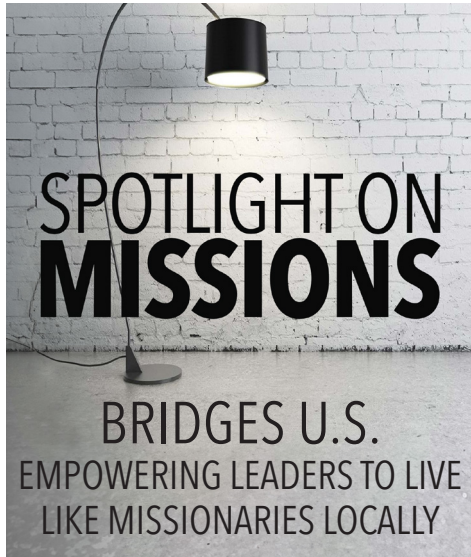


MESSENGER

VOLUME 74, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2025



SPOTLIGHT ON MISSIONS

BRIDGES U.S.
EMPOWERING LEADERS TO LIVE LIKE MISSIONARIES LOCALLY



There are over 230 million people in America who do not participate meaningfully in any Christian community. To engage

these 230 million in their own subgroups across America, BridgesUS equips us to love and serve people who are on our daily path, using the same methods and skills used by missionaries in foreign cultures. We call this missionary lifestyle the 12 Steps of the Bridging Path.

Each Bridge Leader applies this training and lifestyle to their own unique ministry. Together we are befriending the lonely, help-

ing people experience the love of God, and improving our local communities. Your support enables me to lead BridgesUS to serve and empower over 30 ministries in six states, providing them with supportive services that equip them for discipleship, micro nonprofit management, fund development, marketing, and leadership. BridgesUS also provides bookkeeping, non-profit status, and fiscal sponsorship services.

Here are some examples of ministries begun by a few of the over 180 Bridge Leaders empowered through BridgesUS so far:



- After-school programs for at-risk children – Florence Annang (above)
- Distributing food to people living in tents under freeways – Manny Flores
- Empowering pregnant teenagers to care for their babies and also to graduate from High School and sometimes college – Susan Fudge

- Providing wrap-around services for people in an Assisted Living Home – Lawrence Dietz
- Advocating for more housing for people who are homeless – George Vamos
- Low-cost Christ-following community for a group of parents and children – Jon & Beth Teran

I learned how to befriend people who are from a different culture during the five years I lived in Ethiopia, 1995-2000. When our family had to return to the USA due to my daughter Sarah, who was born with Down Syndrome, almost dying from double pneumonia during the rainy season, I discovered the kindness and support of LCPC. I was eating at PEAK most Wednesday nights, while Sarah and Nathan experienced the love of teachers and friends through the Center for Children. Thank you for all your love and support in those early years... and thank you for your ongoing support of my ministry through BridgesUS.

With gratitude,
Rev. Dr. James A. Milley
Executive Director

For more information on the ministry of BridgesUS, please check out our website: <https://bridgesus.org>

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A MESSAGE FROM JESIAH

Friends at La Crescenta Presbyterian Church,

It is with a grateful, yet heavy heart that I announce the end of my time as Director of Children's Ministries and my departure from La Crescenta Presbyterian Church. I have recently decided to accept a job offer working on admissions at a Christian college closer to home. After a lot of praying and discerning, I believe that the Lord is leading me towards this decision.

This job offer comes as I have felt a leading from the Lord to pursue different capacities of serving in ministry. I do not anticipate that this will be a forever step away from vocational

ministry, but trust that this will be an important experience for me in ministering to people in the marketplace. I am looking forward to seeing how and where the Lord leads me as I open myself to the opportunities of lay ministry.

As my new position has had to start quickly, I will be working part-time for the remainder of the month, with my final Sunday



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PASTOR'S LETTER



Greetings, La Crescenta Presbyterian Church Family & Friends,

One morning earlier this year as I spent some time before the Lord in prayer, I found myself praying courageously for the good people of La Crescenta Presbyterian Church to "fully embrace the gospel and be comfortable about what Jesus will have in store for us in 2025." As I found myself praying this particular prayer, I kind of paused for a second and found myself praying the same prayer one more time.

