

Centenary Chimes

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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FEBRUARY 2017

With Hopes of Learning To Fly. . . Again

By Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young

During times of grief, I find solace listening to Bernadette Peters' ballad rendition of "Blackbird" written by Paul McCartney.

Blackbird singing in the dead of night, take these broken wings and learn to fly

All your life, you were only waiting for this moment to arise

Blackbird singing in the dead of night, take these sunken eyes and learn to see

All your life, you were only waiting for this moment to be free

Black-bird fly. Black-bird fly, into the light of a dark black night. P. McCartney

My wings were clipped. I was injured. Emotion soared in all directions; erratically beyond my comfort. My eyes were always swollen with tears. Open, yet I could not see beyond each day.

Losing my job because of our church's struggling finances was a grief that I did not know how to bear, but it grounded me. Grounded me to be stronger in my faith. Grounded me in my relationship with Darryl, Jessea, Taylor and Nikki. Being terminated also grounded me, restrained me, and halted me, from bringing to fruition all the things I had hoped to do— plans and ministries I was passionate about but had to put back into God's hands.

Kind and loving folks have offered to help me pack my

Continued on page 2

Church Events

- Feb 5th—Prayer Shawl
- Feb 11th – Introduction to Taiko
- Feb 12th – AMI Valentine's Lunch
- Feb 19th Izumi & Friends Concert
- Feb 20th—Office Closed
- March 5th—Bazaar Meeting

Regular Events

Nihongo Bible Study 11 am Sun

Chikara Practice 1:30 pm Sun,

Monday Bible Study 6:00 pm

Japanese Dance Class, TW

Karate 7:30 pm MW

OUR PRAYERS

We lift up prayers for these persons and families:

In remembrance of these saints who now rest from their labor....

Hisako Miyashiro passed away on January 8, 2017. A private family service was held at Green Hills Memorial park on January 18.

Emi Serizawa passed away on January 8, 2017. Service was held at Centenary on January 21.

Rose Mayeda passed away on January 15, 2017. Service was held at Centenary on January 30.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

With Hopes *(Continued from page 1)*

office, filled with things representing over 17 ½ years of ministry at Centenary. With appreciation I have declined their offers. As your Associate Pastor, I have always worked along side you, with you, encouraging you, supporting you, equipping you, learning from you, being affirmed by you and praying with you. We have done many things together. Together. But, packing is something I need to do alone.

In my heart, I need to be the one who packs up my tools for ministries, my resources and my personal belongings--as an act of affirmation for myself. I need to be the one who sorts through things—as an act of rediscovering ministries forgotten and ministries treasured. I need to be the one who sits silently in my office with my eyes swollen with tears, taking in all the endless memories, taking in the many ways God has led me, used me and challenged me through the years.

Remembering God's constant presence, God offers me an assuring, "yes". One day my wings will mend and I will learn to fly again. I will soar again, even though the future scares me. My dream job is no longer mine, but God reminds me that I am free to dream new dreams.

May we always know the sureness of God's faithfulness; a faithfulness that can lead us to soar with new hope, see with new eyes and dream dreams for the days yet to come. WITH MY HEART OPEN WIDE, MY ARMS REACHING OUT, MY SOUL FILLED WITH TEARS...THANK YOU CENTENARY!

And thank you Bernadette Peters! But most of all, thank you Darryl, Jessea, Taylor & Nikki. (Note: When I began my pastorate at Centenary in June 1999, Jessea was 8, Taylor was 5, Nikki was 3. Jessea is now 26, Taylor is 23 and Nikki is 20. Darryl and I still love holding each others' hand.)

Pastor's Pen

I believe the most compelling aspects of the Christian message are the life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ given to us through the grace of God, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. One of the questions that I ask at a new member class is, "Tell me why you seek to belong to a church." Common answers that I receive among those who have young children are that they want to be a church member because they believe the church will offer a good moral education to their children. In addition, they believe that the faith community will have a positive influence on its local community and its members, creating a better place for their families to live in. Typically, when I meet with the parents to prepare for a baptism of their infant child, the parents share that they desire for their infant to be a better person and that's why they want their baby to be baptized. These parents believe that church is a place for their children to be instructed with moral principles so that their children will live successfully in society.

