

Centenary *Chimes*

NEWSLETTER | CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
300 S. CENTRAL AVENUE LOS ANGELES, CA 90013
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AUGUST and SEPTEMBER 2017

Pastor's Pen

When I was applying to be fully ordained in the United Methodist Church, I was asked to write about the difficulties our churches will encounter over the next 5-15 years. I would like to share with you what I wrote at the time:

Why talk about what's to happen in five years, when our churches are already facing challenges today? Churches are declining in membership and financial giving, and we are now heavily dependent on rentals to maintain church finances. Budget cuts are unavoidable; the staff, programs, and even the apportionments are deeply affected. There is no discipleship system in place, so the members do not know how to be a disciple in the church and in the world. Guests do not feel welcomed when they come for worship. Moreover, churches are stuck in their particular ways of doing ministry, and are unwilling to adapt to the changing culture and the new generation. Thus, they are unable to reach out to the un-churched. Also, there is barely any manpower available to do any kind of work in the church because most of the members have been retired for at least a couple of decades. The laughter and screams of young children are missing in the churches. No mission is in sight to touch heaven and transform earth. The focus is now inward to sustain the building and provide a chaplain to those who have remained.



Pastor Sunnie

This was written about 10 years ago and I wish I could say that our churches are in much better shape. According to the 2014 Religious Landscape Study, between 2007 and 2014, the mainline Protestant population fell from 18.1% to 14.7%. We know this already, but it's hard to accept that an average person's Sunday activities do not include going to church.

However, I am extremely grateful and excited to share that here at Centenary, we have passionate and dedicated people, who are trying their best to understand what it means to be the church in these changing times. Centenary is and has been a special place for so many and we want to continue to be a vital presence in our community. We believe that we can achieve that by actively offering the life-giving message of Christ to anyone we encounter. This is why the Vision Implementation Team and I have worked on creating a new mission statement (Enrich, Empower, Impact) that makes sense and achievable.

On September 10, 2017, Centenary will have its Rally Sunday. This year's Rally Sunday will be special because not only will we welcome back the choir and the kids going back to school, but we will also get a chance to talk about our hopes and dreams for Centenary as we learn to embrace the new mission statement. So, please mark the date and make plans to attend our Rally Sunday on September 10th. We will start the service at 10:45 a.m. followed by lunch. We are looking forward to seeing you here. Will you join us?

Peace,
Rev. Sunyoung Lee

Installation of UMW Officers

The UMW Officers were installed on June 23 during service.

President - Martha Nishinaka
Vice President - Linda Shirai
Secretary - Jane Oyama
Treasurer - Carolyn Tokunaga
Christian Social Action - Cynthia Lew
Membership Outreach and Nurture - Vicky Leon



On June 3, 2017, Ernie Hiroshige (Judge Ernest Hiroshige, Class of '67) was awarded the Public Service Award at the UCLA Awards Dinner/ Ceremony. This is photograph with him and UCLA Chancellor Gene Block.

Church Events

August 6 - Prayer Shawl Ministry, 12:30 p.m.
Tea Ceremony, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

August 13 - Vision Implementation Team Meeting, 12:30 p.m.
United Methodist Women's Meeting, 12:30 p.m.

August 17 - Skid Row-Kyo& AMI presents "Open Mic Talent Show" 7 p.m. – 10 p.m.

August 27 - All Praise@English Worship, 10:45 a.m.
United Methodist Women's Bake Sale

September 10 – Rally Sunday Service, 10:45 a.m.

September 17 - Church Council Meeting, 12:30 p.m.

September 22 -24th Annual Golf Tournament @
City of Montebello Municipal Golf Course

Regular Events

Adult Sunday School – 9:30 a.m. every Sunday

Nihongo Bible Study - 11:00 am Sunday

Chikara Practice - 1:30 pm Sunday

Monday Night Bible Study - 6:00 pm

Minyo Japanese Folk Dance Class - Tu/W 6:30 pm

Karate - 7:30 pm M/W

Classical Japanese Dance Class - 7:30 pm M/W



Enrich, Empower, Impact

Arigato Bazaar

Thank you all for your continued support for our annual Arigato Bazaar.
The net income for this year was \$38,057.

Centenary Finances

Giving report for May and June 2017 from Gail Nishinaka, Treasurer

	Actual May-June	Budget May-June	Actual Year to Date	Budget Year to Date
Pledges	\$18,391	\$26,167	\$95,522	\$78,500
Unpledged Giving	\$7,314	\$11,800	\$30,520	\$35,400
Holiday Offering	\$47	\$0	\$9,230	\$11,600
TOTAL	\$25,752	\$37,967	\$135,272	\$125,500

NOTE: \$28,815 of the actual YTD pledge amount are from pledgers who have given their total annual pledge.