Fully embracing the gospel and being comfortable about what Jesus will have in store for us as a congregation in 2025 continues to be my prayer. Only the Lord knows what this exactly means for us as individuals and as a congregation. But whatever it is, I pray that we will embrace it, trust it, and not be ashamed of it.

As we continue to have a deeper understanding of God's truth and the fullness of the gospel,

I pray that we would trust it, and as we do so, we begin to solidify our place in a complex and multifaceted world. A world that struggles with its own humanity and is susceptible to the wickedness of those that have lost their way. But our strength and hope are not in the manipulations of those that seek power and greed. Our trust is in the love and power of Jesus Christ.

In our pursuit for a deeper faith, we find an assurance of salvation and a profound understanding of forgiveness of sins. We find peace in a world full of turmoil and uncertainty. We find guidance and wisdom through the power of the Holy Spirit. And in our search for purpose, we experience the love and grace through the power of the Holy Spirit that has transformed our identity, character, and vision.

We understand better now than any time before, that our journey is not only about being blessed but also about being a blessing. It is about

the building up of one another, making provisions for our children and children's children, and being a good steward of the things of God. We know that God provides for us hope for the future, hope even in trials and tribulations, and hope in the promises of God through Jesus Christ that no one can take away or disannul. Therefore, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Let's pray that 2025 will be a year in which we fully embrace the gospel and joyfully receive what the Lord will have in store for us!

Yours in Christ's Service,
Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef
Senior Pastor & Head of Staff



I hope you are all well and basking in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we navigate through this difficult season together, I'm excited to share with you some of the joyful activities and upcoming events in our youth ministry that continue to enrich our community.

Firstly, I want to reflect on the wonderful time we had during our recent winter outing where we took our students ice skating. It was a delightful time of fellowship and laughter, providing a great opportunity for our youth to bond and enjoy each other's company in a fun and relaxed setting. Watching everyone help

and encourage each other on the ice was a true testament to the supportive spirit of our community.

Looking forward, the excitement continues as we prepare for "Mission Arizona" this spring break. MAZ promises to be a significant time of service and spiritual growth for our students. We are eager to see how this mission trip will impact their lives and strengthen their faith as they serve and learn more about the needs of communities outside our own.

In addition, please mark your calendars for our rummage sale on February 15 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. This event is a fantastic way to support our youth programs while engaging with the wider church community. Whether donating items, shopping, or volunteering at the event, your participation is greatly appreciated.

Amidst our planning and activities, our thoughts and prayers go out to the communi-

ties affected by the recent fires in neighboring cities. We ask for your continued prayers for all those impacted, seeking God's comfort and healing during this difficult time. May we come together in prayer and support, embodying the love and strength found in our faith.

As we look to the future, let's draw encouragement from Scripture: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." (Romans 12:12). These words are a beautiful reminder to maintain our hope and patience through all circumstances.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our community. It is through your prayers, participation, and passion that we can make a difference in the lives of others. Together, let's continue to share the love and hope of Christ, both within our church walls and beyond.

With warm regards and blessings,
Izzy



Dear Church Family,
Well, we have certainly had a momentous beginning to 2025!

Every new year starts out as a clean slate, so to speak, where we can look forward to new seasons, opportunities and challenges. The fires in early January were incredibly painful and difficult challenges to so very many people and

communities. I know most of us have a friend or family member who has been affected. We hold them in our arms and prayers and are grateful to remember that we do not walk alone through this dark valley. We know it will be a prolonged and difficult battle to rebuild but we can be there with them, comforting and encouraging them in the Name of our Lord Jesus.

We Deacons are here every day, doing the small but meaningful work of providing meals, transportation, emergency funds, remembering birthdays and anniversaries, prayer and encouragement. We do this because we love you, our church family and neighbors. You are precious in God's sight and therefore in ours. February is
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MESSENGER

LA CRESCENTA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ART DIRECTOR/EDITOR

Shawn Kelly
shawndraws@gmail.com

MESSENGER DEADLINE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 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.

