



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

November, 2020

The Genius of Generosity

A generous person will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:25)

Most people want to be financially savvy. You can browse the bookstore or surf the Internet or turn on the TV to get lots of wise tips from financial experts. Some say to be smart, you must spend carefully. Others say to be wise, you must save regularly. But Jesus, probably the smartest man who ever lived, shows that to be a genius, you must live generously.

Most of us grew up thinking that generosity is something reserved for people who were either very rich or very holy. But we knew we were neither. Maybe when we win the lottery or own our own company we can be generous.

The word genius comes from the Latin word meaning 'to produce.' It represents quality and natural ability. In Hebrew the word for generosity literally means 'to saturate with water, as symbol of life.' In Greek it means 'ready to distribute' available to give time, talent and treasure to bless others. These three dimensions of the genius of generosity picture a life overflowing with care and concern for others. This is not just a noble, sacrificial calling for a few super-spiritual people. Spending and saving carefully are wise, but living generously is absolutely genius. It is one of the smartest, most intellectually sound and emotionally satisfying decisions you will make for your life now and forever.

You are always pouring your time, talent and treasure into something. Whatever you are pouring into, that is where your heart is. (Matthew 1:19,20) You can do that intentionally or randomly. Either way, you are making an investment. Every investment has returns, good or bad. If you want to be protected from bad investments and avoid devastating consequences down the road; generosity will do that for you. Generosity is genius because it is a guaranteed, high-yield investment.

God's design for the way we give is to make it an adventure and then to celebrate. Giving is meant to be joyful and fulfilling. It is not rooted in guilt, self-righteousness, or a martyr complex. It is rooted in joy. And it is genius. It is the smartest way to live. God wants us to be supremely generous.

In fulfilling its purpose, IPC has been a resilient and extremely flexible and generous church. God has blessed us. He has provided a welcoming, multiethnic, multicultural church that is reaching out into the community with a sustainable garden, Farmington; and several programs that feed and provide basic services for the growing unhoused community. He continues to provide guidance as we work to help alleviate food insecurity for many during this pandemic.

When you think of IPC and stewardship, remember Jesus' words in 2 Corinthians 9:11: "*You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God*".

Thank you for being resilient and for your continued faithfulness in giving.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

As we approach the Advent season, lighting that first candle of Hope will have special meaning to many of us as this season continues to batter us and we wonder when there will be relief. We turn to God with prayer and worship; to the strength of our faith; the support and encouragement of our church family and the realization that this is one season of many in God's plan. Worship Team, God willing, continues to forge ahead, to execute creative ideas and keep worship safe and meaningful while serving the spiritual needs of our worshipping community.

For the past three weeks, we have enjoyed the option of attending a combination of virtual worship with live fellowship in the Social Hall. It was in the first of these three Sundays that in addition to celebrating Communion, All Saints Day was observed in honor of those in our church family who have gone before us this past year. Pastor Ed read their names out loud during worship; while observing a time of remembrance and reflection. Thanks to the Audio/Visual team for setting up equipment that include those who worship on Zoom in the live fellowship.



As of this writing we are called upon to make some minor adjustments in plans for worship for the remainder of the year. These adjustments were affected by the worsening pandemic situation in Alameda County. Beginning November 22, worship in the sanctuary without an audience will be live-streamed to the congregation in their homes. A recording of the worship program will then be posted on the IPC website. Check your weekly e-News for up-to-date information and changes.

During the Liturgical season of Advent as we prepare for the coming of Christ, Worship Ministry will be providing weekly Advent devotions to all worshipers beginning the week of 11/22. These devotions were prepared and written by the Rev. Jill Duffield, editor of Presbyterian Outlook. Each week will include a reflection, daily Scripture readings, suggestions for living out the Bible and a short prayer for each day.



Streamed worship will also include the tradition of inviting our families to light the Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love each week; and the Christ Candle on Christmas Eve. Buildings and Grounds and Audio-Visual team are looking into the possibility of holding an outdoor Christmas Eve worship on the quad which will also be streamed thru Zoom, social media sites and posted on the church website.

