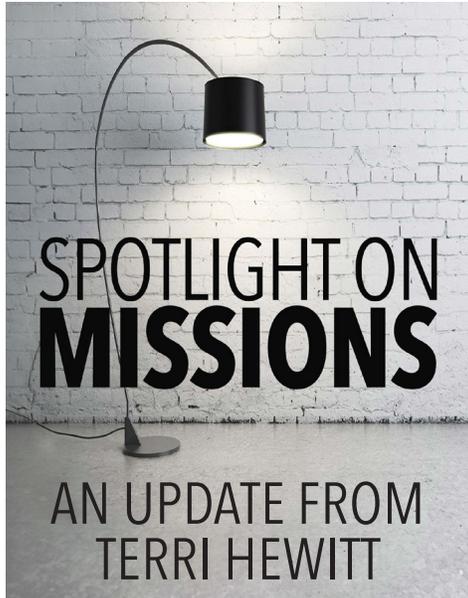


MESSENGER

VOLUME 75, NUMBER 3

MARCH 2026



I miss my parents greatly. Yet as I serve here in Taiwan as a counselor to those who are hurting, and as I minister (in Chinese) on my Taiwanese church's prayer team to people with emotional and physical needs, I clearly see how God uses the comfort we ourselves have received to comfort others.

In November, I had the privilege of sharing from the pulpit at my Taiwanese church about God's gracious hand of comfort and healing throughout my grieving process. As I spoke, I could see tears in many people's eyes. The photo included here was taken during that time of sharing. Please continue to pray for God's healing touch in the lives of these dear people as I meet with them.



Over the holidays – especially Christmas and most recently Chinese New Year in February – I was blessed with several meaningful gatherings with friends. In December, I hosted several events at my apartment. I invited the Taiwanese pastors' wives whom I had mentored for over a year to a tea party in my home, and they loved it. I also gath-

ered two groups of students from my previous mountain biking company, SRAM, where I was able to share the true meaning of Christmas with them. Lastly, I hosted my inductive Bible study group, which I led for many years, and that time together was a tremendous blessing.

Chinese New Year week was filled with more wonderful gatherings, though this time I

was on the receiving end, as I was invited into others' homes for delicious meals. One dinner was with my closest friend, Elbert, his wife Zina, and her family, whom I have known for over 20 years and with whom I share a rich history. The other family was a lady (with her 4 little kids, husband and his family) from my church. She served on the Beauty for Ashes team for many years and we are currently meeting bi-weekly to pray, seeking the Lord's direction as we anticipate how He might lead in establishing another healing ministry within the church.

Please also continue to pray for our counseling center. It has been growing quickly! As supervisor, I recently hired and trained three new counselors, and we now meet as a team of six biweekly for prayer and continued development.

I deeply appreciate your prayers for God's continued wisdom, guidance, and comfort as I serve here in Taiwan. Your prayers, support and encouragement mean more to me than I can express.



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FROM THE PASTOR

"LENT: A SEASON OF SELF-REFLECTION AND SELECTIVE SUFFERING"



Dear LCPC Family & Friends,

Lent is not as joyous as Christmas or as victorious as Easter, yet it remains foundational to the believer's journey. On Ash Wednesday – joining with the Church across the globe – we entered together as a congregation the Season of Lent. Lent is a season of prayer, fasting, and giving – where we try, often with mixed results, to refocus our lives on what really matters.

But let's be honest: Lent is also the *only* time of year when people voluntarily choose to make their lives harder. It's like a spiritual fitness challenge, except instead of lifting weights, we're lifting our *own bad habits* and trying to set them down (preferably for 40 days). And every year, without fail, we all seem to forget just *how long 40 days actually is*.

For those who didn't grow up in a liturgical tradition – or just always wondered why your Catholic friends go into full crisis mode over meat – Lent is a 40-day season leading up to Easter. It's a time of self-examination, repentance, and spiritual discipline, modeled after Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the wilderness.

Now, Jesus spent those 40 days in the desert, resisting the devil and surviving without food or water. Meanwhile, most of us struggle to resist one Girl Scout cookie. But that's the beauty of Lent – it meets us where we are. It's not about suffering for the sake of suffering. It's about stripping away distractions and realigning our hearts with what truly matters.

One of the big traditions of Lent is fasting

– giving up something that usually brings us comfort or pleasure. And while fasting has deep spiritual significance, modern interpretations can get...well, *creative*. For instance, you have those who give up all sugar, caffeine, alcohol, and social media. These people are basically signing up for their own *Survivor* reboot, and honestly, we should just let them win a prize at Easter.

