



Good News



Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church

A United Church of Christ

Sr. Pastor Rev. Mitchell Young

144 S. Greenwood Ave. Montebello, CA 90640

(323) 721-5568 MontebelloUCC.org

August 2026

Volume XLV No. VIII



...giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:20

A Word of Gratitude and Encouragement from your Former Pastor (as of August 1)

Dear Members and Friends of Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church,

As I look back, my first official day as your pastor was August 1, 2005. And now, August 1, 2026, marks my first day as your former pastor. So, as I write this in my final two weeks of active ministry as your pastor, and as you read this in our August newsletter, my time as your settled pastor has officially drawn to a close. Looking back on our 21 years of shared ministry together, my heart is overflowing with gratitude: I am overwhelmed by the love, dedication, and faith that define this beautiful community.

Our 2026 annual theme, "Grateful in all things" (Ephesians 5:20), has been our guiding light this year, and it feels especially poignant right now. I want to express my profound gratitude for our recent celebration of ministry worship services. In particular, I am deeply thankful for the Celebration of Ministry service on August 2: the Holy Communion service led by our longtime friend, Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young, helping us recall our most meaningful ministry and fellowship moments together, as well as the Service of Release led by our Conference Minister, Rev. Rachael Pryor. Those sacred moments of

letting go and blessing one another perfectly encapsulate the beauty of our two decades together.

Now, a new chapter begins for Montebello Plymouth, and I look forward to your future with immense hope. The months ahead will be a time of transition, discovery, and growth. I encourage you to enjoy the many diverse voices of the pulpit supply preachers who will feed you spiritually week by week.

Hopefully, you will soon welcome an interim pastor. Please be fully open to their wisdom. An interim period is a unique gift; it is a time to dig deep and understand who you are right now as a church. That foundational work will help you clearly discern the kind of leader God is preparing for you next. Honor and support the leadership of your pastoral search committee who will work tirelessly and hand-in-hand with the Southern California Nevada Conference of our United Church of Christ. Then when the time comes, and you discern who God has called to serve as your next settled pastor, I pray you enter that new relationship with a renewed sense of mission, vision, and purpose.

Change can bring uncertainty, but you possess all the tools you need. All along the way, keep Ephesians 5:20 as your guiding outlook. Be grateful for where you have been, grateful for where you are, and grateful for the bright future God has in store for you.

Thank you for the honor of being your pastor for 21 wonderful years.

You will remain forever in my prayers.

With enduring love and deep gratitude,
Rev. Mitchell Young
Former Pastor, Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church

Worship Schedule

August 2

Holy Communion w/
Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young
"Resting"
Psalm 23:1-3

August 9

Rally Sunday/School Supplies Drive
Speaker Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young
"Breathing and Breathe"
Isaiah 42:5-9

August 16

Speaker Rev. Dr. Yuki Schwartz
"Has It Ever Occurred to You That You Might Be Wrong"
Matthew 15:10-28

August 23

MPCC Founder's Day
Speaker Rev. Scott Furukawa
"Butterfly Effect on Faith"
Exodus 1:8-2:10

August 30

Speaker Chris Low
"Our Identity in Christ"
Genesis 2

A Message from our Moderator...

Lori Katayama

We continue our "Grateful in All Things" theme by sending off Pastor Mitchell, Nitaya, and Natasha with immense gratitude and love for their time with us. I hope you all make it to the farewell service on August 2nd and if you are unable to be there, please keep them in prayer for a safe journey back to Hawaii.

Pastor Mitchell will keep his email (myoung@montebelloucc.org) for the time being since many of his UCC related emails are sent to that address. We will notify everyone when/if it is discontinued, however, we don't anticipate that for some time.

The church boards are working hard to maintain the same level of energy, continuity in worship, and community care that Montebello Plymouth church has always had. Just as a reminder of some of their responsibilities:

The Diaconate Board

Advise and counsel the Church on matters of spiritual welfare, worship services and other areas related to the Church and community. Designate funds for Church missions. Assist in the preparation and the administration of Christian rites and in the caring for the poor, the sick, the sorrowing, the indifferent and the stranger. Supply the pulpit in the absence of the Pastor. Handle matters of membership. Assist the Pastor(s) in visitations.

The Christian Education Board

The coordinating body for educational programs, the fellowship groups and the social activities of the Church.

The Board of Trustees

Manage the financial and business affairs of the Church and maintain its property. Offer all Members and Non-Members the opportunity to make written pledges, contributions, tithes and special offerings to support the Church. Ensure that all financial documents reflect that the fiscal year of the Church is the calendar year.

There is no doubt that we will require more participation and help in the coming months. If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact any council member or myself. This will be a time of adapting to changes but I am certain we will manage if we work hard together.