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

Meeting opened with Pastor Ed praying for “unity, kindness and love and for God to give us wisdom to know how to deal with things and to decide wisely and to articulate.” He and the session then read from 1Corinthians 12:21-31. In his report, Pastor shared that he is happy preaching and that virtual worship is working well. He has an opportunity to talk with the largely unchurched Chinese group during the Saturday morning pantry.

By motion, Buildings and Grounds was granted permission to award the roof repair to B&M Roofing. Shannon’s RV would soon be moved. The individual camping in front of the RV was relocated to a hotel room. Going forward anyone who wants to park on campus for more than one day will need to sign a waiver and if on campus for three days without permission, will be cited for trespassing.

Finance received approval to move our checking account to Fremont Bank. Finance was requested to provide guidelines and spreadsheets for each ministry so that they can submit budget information by November 24.

Worship Ministry is beginning to plan Advent and will have details for November meeting. Looking at the future there is a plan for zoom worship and fellowship in the social hall beginning November 1 and to return to sanctuary worship on November 22.

Stewardship and Missions are gearing up for the Christmas Joy offering and a safe Birthday Party for Jesus. More information will follow. Mission Team provided 100 Bibles for Arsi Oromo in Ethiopia and is encouraging participation in the annual Hope Unlimited “30 Days of Prayer”.

Clerk pointed out that as a team, Session needs to do a better job of following up on members of the congregation whom they are assigned. Pastor will have the Admin reissue the contact list for each session member so that follow up will be regular and insure each member is frequently contacted.

Under new business, Moderator explained that Kim Avery sent a letter to the Presbytery indicating that she had fallen while riding her bicycle on the driveway at the back of the church. She followed up with another letter to Pastor wanting to meet with him. Pastor Ed also reported that based on discussions with Presbytery, we should retain an attorney to address the issue. Elder Kamron pointed out that we do not have any lawsuit against us so why address an issue that was not there. Elder Ron volunteered to contact Lynnette Ariathurai or our attorney who handled the property tax issues for a recommendation on how to proceed. B&G was requested to prepare a timeline of events when the apparent incident occurred. Going forward Pastor recommended we not engage with Ms. Avery.

The Annual Congregation Meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2021. This meeting will elect officers, the Elder Class of 2023 and to accept the annual report.

Clerk requested all input from ministries for the annual report to be sent to him by December 15. One to two pages should be the maximum for each ministry.

Outreach Ministry requested \$3500 from the Presbytery COVID Grant to fund the ministry that is now out of funds. On Pastor’s suggestion Elder Ron would discuss with Missions if they would be willing to fund this amount to Outreach Ministry. A motion to fund the Ministry \$3500 from the undesignated COVID funds was approved.

Pastor Ed then invited members to pray for each other before the meeting was adjourned.

CONGREGATION NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Alex Fong

Brook Mantia

Jonathann Jiang

Stephanie Yamada

Daniel Khuc

Emmy Yourish

Dick Hwang



Patty and Pastor Michael Boyland

Janti Lie and Kelvin Chow

Gillian and Don Carson

Nominating Committee

Your Nominating Committee has started its work to recommend a slate of candidates for the Elder Class of 2023. This is one of the most important ministries at IPC. Their task is to seek out leaders who will help guide the congregation to fulfill its mission. Their work is essential. During this pandemic most of their work will be done via the telephone or email. We ask that you pray this prayer with us: *Lord, we give you thanks for those who serve on the Nominating Committee. Bless them with grace, patience and wisdom as they listen for your whispers of the names you want to lead your church. Open our hearts to serve you as leaders and to support those called to lead. In Christ, we pray, Amen.*

Ministry members are: Mary Lou and Richard Craig, Sonal Macwan, Shirley and Chuck Scafidi, and Mustapha Baksh. Pastor Ed serves as a member, ex officio and without vote.

Poinsettias for Christmas

Although we may not be worshipping in the sanctuary this year, in keeping with the annual tradition of celebrating the birth of Christ, poinsettias will decorate the sanctuary. We plan to purchase plants and have them in the sanctuary by December 8.