Then you have those who use Lent as an excuse to kickstart a diet or financial detox “such as giving up Starbucks and impulse shopping.” And finally, there are the ones who give up soda but conveniently switch to iced tea. Or who give up fast food but suddenly *love* Chipotle because “it doesn't technically count.”

Look, I get it. 40 days is a *long time*. The first week, we're all *so* devout. By week two, we start negotiating with ourselves. By week three, we're Googling, “Does Sunday count in Lent?”

But the real point isn't about technicalities – it's about intention. The goal isn't just to survive 40 days without chocolate. The goal is to create space in our lives for God. And if we're just replacing one distraction with another (*goodbye Instagram, hello Netflix*), then we might need to reassess what we're doing here.

While fasting is a big part of Lent, it's only one piece of the puzzle. Traditionally, Lent is built around three pillars: **(1) Fasting** (Giving something up to grow in discipline); **(2) Prayer** (Deepening our relationship with God); **(3) Almsgiving** (Giving to others in need).

Most of us are great at remembering the first one (mainly because we like to remind everyone what we're fasting from). But Lent is also an invitation to *do more*, not just *give up more*. Maybe instead of just cutting something out, we add something meaningful—like daily prayer or journaling. Maybe instead of just giving up coffee, we donate what we would have spent to a food bank. Maybe instead of just avoiding social media, we use that time to reach out to a friend who's struggling.

Because at the end of the day, Lent isn't a spiritual weight-loss program. It's an opportunity to *become more whole*. Lent is weird. It's messy. It's full of good intentions, small failures, and hopefully, a little bit of growth.

It's a season where we remember that we are dust (*which is both bumbling and slightly depressing*). But more importantly, it's a season where we remember that God loves us *even though* we are dust.

So if you find yourself slipping up during Lent, don't panic. God isn't keeping a scorecard. Lent isn't about perfection—it's about progress. So whether you're fasting from sugar, swearing, or your *overwhelming* need to check your email at 2 a.m., let this season be about more than just what you give up. Let it be about what you *gain*.

Warmly in Christ,
Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef
Senior Pastor & Head of Staff

March is shaping up to be a meaningful month for Abide! Our weekly gatherings continue to be full of games, laughter, fellowship, and opportunities for students to grow together in their faith. It has been encouraging to see friendships deepen and students continue showing up for one another week after week.



and supporting a ministry that blesses families in our community. Stay tuned for more details!

We have also

begun interviews for the full-time Director of Student Ministries position. Please join us in praying for wisdom and discernment for everyone involved in the process, and that God would clearly lead the right person to serve and shepherd our students well.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for our students and leaders. We're grateful for this church family and excited to see how God continues to work through Abide this spring.

–Will Wolfswinkel

MESSENGER

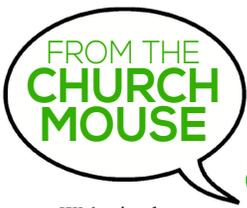
LA CRESCENTA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ART DIRECTOR/EDITOR

Shawn Kelly
shawndraws@gmail.com

**MESSENGER DEADLINE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18
9:00 AM SHARP**

Messenger articles and corrections should be emailed to shawndraws@gmail.com. **Please put the word "Messenger" in the subject line.** Materials submitted after the deadline may be omitted at the discretion of the editor.



We're in the holy season of Lent – our time of reflection, prayer and preparation for the celebration of Jesus's victorious resurrection on Easter Sunday!

We begin the month with the important **Annual Meeting of the Congregation** on Sunday, March 1. The Fellowship Team will host a **yogurt and muffin bar** down in Koopmans right after the service ends for all to enjoy while we review the annual report and budget, vote on Terms of Call for Pastor Mouris, elect at-large members of the Nominating Committee, and vote on a proposed change to the bylaws. Please plan to attend this important meeting about the life of our church.

Pastor Mouris is offering **New Member classes** again this month for those interested in joining LCPC or learning more about membership. The classes will be held Sunday, March 8 and Sunday, March 22, from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM and both classes are required. To sign up, contact Mouris@lpc.net.

The **Bistro 50+** Luncheon will be Tuesday March 10 in Koopmans, with a delicious hot lunch for just \$5. After lunch, the **Cruisers** invite everyone to an informative presentation by **Larry Helscher** on "Understanding Household and Personal Care Products." Larry has 30 years of experience in this field and will share his insights on common products we use daily.

