



Good News



Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church
A United Church of Christ

144 S. Greenwood Ave. Montebello, CA 90640
(323) 721-5568 MontebelloUCC.org

September 2026

Volume XLV No. IX



A Message from our Moderator...

Lori Katayama

Thank you to everyone for making Pastor Mitchell's Celebration of Ministry on August 2nd such a wonderful and heartfelt send off. It may have been one of the hottest days of the year and it was probably a first for MPCC to host two large services in one day. I would like to acknowledge the following people who were part of the planning team:

Morning worship:

Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young carefully crafted a service of personal good-byes and thanks for the Young Family. Every part of the service was filled with sentiments of gratitude and thanksgiving including an inspiring adaptation of the hymn "God of Grace and God of Glory."

Music offerings were given by: Ida Gonzales, Eileen Mitsueda, Rhys Yamasaki.

Readers for the service were: Roger Ng, Lynne Hanamoto, BJ Woo, Jan Fukushima, Glenn Hino, Alice Higashi.

AV and slide presentations were done by: Steven Woo, BJ Woo, Glenn Hino

An especially poignant moment was the final video from Rev. Charing Wei-Jen Chen whose send off included a "live long and prosper" Star Trek nod.

Afternoon worship:

Rev. Rachael Pryor led a beautiful

Celebration of Ministry service at 3pm filled with remembrances from many of Pastor Mitchell's colleagues.

Music offerings were given by: Ida Gonzales, Eileen Mitsueda, La Hula I Ke Akua led by Darin Yamada.

Lei Presentations: Lori Katayama on behalf of the church, Alice Higashi on behalf of Bible Study, BJ Woo on behalf of youth and young adults.

Remembrances were given by:

Representing PAAM: Rev. Dr. Ernie Reyes

Representing Nikkei Interfaith Fellowship: Rev. Robert Yuge

Representing Asian Youth Collective: James Chin

Representing Jesus Reigns Victoriously Church: Rev. Romy de Gula

MPCC Pastor Emeritus: Rev.

Michio Oyakawa

Representing MPCC Youth Ministries: BJ Woo

Representing MPCC Members, Family, Friends: Lori Katayama

Closing Prayer: Mike Okamura

I would like to also thank the Farewell Planning Committee for their participation and contribution to the various events this past year: Mamie Okamoto, BJ Woo, Lynne Hanamoto, Kiko Kawamoto, Ron Yamasaki, Annie Yamasaki, and chief decorator Mac Reyes. Our luncheon and desserts were coordinated by Lynne Hanamoto and Tricia Tao and we received a generous donation of

cookies from Anne Hashisaka of Kauai Kookie Company. Thanks also to Montebello High School's Interact Club for their help setting up and cleaning up afterwards.

I encourage everyone to view the services on YouTube to re-live the love and gratitude that was shared on August 2nd.

Blessings – Moderator, Lori

Worship Schedule

September 6

Holy Communion w/
Rev. Dr. Ernie Reyes

"United Hearts: Trusting and Obeying God Together"
Luke 5:1-11

September 13

Speaker Rev. Wendy Tajima
"Mercy"

Genesis 50:15-21 & Romans
14:1-12

September 20

Speaker Rev. Sam Pullen

"I was Unjustly Detained, and You Visited Me"
Matthew 25:35-40

September 27

Summer Ex Fundraiser
Speaker Rev. Norma DeSaegher

"The Power of Prayer"
Luke 11:1-12

A Message from our Treasurer...
Bien Reyes

and for everything in our Lord Jesus Christ - Ephesians 5:20

Financial Summary - July 2026

	Month	YTD
Total Income:	\$14,075.00	\$159,846.45
Total Expenses:	\$24,447.28	\$169,120.18
Surplus/(Deficit):	(\$10,372.28)	(\$9,273.73)

Wednesday Group
Art Hanamoto

7/22/2026 Terry H., Suzy H., Kiku K., Alice H., Ernie A., Chris C., June Y., Margaret E., and Lynne H. folded, labeled, and mailed the Goodnews publication.

