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Mission Partners Respond to Earthquake in Syria and Turkey

by Carol Sittig on behalf of the Mission Interpretation Commission

“Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.” –Isaiah 54:10

In the early morning hours of Monday, February 6, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkey resulting in destruction there as well as northern Syria. That was followed by almost equally strong aftershocks throughout southern Turkey and northern Syria. Its impact was also felt in parts of Iraq, throughout Lebanon, and in parts of Jordan, Israel/Palestine and Cyprus.

Our Mission Co-Workers, Elmarie & Scott Parker jumped into action. Elmarie reports in her PC(USA) Mission update that *“My phone began filling with WhatsApp messages from local partners, neighbors, and friends almost immediately. All of us were checking in on each other. My building suffered no damage. I am safe.*

I spent the rest of the day messaging with all the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) pastors in Syria and northern Lebanon, along with other partners and friends in Syria and Lebanon. Thanks be to God, none of our dear partners and friends lost their lives in this

Upcoming Worship

Sunday worship services are in-person and accessible through Facebook Live (facebook.com/claremontpres) or YouTube (search Claremont Presbyterian Church).

Sunday, May 7, 10:00 AM

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Matthew 12:1-21

Karen Sapio preaching

Sunday, May 14, 10:00 AM

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Matthew 21:12-22

Karen Sapio preaching

Wednesday, May 17, 5:30 PM

The Village Dinner Church

Sunday, May 21, 10:00 AM

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Youth Sunday

Ordination and Installation of Officers

Sunday, May 28, 10:00 AM

Pentecost Sunday

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

John 20:19-23

Karen Sapio preaching

quake. All of them began to immediately spring into action to offer shelter, blankets, food, water, medical assistance and hygiene packs to the many around them who were forced into the freezing cold rain and snow of the early morning hours as their homes collapsed around them.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance was in immediate contact with our partners as well. Already four emergency grants of \$10,000 each are being sent to four of our partners who are on the ground in Syria and have an impressive track record through these many years of struggle for implementing effective relief work benefiting everyone in the community. These four partners are: National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), Forum for Development, Culture, and Dialogue (FDCD), and Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEED). Between each of their expansive networks, they will be reaching many people in need over the coming months. Their immediate focus is on basic support: getting blankets, food, water, medicines and hygiene supplies to the network of local churches, mosques and schools that are offering displaced families emergency shelter. PC(USA) will be working with these partners to assess and collaborate on mid- to long-term recovery and rebuilding needs."

The CPC Mission Interpretation Commission (MIC) donated \$2,000, and The Refugee Concerns Team donated \$1,000 to Syria Lebanon Partnership Network – Earthquake Relief. MIC would also like to thank our CPC congregation for your individual donations through the Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for Syria and Turkey.

Jazz Vespers Celebrates Women of Jazz

A special Mother's Day evening Jazz Vespers will celebrate Women of Jazz. Music for this evening will feature one of Southern California's noted women of jazz, Sherry Williams. She began singing professionally when she was a high school student in San Bernardino, California. She sang and toured with The Young Americans and at UCLA, she joined the acappella choir and worked with the famous Roger Wagner and the UCLA Choir, both in Los Angeles and Europe. She has worked extensively in and around the Los Angeles and Denver areas in important jazz venues, nightclubs, and festivals, and has recorded three solo CDs and two ensemble CDs.

On May 14 at 6:00 PM, bring your mom, your friends, your neighbors and experience this fusion of prayer, music, and contemplation.

New Bible Study Starts May 3

What is a miracle? What do miracle stories teach us? *Signs and Wonders: A Beginner's Guide to the Miracles of Jesus* explores selected miracles of Jesus in historical and theological context. For each miracle, we will discuss not only how past witnesses would have understood the events,

but also how today's readers can draw meaning from Jesus's words and actions. Sound interesting? Please join us on Wednesdays at 4:00 PM for this six week study beginning on May 3. The Zoom meeting ID is 862 1883 9113. The book is available through most online book sellers. If you prefer to have the church office order for you, please contact Pastor Sapio.

Local Legends Concert Series Returns

Elizabeth Hangan, Marguerite Millard, and Ellen Harper are longtime musicians now performing together as the Citrus Sisters. They will be at Claremont Presbyterian Church on May 20 at 6:00 PM playing some of their own tunes as well as traditional folk songs, with an invitation to the audience to sing along.