It's **Potluck** time, Sunday, March 15 down in Koopmans right after service. As always, you can store your food in the LCPC kitchen fridge or bring it in a crockpot to keep it hot. Cookies and coffee will be out too, so stop by for a snack or lunch, because there is always a great variety of fun foods to sample!

Our current **PEAK classes** end on March 18 – Stay tuned for details on the upcoming PEAK offerings after Easter.



Game Night will be in Koopmans Thursday, March 19 – Bring your dinner or a snack at 6 PM and have as great time for a couple of hours, learning a new game or playing an old favorite!

There is another opportunity to volunteer with **Habitat for Humanity** in Altadena on Saturday, March 21, but make sure to **reserve**



your spot by March 9! There are morning and afternoon shifts, with lunch provided for both, but spots are limited. Sign up using the link in the weekly email or at lpc.net/events.

Palm Sunday, March 29, is going to be a busy day around LCPC! The **Deacons** are hosting their bi-annual **American Red Cross Blood Drive** down in Koopmans Hall, from 8 AM-2 PM. What better way to honor Jesus' triumphant entry than by giving the gift of life! You can donate if you're in good health, 16 years or older, and have not donated in the last 56 days. Look for the sign-up link in the weekly email or go to redcrossblood.org and search for LCPC's blood drive using the zip code 91214.

Right after the Palm Sunday service, **Student Ministries** will be hosting a Fundraiser **BBQ lunch** down in the courtyard. All donations will benefit the **CFC Student/Parent Scholarship Fund**, so give generously for this delicious lunch! We love to support our CFC families!

Holy Week is right around the corner. There **won't be PEAK on Wednesday, April 1** (This is not an April Fools Joke!) Thursday, April 2, the **Deacons** will serve their **sacrificial soup dinner** from 5:30-6:30 PM in Koopmans, with the **Maundy Thursday** service beginning at 7 PM in the Sanctuary. **Our Good Friday Service** will be April 3 at 7 PM in the Sanctuary. We have two services on Easter Sunday

– our **Contemporary service at 9 AM** and our **Traditional service with the Choir at 11**

AM – both services will be in the Sanctuary. We hope you can join us for these sacred services, and invite friends and family!

We're all going to miss **Dot Kim** and her beautiful family, as she moves on from LCPC, to where God is calling her. They have all been a huge blessing to our Children's and Family Ministries program and we thank Dot for all the love, teaching and care she gave to our children and parents. We're grateful to her husband **Daniel** for leading the children's music for **Wonder Kids**, and to her amazing kids **Haley, Kory** and **Aaron** for spreading joy wherever they go. We wish them all the best!

We are so grateful to **Paul Hofmann** for taking on the **Digital Media Coordinator** position in addition to all he already does as **Head of Digital Support** for Worship! You can email Paul@lpc.net for email and website items, while the Communications Team works out new procedures for advertising requests.

Thank you to **Pat Chambers** for organizing a gorgeous **tea party** for the **Ladies of LCPC** last week. The tables and decorations



were elegant, the food was abundant and scrumptious, and she had beautiful party favors

(continued on page 6)



CFC Heartbeat



Trike-A-Thon Fundraiser

March is bringing fresh energy, joyful celebrations, and one very exciting first for our CFC community!

We are thrilled to announce our First Annual CFC Trike-A-Thon Fundraiser!

This special event will bring together our infants through preschool classrooms for a day of racing, decorating, cheering, and community fun. Our children will decorate their tricycles, and our infant families are invited to decorate their strollers so even our tiniest racers can join the celebration in the newly paved bike yard!

Our brand-new Fathers & Others Club families will be helping us transform our track into a festive raceway for all our little riders. We are so grateful for the dads, grandpas, church members, and special mentors stepping up to



help create this memory for our children.

In the coming weeks, children will begin asking family and friends for sponsorship. Funds raised will go directly toward new classroom materials and outdoor equipment, helping us continue to enhance the learning environments our children enjoy every day.

We are so excited to make this an annual tradition that builds community while investing in our school.

Spring Camp at CFC

Spring is just around the corner, and that means Spring Camp at CFC!

GUSD is closed from March 23-30, however, Center for Children is open! We have exciting activities planned filled with creativity, outdoor play, and field trips. Spots fill quickly, so we encourage families to register soon.