	Paid Actual Year to Date	Amount Owed
Apportionments	\$29,104	\$48,608

Acknowledgements

Donations June 4, 2017 to July 16, 2017

Anonymous Special Offering in appreciation of Community Open House

Gary Asano Donation

Susan Edwards Special Offering for Office Supplies

Mary Enomoto Special Offering to VIT

Mitchell Fujii Special Offering

Yoshie Hagiya in memory of Toshi Miyamoto

Steve & Jan Haruta in loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. Hiroshi Haruta and Mrs. Satsuki Fujita

Steve & Jan Haruta in loving memory of Aiko Nobori, Grace Miyamoto, Ruth Yoshioka

Steve & Jan Haruta in loving memory of Susan Haruta

Brian Kurushima in memory of Loved Ones

Rev. Sunyoung Lee Special Offering in thanks of 1 year anniversary at Centenary

Lynn & Shu Miyazaki Special Mid-Year Donation

Wendell & Jane Oyama in memory of Fathers Jim Oyama & Yo Yoshimoto

Mark & Kathy Sadamitsu in memory of Carol Moriguchi (Kristi Bala's Mom)

The Toda Family in memory of Riyoko Toda

The Toda Family Special Offering in appreciation of Bishop Grant Hagiya

The Wada Family Birthday Remembrance for Joe Wada

Jean Urushima in memory of Riyoko Toda

France Yanai Wong Late Father Hisataro Yanai

Mary Yonemoto in memory of Loved Ones

Peace With Justice Sunday

Anonymous

Judy Asazawa

Cathy Benney

Elston & Verna Carr

Mary Enomoto

Steve & Jan Haruta

George & Linda Holtz

Terry Kasuyama

Susie Koo

Harry & Carole Kuruma

Brian Kurushima

Rev. Sunyoung Lee

John Matsubara

Angel Nishinaka

Robert & Gail Nishinaka

Jonathan Oyama

Wendell & Jane Oyama

Akira & Carole Sasaki

Terry Sonoda

Emi Takashima

Carolyn Tokunaga

Vicky Uyemura

Kid City Back to School Project

Karin Hayashi

Judge Ernie Hiroshige

Brian Kurushima

Arline Lew

Angel Nishinaka

Emi Takashima

Vicky Uyemura

Reflections on 2017 California-Pacific Annual Conference

By Carole Sasaki

8 Centenary members and clergy attended CalPAC in Redlands, June 14-17. Cal PAC is a conference of clergy and lay persons representing all United Methodist Churches in So. California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, Guam and Saipan. The conference was led by Bishop Grant Hagiya, a former Centenary pastor.

This year's theme, "From Here to There", challenged churches to provide meaningful worship, Bible study, and relationship building experiences "HERE" (in the local church) which inspire members and friends to go "THERE" (in the wider neighborhood) and actively share God's love with those who may be hungering for the connectedness of a loving community.

We were challenged to make church more than mere "moments"- i.e. sacred worship, enlightening studies, and inspirational programs that transform our lives. In addition to "moments", church should be a "movement" – "moments" that inspire action of church goers to make a difference in someone else's life.

Throughout the 3 days of conference various outreach ministries, "movements", of various churches were highlighted – i.e. safe parking lots for homeless, feeding needy persons, opportunities for creative expression in photography, therapeutic workshops, to name only a few. The ministries were developed by assessing needs of the church's neighborhood. Also, Bishop Hagiya emphasized the meaningfulness of one-to-one conversation sharing "stories" of our lives – and listening to others' stories without judgment - when in contact with others in church and throughout the week.

The CalPAC theme "From Here to There" is applicable to Centenary's new Mission Statement – Enrich, Empower, Impact. We come to Centenary where

we are enriched by scripture, sermon, song, prayer, and fellowship, whereby

we are empowered with courage, confidence and passion, whereby

we are moved to impact others with life affirming experiences as exemplified by the life and acts of Jesus Christ.

Centenary was represented at CalPAC by Kathy Sadamitsu, Judy Asazawa, Skeeter Sasaki, and our pastors, Sunyoung Lee and Richard Kuyama as voting members. Harry and Carole Kuruma and Carole Sasaki attended as guests.

On a personal note, CalPAC was an enriching experience which empowered me to want to share the experience and, possibly, impact a Chimes' reader's life!

Little Tokyo Community Open House and Skid Row-Kyo Public Ondo

The Little Tokyo Community Open House / Skid Row-Kyo Public Ondo was held on Sunday July 2, 2017 at Centenary in Little Tokyo / DTLA. In the spirit of culture and community, this was a FREE event, and all were welcome to attend. A "potluck style" lunch was served, but all that guests had to bring was an appetite to share in fellowship and good times with community friends and neighbors.