Harper, Hangan, and Millard have had personal connections for decades. Harper's parents opened the Folk Music Center in Claremont in 1958. Millard learned to play guitar from Harper's mother. And Hangan's parents in San Bernardino and Harper's parents in Claremont were friends. The Citrus Sisters perform such tunes as Bob Dylan's "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," the gospel sing-a-long "This Little Light of Mine," Holly Near's "Singing for Our Lives," the spiritual "Wade in the Water," the calypso classic "Day-O," Millard's composition "Noah" and Harper's own "City of Dreams." Besides performing as the Citrus Sisters each has her own projects. Millard has a band, Squeakin' Wheels. Harper's 2021 memoir, "Always a Song," received nation-wide attention, including a NPR interview by Terry Gross. She's in her store five days a week. Hangan performs with various combinations of musicians, from funk to world music around Southern California.

Sacred Gardening as Spiritual Practice - a 2 part series

Today many in our local communities have caught interest in growing produce in their own raised garden beds. Whether it is for consuming at home, feeding domestic animals, or for giving away to neighbors and friends. This has also been a practice by Native peoples in this area of Southern California. Come listen to those sharing the his-

tory of the use of native plants and hear from your friends and neighbors as to their passion for growing food to share communally. And, we hope you will feel the invitation to share your own story. This will be on two Monday evenings (one in May and one in June) on Zoom. Watch for more specifics to come.

Also, watch for updates on a 4 part series in the fall on Climate Change. This will include guest speakers, learning about youth and mental health issues, and possibly engaging a book study and/or a documentary discussion.

Grad Sunday, June 11

Help us celebrate our young people as they mark completions and transitions in their educational journeys. If your student is graduating from college, preschool, grad-school, high school, jr. high, or other educational programs please send the following information to Pastor Brian: name, degree/diploma/program, name of institution, family members connected to CPC.

We will also be celebrating those completing their 3rd grade year with a Bible gifted by the church.

Pentecost Offering

Our upcoming special offering will be the Pentecost offering, which is collected during the weeks around Pentecost (Sunday, May 28). This offering goes to support young people and inspire them to share their faith, ideas, and unique gifts with the church and the world.

While much of our special offering collections are split between the denomination and the presbytery, the Pentecost offering allows for 40% of the collection to stay with the congregation; that means us here at CPC.

This year the Education & Leadership Commission is still discerning where to designate our 40%, with a focus on youth spiritual and leadership formation here at CPC and in our community.

Youth Sunday

On May 21 our young people will be leading us in a creative worship experience. Make sure you come ready to be engaged and excited to learn from the gifts of our elementary children and youth. We are invited to grow

through our mutual gifts as we seek to be taught by the younger members of our community.

The Village Dinner Church

Our next Village Dinner Church is Wednesday, May 17 in the Fellowship Hall from 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM. This month we welcome Christy Anderson, Executive Director of Claremont Canopy to share about her work of passion with resettling refugees and asylum seekers. Also, providing some of his own musical pieces, Pierre Englebert will be singing and playing his guitar. Village Dinner Church lifts up the gifts of the community wrapped in worship.

Vacation Bible School - Save the Date

This year's Vacation Bible School will be July 17-20, 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM and our theme is: *Under The Sea: Diving Deep Into God's Love!*

Suggested donation of \$25 per child, but no more than \$60 per family (no child will be excluded for not being able to offer a donation). We will gather each afternoon in the Fellowship Hall at the church

No Waffle Church in May

All who are interested are invited to register for and attend the CPC Family Camp.

Family Camp – Vision Into Action Pt. 2

This year Family Camp will return to the Big Bear Lake Camp. We again want to offer an opportunity to get away, close to home, and enjoy some modern amenities while being able to step out the doorstep and into nature. Join us on May 27, 3:00 PM - May 29, 11:00 AM at Big Bear Lake Christian Conference Center. Cost is \$118 per participant and children 2 years and younger are free. Register today with your \$50/participant deposit Scholarships available. Sign-up today with Pastor Brian or Heather.

CPCC El Rancho Fundraiser

The Children's Center will be having their second "Second Monday of the Month" fundraiser at El Rancho, 984 Foothill Blvd, Claremont on Monday, May 8. The first was well attended by CPCC families. We'd like to see more CPC families joining us. It's a great time for having dinner in a place that's not your house with people who usually aren't at your dining room table for good conversation. Flyers will be on the table in the narthex on the Sunday prior or you can get one from Barb MacKenzie or Sacha Lord at El Rancho. We hope that you'll come join us!

Red Wheelbarrow Food Collection Sunday

The red wheelbarrow collection in March was a great success! We were able to donate lots to the Beta Center, one of the programs of the Inland Valley Hope Partners (IVHP). The Deacons thank you for your support. The next red wheelbarrow collection Sunday will be June 4. We invite you to join us in making food or hygiene donations to the red wheelbarrow. The donations will be delivered after church that Sunday. We continue to have a need for food donations or monetary donations for food in our own communities. But you don't have to wait until June 4 to donate, you are invited to drop off donations any Sunday. Let us joyfully consider how we might each contribute to filling the red wheelbarrow!