You can sign up at: www.center4children.com

While you're there, you'll also find information and registration for our highly anticipated Summer Camp program. We have so many exciting plans in store!

There is so much happening at Center for Children, and it is such a joy to see our community growing stronger together.

Hebrews 10:24: *"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."*

BISTRO 50+



**TUESDAY, MARCH 10
12 NOON IN KOOPMANS**

Everyone 50+ years old is welcome to come and enjoy a meal and fellowship for just \$5.00.

CHURCH MOUSE

(continued from page 5)

for each guest. One of the table hostesses, **Cindy Porcell**, hand painted little teacup pictures for each guest at her table! Speaker **Rev. Ruth Schmidt** gave an inspiring presentation on **Cyclical LA**, a group within the **San Fernando Presbytery** that is doing amazing work to help churches and church planters build God's Kingdom. It was a fantastic morning enjoyed by 40 lovely ladies.

May you grow closer to Jesus during these last weeks of Lent, as you focus on Him, listen to Him, pray to Him and follow wherever He leads you. Talk to you next month!



CRUISERS

The Cruisers will be hosting Larry Helsher at their March 10 meeting. He will be talking about "Understanding Household and Personal Care Products". Larry will share some insights gained in his 60 years of working with formulating chemists. We will examine the type of products that we buy and use almost every day. All are invited.



As we move into the Lenten season and Holy Week, the Deacons are focusing on transportation. We want to make sure congregants and members of our church community are not deterred by a lack of transportation to attend our church events in this special season. Rachel Wolflick (rmwolf@earthlink.net) is our contact for transportation if you need to coordinate a ride to church or to run errands during this busy season of renewal. She will do her best to sort out a ride that is suitable to your needs, whether it be a large SUV or a more accessible vehicle if necessary.

The Deacons can also organize carpooling to celebrations of life for families of long-time church members. We stand ready to assist the entire church community, so don't hesitate to contact Rachel should you be in need.

In other news, please mark your calendar and tell a friend – about our Blood Drive on Sunday, March 29. The need for blood donations is *critical*, so we hope you can contribute. Volunteers are also needed to assist on the day of the Blood Drive! Please contact Hilary Norton or Alice Hill to sign up to volunteer or donate blood, or go to redcrossblood.org and type in 91214 in the zip code box to find LCPC's Blood Drive.

We want to thank Jerry White and the

SESSION REPORT

At its January 2026 meeting, Session adopted several proposals:

- Extended Steven Andersen's term as Clerk of Session.
- Accepted Pastor Mouris' 2026 Terms of Call as approved by Personnel Committee.
- Accepted a request from San Fernando Presbytery to host a Presbytery meeting, including dinner, on Tuesday, May 26th
- Accepted several transfers from inactive Young Adult and Missions fund balances to active fund balances.
- Received LCPC's Fiscal Year final LCPC Profit & Loss statement, as well as the Center for Children June-December 2025 financials to date.
- After discussion regarding the budgetary impact of four families who reduced their projected contribution for 2026, due to either moving or no longer attending LCPC, finalized and approved the 2026 budget. Included in the budgetary votes is a proposal to reduce proportion of congregational giving allocated to Missions from 10% to 9% for 2026. If the actual deficit (i.e., difference between revenue and expenses) exceeds budget, any improvement vs. the budgeted deficit, up to 1% of congregational giving, will be transferred to designated missions at year-end.
- Formed a Session Task Force to develop a New Members Class curriculum. The classes will be shorter than previously and have more involvement of Session members.
- Accepted a proposal for Student Ministries to host an after-service BBQ on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026. A free-will love offering will be taken to benefit the CFC Student/Parent Scholarship Fund.

With all of the changes occurring at LCPC, Session remains committed to prayer for our church, as well as listening to the voices and concerns of our church body. We welcome your inputs during this transition time.

–Steven Andersen
Clerk of Session

Student Ministries Team for their “loaves and fishes” grace, as they have agreed to host a BBQ that day to benefit scholarships to the Center for Children (CFC). Please come on

down, give blood, and then enjoy some delicious BBQ while supporting a great cause!

Until next month,
Dave Eagle

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Dear La Crescenta Presbyterian Church, As most of you have probably already heard, my time in my position as the Director of Children & Families is drawing to a close, with my last day being Wednesday, March 18th. The Lord works in such mysterious ways sometimes, and I am still processing the end of what has been a confusing chapter of work and life – a season of both wonderful mountaintops as well as deep valleys. Please know that this has been a decision I've made after several months of prayer, wise counsel, and careful consideration.