The key word in both of those instances is "better". People recognize that the world we live in is marred with greed, violence, poverty, wickedness, and injustice; and they believe that there must be something better than this. So they turn to church for guidance in living a better life. Better means to improve in quality and the Christian message offers a sense of hope and amelioration in this corrupted world, because life in Jesus Christ is transformative. Once, I sat in a worship service and was wholly confused and disturbed when the preacher said, "Jesus does not want to change you, but wants you to stay the same." There is something wrong with that statement. What good is Christianity if people are asked to stay the same as if they had never known Christ? Knowing Christ means that I am to give up my old and sinful ways of living so that I may be a new creation in Christ. Jesus Christ, through his life, death, and resurrection, offers to us salvation. According to Wesley, the very heart of Christianity is "the renewal of the creation and the creatures through the renewal in humanity of the image of God." In other words, being a Christian is to have a life-changing experience so that what once was lost is now restored. The best of it all is that this life-



transforming relationship with Christ is offered to us freely; it is not earned by our works but only through grace (Eph. 2:8-9).

The message of the Gospel does not end with individuals having life-changing experiences, but it extends out to transforming the world. "The church does not exist for itself, but exists for the world. The community of faith is a community of transformed humanity that reforms and transforms the structures of human society." The purpose of the church is not necessarily to make people come to church to increase membership, but to spread 'scriptural holiness' as John Wesley said. I once asked a member to name what factors attracted her to attend church and her answer impressed me greatly. She said that the church needs to provide opportunities for her to serve. Sound doctrine, genuine worship, fervent prayer meetings, and profound Bible study need to be matched up with the church's outreach, mission, and evangelism programs. She then added, "My faith needs to be lived out in my life. I need a church that gives me the opportunity to make a difference in this world." An authentic relationship with Christ calls for the transformation of the world, in so, working toward establishing the Kingdom of God.

Peace,
Rev. Sungyoung Lee

Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 8.
Ted A. Campbell and Michael T. Burns, *Wesleyan Essentials In A Multicultural Society* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 122.

Centenary Finances

Monthly financial report as of December 31, from Gail Nishinaka, Treasurer

	Jan-Dec 2016 Actual	Jan-Dec 2016 Budget
Pledges	\$162,933	\$161,506
Other Income	\$280,169	\$277,524
Transfers	\$34,750	\$44,500
Total Income	\$477,852	\$483,530

Transfers are from reserves at Union Bank and Investments at Merrill Lynch

Apportionments	\$18,127	\$72,510
Other Expenses	\$447,328	\$461,980
Total Expenses	\$465,455	\$534,490

Income/Expenses	\$12,397	(\$50,960)
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Nihongo Division income and expenses are from July-December.

Apportionments of \$54,383 were not paid

Social Justice Agency of The United Methodist Church Stands With Immigrants and Refugees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - January 26, 2017

Rejects policies that deny dignity and worth

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, the Trump administration took executive action to expand the U.S.-Mexico border wall, increase the powers of immigration law enforcement and cut federal funding for sanctuary cities. The administration is expected to announce further action to halt the acceptance of refugees, and discriminate against Muslim refugees seeking asylum.

The General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church calls upon all policy makers to work for just and compassionate migration policies that affirm the worth, dignity, and inherent value and rights of all persons regardless of nationality or legal status. (2016 Book of Resolutions, #3281 “Welcoming the Migrant to the United States”)

Supportive of churches offering sanctuary to migrants, Church and Society is especially concerned about the explicit targeting of communities determined to help those in need. Such policies are antithetical to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and will not be celebrated as progress.

“As followers of Jesus, we reject in the strongest terms efforts to expand the U.S.-Mexico border wall, penalize communities providing sanctuary, halt refugee resettlement or impose a religious test for those facing forced migration,” said the Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society.

“Immigrants and refugees sit in our pews and are behind the pulpit. United Methodists around the world are loving their neighbors by welcoming refugees and immigrants into their congregations and communities,” Henry-Crowe continued. “We call on our political leaders and policy makers to follow their lead and compassionately welcome our sisters and brothers.”