JESIAH

(continued from page 1)

on February 2. PEAK will be overseen by volunteers in the meantime. Please trust that I, the Children's Team and Personnel are working hard to ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible. My main priority in this transition is to ensure that the care, education, and formation of our children is maintained, even as I step away.

I will always hold a special fondness for my time serving at LCPC. This was my first full-time ministry position. It required a lot of patience, growth, perseverance, and humility before the Father. Thank you to those individuals who made up the search committee, Personnel team, and those who were on Session and were willing to take the leap of faith to bring me on for this position. I pray that I was able to honor the faithful risk that LCPC took on me.

I thank my fellow staff members here at La Crescenta for their support, camaraderie, and encouragement on this journey. Ministry can be a lonely experience, and I am thankful for the many conversations that I had from invested pastors, caring co-workers, and encouraging friends. Special shout-out to Andy Wilson, Lee Cook, Mike Harbert, Josh Horton, Austin Granier, Izzy Cox, Will Wolfswinkel, Pat Chambers, Nancy Thomas, Gary Woodward, Dan Blessinger, and Mouris Yousef, each of whom has come alongside me in particular ways to support me as well as the Children's Ministries.

I thank the moderator of the Children's team, Dennis Fernandez, and the rest of the Children's Ministries Committee and volunteer team. I have been astounded by the blessing of working with such a Gospel-centered team full of ideas for how to love children well. LCPC's Children's Ministries team is made up of very dedicated, compassionate, and genuine people who have been committed to sharing Jesus with these little ones in very tangible ways. I feel confident that I leave the Children's Ministries in very honorable, capable hands, knowing that these are the same individuals who already play a big part in making LCPC Children's Ministries a space for kids to safely grow in relationship

and in discipleship to their loving Savior.

I thank all the families who have come through our doors at LCPC in my time here. The parents of the children have offered me a lot of encouragement and genuine, healthy feedback. The ministry has had its own share of growing pains, and there are many here who have stuck around through disappointments and difficulty. Many times, these parents have encouraged me when I most needed it. I am thankful for the words and smiles that have motivated me to keep going, even in the face of discouragement.

I thank my wife for her continued support, prayer, patience, and love as I have served here at LCPC. She has done a lot of behind-the-scenes work to support and encourage this ministry. I don't believe I would have been able to do this position effectively and sustainably without her presence in my life. I thank God for her every day.



Last of all, I thank the kids. It doesn't take a lot of work to see how wonderfully God has designed each and every one of them. They are all unique. I celebrate the way that each one of them has made me laugh and how much each one has caused me to ponder about God. These kids ask the best questions, play the best games, and are growing each and every day in pursuit of the best Gospel. I will miss their smiles, hugs, questions, and answers. Ministering to them has often felt more like a gift than a job.

Know that, as I depart, I will not cease to pray for the Lord's mission over this church community. The hardest part of leaving is saying goodbye to the children and entrusting them to God's care. I know that I have shared the most important truth I could with them. I now ask the Lord to bring the good work that has begun in them to fruition. He is The Good Shepherd. He will love and take care of these kids. He will love and take care of all of us. That is my trust.

As said, I do not leave LCPC without a plan for the Children's Ministries moving forward. Believe me, we are working hard to ensure that the children and families will be cared for well. I



pray that the Lord God will provide the teams with wisdom as they seek what comes next for children's programming here at LCPC.

I bless the ministry of La Crescenta Presbyterian Church, asking that the Lord would continue to have His way over its labors. May His kingdom come, may His will be done, in La Crescenta Presbyterian Church as it is in Heaven.

Grace and peace,
Jesiah Bozich

BISTRO 50+

TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 11
12 NOON IN
KOOPMANS

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

CRUISERS

The support of Missions beyond the local church has been a defining feature of LCPC for decades. Cindy Guenther-Williams will report on the work of the missions team and latest news from the missionaries and mission projects we are currently supporting. She will also share initial ideas for how LCPC might support the Eaton Fire recovery efforts over the coming months and years. Come and bring your questions and ideas!