They will be dedicated to loved ones, in memory of those dear to you, friends or family who are ill, or any other occasion. For special dedications, contact Deacon Shirley Scafidi at (510) 798 1003 and let her know so that we can add your dedication to the list.



Because of the current pandemic restrictions, these Poinsettias will be gifted to the congregation by your Deacons.



Hanging of the Greens



Join the children and adults on Saturday December 5, for one of our traditions as we decorate the sanctuary and social hall for the holidays. There will be hot soup, cookies and eggnog.

If you feel safe and would like to participate, please contact:
Sonal Macwan 510 499 5471

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Celebrating the Tradition of Advent at IPC

While the Advent Wreath with its five candles did bring light to churches, it was not to illuminate the interior as much as to symbolize the coming of Christ. On each Sunday of the Advent season we invite families and small groups to read litanies and scripture while lighting a candle on the wreath. We have watched and waited:

in **Hope** as we light the 1st candle,

for **Peace** we light the 2nd,

in **Joy** we light the 3rd,

with **Love** we light the 4th,

as our redemption draws near, on Christmas Eve, the Christ candle will be lighted.

This year's Advent celebrations begins November 29. Check your Sunday Bulletin for more details.



Fule Church

Fule continues to partner with Burlington Presbyterian Church and minister to a larger Mandarin speaking congregation in the Bay Area. In addition to Pastor Jonathan Jiang and Elder Elaine Liang from Fule Church Pastor, Jacob Gao also from Fule has accepted an invitation to occasionally preach during the joint online Mandarin service on Sundays.

In November, Missionary David Chow and his wife Carol Chow were invited to share their missionary work in China during the joint Friday evening Bible Study Fellowship. The attendees from both congregations were greatly touched by their testimony. Some, in the congregation who are from China were excited and volunteered to visit the brothers and sisters in Yunnan whose lives have been touched by David & Carol.



The Sunday worship and Friday Bible Study over zoom, WeChat and YouTube continue to grow. We are thankful that Fule is able to meet the spiritual needs of so many during a time when every county is facing a rise in COVID infections. A large number of the guests who come to the drive thru pantry gather on the quad for fellowship. Pastor Ed, Pastor Jonathan and Elder Elaine continue their efforts to introduce this group to Christ. They wait for the Holy Spirit to touch their lives.

Farmington

We are now into the Fall and except for three boxes that were planted by guests from the breakfast Program, work is now centered on clearing, cleaning and building new boxes. The goal is to add six more boxes and have them ready for Spring planting.

The area behind the "pump house" is now covered with mulch. Soon we will add a few tables and chairs so that the area can be used as a resting place for Farmingtonians. This year, we added water to the garden. The plan is to have electricity installed early next year.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Session Calls the Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday January 24, 2021 at 11:30 am following worship and via zoom.

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

The Annual Report and 2021 Budget will be available on Sunday January 17.
The Annual Report will be mailed and emailed.

Christmas Joy Offering

This special offering will be collected during the Advent Season. You will shortly receive envelopes in the mail that you may use for this purpose. When you give to the Christmas Joy Offering, you are providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need. You are also helping to develop our future leaders at Presbyterian related schools and colleges that equip communities of color.

Please mark your checks "Christmas Joy Offering". Thank you.



Birthday Party for Jesus

It is that time of the year when we can all give a little to help many. For many years IPC has hosted a Birthday Party for Jesus where you brought unwrapped gifts to the sanctuary for persons of any age. These gifts were then taken to Tri-City Volunteers and handed out to families in our community who may not receive a gift for Christmas. With the current pandemic we are unable to plan bringing gifts to the sanctuary.

Therefore, we are requesting if you are able, drop off your gift in the church office or contact Ron Fong who has volunteered to pick up from your home. Tri-City Volunteers are also recommending you shop on line and have the gift delivered directly to their office. They would like all gifts delivered by December 14, because they are planning a drive thru on December 23, when the gifts would be placed in the trunks for those who come to the drive thru. The Lord has done so much for us so let us respond with generous hearts as we do something special for someone during this holiday season.