Peace in Christ
Moderator, Lori

A Message from our Treasurer...

Bien Reyes

Financial Summary - June 2026

	Month	YTD
Total Income:	\$40,114.84	\$145,771.45
Total Expenses:	\$28,127.36	\$144,859.78
Surplus/(Deficit):	\$11,987.48	\$911.67

Board of Trustees

Annie Yamasaki, chairperson

Pastor Mitchell likes to remind us of the church theme for this year – GRATITUDE. That word probably best describes how I feel about his time here. I am so grateful to have had Pastor Mitchell and the Young Family with us for the past 21 years.

Here we are, at the crossroads. We, as a church, will be making some big and small decisions in the coming months to determine the direction of our congregation. I hope we can come together to build a church we can be proud of.

Change is hard but I just realized, even though it will be a big change, it is only one thing that is changing. The rest of our church will remain and we will be there for each other and we be the same closed knit community, and for that, I am very grateful.

Lori, our moderator, has asked the current board chairpersons to stay in their positions. This is to ensure fewer changes as we work together to find a new pastor to lead our church.

Along with sadness and gratitude of the Young's departure comes a sense of adventure and excitement of a new beginning. I hope you share my optimism for the future of this church.

Christian Education Board

Steven Woo, chairperson

Hello Everyone,



I hope everyone is enjoying their summer and staying cool and hydrated. We had a great picnic at Henry Acuna park in Montebello. Thank you to the Yamasaki's for getting the Taco man, everyone that brought

food, and everyone coming and enjoying a lovely day at the park.

On August 9th, we will have our Rally Sunday to kick

off the new Sunday school year. Come and bring your children and grandchildren to enroll them in Sunday school. We will also have school supplies to give out that day as well.

Diaconate Board

Lynne Hanamoto, chairperson

We thank Pastor Mitchell and Nitaya for their faithful service on the Diaconate Board. Your leadership, compassion, and dedication have been a true blessing to our church. May God continue to guide and strengthen them both in all they do, when they move to Oahu.

As Pastor Mitchell retires effective July 31, 2026, the Diaconate Board will take on expanded responsibilities to ensure continuity in our worship and spiritual life. Our primary duties include welcoming our guest preachers, assisting in planning services, designating funds for missions, and assisting with Christian rites such as communion. We also will care for those in need of healing, sorrowing, and provide "pulpit supply" by coordinating guest speakers in the absence of a permanent pastor.

Moving forward, we will do our best to serve our church during worship services and extend compassion and outreach to visitors and those in need. Our board members will assist with the following specific tasks:

- Worship Coordination: We have scheduled pulpit supply, with guest speakers confirmed for August, September, and October.
- Communion & Rites: Melody T. leads the preparation for Holy Communion, ensuring we are ready for the first Sunday of every month.
- Coordinating of Coffee Hour Refreshments: Melody T.
- Visitation & Support: Members including Lynne H. and Kiku Y. will make phone calls and visits to our homebound members.
- Ushering & Hospitality: Joe P. and Ron N. With support from Art H., Ed Y., and Ramon P. as needed, will serve as ushers to welcome and assist all who enter our sanctuary.
- Missions of our Church: UCC Missions: Ron N.
- Layreader & Music Coordination: Ida G. Worship Music Coordinating and Layreader scheduling.
- Board Secretary: Mamie O.
- Card Ministry: Alice H. assists us.

Wednesday Group

Art Hanamoto

6/24/2026 Terry H., Suzy H., Kiku K., Alice H., Ernie A., June Y., Jesse E., and Margaret E. folded, labeled, and mailed the Good News publication. Additionally, Christine K., Mike Y., Nitaya Y., and Ernie A. completed the following tasks: 1) sorted

Special Offerings and Gifts

Chun, Chris	In Memory of Les
Katayama, Lori & Dave	Summer Ex
Kobashigawa, Kiku	Summer Ex & Special Offering
Reyes, Bien & Mac	Summer Ex
Watanabe, Carolyn	In Memory of Henry W.
Yoshida, Beverly	Special Offering
Yoshimi, Evelyn	Family Fund & In Celebration of Suzy H.'s Birthday

and took plastic bottles and cans to the recycling center, 2) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway and Los Angeles parking lot, 3) sorted items and donated books to a library, 4) trimmed the Thai lime tree in the parsonage backyard, and 5) repaired an electric saw.

7/1/2026 Ernie A., Alice H., Nitaya Y., Mike Y., Christine K., Lynne H., and Art H. 1) organized the boutique room, 2) organized the church parsonage garage, 3) weed-whacked the parsonage backyard, 4) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway and Los Angeles parking lot, 5) discarded broken bricks, and 6) cleaned the pushcart.