The General Board of Church and Society is one of four international general program boards of The United Methodist Church. The board is called to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Donations received Dec 30 to Jan 22:

Yoshio & Natsuko Akiyama, In memory of Bill Murata

Yas & Joyce Aochi, Christmas

Judy Asazawa, In memory of Bill Murata, Emi Serizawa, Hisako Miyashiro

De La TorreFamily, Thank you for everything Rev. Karen-Fay

John Enomoto, Special Offering

Donald & Nancy Fister, In memory of William Murata

Lillian Fujimoto, In memory of Bill Murata

Lily Fukunaga, Christmas

Barbara Fukushima, In memory of Bill Murata

Larry Furukawa, Christmas

Roger Furuno, Christmas

Steve & Jan Haruta, In memory of Bill & Betty Murata

Alan Iba, Special Offering

Susan Imoto, Special Offering - 50th Wedding Anniversary

Rochelle Jones, In memory of Bill Murata

Roy Kaneshiro, Christmas

Terry Kasuyama, In memory of Bill Murata

Kristin Kitagawa, In memory of Russell Kitagawa

Richard & Frances Kushino, In memory of Emi Serizawa

Pastor Sunnie Lee, New Year's Thank Offering

Arline Lew, In memory of Bill Murata

Victor & Cynthia Lew, In memory of Bill Murata

Arline Lew, In memory of Emi Serizawa

Tim & Marion Manaka, Special Offering

Tim R. Manaka, Holiday Offering

Mark Maruyama, Special Offering

Kimberley Masuyama, Christmas in memory of Isoe Terasawa

Michi Miyada, Special Offering

Masako Miyake, In memory of Bill Murata

Toshi Miyamoto, Special Offering

Lynn & Shu Miyazaki, Christmas

Angel Nishinaka, In memory of Hisako Miyashiro

Robert & Gail Nishinaka, In memory of Bill Murata, Hisako Miyashiro, Emi Serizawa

Marilyn Nobori, Special Offering celebrating Carolyn & Asao Tokunaga's 50th Wedding Anniversary

Pat, Gloria, & Caitlin O'Brien, In memory of Emi Serizawa, Rose Mayeda

Mariko Okumoto, Special Offering-Christmas Caroling

Kathy Onoye, Christmas

Wendell & Jane Oyama, In memory of Bill Murata

Ernie & Jane Rivera, In memory of Bill Murata

Donald & Wendy Sasaki, Christmas

Yusel & Kay Shafi, Special Offering

Suburban Optimist Club of Buena Park, In memory of Bill Murata

Ray & Fumi Tadakuma, Christmas

Hideharu Taise, In memory of Hideko Rose Taise

Susan Tamaki, In memory of Marj Tamaki

Clifford Tanigawa, Special Offering

Tetsu & Kathy Tanimoto, Special Offering

Nancy & Daniel Tiemeier, In memory of Bill Murata

Richard & Susan Tiemeier, In memory of Bill Murata

Carolyn Tokunaga, In memory of Bill Murata, Emi Serizawa, Rose Mayeda

Donna Ujiye, Christmas

Jean Urushima, Christmas

Alice & Noboru Uyekawa, In memory of Bill Murata

Richard & Beverly Waltz, In memory of Bill Murata

Lily & Ted Yamaguchi, In memory of Bill Murata

Divided. March.

Summary of Rev. KarenFay's 1/22 Sermon

By Carolyn Tokunaga

In an ancient story from the Bible, in a region where people lived under times of oppression and war, a new leader emerges. For the fortunate, he brought prosperity, but the poor and less fortunate suffered. The people were in conflict. From both sides, there were many different visions and views of what the nation needed, many different interpretations of what was just and right. But through all, amidst their differences, conflicts and struggles, both sides of this nation turned to God for justification and hope.

In our own nation today, Christians are divided and from both sides of the divide, we, too, look to God for justification and hope. We look to God to shed light on this time of change. Today there are Christians who are celebrating and thanking God for the coming of this new political era, but there are others who worry about a new president who seems to display very little regard for the values of equality, social justice, the poor and disenfranchised, and for environmental justice.

Today, no matter where we stand on the divide, we are called to embrace the ideals of Jesus. Jesus called two poor fishermen and two very rich fishermen to follow him. Divided by their economic security and social status, divided by wealth and poverty, they were called. Jesus was the true Light for all. Jesus disrupted their lives and called them to set aside all that they knew and all that they had to "come follow me." Jesus called them to re-set the focus of their lives – a call to open their lives to a new understanding to thrive spiritually.

In the days of Jesus, villages, towns, and scores of people filled country sides as they walked in large crowds to be close to Jesus, to be touched by Jesus, to be near and to hear him. Perhaps it is that same desire to thrive spiritually that has led many Christians to march on Jan. 21 for justice for the poor, to march to give a voice to those who are oppressed, to march for spiritual health, to march and awaken our awareness for the needs of others.