Our hearts and prayers go out to all who were affected by the horrific wildfires that ripped through southern California last month. Everyone in our church family has people in their lives who've lost everything, and so many have jumped into action to help in any way they can. Our **Missions team** is working to identify specific partner ministries that the LCPC family can support with our money, time and talents. Be watching for more information in the coming days.



Thank you to **Jamie Given** who quickly pulled together processing workshops for the community and a **Prayer and Share** group at church for those affected by the fires, needing support. We are so grateful for her expertise and service to those traumatized by the events of the past few weeks.

Both LCPC and CFC are relieved to report they're unaware of any current families or staff who lost their homes, though some are unable to live in their homes because they need extensive cleanup and repairs. Sadly, we did have previous members who lost homes, and some who lost childhood homes. CFC has a few spaces in their classrooms if you know of anyone that has lost their childcare location. Contact CFC at 818-249-8124.

We're sad to be saying good-bye to our Director of Children's Ministries, **Jesiah Bozich**, and are so grateful for the leadership, teaching, care, and enthusiasm he gave to the children and families of LCPC these past three years. Jesiah will be working closer to his home in the admissions office at Hope International University. We'll all miss him and **Jen Ning** very much but wish them all the best. Please plan to join us for a celebration thanking Jesiah, after service on Sunday, February 2.

Though we were sad to have our Contemporary Music Producer **Dan Blessinger** leave us last month, we are so grateful that keyboardists **Scott Tibbs** and **Dave Robbins** have stepped in as interim producers to keep the fantastic praise music we have come to know and love going strong. **Lana Arrington**, **Brock Cary** and **Dave** will continue as lead vocalists and band members **Jonathan Ahrens** and **Alejandro Briceno** will be on bass and guitar.

Tuesday morning Bible Study and PEAK classes are going great with good sized classes

for all three gatherings. Feel free to attend anytime – it's not too late to check them out!

The **Cruisers** will welcome **Cindy Guenther-Williams** to their meeting Tuesday, February 11 at 1:00 PM to give an update on all the missions opportunities we currently support at LCPC. Anyone is invited to attend and if you come at noon, you can also get a delicious meal cooked by chef **Geoff Bryan** for just \$5 at the **Bistro 50+** luncheon (no one is checking IDs, so just come!)

It's time to clean out your closets, cupboards and garage for the **Mission Arizona (MAZ) Rummage Sale** Saturday, February 15, from 8 AM-2 PM in Koopmans Hall. Donations of gently used clothes, housewares, books, toys etc. (no large appliances or furniture please) can be dropped off to Koopmans on Thursday, February 13, Noon – 7:00 PM and Friday, February 14, 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM. **Jerry White** will also be selling **MAZ "Stock"** on Sundays during Fellowship time and Wednesdays during PEAK dinner. Buying one of these stocks is your chance to invest in the youth of LCPC! To help with the rummage sale or for questions, contact **Jerry** at jerry.j.white@att.net.

The **Mission Arizona** trip for youth is



happening this March during the GUSD Spring Break. The team will once again stay at the **Vah Ki Presbyterian Church** in Bapchule, AZ, doing much needed maintenance projects around the campus and at a neighboring church. There will also be plenty of time for fun and worship! All junior high and high schoolers are invited to this awesome week of service. To sign up, contact **Izzy Cox** at Izzy@lcpc.net or **Jerry White** at the email above.

The monthly **Sunday Potluck** will be on February 16 right after service. In addition to lots of delicious food, you can browse the

remaining items left from the MAZ Rummage Sale! Bring your favorite food to share and some cash or your checkbook, and leave with a full tummy and a new treasure.

We are excited to be bringing back a young adult group to LCPC! **Abide Young Adult Ministries** (formally known as YAM) meets on Sundays, at 11:30 AM in room 203 for an open-ended hour of fellowship and study. They're currently going through Richard J. Foster's book **Prayer – Finding the Heart's True Home**, a guide on the many different forms of prayer. For more information or to get a copy of the book contact **Jerry White** at jerry.j.white@att.net. (Jerry is a very busy guy!)