Concrete blocks were placed alongside the sidewalk outside of the Sunday School to block water from running onto the sidewalk.

7/8/2026 Jesse E., Margaret E., Nitaya Y., Christine K., Alice H., Lynne H., and Art H. 1) moved 50 concrete blocks to the Angel lot and continue placing them alongside the sidewalk outside of the Sunday School, 2) put extra concrete blocks and red bricks on the Greenwood parkway for giveaway, 3) organized the Sunday School room and sorted the Christmas costumes, 4) recycled old paint cans, and 5) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway and Los Angeles parking lot.

7/15/2026 Alice H., Christine K., Jesse E., Margaret E., Joe P., Nitaya Y., Lynne H., and Art H. 1) Sorted Christmas costumes in Room #2, 2) organized Sunday School room #7, 3) sorted and took plastic bottles and cans to the recycling center, 4) continued placing concrete blocks alongside the sidewalk outside of the Sunday School, 5) put extra concrete blocks and red bricks on the Greenwood parkway for giveaway, 6) examined the broken parsonage's door knob, 7) weed-whacked and rake the parsonage backyard, and 8) watered the grass and plants in the Greenwood parkway and Los Angeles parking lot.

Prayers of the People

With deepest sympathy to the family/families of:

- Sandra L.'s friend Alcine's mother passed away on June 28th and sister-in-law's friend's mother passed away.

August Birthday Celebrations

Prayers of Healing, Comfort and Blessing for:

- We continue to lift up prayers for strength and health for our sons and daughters: Warren H., Bryan H., and Natasha Y. An encouraging post from Warren's wife Melissa: *Warren is continuing to heal. He is saying and comprehending more words than he was a few months ago, Praise God!*
- Toni M.'s Father's Day blessings for all fathers and church men. Also, thanksgiving for God's protection in a recent auto accident. The car was damaged but son Frank is fine. Lastly, prayers for everyone.
- Rosa R.'s thanksgiving for friends and family who have been visiting. Prayers for daughters Ana, Stevie, and Luana who are looking after her and also for Rosa's mother Ana Maria.
- We lift up the Boyle Heights community and all those affected by the ongoing warehouse fire. Grant strength and protection to the brave first responders working tirelessly to contain the blaze.
- Prayers for our friends recovering in nursing facilities, we pray for strength and healing for Rosa R. and Evelyn H. Rosa R. who is taking therapy at a rehabilitation center.
- Lori K.'s prayers for sister Eileen as she heals from a foot infection. Also prayers for Summer Ex in their final week. They had an outing to Knotts Berry Farm.
- Kiku K.'s prayers of safety for Reiko's family as they travel up to Sequoia Big Tree.
- Sandra L. remembering son Danny who serves in the navy. We also pray for Danny and wife Regina since this will be the first time they will not be physically together for their wedding anniversary.
- Mike P.'s prayers of recovery for brother-in-law Carol J. who had a cardiac issue.
- Prayers for Summer Ex staff for safety and health as they guide our children.
- Prayers for the people of Venezuela after the horrific earthquakes.
- Chris L.'s prayers for sister-in-law Nina who had to go to the hospital due to high blood pressure and low sodium. Nina is back home recovering.
- Lynne H.'s prayers for all those families that were affected by gun violence and have lost loved ones.
- Ida G.'s prayers of blessing and good health for friend Ann. Also, prayers for patient May S. in her time of transition.
- Linda's prayers for healing and strength for a bowling colleague who had a stroke recently.

1	Dirk Matsuda
2	Andrew Kobata
4	Keila Davies
6	Rosa Romero
8	Taylor Yoshitake
11	Mari Leal
11	Rhys Yamasaki
13	Trent Hata
14	Christine Kizuka
15	Ron Yamasaki
16	Melissa Reyes
17	Ernie Agcaoili
17	Mitchell Young
18	Troy Kawaharada
25	Sho Hashizume
25	Yvonne Phillips
25	Ryan Yasukochi
27	Kaito Katsura
27	Edith Sakamoto
29	Joelle Phillips
29	Ku'ulei Poole
30	Bernalyd Alimboyao
31	Raquel Moreno
31	Miki Stevens

Traveling Mercies:

- Rhys Y.'s prayers for family as they return from Joshua Tree.
- Carolyn W.'s prayers for granddaughter Ashley as she travels to China with her friend.
- Lori K.'s travel mercies for our guests from Hawaii as they travel back to Turtle Island.

