

# The Messenger

First Presbyterian Church of Garden Grove

DECEMBER

2019

## Walking in Faith, Living in Hope, and Acting in Love

Sunday Worship  
9:30 am

11832 Euclid Street  
Garden Grove, CA  
92840

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### From Pastor Jack's Study:

#### FRIGHTENED SPARROWS

by Rev. Dr. Jack Michael Loo



One Christmas Eve, a Chicago journalist, not being a fan of Christmas programs or the Jesus story, stayed behind his typewriter while his wife and children went to a Christmas program at a local church. While he was working, a fierce storm moved in. And in the middle of it, he heard an irregular thumping at the window. He went to the window and saw tiny, shivering sparrows, attracted to the evident warmth inside, beating in vain against the glass.

Touched by what he saw, the man bundled up and trudged through the fresh snow to open the barn for the struggling birds. He turned on the lights, tossed some hay in a corner, and sprinkled a trail of saltine crackers to direct them to the barn. But the sparrows, which had scattered in all directions when he emerged from the house, hid in the darkness, afraid of him.

He tried various tactics: circling behind the birds to drive them toward the barn, tossing cracker crumbs in the air toward them, retreating to his house to see if they would flutter into the barn on their own. Nothing worked. He, a huge alien creature, had terrified them; the birds could not understand that he actually desired to help.

He withdrew to his house and watched the doomed sparrows through a window. As he stared, a thought hit him like lightning from a clear blue

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**The Messenger** is published monthly to inform members and friends of church news, upcoming events, and "food for thought".

**Deadline** for contributions is the **10th** of each month.

Contributions are subject to editing with regard to subject matter, space requirements, and *timely* submission. The Editors and Staff appreciate your kind and thoughtful cooperation.

For weekly updates, please come to Worship Service each Sunday morning to receive your copy of the Bulletin with announcements.



**Sunday Worship begins at 9:30 am**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1  
COMMUNION SUNDAY**

**FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
HOPE**

**“What Shall We Name Him?”**

Isaiah 9:6-7

Matthew 1:18-25

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8  
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
PEACE**

**“You Want Me To Be  
Whose Dad?”**

Psalm 95:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15  
THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
JOY**

**“In Favor With God”**

Psalm 100:1-5

Luke 1:26-38

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
LOVE**

**“Child Of Hope”**

Psalm 98:1-6

Luke 2:1-14

## **FRIGHTENED SPARROWS**

(continued from page 1)

sky: If only I could become a bird—one of them—just for a moment. Then I wouldn't frighten them so. I could show them the way to warmth and safety. At the same moment, another thought dawned on him. He had grasped the whole principle of the Incarnation.

A man's becoming a bird is nothing compared to God's becoming a man. The concept of a sovereign being as big as the universe He created, confining Himself to a human body was—and is—too much for some people to believe.

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10)

May the great joy of Christmas fill your heart!

*Pastor Jack*



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24  
CHRISTMAS EVE: 4:30 pm  
“Jesus Changed Everything”**  
Luke 2:1-14

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29  
“Making A Place For God”**  
Isaiah 40:3-5  
Luke 3:1-6

**Rev. Dr. Jack Michael Loo, Pastor**



**SUPPORT PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE CHURCH LEADERS BY GIVING TO THE PCUSA CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING**

Each year during Advent, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, we honor God’s gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Members of the FPCGG family are encouraged to support the Christmas Joy Offering by making special gifts. Special envelopes will be available Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, but your gift could be specially designated at any time during Advent.

**PLAN TO JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS CAROLING!  
Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**



Come one, come all — singers and joyful noisemakers — and join the Young-At-Heart Singers as we sing Christmas songs to those who are homebound on Sunday afternoon, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will make a joyful noise and maybe even some harmonies, sharing the gift of Christmas music with those unable to attend worship. It is an afternoon of inspiration for everyone as we share the good news of God’s love with those who really appreciate it.

**We will leave the church parking lot next to the exit at 1:00 pm to carpool to our destinations. Please plan to spread and receive joy with us!**

**ELECTING NEW OFFICERS**

by the Nominating Committee

The Session has called a Special Congregational Meeting for Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, directly after worship, so that we may hear the report of the Nominating Committee and elect Ruling Elders and Deacons who will begin their service in January 2020. Please join your church family as we prayerfully consider persons willing to commit to leadership in the Lord’s service at FPCGG in the coming years.