Pastor Mouris is offering a **New Members Class** to those interested in joining the LCPC family. This will be a 3-hour class (one hour a week) that will explore the foundations of the Christian faith and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Times of the classes will be determined based on availability of interested people. Please contact **Pastor Mouris** at Mouris@lcpc.net or call the church office if you would like to sign up.

Thank you to all who came in the midst of a chaotic week to clear out the Christmas decorations. The **Saturday morning men's hiking group** didn't hike due to the fires, so instead they showed up at church and had most of the decorations put away before the rest of the volunteers arrived! We are grateful to them and the others who got everything in tip top shape for services the next morning.

The **Property team** has been working hard to remodel the office across from **Nancy's** desk in the church office to form **two new offices for church staff**. Children's Ministries and Student Ministries will both have offices in the main office by the end of the month. Finance Manager **Cindy Charles** will be nearby at a work station in the work

room just down the hall. It will be so convenient to have most of the church staff in one location now.

And if you stop by the **CFC office**, you'll see a familiar face as **Peggy Bedevian** will be an interim administrative assistant to help **Pat Chambers**, until a new CFC director is hired. Pat will be retiring at the end of June after a long and meaningful 28-year career as the Director of CFC and a staff member for many years before that. She will be greatly missed but her retirement is well earned! Talk to you next month!



CFC Heartbeat



Director's Corner

February brings many changes here at CFC. While we've always appreciated Julie's incredible contributions to the overall organization of CFC, we're now discovering all the little things she did that we'll truly miss—especially her energy and welcoming spirit. At the same time, we're excited to welcome Peggy, our interim administrative assistant, to the office. We're confident Peggy will quickly adapt and assist with paperwork, tuition, and other responsibilities that Julie previously managed.

This month, we also bid farewell to Jesiah (pictured below), our children's minister. Over the past three years, Jesiah has led our chapels with passion and supported many of the combined events between CFC and the church. While we will miss Jesiah's spirit and playful sense of humor, we remain committed to continuing the spiritual education that is such a vital part of CFC.

This year, CFC celebrates 58 years of ministry. Over the decades, many dedicated individuals—from administration and classroom staff to children's ministers—have come and gone, each leaving a unique and meaningful imprint on our program. The families who've been part of CFC have also shaped us, contributing to the ongoing evolution of our mission. From our beginnings as a five-classroom, morning-only program to the full-day, year-round program we are today—serving children from six weeks old to age 14—change has always been a defining part of who we are.

Through it all, the Lord has been faithful, providing the people and resources needed to maintain a high-quality program. As we navigate these transitions, we trust in His continued guidance and provision for the future.

Pat



Valentine's Day

We enjoy celebrating Valentine's Day at the Center for Children. On February 14 we are asking the kids to wear Valentines colors to school: red, pink, purple, blue...or whatever that means to you! You will see lots of hearts and red, pink, and purple paint as you walk around. On the 14th we will have a menu filled with love and the color red! Please check with your child's classroom to see how and when they will be celebrating. For most classrooms, it's best to bring Valentines without names on the outside. Remember, as parents the best Valentine's present you can give to your children is to love and respect each other.

February Calendar

- February 1:** Preschool VIP Day 9-11:30 AM
- February 10:** GUSD closed, CFC open
- February 17:** GUSD and CFC closed for Presidents' Day

Registration for 2025-26

Yes, it is that time already for you to let us know your intentions for next year, which for us begins on June 1, 2024. You will be given a registration form to fill out that must be returned by February 20 if you have decided not to come back next year. If you fail to notify us via this form that you are not returning, you will be billed the registration fee of \$100 the following week. Registration is due even if you will only be with us for the summer months. Last year our summer day camp filled up fast, so be sure to register for summer day camp as well. And don't forget, we offer a \$100 finder's fee when a recommendation you make results in a student enrolling at CFC, so spread the word.

Very Important Person Day

Saturday, February 1 from 9:00 – 11:30 AM is our VIP day. Rooms 104, 105 and 108 will participate in this special day. Each preschool child can bring up to two adults with them to enjoy a typical morning in their class. Come to the classroom for stories, art, snacks and free choice. You will get to see what your little one does during the day. Outdoors will include our two upper yards. This event takes place rain or shine. Let you teacher know if you will be attending.