Thanksgiving:

- Toni M.'s thanksgiving for granddaughter Samantha who graduated from college and she also got engaged to boyfriend Mauricio.
- Pastor Mitchell Y.'s thanksgiving for visitors Linda, Jessica, Joseph, and Tommy from our July 12th service. We also give thanksgivings for all those who attended the park for the church's picnic.
- Glenn H.'s thanksgiving for mother's Suzy H.'s birthday.

NOTE:

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

August Guest Speakers

Guest Speaker for August 2 & 9 Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young



Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young's family history is deeply rooted in Hawaii's sugar and pineapple plantations of yesteryears. Her home church was Hollywood Independent UCC, a historical Japanese American church, in East Hollywood, and MPCC's sister church. Even before she was ordained, 35 years ago, she had connections with PAAM, Pacific Islander and Asian America Ministries UCC. Before retiring, she served on multiple-staff (3 to 7 pastors) UCC and United Methodist churches in Northern California, Hawaii and Southern California. She and her husband Darryl are members of First Congregational Church of Glendale UCC. They have 3 adult children.

Guest Speaker for August 16 Rev. Dr. Yuki Schwartz

Rev. Dr. B. Yuki Schwartz (they/them) is the acting vice president for academic affairs and acting dean of the faculty at Claremont School of Theology, where they also teach constructive theologies and spiritualities. Dr. Yuki is a longtime participant in the Pacific Asian North American Asian Women in Theology and Ministry (PANAAWTM) conference, and now serves as a member of the Board of Directors and as a mentor. They also are an ordained Christian minister with standing in the United Church of Christ and is thrilled to be part of PAAM in the Southern California Nevada Conference of the UCC. Their publications include the chapter "The Cosmopolitics of Belonging: Model Minority Superheroes and Theological Imagination" in *Embodying Antiracist Christianity: Asian American Theological Resources for Antiracism*, the "Reimagine Advent: Discover the Liberating Christ" Advent liturgy published by The General Commission on Religion and Race of the United Methodist Church; and the chapter "Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation" in the book *When Kids Ask Hard Questions: Faith-filled Responses for Tough Topics*.



Guest Speaker for August 23 Rev. Scott Furukawa

Rev. Scott Furukawa is a sansei (3rd generation) Japanese-American originally from Hawaii. He began his work career in the corporate world as the Hawaii branch manager of a major Wall Street financial investment firm. Answering a vocational call to ministry, Scott left the corporate world and pursued a theological education. After graduating with honors from Vancouver School of Theology in British Columbia, Canada, he accepted a position as Director of Community Outreach, serving the "houseless" communities on the island of Oahu. He would go on to serve as pastor to several churches in Hawaii, including Central Union Church, Kaumakapili Church, and Waialua United Church of Christ. In 2020, Scott and his wife, Christy, moved to Southern California. Shortly thereafter, Scott was called to serve as interim pastor at Woodland Hills Community Church. His interim duties concluded as of February 2024. Christy is a retired pediatric nurse practitioner. Their daughter, Claire, and her husband, David, and their daughter, Juniper, live in Montrose. Scott and Christy are members of First Congregational Church of Pasadena.



Guest Speaker for August 30 Chris Low

Supervisor's Suggestions and Comments

Chris Low is a



June 28, 2026 Youth from our church and Kahu Rennie Mau's youth shared their experience from the PAAM Convocation



July 11, 2026 Family Picnic at Henry Acuna Park in Montebello

July 19, 2026 Summer Ex Sunday



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Holy Communion w/ Rev. KarenFay Ramos-Young Pastor Mitchell's Retirement Cele- bration @3pm	3	4 Bible Study @10am	5 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	6	7	8
9 Speaker Rev. KarenFay Ramos -Young Trustees/Diaconate Meeting @11:30am Rally Sunday/ School Supplies Drive	10	11 Bible Study @10am	12 Wednesday Group @8am *Jets/Jetts Meeting @7pm	13	14	15
16 Speaker Rev. Dr. Yuki Schwartz Council Meeting @11:30am	17	18 Bible Study @10am	19 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	20	21	22
23 Speaker Rev. Scott Furukawa Goodnews Deadline MPCC Founder's Day	24	25 Bible Study @10am	26 Goodnews Mailing @9am *Dance Class @7pm	27	28	29
30 Speaker Chris Low H.S./College Fellowship	31	NOTE: Events marked with an asterisk (*) are private classes and not church events. Please contact the church office for more information.				

Coming in 6 **Guest Speaker Rev. Dr. Ernie Reyes**
 13 **Guest Speaker Rev. Wendy Tajima**
September 20 **Guest Speaker Rev. Sam Pullen**
 27 **Guest Speaker Rev. Norma DeSaegher**
 Board Budgets Due
 H.S./College Fellowship

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