**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

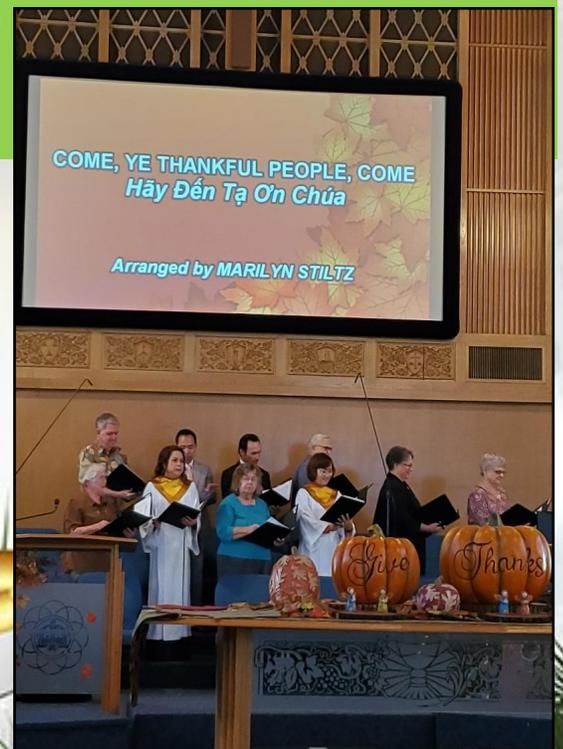
## FPC AND VPC GAVE THANKS AND PRAISED GOD IN JOINT THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

First Presbyterian Church of Garden Grove and Vietnamese Presbyterian Church worshipped together at 10:00 am on Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, in a Joint Thanksgiving Service. Nearly 350 participants celebrated in a joyous blending of music and message.

Special music by a group of ten singers called us to worship with “I Will Give Joyful Thanks”. The VPC Praise Band and both FPC and VPC vocalists led songs of praise. The VPC Children’s Choir sang “Thank You, Lord, for Making Me” while displaying monkey, bear, and alligator hand puppets. (Those lyrics amused everyone with clever animal sounds, including “Chomp, chomp, chomp” for the gators.) FPC Director of Music Marilyn Stiltz directed a combined FPC and VPC Choir in her own specially arranged anthem, and the VPC Choir sang two anthems.

Four Presbyterian Pastors shared leadership during the service, including Rev. Ngoc-Huong Thi “Cedar” Dang (VPC’s pastor), Rev. Dr. Jack Michael Loo (FPC’s pastor), Rev. Cuong (retired VPC pastor), and Guest Preacher Rev. Forrest Claassen, Los Ranchos Presbytery Co-Executive and Stated Clerk for Governance and Congregational Leadership. His sermon entitled “Is It Right for You to be Angry?”, based upon Jonah 4:1-11, was delivered in English, while the Vietnamese translation was projected on the screen.

VPC generously and graciously prepared and served a traditional Vietnamese lunch afterwards in the Fellowship Hall.





This Joint Thanksgiving Worship represented hours of time for planning, coordinating, practicing, translating, tech and bulletin preparation, food preparation, decorating, set-up and clean-up. Much was gained by working together.

Praise God for Christian brothers and sisters working and serving together!





At left, the old steeple rises above the original church building in an undated photo.

**OUR OLD STEEPLE HAS A NEW HOME!**



## PRESERVING A REFURBISHED PIECE OF FPCGG HISTORY

by Sharon Wolfe, Clerk of Session

First Presbyterian Church of Garden Grove actually “began” at an initial meeting of a Presbyterian Steering Committee of eight couples in a private home on October 3, 1954. The church was officially organized on Sunday, January 23, 1955. For a donation of \$25 per week, the new church family met for worship and meetings at the Adventist Church in Garden Grove. A property on Euclid Avenue on which to build a church was recommended to the New Work Committee of Presbytery on April 23, 1955. The contract with the architect was dated April 9, 1956. Plans were for a “social hall, two classrooms, crib room, kitchen, choir room, men’s and women’s restrooms, and the funds available for these improvements was the sum of \$60,000.00.” Dedication services for the new church building were held on January 20, 1957.

The steeple that was erected over that first set of buildings was topped with a spire described as “the Cross exalted above the Crown of Thorns pointing over the four directions of the world, and over of the Crown of the Exalted Christ.” Fast forward to today. We at 2019 FPCGG were compelled to solve a repeatedly repaired roof leak which consistently flooded the current Fellowship Hall restrooms and hall during heavy rains by removing the cause of the problem, the original steeple. The entire metal spire was saved, and now has been refurbished.