The 3rd Street Open Space was available for those who wanted to just "hang out" and watch the sights of Skid Row-Kyo. FREE entertainment, games and contests took place throughout the day.



Lunch time entertainment was provided by "Mx'd Plate" a motley band of musically inclined friends who share a love of fun, food, and the Hawaiian Spirit. They fearlessly tackled a variety of genres!!!

Other entertainment included an "Open Mic", free games with prizes for all ages and a public ondo. This event has taken place annually for the last 5 years.

This FREE event is our way of thanking the community for all the support they provide to us and our missions. Skid Row-Kyo Mission: Help us help others. On the day of the Open House we collected bottled water and packaged snack foods for our neighbors on Skidrow.



Please note our new
email address:
centenaryDTLA@gmail.com

Women's Day Service



Marsha Aizumi

The guest speaker for the Women's Day Worship was Marsha Aizumi, a loving mother of a transgender son and a LGBTQ activist.

Marsha's journey is intertwined with that of her son. The happiness of a child is the goal of all mothers. She struggled with uncertainty and confusion as she watched her young tomboy become withdrawn and depressed as she entered her teen years. Bullied and suicidal, Aiden made the decision to transition at age 20. Marsha was sad to lose her daughter but listened to her son and hoped that through her support and love, he would find his way. That change allowed him to be his true self and he blossomed into a confident, determined and compassionate young man.

Hers is a journey of love and strength nurtured by two very different women in her life.

Marsha's mother, Jean Ogino, raised her to believe that the most important thing was to be kind and compassionate. Marsha found that when she did something kind, she felt like a good person and so it made her want to be kind more often. And the kinder she was, the more kindness came back to her – The Golden Rule in action. She also realized that when she was compassionate towards others, it made her more compassionate towards herself. There were so many times on her journey with Aiden that she found opportunities to beat herself up, to question her abilities as a mother, until she used her compassion on herself and admitted that she was a good mother who is learning to be better. Moving testimony comes from her son. "I have the greatest fortune of being your son and getting to experience your love. I have watched you become an amazing voice in the LGBTQ community and to see you fight for me so that I can have the best life possible."

Just recently, Marsha went to see the movie Wonder Woman and found inspiration in her words. She remembers her saying, "I am willing to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves." As women we have the amazing power to combine both our courage and our compassion to fight for those who may not have a voice.

Another Wonder Woman quote resounded with Marsha - "Only love can save the world." She understands this at a very deep level, because it is her love for her son that has allowed her to find her voice and be more courageous than she thought possible. Her love for the LGBTQ community has made her a passionate advocate for those who are still struggling on this journey.

Although the Women's Day service is about recognizing women, we all have the power to make the world better. We all have the ability to speak for those who cannot. We all have the heart to bring more love into the world.

Father's Day Message



Mark Nishinaka

Summarized from Mark Nishinaka's Sermon based on Matthew 9:35-10:1-8

In today's scripture, as Jesus preached in the towns and synagogues, he saw the crowds and had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Seeing a need, he calls the 12 Disciples together with instructions to not go among the Gentiles or Samaritans but to first proclaim his message to the "lost souls of Israel" which seemed a strange message from one who included all in his ministry. But Jesus knew he needed to bolster his Disciples if his message was to be relayed.

Jesus taught through his example that we have nothing to fear if we equip ourselves with knowledge and understanding. With confidence in ourselves, we can overcome everything placed before us.

Jesus recognized this need in his Disciples. In sending them out to spread his message among the Jews, he knew his message would be more readily accepted because of their similar backgrounds. It would be a confidence builder that would serve the Disciples well as they moved out into other communities. Jesus taught through his example of unconditional love to love one another, as he has loved us. As Christians, we must strive to love one another unconditionally.

It is much easier to show unconditional love towards family than to strangers, so Jesus instructs the Disciples to seek out their own first and through this growing process, learn the benefits of loving unconditionally. With this accomplished, they would be able to approach a Gentile or Samaritan with their message.

Motivation to love unconditionally must come from our pursuit of Christian perfection, also known as perfect love or Sanctification.

For Methodists, Sanctification is a life-long journey and motivates us to love unconditionally. Christian perfection does not mean you have to be perfect. Jesus knows human nature and has always left the door open for infinite chances of redemption.