First Tuesday Coffee and Conversation

At 9:30 AM on May 2, grab a cup of coffee to go from your favorite Claremont Village coffee shop and

A Labyrinth Meditation for May

May is a month that brings many memories as we celebrate Mother's Day, Ascension Day, and Memorial Day. Memories can be sweet and poignant; they can be bitter and sad. Use your prayer walk through the Labyrinth as a way to give to God both your happy and sad memories.

As you begin, take a deep breath and ground yourself here, aware of trees, birds, the feel of wind and sun, and other sensations.

As you wind around slowly to the center, using Mother's Day or Memorial Day, choose a memory that is sad and grief-filled. Let yourself mourn. Pray for those you are remembering. Receive Christ's comfort as you remember his words: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

At the center, stop, take deep breaths, and let go of your grief, giving thanks to Jesus, who is with you.

As you wind your way out, choose memories that are blessings of joy. Offer prayers of gratitude and blessings to the Holy God, who has given us our life with these joys. Think of ways you can bring blessings and joy to some others in your life.

At the end, which is also the beginning, take deep breaths, grounding yourself in the present moment, looking forward to the rest of your day. Give thanks to Jesus Christ, who walks with you – now and into the future.



join friends in Laemmle Square for a time of conversation and building friendships. This is a great chance to get better acquainted with members of our community. Questions? Call the church office at 909-624-9693.

March Session Highlights

- Rejoiced in approving the baptisms of Jessie Sie, Eva Agwu and Phoenix Agwu on Easter
- Acknowledged the deaths of Kevin Kessler, Kay Brown, Ron Diaz and Roger Shervington
- Were introduced to the seven marks of a Matthew 25 Church and engaged in discussion of CPC's strengths and challenges
- Publicly thanked Patrick West for his diligence in facility maintenance

Easter Lily Thank You

We are grateful for such generosity from so many who donated 114 Easter Lilies that were delivered by Deacons, Congregational Care, and kind volunteers to those near and far who are bereaved, isolated, or home-bound. Multiple smiles and uplifting stories have been shared by delivery volunteers.

The Easter lilies also graced our CPC sanctuary for our glorious Easter Sunday resurrection celebration! Thanks is also extended to our Intergenerational team of friends who joyously decorated the sanctuary.



The Communicator is published monthly by Claremont Presbyterian Church. Submissions are subject to editing for content and length. To submit an article please e-mail Lisa Strom (lisa@claremontpres.org) by the 15th of the month.

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Ways to Give

- Place offerings in offering box in narthex after worship.
- Check: We can receive contributions by checks mailed or dropped off at our church office.
- Online: You can make an online contribution to Claremont Presbyterian Church by navigating to our website at claremontpres.org/giving-2. or by scanning the QR code to the right.
- Autopay from your checking account: Your bank should be able to help you set up an electronic payment directly to CPC.
- Transfer money through your bank or the Zelle app. Send your money to: giving@claremontpres.org.



Flowers for Worship

Our CPC worshipping community is blessed by the generosity of individuals who have shared arrangements in honor of, in memory of, or in celebration of a loved one or an event! Below are the arrangements that were donated during the month of April.

April 2: donated by Trish, Ron and Jean Perry in loving memory of Joseph (Joe) Nelson, Trish's son-in-law.

April 9: the arrangement at the base of the cross was lovingly donated by Chinny and Nwojo Agwu to the glory of our Risen Lord on Easter and in honor of her granddaughters: Eva Amarachi Agwu and Phoenix Chika Leggette-Agwu, both receiving Holy Baptism on Easter Sunday!

April 16: given by Sharron Bentley in loving memory of son, Andrew Bentley, for his birthday on April 17.

April 23: given by Phyllis Shervington-Epling in memory of both her father, Roger, and of her mother, Sandy. Rev. Roger Shervington passed away on March 17. Sandy passed away on March 16, 2020. They are also given in honor of their birthdays. Sandy's 75th birthday would have been on April 29, and Roger's 75th would have been on May 1. Roger teased, "Yes, I married

CLAREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AS OF 03/31/2023	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Pledges	\$138,557.04	\$121,251.00
Other Income	\$23,602.53	\$29,829.00
Expenses	-\$174,571.41	-\$183,230.41
Variance	-12,411.84	-\$32,150.41
CHILDREN'S CENTER AS OF 03/31/2023	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Revenue	\$296,289.56	\$278,515.00
Expenses	-\$285,493.32	-\$279,509.25
Variance	\$10,796.24	-\$994.25

an older woman, by 2 days!”