Christine K., Nitaya Y., Jesse E., Ernie A., and Art H. also completed the following tasks:

1) prepared Mori Hall for the retirement party by clearing the "Give Away" table, Summer Ex crafts, Bazaar sign, and stage items, 2) aligned bricks along the walkway outside the Sunday School to keep dirt off of the sidewalk, 3) placed extra bricks on the Greenwood parkway for giveaway, 4) hosed down the sanctuary steps, handicap ramp, and lanai, 5) repaired the measuring tape, 6) sorted plastic bottles and cans and took them to the recycling center, and 7) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway and Los Angeles parking lot.

7/29/2026 Nitaya Y., Ernie A., Alice H., Christine K., Jesse E., Margaret E., Mike Y., and Art H. 1) sorted kitchen hand towels and aprons for disposal or giveaway, 2) cleaned the refrigerators, 3) organized items in the kitchen cabinets and drawers, 4) continued aligning bricks along the walkway outside the Sunday School, 5) placed extra bricks on the sidewalk for giveaway, 6) trimmed branches from trees in the Greenwood parking lot, 7) removed wood pieces from the parsonage kitchen, and 8) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood and Los Angeles parking lots.

Special Thanks: The Wednesday Group extends special thanks to Nitaya for her years of guidance and support.

8/5/2026 Jesse E., Margaret E., Christine K., Alice H., Lynne H., and Art H. 1) straightened up the kitchen after the retirement party, 2) organized the Sunday School rooms, 3) placed tablecloths from the retirement party into the blue bin, 3) added an extra link to the wire holding open the Los Angeles Street gate, 4) placed the remaining extra bricks on the sidewalk for giveaway, 4) recycled old paint cans, and 5) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway and Los Angeles parking lot.

8/12/2026 Alice H., Christine K., and Art H. 1) organized the "Free" table, 2) organized the kitchen, 3) cut weeds behind the storage shed, and 4) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway and Los Angeles parking lot.

8/19/2026 Christine K., Jesse E., Margaret E.,

Christian Education Board
Steven Woo, chairperson

As the new school year starts, we also have Sunday school for children. Please invite your kids and grandkids. We had our Rally Sunday and gave out school supplies to our neighbors and around 12 families stopped by. We mentioned to them our Sunday school, Summer and Winter Ex program and our Halloween party on October 24th. We had a smaller turnout last year, so we're trying to get the word out to have more people, especially kids come. Thank you and let's have a great school year!



Diaconate Board
Lynne Hanamoto, chairperson

As we move through the weeks after Pentecost, we are continuing to enrich our worship services with guest Ministers and we hope that you have enjoyed our new junior deacons: Madelyn, Elora and Teddy. As other families with children, join us in service, they are invited as junior deacons also.

We are grateful to everyone who has contributed food for Coffee Hour Fellowship. We also thank Melody for preparing the sign-up list for those who would like to help provide light refreshments during fellowship this fall. If you can join in providing for Coffee Hour, please sign up in Mori Hall.

We hope you enjoyed the guest preachers who shared messages with us in August. As, we get into the school year, we look forward to our September Guest Ministers: Rev. Dr. Ernie Reyes, Rev. Wendy Tajima, Rev. Samuel Pullen, and Rev. Norma DeSaegher.

Let us focus on our theme, our MPCC "Grateful in All Things" giving thanks to God, the Father at all times

Ernie A., Alice H., Lynne H., and Art H. 1) removed most of the Young family's remaining personal items from the parsonage and set aside the reusable items for the rummage sale, 2) took linens home to laundry for giveaway or the rummage sale, 3) unboxed and assembled the AED wall cabinets, 4) sorted recyclables and temporarily stored them in the parsonage backyard, 5) organized items in the kitchen cabinets and drawers, and 6) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway, Los Angeles parking lot, and parsonage yard.

Special Offerings and Gifts

Bender Family	Family Fund & Pastor Mitchell's Retirement
Kizuka, Christine	Summer/Winter Ex
Okamura, Mike	Pastor Mitchell's Retirement
Woo, Steven	Summer Ex
Yoshimi, Evelyn	Summer Ex

A Message from Your Music Director,

An Invitation to...

Sing in the Choir
Join the Praise Team
Play a musical instrument
See me!
Your Music Director, IDA

**Save Used Stamps Update
"Thank You"**

SAVE those stamps (even pre-sorted stamps are accepted)!

I will cut them for you and please leave at least 1/8 inches on the edges.