Even as I'm filled with peace and assurance that my time at LCPC is coming to a close, I'm also so grieved to leave the amazing children and families that the Lord brought into my care for a season. It has been such a privilege and a joy to serve every child, each one so precious

and unique. I pray that our time worshiping, learning, and playing together on Sundays and Wednesdays have drawn these kids into deeper understanding of Jesus' love for them and encouraged them to place their hope in Him alone. I know that I've only played a small role in their lifelong stories of walking with the Lord, and I trust that He will continue to lead them into deeper relationship with Him as they grow.

I'm so grateful for the support, prayers, encouragement, and joyful service of the Children & Family Ministries moderator, Dennis, as well as that of the entire team, teachers, and volunteers. Each of these wonderful individuals gave so generously of their time and talents

to serve the kids in our care – including those at the CFC and in the community – and were a constant source of encouragement and wisdom for me. I truly would not have made it through this past year without their presence and support. Over the past several weeks, we have been working together to prepare a plan to sustain the Children's Program at LCPC throughout this transition.

Thank you also to all of you as well as to the staff and leaders of LCPC. Thank you for your kindness to me and my family over the past year. I'm grateful that you trusted me to lead this ministry for a season, and I will be fervently praying that the Lord continues to have His way in the hearts and lives of these children. I also pray that He continues to lead the church in all its endeavors. May His will be done at LCPC and may He be glorified in all things.

With gratitude,
Dot

MARCH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

CLASSIC WORSHIP IN THE CHAPEL
 CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY
 BOTH SERVICES AT 10 AM

WITH CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS

SUNDAY, MARCH 1
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT
COMBINED & COMMUNION
WORSHIP SERVICE

“Beyond Bread!”

Deuteronomy 8:1-15 and Matthew 4:1-4

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef

SUNDAY, MARCH 8
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

“A Short Cut to Glory!”

Psalm 91:9-16 & Matthew 4:5-7

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef

SUNDAY, MARCH 15
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

“More Important than The Kingdoms of the World!”

Deuteronomy 6:13-19 & Matthew 4:8-11

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef

SUNDAY, MARCH 22
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

“The Cross: The Way of Christ!”

Philippians 2:1-11

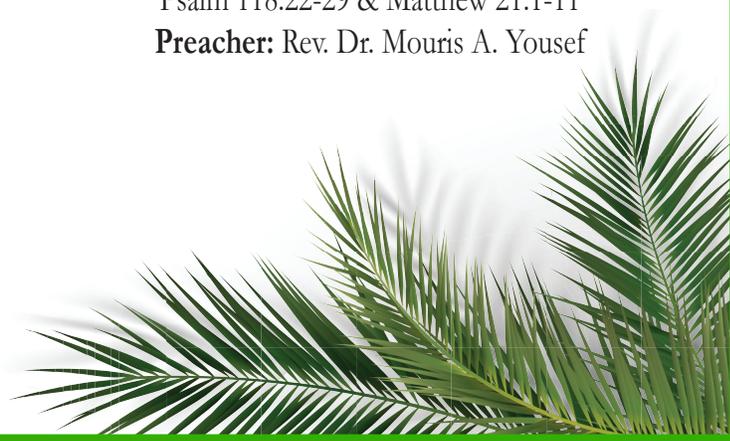
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef

SUNDAY, MARCH 29
PALM SUNDAY

“Shout Out Your Hosanna!”

Psalm 118:22-29 & Matthew 21:1-11

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef



CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Mouris Yousef	Senior Pastor & Head of Staff mouris@lpcpc.net	Cindy Charles	Finance Manager
Arpy Jahjah	Executive Director, Center For Children arpy@lpcpc.net	Gary Woodward	Choir Director gary@lpcpc.net
Will Wolfswinkel	Interim Director of Student Ministries will.wolfswinkel@gmail.com	Matthew Krell	Organist/Pianist
Dot Kim	Director of Children's Ministries dot@lpcpc.net	Scott Tibbs & Dave Robbins	Producers of Contemporary Music
Nancy Thomas	Office Manager nancy@lpcpc.net	Paul Hofmann	Head of Digital Support for Worship Interim Digital Media Coordinator paul@lpcpc.net
		Baldo Muralles	Facilities Manager