In late November that original steeple was professionally and securely installed by Pacific Westline alongside the stage in what is now the Fellowship Hall, the social hall which originally served as the worship space for the 1957 church. We have chosen to preserve and prominently display the original intent to reach into all four corners of the world with news of the risen Christ.

## FINANCIAL NEWS

by Administrative Ministry



Here are the numbers!

Commitments and Regular Giving Income as of October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019:

YTD 2019 Actual	\$ 70,586.55
YTD 2019 Anticipated	\$ 70,430.00
YTD Difference	\$ 106.55

Financial Update as of October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, for total income and expenses:

YTD 2019 Income	\$ 172,352.20
YTD 2019 Expense	\$ 168,294.78
YTD Difference	\$ 4,057.42

The FPCGG Session is diligently striving to keep expenses reasonable. Current expenses are less than current receipts because of the generous initial offering total of \$5,880.00 received in January, facility use fees paid by Vietnamese Presbyterian Church, Chapman Montessori School and others, the careful use of Non-Restricted Gifts to fund unexpected maintenance, and special gifts. Actual FPCGG pledges and regular giving receipts are \$106.55 ahead of what was anticipated as the year began, so giving is faithful. This church family gives generously beyond ourselves — our time, our energies, and our financial resources — and we pray that God will continue to use them and us to serve the call of the church.



These Harvest Bags were donated by the FPCGG church family on Harvest Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. 19 of them were delivered to H.O.P.E., and our church office distributed the remaining 5.



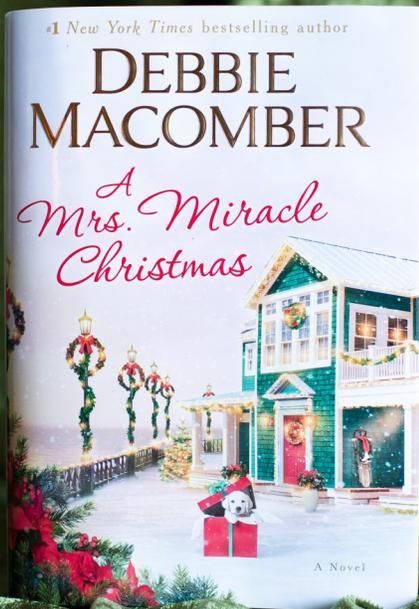
We are saddened to announce that the FPCGG church family is mourning the deaths of three of our brothers in November:

Richard Allinger died November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Paul Radcliffe died November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mike Hudson died November 27<sup>th</sup>.

Please pray for the peace and comfort of the families and friends of these three who lived and served among us and now have moved to eternal rest.



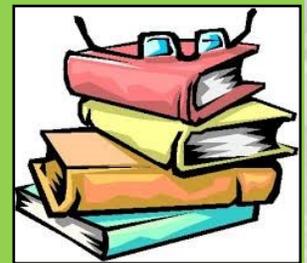
## FPCGG BOOK CLUB READS ABOUT FICTIONAL ANGELS IN A SEASONAL STORY OF HOPE

In anticipation of Christmas, the FPCGG Book Club is reading the October 2019 released novel *A Mrs. Miracle Christmas* (Angelic Intervention #11) by Debbie Macomber, who is celebrated as “the official storyteller of Christmas”. Mrs. Miracle is back and she’s not alone; the angels Shirley, Goodness, and Mercy are back, too. In her novels, Macomber brings to life compelling relationships that embrace family and enduring friendships, heartening her readers with stories of connection and hope. This uplifting holiday tale shows an ordinary family, a couple and her grandmother, that they are blessed beyond belief.

Won't you join our book club on this holiday reading journey of exploration? **Join us on Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 pm** as we gather around a table in the back room at Marie Callender's at 13252

Brookhurst in Garden Grove. Choose from the menu (possibility including a sinfully-delicious piece of pie), and share thoughts regarding *A Mrs. Miracle Christmas* and ideas of other good books to read plus interesting conversation on many other varied topics both trivial and significant, serious and fun.

**Direct your questions and RSVP to Joan Mildenstein (714.539.1034).**



## FPCGG SHOWER PLUS MINISTRY STATISTICS FOR OCTOBER—NOVEMBER 2019 (a total of 16 days)

**Total showers taken: 972** (duplicated individuals; approximately **61** unique individuals each day)

**Total breakfasts served: 1248** (duplicated individuals; approximately **104** unique individuals daily)

**Number of participants who were new to us: 40** (unique individuals)

**Number of volunteer hours donated: 1097** (a value of \$ **12,061.00**, \$11.00 per hour, CA minimum wage)

**Bakery Donations from Costco: approximate value, \$ 1,996.48**

**Food Finders, St. Jude's Hospital Fullerton, Donation: 926 lbs. of pre-cooked food**



**(The Shower Plus Ministry will be closed for restructuring through the end of December.)**

## BREAD OF LIFE



### BREAD OF LIFE DONATIONS

Non-perishable food items are collected monthly. These gifts are then shared with H.O.P.E., a Garden Grove organization which helps families who are hungry and hurting. Requested donations for December's Bread of Life program:  
**Top Ramen / similar noodle soups**  
Thank you for your generosity!



