b>You must register to participate in this service.</b>
December 25	Gujarati families Christmas Day Service - lots of cheer, scripture reading and carols.
December 31	Meet up on the patio for our annual Walk the Labyrinth at 7:00 pm.

### **Session Calls the Annual Congregational Meeting**

*on Sunday January 24, 2020 at 11:10 am via zoom.*

*For the purpose of receiving the Annual Report, Annual Budget, electing Elders and a Treasurer.*

*The Annual Report and the 2021 Budget will be available by Tuesday January 19, via email or by requesting a copy from the Church Admin.*



***Please Note: December 28 is the deadline for our January issue.***

All articles are to be delivered in writing to the church office or by email to [kandmbaksh@gmail.com](mailto:kandmbaksh@gmail.com).

*Thank you, Pastor Michael Boyland, for your contribution to the front page message.*