Thank you to all who have diligently collected used stamps. I greatly appreciate your time and effort.

After Japan receives the stamps, it is sold to collectors. With that money, aides are sent to countries in need.

Our goal at MPCC is to help the church, community, and other nations collectively with other UCC churches collecting "used stamps", we can make a difference! - Evelyn Yoshimi

Congratulations

Shania Amodo

(2026 Rev. Joseph K. Fukushima Scholarship recipient)

Alexandra Martinez

(2026 Akira Mori Scholarship recipient)



To: Bible Study, Japanese Classes, Dance Class, Jets/Jetts
From: MPCC Main Office

Monday through Saturday usage of facilities
Groups and individuals using the church facilities must notify the office and write their activity or responsible party on the church calendar.

All food related trash needs to be disposed of in the outdoor bins.

Leftover food should be discarded or sent home not stored in the refrigerators.

Prayers of the People

With deepest sympathy to the family/families of:

- Sandra L.'s prayers for comfort for the families of two good friends. One friend Alcine (mother Alice M.) passed in June and Paula, her mother passed away recently.
- Lisa M.'s prayers for auntie Lucy and all family members.

Prayers of Healing, Comfort and Blessing for:

- We continue to lift up prayers of strength and health for our sons and daughters: Warren H., Bryan H., and Natasha Y.
- Rev. KarenFay's prayers for MPCC staff, leaders, Sunday school teachers, and those who come Sunday after Sunday lifting up the joys and life of this congregation.
- Prayers for Eileen M. who is still not feeling well from an infection.
- We lift up in prayers the people of Hawaii who faced a hurricane recently. Also, prayers for Indonesia and Colombia that were affected by a massive earthquake.
- Prayers from the Low family for son Daniel in the Navy and the rest of the troops.
- Suzy H.'s prayers for granddaughter Grace who had knee surgery due to an injury playing basketball.
- Jay and Jan F.'s prayers for Emmett R. after a fall and he has problems with his lungs and have trouble circulating fluids in his body due to a weak heart.
- Kiko K.'s prayers of healing for friend Veronica.

September Birthday Celebrations

4	Kayla Reger
7	Wendy Correa
7	Ned Tsunekawa
8	Eileen Mitsueda
10	Jerry Fujita
11	Joe Palacios
11	Enzo Kou
11	Raul Martinez
13	Kenzo Khowdee
15	Thomas Togioka
16	Dani Kou
17	Mai Hino
18	Jane Kubota
20	Davy Low
20	Janice Rodan
20	Josiah Palacios
21	Chris Chun
23	Lily Sakado
23	Harold Iwata
23	Sydney Sakamoto
25	Kimo Endo
27	Evelyn Hashizume
28	Krystyna Matsuda
29	Amara Kwon

Traveling Mercies:

- Carolyn W.'s prayers for safety for son Keith and co-workers who are in Japan then afterwards travelling to Utah and San Francisco. Also, prayers for granddaughter Ashley who will be flying to North Carolina for training with Wells Fargo.

Thanksgiving:

- Tony M. lifts up a prayer of joy of being able to attend to Pastor Michell's celebration and she was able to see everyone.
- Congratulations to Aubrey P. on getting her master's degree on Speech Language Pathology and for her your new job in Montebello.

NOTE:

For prayer requests in the month of September contact our Church office by email mpcc@montebelloucc.org or call our church office (323) 721-5568.

September Guest Speakers

Guest Speaker for September 6: Rev. Dr. Ernie Reyes is one of the Past Moderators of the National Pacific Islanders Asian American Ministries (PAAM) of the United Church of Christ. An active member in both the National PAAM and Regional – Southern California Nevada PAAM, he served in different leadership roles. Rev. Reyes was voted to be the recipient of the Leadership Pacific Islander Asian American Ministries of the United Church of Christ Honored Person in 2016. Rev. Reyes, a graduate of Claremont School of Theology with a Master of Divinity. He was a recipient of the Fukushima Scholarship Grant from Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church. He completed his Advance Pastoral Studies program at San Francisco Theological Seminary in May 2015 where he worked on the dissertation entitled: Asian Churches in Transitioning Communities: Towards a Multicultural and Multiracial Congregation. Rev. Reyes is a retired US Army war veteran, initially enlisted as an Infantry personnel. Later in his military career served as US Army Chaplain. He served the United States Army for 23 years. Rev. Reyes is married to our current National PAAM Vice Moderator - Michiko Manacop-Reyes, a retired Chief Director for Budget and Finance for the City Attorney's office of Los Angeles; and was the former Moderator of our SCNC – UCC Board of Directors. They have three sons: Risenrey, Lee, and Julian. They were blessed to have new members in the family – Risen's wife – Crystal Cheng; and their new baby girl (born last December 2025) – Baby Sol.