2 Jolene Lichty  
5 Mark Winters  
8 Ed Lord  
15 Laura Wise  
20 Jo Johnson  
31 Dr. Doris Schoon

## THOMAS HOUSE FAMILY SHELTER



*Serving Homeless  
Families with Children  
Since 1986*



### “MUNCHIES FOR MISSION”

#### December Focus: Thomas House Transitional Shelter by Outreach Ministry

After Sunday worship, as we gather in the Choir Room for fellowship, coffee, and punch, we also may enjoy sweet treats from the “Munchies for Mission” table. Those goodies are donated each week; the binder with the upcoming calendar of volunteer sign ups is on that table, along with a donations basket. Those cash donations (augmented by the Deacons’ Fund to reach \$150 monthly) are sent to a designated local non-profit organization at the end of the month. In December those “Munchies for Mission” moneys will be given to Thomas House.

The mission of Thomas House Transitional Shelter is to provide a safe, supportive environment and the resources necessary for homeless families with children to remain together while empowering them to become independent and self-sufficient.

They are assisted by grants from the City of Garden Grove, Orange County United Way, the Children and Families Commission of Orange County, and a dedicated staff and faithful volunteers.

For over 28 years, Thomas House has provided rent-free shelter, as well as food and supplies, for homeless families with children. In return, each family is required to save 80% of their income after necessary expenses, enabling families to build savings and learn life skills. The average stay at Thomas House’s two building apartment complex is just over nine months. Thomas House supports families with case management, counseling, life skills development, employment assistance, and children’s programs to help young residents succeed in school and remain drug-free. Their website states: “People say we change lives! Our founder Bernie Selz often said, ‘Change isn’t about me changing you, it’s about you changing you!’”

Thomas House Temporary Shelter, P.O. Box 2737 Garden Grove, CA 92842-2737  
Office Phone: 714-554-0357 [Info@thomashouseshelter.org](mailto:Info@thomashouseshelter.org)



NEWS from and about our extended church family and friends



Dear Friends at First Presbyterian Church of Garden Grove,

On behalf of those who benefit from the services provided by Radiant Health Centers, we thank you for your recent donation of \$150. Your contribution is vital to our mission to provide comprehensive care to the LGBTQ+ Community.

For over 30 years, donors like you have allowed us to continue our service across Orange County. At Radiant Health Centers, we remain committed to ending the HIV epidemic by ensuring everyone has equal access to healthcare and medications in a safe and supportive environment.

Your donation also makes it possible for us to provide wrap-around services that address the needs of those living with HIV and those at risk. It supports services such as housing support for individuals in fear of losing their homes, pantry services for those who struggle to put food on their tables, and mental health services for those coping with mental illness within this vulnerable population.

Your gift allows us to make a difference in people's lives, and we are grateful for your generous support.

Sincerely,  
Philip Yaeger, Executive Director  
Radiant Health Centers

Editor's Note: This gift was the result of donations at "Munchies for Mission" in October 2019.



## UPCOMING EVENTS, DECEMBER 2019

Sunday	December 1		First Sunday of Advent
Sunday	December 8	10:30 am	Congregational Meeting to elect Elders and Deacons
		11:00 am	Session Meeting
		3:00 pm	Richard Allinger Celebration of Life
Saturday	December 14	10:00 am	Paul Radcliffe Celebration of Life
		2:00 pm	Y-At-H, <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> , GEM
Sunday	December 15		
Tuesday	December 17	5:00 pm	FPCGG Book Club @ Marie Callender's
Friday	December 20		Men's, Women's Luncheons <u>cancelled</u> for December
Sunday	December 22		"Christmas Sunday," Poinsettias in Sanctuary
		1:00 pm	Caroling to Homebound
Tuesday	December 24	4:30 pm	FPCGG Christmas Eve Worship
Wed.	December 25		Christmas Day

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(714) 534-2269



*Tuesday, December 24, Christmas Eve*

*Candlelight Service at 4:30 pm:*

*“Jesus Changed Everything!”*

*Bring your family to join us!*

