



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

March 2025

Volume XLIV No. III

When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Genesis 1:1-2

Amidst the Chaos

As the Epiphany season of shining light and unveiling revelation of God transitions to the introspective Lenten season of repentance and inner renewal, our world still faces enormous chaos, confusion, and conflict.

It has felt as if the news has been coming fast and out of control. Not only have we been overwhelmed by the deluge of executive orders, governmental memos, and images of mass deportations from around the country, we have also had to deal with all the responses to these actions, and reactions from people. We have seen acts of resistance and we have seen pleas for mercy. We have also seen acts of cruelty, heard words used to bully people, and seen frequent self-righteous victory laps in the face of other people's disappointment and pain. We have seen pain and hurt and even people laughing at others suffering as they point fingers saying they deserve what they get because of how they voted: "Fool Around and Find Out" they arrogantly taunt. It has been, and probably will continue to feel, chaotic and

overwhelming. It certainly has felt that way for me.

With that in mind, this month I want use this space to share a little peace, to make a respite from the chaos. After all, as we read in the earliest verses of the Bible, in Genesis 1, we worship a God that first brought calm to the chaos to create the world. So, if we strive to create a better world, a world that looks more like the "Kin-dom" Kingdom of God, we will need ways to manage the chaos.

Consider these words from Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God." They remind us of God's presence with us. They are also a reminder that not only is God with us, but God is part of us, and we are a part of God. Also remember the words of the Apostle Paul: "I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither present nor the future...will be able to separate us from the love of God." (Romans 8:38-39)

So, when things begin to feel chaotic or overwhelming, let me offer this prayer, based on Psalm 46, as a way of centering, and bringing order to the chaos of finding calm, safety, and hope in the presence of God. You can also use it as a breath prayer.

"Lord of my heart, help me to trust my heart when you say,
(Inhale) be still and know
(Exhale) that I am God
(Inhale) Be still and know

(Exhale) that I am.

(Inhale) Be still (Exhale) and know.

(Inhale) Be (Exhale) still.

Be." Amen.

Breathing in God with you this Lent,

Pastor Mitchell

Worship Schedule

March 2

Holy Communion
"On the Mountain to Pray"
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

March 5

Ash Wednesday
"Trembling"
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

March 9

"Famished"
Luke 13:31-35

March 16

Cookie Walk
"Warning"
Luke 13:1-9

March 23

"Cut Down"
Luke 13:1-9

March 30

One Great Hour of Sharing
"Squandered"
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

A Message from our Moderator...*Lori Katayama*

Our church council members had their first formal meeting of 2025 on February 16th. (Council members who attended the annual planning meeting in January met informally). Some of the initial decisions made by the council thus far are:

- Annual Bazaar will be held on June 7, 2025 as a pre-order bento style event. Extra meals will be available. Fewer food booths will be needed, however, food trucks or outside vendors may be added to the event. The council is seeking a chairperson for the bazaar. If you are willing to help, please contact the moderator.
- A live feed will no longer be posted on Facebook following worship services. It initially began during the pandemic to keep connected with those who are unable to attend, however, more emphasis will be made during the worship service "sharing the peace of Christ" time instead.
- Improved lighting, signage, and the possibility of a wall mural in the new parking lot is being studied. More landscaping will need to be done. (If you have any recommendations for a landscaper for the church property please refer them to the moderator to make a bid).

Lastly, I ask that you take our annual theme "Welcome One Another" seriously and invite your friends, loved ones, and acquaintances to worship with us. I feel that this is a pivotal year in the life of our 112 year old church. It's time to reach out and be welcoming to all.

Board of Trustees*Annie Yamasaki, chairperson*

Greetings!

Time went by so fast that I neglected to write an article for January. It went by fast because the days were normal and comfortable so the passage of time was not that noticeable. I am guessing that it is not the case with the folks who were victims of all the recent fires, for them every day became a struggle for their livelihood. Let's keep them in our prayers.

While we had little time to prepare for the Rev. Pryor's installation in January, we now have a few more weeks to make this a special occasion. The reason for the delay was the Los Angeles fires, which was not a welcomed occurrence, but if there was a tiny silver lining, the news coverage of church unity was inspiring for me. Perhaps we made some new friends or gained insight on the fragility of our possessions, mostly we can find comfort in fellowship with other like-minded folks.

February 2025 marks the one-year anniversary of the start of the parking lot project that was supposed to take 6-8 weeks. The work itself probably did take only weeks but the entire process took months due to bureaucracy and red tape. Very soon, everyone will be able to enjoy this new space.

The Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church campus is very outdated and keeping it running smoothly has been a challenge. Even just keeping the property clean would require a staff of more than a single custodian once a week. There has been a group of Wednesday volunteers who helps out but the group size has gone from around ten to three or four each week. Please consider joining the group if you are able to assist. Contact the church office if you are interested.

Wishing you a beautiful Spring and much peace in this season of renewal.

Diaconate Board*Lynne Hanamoto*

The Diaconate Board would like to thank Beverly, Minnie, and Nitaya for helping provide supplies for Coffee Hour.