Fires

The wind and fire storms that came through our area in January were scary and anxiety producing. While we never want to close the CFC unexpectedly, sometimes there is no other choice. We were pleased to be able to re-open after only two days. La Crescenta Presbyterian Church is ready to help families that have had disruptions in their lives due to damage in their home, job insecurity or other issues caused by the fire. If we cannot help directly we have resources that we can direct you to for help. We know that recovery will take time.



CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Mouris Yousef	Senior Pastor and Head of Staff mouris@lcp.net
Izzy Cox	Director of Student Ministries izzy@lcp.net
Pat Murphy Chambers	Director, Center For Children pat@lcp.net
Nancy Thomas	Office Manager nancy@lcp.net
Gary Woodward	Choir Director
Matthew Krell	Organist/Pianist
Scott Tibbs & Dave Robbins	Producers of Contemporary Music (interim)
Baldo Murall	Facilities Manager
Paul Hofmann	Director of Social Media
Will Wolfswinkel	Digital Media Coordinator

DEACONS' BEACON

(continued from page 2)

notable for Valentine's Day, for showing love to those in our lives, but love never goes out of season. We have the opportunity and privilege of sharing the love of Jesus every single day in many ways.

If you are unable to make it to PEAK or some other church event because it is difficult to drive at night, or at all, or if you need a ride to the grocery store, or an appointment, call on your friendly Deacons; we are ready to help. If you need someone to sit with you in a time of grief or illness, we are here. If you need help with emergency funds or buying groceries, call on us. If you have not been to church lately or know of someone who is missing from worship, reach out to your loving Deacons. We want you to know you are loved and wanted.

We will be holding our bi-annual blood drive, on Saturday, March 29. In April, you will be able to enjoy our annual "Strike Up the Band" concert, which benefits the students in our congregation. More about that in next month's *Messenger*.

We want to thank our outgoing Deacons who have served faithfully: Armineh Minookian, Noel Collins, Ann Wetzel, Valerie Andrew, Amanda Granier, Fran Delaney and Sarah (Milbrodt) Eggertsen. Welcome to our new Deacons Bill Larson, Scott Carpenter, Yuqin Hu, Marilyn (Susie) Robinson, and me, Kerry Milbrodt. What a privilege and a joy it is to serve!

God bless us, everyone!
Kerry Milbrodt

FEBRUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

CLASSIC WORSHIP IN THE CHAPEL
NEW SONG WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY
BOTH SERVICES AT 10:00 AM

RENEWED! THE CHRIST-SOAKED LIFE!

The journey of faith is a journey of exploring what it means to be in Christ. The ultimate goal of our faith is to live a Christ-soaked life. Think about it like this: Everything we do, the actions we take, the thoughts we think, the friendships we maintain, the church we attend, the mission drives we support, the way we spend our money, the way we spend our time . . . it needs to be infused, saturated with and in and for Christ.

Think about that phrase: "Christ-soaked." The best image is that of a sponge. It holds so much more than its weight. And when you press against it or squeeze it, that which is held on

the inside is shared out.

On Sunday, February 2, we will kick off a new 7-week sermon series titled, "Renewed: The Christ-Soaked Life!" Our anchor Scripture will be Colossians 3:12-17. We will be unpacking the Christian virtues of forbearance, compassion, kindness, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love. We hope you can join us as Dr. Yousef leads us in this journey through the months of February and March.



FEBRUARY 2 COMBINED & COMMUNION SERVICE

"Forbearance!"

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 & Colossians 3:12-17

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef

FEBRUARY 9

"Compassion!"

Zecharia 7:9-10 & Colossians 3:12-17

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef

FEBRUARY 16

"Kindness!"

Ruth 2:15-17 & Colossians 3:12-17

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef

FEBRUARY 23

"Meekness!"

Isaiah 29:19 & Colossians 3:12-17

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Mouris A. Yousef