If you would like to make a donation of flowers to grace our sanctuary during Sunday morning worship, please contact Delight and she will take care of all the details for you and with you.

Please Lift Up Your Prayers

In gratitude: for those in our CPC community experiencing improvements in health and well-being.

In contemplation: As we celebrate the Easter resurrection of Christ and as we observe the 5th, 6th, and 7th Sundays of Easter moving into Pentecost, let us be the vehicles of sharing the deep love of God with kindness and compassion extended to those around us. We anticipate the day of Pentecost and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In grief: We ask for prayers, remembering persons from the Southern states to the Great Lakes area whose lives have been impacted by the recent tornadoes; we ask for the Holy Spirit’s comfort for those families who continue to grieve following a shooting in a Nashville Christian school; we continue to ask for God’s grace, comfort, and strength for the survivors and for the responders in the tedious reparations as a result of the devastating earthquake in Turkey and in Syria.

For those who have died, may God wrap each one left grieving in love and peace: Ann Lillich, Stuart Lillich’s mother, died on March 25. Ann was firm in her faith and we are certain she is walking with Jesus now along with her husband who died two years ago; Virginia “Ginny” Gillette, mother of Lori Lillich, died early afternoon on March 23, now at peace; Rev. Roger Shervington passed away on Friday, March 17 in Claremont. Rev. Shervington was a pastor of Eagle Rock Presbyterian Church and Community Presbyterian Church, El Monte before he retired. He and his pre-deceased wife, Sandy, who died on March 16, 2020, and only child, Phyllis, have been long-time members of Claremont Presbyterian Church. We pray for their daughter Phyllis and their family and friends as they mourn his death. Rev. Raymond “Kay” Brown passed away on Tuesday, March 14. Rev. Brown retired to Pilgrim Place twenty years ago after serving churches in Arizona and Washington and was active in the San Gabriel Presbytery when they moved to Pilgrim place. We pray for his wife, Suzanne, and their family of five children and friends as they mourn his death.

For those who are faced with health challenges and recuperation: Encarnacion Amores, mother of Teresa Bernal, who continues to struggle with health issues and Marivic Amores, who continues to provide loving care to her; Jean Perry, recovering from a fall; Sean Hughes; Linda Hamilton being treated for lymphoma; friends and neighbors who are recovering from Covid and the flu.

For those for whom we wish the continued grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit: Pam and Roger House as Pam continues to navigate her path in recovering from long-Covid and cancer treatment; Linda Hamilton’s husband, Lee Ireland; Dolores Morgan; Wadie and Rita Alkhouri; Marcia Reich’s niece, Wendy, undergoing breast-cancer chemotherapy; Patricia Yu, Catherine Lin’s mother; Joan Kelly’s sister and Donna Kelly’s aunt who suffered a stroke; Corinne Tolles, Delight’s cousin undergoing chemotherapy and continuing dialysis.

For living transitions: Pastor Brian’s parents, Bonnie and Dennis Symonds, as they get used to their new surroundings; Joyce Alexander, relocated to Ventura.

For the strength and peace of the Holy Spirit for those of us who may find ourselves in sensitive family situations: Greg Stout and sister, Margie Stout Ludwig; pastor Brian’s aunt; Pastor Brian and family; the Agwu family.

For those whom we remember on an ongoing basis: Mike Layne; Larry Robertson; Frank Pinkerton; Cloyce Morrow; Ron and Trish Perry; Gennie Ransom; Sue Likens; Peggy Nall; John Najarian; Carrie Willette, Jan Willette’s daughter; Barbara Patch; Doris Craig and Mae (Becky) Beck and her nieces; Tom Bleakney; Eileen Jaeger; Carolyn Kingshill; Claire McDonald; Barbara Myers; Doris Chambers; MaryAnne Blaine; Marianne Hillman; Sandra Deibel; Carolyn Whitham; Marion Thompson; Jean Cochran.



COMMUNICATOR

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Deadline for June *Communicator* - May 15

Weekly Online Events

Monday - Thursday, Saturday

8:00 AM - Morning Prayer (Facebook)

Sunday - Friday

5:00 PM - Evening Prayer (Facebook)

Sunday

10:00 AM - Worship (Facebook)

Wednesday

11:30 AM - Mid-Week Mini Concert (Facebook)

4:00 PM - Bible Study (Zoom)

Friday

8:00 AM - Morning Meditation (Online Meditation Chapel)

See All That's Happening... For the most up-to-date calendar of events, go to www.claremontpres.org/calendar.



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