Outreach Ministries

Serving the Church and Community

The drive thru pantry that started off as a service to our congregants who were unable to do grocery shopping at the start of Covid-19 lockdown continues to grow. Food insecurity has an increasingly negative effect in our community during the pandemic and wildfires, creating an increasing need for food sources. We now distribute an average over 50 bags of groceries each week.

All in our community and the IPC congregation who need grocery items, are invited every Saturday morning 9:30 to 11:00 am to pick up a bag containing protein, dry or canned shelf food items, fruit and fresh veggies when available. Outreach Ministries would also deliver to the homebound. Social



Preparing to hand out grocery bags

distancing and masks are required for everyone visiting or working in the pantry. Donations for provisions come from the IPC congregation, Fule Church congregation and Presbytery of San Francisco who donated cash to purchase fresh eggs, canned and boxed food items. Lettuce, and spinach are provided by Peninsula Food Runners. During October, we teamed up with Pastor Dave Chioloro at Harbor Light Church to distribute more complete nutritiously balanced boxes containing fresh poultry, eggs, milk, veggies and fruit from the United

States Department of Agriculture. Outreach Ministries is continuing to look for other food sources to supplement current offerings.

Carol Lynn, a Ministry member has joined the team of volunteers to help bag food items on Saturday mornings. There are a few High School Students who also volunteer to pack and distribute grocery bags. Elder Elaine Liang, Pastor Jonathan Jiang and Pastor Ed provide support and spiritual guidance to many of our pantry visitors.



Vehicles lining up at the pantry

As we continue to serve the community, Outreach Ministries has partnered with "KIDS AGAINST HUNGER" (KAH) Fremont, to pack bags of fortified grain in the social hall. Each individual packet of grain provides six nutritionally complete servings for only 20 cents per serving. A packet of grain is included in each grocery bag distributed on Saturday.



The Salaam Food pantry that is run by the Islamic Center at the corner of Irvington and Fremont Boulevard, also receives 210 packets (1300 meals) for distribution during their monthly food distribution. Thank you KAH.

The generosity of KAH extends to Rancho Santa Marta in Mexico, one of the Ministries that is supported by IPC. Each month Outreach Ministry delivers 72 packets of grain to this Ministry at their US office in El Cajon.

DEAR IPC FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

During the months of November and December, we had planned family friendly events that were the perfect opportunities for you to invite neighbors, friends and co-workers to come experience the benefits of being part of our church family. When we planned, Alameda County was in the Orange Tier of the State of CA "Blueprint for a Safer Economy".

With the alarming increase in COVID-19 infections, the State and subsequently Alameda County reverted to the Purple Tier - the most restrictive level in the state's reopening framework. This means that we are unable to meet in person or hold indoor services.

Pastor Ed, the Worship and A/V Teams got together and have planned many activities that will be held outdoors and via zoom. Anyone planning to attend an outdoor event will need to pre register, wear masks and social distance. Pre registration is mandated for contact tracing. Participate in outdoor activities only if you feel safe and are prepared to follow the published guidelines.

We are thankful for you and grateful for what God is allowing us to do during this pandemic. So,

Check out what's to come this November and December:

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| November 15 | Last of zoom worship and fellowship in social hall |
| November 22 | We begin to stream worship service from the sanctuary, mailing of Advent devotionals. |
| November 29 | 1 st Sunday of Advent, Sign up for Christmas poinsettia dedication |
| December 5 | Hanging of the Greens |
| December 6 | 2 nd Sunday of Advent |
| December 13 | 3 rd Sunday of Advent, Annual Birthday Party for Jesus |
| December 20 | 4 th Sunday of Advent |
| December 24 | A Special Christmas Eve candle light Service at 7pm. Weather permitting, this service will be on the patio wearing masks and practicing social distancing. |
| 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 11:00 pm. |



Please Note: November 29 is the deadline for our December 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.