

**AMP 7-19-15 | 9:00 - 9:30am**

**Today's Service**

- That God would draw unsaved people to our service, and into his kingdom.
- That Pastor Jon would preach in God's power as he preaches a topical series: Questioning Jesus that will cover various texts from the four Gospels and will work through the questions people ask Jesus and the questions Jesus asks people.
- That God's presence would be palpable and that all in attendance would be changed by the goodness, power, and love of God.

**RPC Outreach**

- That we the people of RPC would desire to be a word and deed church.
- That God would open up great and lasting opportunities of community service for RPC.
- That preparations for the first annual Reformation sDAD (sacrificial Dedication Appreciation Day) would go smoothly and many of those invited from BPCC, Street Life Ministries, the NYPD and the NYFD would attend.

**Regional Church**

- Pray for the other churches of our presbytery: Westminster Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Jonathan Holst (Hamden, CT); Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Bohemia, Meindert Ploegman (Bohemia, NY); Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, William Shishko (Franklin Square, NY), Trinity Church, Ben Miller (Syosset, NY), Westchester Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Dan Osborne (Mt. Vernon, NY).

**Iran | Basic Country Facts:**

**Operation World Denomination Statistics**



Christians	Deno ms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
<b>Protestant</b>	21	0.02	12,000	4.3%
<b>Independent</b>	1	0.15	110,000	22.4 %
<b>Anglican</b>	1	<0.01	<1,000	5.6%
<b>Catholic</b>	1	0.04	30,000	4.6%
<b>Orthodox</b>	4	0.31	232,000	-0.2%
<b>Marginal</b>	3	<0.01	<1,000	-0.4%

**Ethnic Breakdown:** Persian 61%, Azeri 16%, Kurd 10%, Lur 6%, Baloch 2%, Arab 2%, Turkmen and Turkic tribes 2%, other 1%

**Major Languages:** Persian (official) 53%, Azeri Turkic and Turkic dialects 18%, Kurdish 10%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 7%, Luri 6%, Balochi 2%, Arabic 2%, other 2%

**Religion:** Muslim (official) 99.4% (Shia 90-95%, Sunni 5-10%), other (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian) 0.3%, unspecified 0.4% (2011 est.)

**Population:** 80,840,713 (July 2014 est.)

**Life Expectancy:** male: 69.32 years female: 72.53 years (2014 est.)

**Government:** theocratic republic.

**Economic Conditions:** Iran's economy is marked by statist policies, inefficiencies, and reliance on oil and gas exports, but Iran also possesses significant agricultural, industrial, and service sectors. The Iranian government directly owns and operates hundreds of state-owned enterprises and indirectly controls many companies affiliated with the country's security forces. Distortions - including inflation, price controls, subsidies, and a banking system holding billions of dollars of non-performing loans - weigh down the economy, undermining the potential for private-sector-led growth. Private sector activity includes small-scale workshops, farming, some manufacturing, and services, in addition to medium-scale construction, cement production, mining, and metalworking. Significant informal market activity flourishes and corruption is widespread. Fiscal and monetary constraints, following the expansion of international sanctions in 2012 on Iran's Central

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Bank and oil exports, significantly reduced Iran's oil revenue, forced government spending cuts, and sparked a sharp currency depreciation. Iran continues to suffer from high unemployment and underemployment. Lack of job opportunities has prompted many educated Iranian youth to seek employment overseas, resulting in a significant "brain drain."

**GDP Per Capita:** \$16,500 (2014 est.)

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:** agriculture: 9.1% industry: 40.7% services: 50.3% (2014 est.)

**Education:** Education in Iran is highly centralized. K-12 education is supervised by the Ministry of Education, and higher education is under the supervision of the Ministry of Science and Technology. The adult literacy rate in 2008 was 85.0%, up from 36.5% in 1976.

**State of the Church:** Shi'a Islam is the state religion, and 89% of Iranians follow this. Sunni Islam is respected and largely followed by the Turkmen, Kurd and Baloch populations. The Iranian attitude toward religion can seem contradictory – heavy-handed but laid back, very chaste in public but much less so in private. The courts have the right to impose the death sentence on male apostates and life imprisonment for female apostates. Historic religious minorities such as Jews, Zoroastrians and Assyrian and Armenian Christians are recognized by the constitution, but the Baha'i are not. Effectively, Iran is a religious dictatorship where little of consequence can occur without the approval of the Mullahs. (OW)

**Prayer Points:**

- The many promises of the Islamic Revolution, made over 30 years ago, have yet to materialize. The peace and prosperity that strict adherence to Islam was supposed to deliver have never materialized. Instead, a legacy of bloodshed, cruelty, injustice, extremism and economic deprivation discredits the conservative religious leaders and the narrow brand of Islam they promote. Repression, corruption, injustice and human rights abuses are frequent; religious leadership controls the police, army and judicial system. Strong allegations of fraud in the 2009 elections sparked widespread and continued protests, an indication of the frustration felt by millions. Pray that corruption and repression might end and a government that provides true justice and safety for all be established. (OW 1)
- Religious persecution of certain minorities has intensified since 2005. This is particularly aimed at the Baha'i (a religion that originated in Iran but not recognized as a valid religious group), at Sufi Muslims and at Christians, especially believers from a Muslim background. According to the state, only Armenians and Assyrians can be Christian – ethnic Persians are by definition Muslim, and therefore ethnic Persian Christians are by definition apostates. This makes almost all Christian activity illegal, especially when it occurs in Persian languages – from evangelism to Bible training to publishing Scripture and Christian books. Yet the regime's harsh treatment of Christians only further fuels the flames of church growth. Pray that the body of Christ might continue to multiply and mature despite persecution. (OW 3)
- The Iranian Diaspora is around four million. Most have found refuge in the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Turkey, Gulf States and other lands – where they can be evangelized. Western countries are making it harder for Iranians to immigrate. Pray for:
  - A. Diaspora churches. There are probably about 800 Persian-speaking Iranian churches and house fellowships, totaling around 200,000 people. Unity is frequently a challenge. Yet these diaspora Christians are highly active and generous regarding ministry into Iran and among other Iranians abroad; their contribution in this regard is crucial.
  - B. Ministries reaching out to the diaspora, providing not only evangelism tools and outreach but also church planting, discipleship and leadership training, so that Iranians living abroad will be reached and hopefully then reach other Iranians. Christian refugees fleeing from persecution are also assisted. Many diaspora Christians visit Iran and powerfully minister to their countrymen. Significant ministries include Elam Ministries, 222 Ministries, Persian World Outreach, Iran Alive Ministries and Iranian Christians International. (OW 6)
- A deal has been reached with Iran and the United States concerning Iran's nuclear program on Tuesday July 14<sup>th</sup>. "Under the deal, sanctions imposed by the United States, European Union and United Nations will be lifted in return for Iran agreeing long-term curbs on a nuclear program that the West has suspected was aimed at creating a nuclear bomb." (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/14/us-iran-nuclear-idUSKCN0PM0CE20150714>) Pray that leaders will give this agreement proper scrutiny and that the result of this deal will be peace.