Guest Speaker for September 13: Rev. Wendy Tajima is a Sansei native of Pasadena. Though ordained Presbyterian, she was blessed to begin her ministry in the Hawai'i Conference UCC, including six years as pastor of Hanapepe Hawaiian Congregational Church and Associate Conference Minister. While in Hanapepe, she partnered with Rev. Mitchell Young at Hanapepe UCC, who she considers like a brother. In 2025, Wendy retired as San Gabriel Presbytery Executive, but now is helping Pacific Presbytery (Los Angeles and Hawai'i) on an interim basis. She has also volunteered for Altadena Community Church (UCC) since returning to California in 2007. She is happy to worship with MPCC again.



Guest Speaker for September 20: Rev. Sam Pullen (he/him) is called to serve at the intersection of soulful music, contemplative spirituality, and social justice. Pastor Sam brings over 25 years of experience in union, nonprofit, interfaith and congregational settings to his current role as a Faith-Rooted organizer with CLUE, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice. As an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, Sam has served as the Minister of Health Justice with LA Voice Faith In Action (PICO), and as the pastor of LGBTQ+ affirming congregations in Los Alamitos and Woodland Hills. Sam is fluent in Spanish, and is known to perform with mariachi groups as “El Mariachi Gringo.” Pastor Sam was a recipient of the CLUE Architect of Justice award in 2020 for his community organizing to defend immigrants from anti-sanctuary policies in Los Alamitos. Sam holds a Master of Divinity from Claremont School of Theology and a B.A. in Environmental Justice

from The Evergreen State College. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, daughter, and their chihuahua. When not parenting, pastoring, or prophetic organizing, Sam loves to get out of cell phone range and explore sacred wilderness spaces.

Guest Speaker for September 27: Rev. Dr. Norma DeSaegher was born and raised on Kauai, Hawaii. She moved to California to attend college prior to Hawaii achieving statehood. The youngest of six siblings, four of whom are living, she has had a diverse career. Her two primary professional paths include serving as an executive in the environmental industry and spending the last 30 years as a United Church of Christ (UCC) Minister. She is the widow of Col. John DeSaegher and has two children and one grandson.





August 2, 2026
Retirement Celebration
Service for Pastor
Mitchell Young



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	3	4	5 Choir Practice @10am
6 Holy Communion w/ Rev. Dr. Ernie Reyes C.E. Board Meeting @11:30am	7 Office Closed	8 Bible Study @10am	9 Wednesday Group @8am *Jets/Jetts Meeting @7pm	10	11	12 Choir Practice @10am
13 Speaker Rev. Wendy Tajima Trustees/Diaconate Meeting @11:30am	14 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	15 Bible Study @10am	16 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	17	18	19 Choir Practice @10am
20 Speaker Rev. Sam Pullen Council Meeting @11:30am Goodnews Due	21 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	22 Bible Study @10am	23 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	24	25	26 Choir Practice @10am
27 Speaker Rev. Norma DeSaegher Summer Ex Fundraiser	28 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	29 Bible Study @10am	30 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	NOTE: Events marked with an asterisk (*) are private classes and not church events. Please contact the church office for more information.		

Coming in
October
2026

2 Rummage Sale Sorting
 3 Rummage Sale
 4 World Communion Sunday/Neighbors in Need offering
 24 Halloween Party
 25 Fall Church Clean-up

See our updated online calendar at:
<http://Montebelloucc.org>

Join us for our **Virtual & In-Person Worship Service on**
Sundays at 10 a.m. :

YouTube Livestream

Subscribe to our Youtube page to watch our
 latest videos

(www.youtube.com/mpccucc)

*Contact our Church Office for more info