In the days to come, how will we march in body and in spirit? How will we share our presence, our voices and God's love? Even amidst division, we all can live with more compassion, more care, more willingness to be a voice for the oppressed, and to listen and embrace and respect others.

Sharing 
God's Love

Announcements

- Eastside Bible Fellowship will meet January 5th and 19th at the Lew's home, 7:30 pm.
- Monday Night Bible Study will meet Mondays 6:30 to 7:30 pm.
- February 5—Prayer Shawl meeting immediately following worship in multipurpose room.
- February 11—Introduction to Taiko (see flyer last page)
- February 12—AMI Valentine's lunch immediately following worship.
- February 19th at 2 pm—Izumi & Friends begin the 2017 concert series . (see Upcoming Events) Other concert dates are May 21 and September 17
- February 20—Office closed for President's Day
- March 5 at 12:20—First Bazaar planning committee

Expressing God's Love and Concern

Prayer Shawl Ministry has been working diligently. If you know of anyone that may benefit from a prayer shawl or lap throw, please let the Prayer Shawl group know. We will package the item for you to deliver. Thank you.

Farewell Gifts

Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young will be leaving at the end of February after sharing her spiritual gifts for more than seventeen years at Centenary. Michele Nagata is compiling a Memory Book which is comprised of pages created by all of the groups at Centenary. There will also be pages set aside for members of the Centenary family who do not belong to a particular group, but still want to write a message to KarenFay. See Vicky Leon if you would like scrapbook paper or have any questions.

Michele Nagata will also be collecting Love Gifts for KarenFay each Sunday in February. Michele will be making a Love Gift box. Cash, checks, or gift cards may be deposited directly in the box or in a card.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 11th

Introduction to Taiko—Ever wish you could beat the taiko? Here's your chance. Chikara Daiko will hold a workshop for beginners at 9:30 am. Registration is \$30.. See flyer on last page.

Sunday, February 19th

Izumi & Friends will present a series of concerts. The first concert begins at 2 pm and will feature Soprano Xiabo Su and Cellist Yoshika Masuda.

WANTED

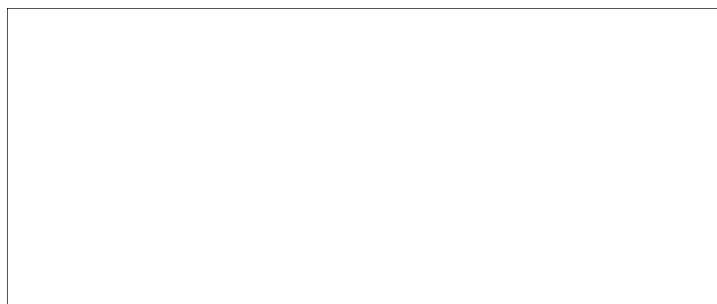
Starting with the April Issue of the Centenary Chimes, a new editor is needed. The editor's responsibility includes determining and securing a writer for the feature article; updating all dates for Church Events, Announcements, and Upcoming Events; formatting donation lists from financial secretary; securing or writing additional articles from staff writer, committee chairs, outside organizers; formatting Chimes to purchased templates. Chimes is produced monthly. Please notify Pastor Sunnie if you are interested.



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Chikara Daiko - Strength of the Spirit

If you have had the opportunity to see Chikara Daiko* or any other Taiko group play Taiko (Japanese group drumming) and thought, I'd really like to try that.... Well, here's your chance! Chikara Daiko is putting on an "Introduction to Taiko" workshop on February 11, 2017. Open to ages 10 and up, no musical experience necessary! The workshop will cover the basics of playing along with learning a short piece. This will be a hands-on workshop so wear comfortable clothes and come prepared for a fun time learning and playing taiko!

INTRODUCTION TO TAIKO

Date: Saturday, February 11, 2017
Time: 9:30am-12:30pm
Place: Centenary United Methodist Church

Cost: \$20 per person pre-registration by February 8
\$30 per person at the door if space is available
(workshop limited to 20 participants).

**For pre-registration and more
information contact:
Jody Miyashiro at jmiyashiro@mwdh2o.com**

Make checks payable to "CUMC—Chikara Daiko" and mail to Centenary UMC at above address. Note "Taiko Workshop" on the envelope.

*Chikara Daiko is based out of Centenary UMC and has played at several Los Angeles District and Cal-Pac Conference events and performed at the 2006 UMW National Assembly and 2008 General Conference.