Unconditional love gives us the ability to deal with people who may be different than ourselves, people who may be less fortunate, people with different points of view, people rejected by others because of conditions like leprosy or personal demons. The healing starts when it is done without placing any conditions on those in need of healing. In summary, knowledge and self-confidence leads to no fear. When you love with no fear, you are able to love without conditions. When you are able to love without conditions, you have reached the purest form of love, God's Love. Because we receive His love freely, we want to give our love freely. If we all pursued Sanctification, the world would be a very different place.

In recognition of Father's Day, Mark chose to close with John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

All Church Picnic: Worship at the Park

Our annual picnic was held on July 9th at Veteran's Memorial Park in Culver City.

The day began with an outdoor worship service which was inspiring and tranquil. The music of All Praise added to the joy of being surrounded by God's creation. A delicious potluck filled our stomachs with food to spare. Too full to move, Bingo filled the afternoon. Bingo prizes were provided by Vicky Leon, Gloria O'Brien, Susie Koo, Mui Koike, Carolyn Tokunaga and others. It was a great day of fellowship and fun.

We thank Wesley and Mark Nishinaka and Terry Kasuyama for setting up the tents, tables, supplies, and drinks for the Centenary Picnic: Clifford and Mui Koike for securing the location permit: Janice Date and Gloria O'Brien for arranging the food on the tables.



Mark Nishinaka



Wesley & Martha Nishinaka with the help of Terry Kasuyama set up tables and tents for the picnic.



Worshipping at the park



Worshipping at the park



Bingo!



Bingo!



Delicious potluck



All Praise provided worship music

More bingo...more prizes!



"Aiko's Team - 14 years for Suicide Prevention"

By Marilyn Nobori

On September 24th Aiko's Team will participate in the Alive and Running 5K for Suicide Prevention held by Didi Hirsh's Suicide Prevention Center. It will be our fourteenth team since my daughter, Aiko Nobori, died by suicide at the age of 14. There are 44,000 suicides in the US each year (120 per day).

Back to the beginning. Aiko's death had the entire church in mourning. She was an active youth participating in taiko, praise band, A4G, UMY, church school and chamber group. Her life was celebrated, her death was horrific but it did happen, and the only thing that could give meaning to this event was how we responded to it. "Why God?" was a question asked by many, and God was in our struggle and the Spirit moved us. As a church we began to explore the subject of suicide and mental illness. It was Suicide Prevention Center (SPC) who sent a speaker to talk to the youth and adults about suicide and its prevention. We held workshops for clergy and youth workers to hear SPC and Teen Line speakers.

That first year, 6 of us decided to participate in the 5K. At the last minute we became "Aiko's Team" and raised \$2,000 for SPC. June Kumagai said to me "I wanted to do something. I felt helpless. This I could do" – she talked to people during our lunch fellowship and raised funds.

The team has grown each year. In 2013, the 10th memorial, we had 85 people present and raised \$10,000. Each time Aiko's Team participates in the event, we raise awareness about this deadly problem. I know of at least 10 interventions where someone heard Aiko's story and took action to help another.

We are also raising money to support the Suicide Prevention Center at Didi Hirsch. SPC has a 24/7 crisis line in English and Spanish and offers several hours in Korean and Vietnamese. It receives 95,000 calls, chats and texts each year. It covers most of Southern California and, as part of the national Lifeline, handles calls both nationally and internationally. The center's speakers go into schools, churches, clinics and workplaces to make presentations on suicide awareness and prevention. They conduct ASIST trainings, which is similar to CPR in that they provide lay training to create a community-wide safety net. The center is also one of only a few in the nation that provides support groups to people who have attempted suicide, called Survivors of Suicide Attempt (SOSA). And when the horrible happens, there is Survivors After Suicide, a bereavement program for individuals, groups and workplace debriefs. In addition there is a Suicide Response Team, which in Los Angeles, that goes out to the scene of a suicide and talks with the family. There are new plans to open a free-standing SPC with full clinical services.

There is a great deal of stigma around suicide and mental illness. In 2011 the Church and Society Committee added Aiko's Team to their list of projects (Kiva, LGBT issues, Fair Trade, labor issues). Although Centenary has supported Aiko's Team from the beginning, it became an official ministry. This is the last year I will head Aiko's Team. Stephanie and Kris Leese will continue to organize the team starting next year. Molly Fumia wrote "If you mention my loved one's name I may cry. But if you don't mention it, you will break my heart". I thank each member of Aiko's Team for remembering and honoring her. It is now time to move from personal remembrance to social justice.

Join or donate online Aiko's Team <https://support.didihirsch.org/AliveandRunning2017/AikosTeam>

Side note: I spent 7 yrs as a volunteer on the crisis line. I will continue my 12 yrs of volunteer work in suicide bereavement and speaking to groups. So, I'm not going away from the issue, just changing roles.



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