We would like you to become good stewards of the Earth and to help minimize church expenses. We hope you will bring your own cup for Coffee hour and your own container from home for you to take home some left over light refreshments when there are some at the conclusion of Coffee hour.

Ida our Music Director would like to thank the Ukelele Group for participating during worship service.

Members-at-Large*Ron Yamasaki & Evelyn Yoshimi*

We wanted to address some of the concerns we, as Members-At-Large, received during the last couple of months.

It was brought to multiple people's attention that the toilet paper dispenser was empty in the women's restroom in the Sunday School wing. Because of the multiple concerns this must have happened more than once. The janitorial/custodial person has been notified.

Additionally, the toilet paper dispenser in the handicapped stall of the women's restroom is difficult to access because of the location of the sanitary napkin disposal bin. Council has been notified and plans are being made to make access to the dispenser more

convenient.

Someone was annoyed that the bulletin board wasn't updated with the latest issue of Good News. This appears to be a one-time thing as the Good News is usually posted as soon as it is available.

Others complained that the info about Altadena was moved to the south wall of Mori Hall. Council is looking to possibly move the bulletin board to a location that won't impede access into Mori Hall. Suggestions are welcome.

Another person recommending that we stop sending out the Good News because "nobody reads it". However, Council has decided that the Good News will continue to be mailed out. For some, the Good News is the only connection they have to the church.

Finally, someone pointed out that the solar lights along the new parking lot and walkways were not installed vertically correct. Since the area is not yet landscaped, we could wait until it is. I did suggest that, in the meantime, he could realign them to his liking.

Wednesday Group
Bob Miwa

1/22/2025 Alice Higashi, Ed Yasuda, Beverly Yoshida, Jean Kobata, Sets Shinto and her care taker, Sharon Imada, Ernie Agcaoli, Suzy and Terry Hino, Lynne and Art Hanamoto, Mari Wada and Marlin (care taker), Denise Wada, Christine Chun, and Pastor Mitchell and Nitaya Young folded and labeled the Good News for mailing. Afterwards, they trimmed the hedges in the back parking lot, swept and watered both parking lots. Art fixed the door to Mori Hall.

1/29/25 Maria M., Art and Lynne H., Alice H. Ernie A., and Nitaya Y. swept our 3 parking lots and parkways, power-washed the Sunday school sidewalk, dug a ditch for running water along the Sunday school sidewalk, arranged and sorted Thanksgiving items in the craft room and fixed a coffee pot. They also fixed the lighting fixture and drawer in the kitchen and scrubbed some windows in the Kitchen. Last-

ly, cut pallets and put them in the trash.

2/5/25 Art and Lynne H., Christine K., Alice H., Maria M., and Nitaya Y. arranged the boutique room for youth ministry, Summer Ex, and Christmas decorations as storage room. They also sorted and threw away old items in the craft room and scraped the kitchen windows.

2/12/25 Alice H., Christine K., Maria M., and Nitaya Y. swept the Greenwood Parking lot and parkway, cleaned the craft room and sanded two wooden stools, arranged the mug cabinet in Mori Hall, and pulled weeds in the Angel parking lot. Afterwards, they put new coverings for a board in Sunday school hallway.

Special Offerings and Gifts

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ishibashi, Jane | In Memory of Mary Ishibashi |
| Miwa, Bob | In Memory of Esther Miwa |
| Oyakawa, Helen & Michio | Disaster Relief |
| Wada, Mari | In Memory of Nitaya's mother |



Everyone Welcome!

ASHES

Distribution of Ashes from the church parking lot.

Walk-in + Drive-thru

8-11 AM, 1-5 PM

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 5, 2025

Followed by simple service of ashes at 7 pm.

One Great
HOUR
OF SHARING

OFFERING DATE
MARCH 30, 2025

Prayers of the People

With deepest sympathy to the family/ies of:

- Irene M. asked for prayers for husband Mit's sister Naomi B. whose husband passed away last week due to cancer.
- Ivonne P. requested comfort prayers for all the families who lost their loved ones due to the American Airlines and Black Hawk military flight crash.

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.
- Julie T. requested healing prayers for grandmother Rosalba S. Rosalba has recovered from pneumonia but continues with congestive heart failure.
- Carolyn W. requested healing and strength prayers for Evelyn Y. who is feeling weak and tired.
- Yvonne P. now ask for prayers of support as David and Joelle now search for permanent housing to rebuilt their family life.
- Maria M. requested concern and peace prayers for all the immigrants who were deported recently.
- Lisa M. requested comfort prayers for Kai's High School principal Constantino D. who lost his house in the Gardena fire.
- Minako from Japan texted Kiku requesting prayers for all the people who lost their homes due to the wildfires.

Traveling Mercies for:

- Ron and Michi also ask for travel mercy for friend Frank traveling from Scottsdale as well as for firefighters and the families in that area that need care.
- Jay F. requested travel mercy prayers for wife Jan F. who will be traveling to South East Asia for 3 weeks.
- Bien and Mac R. requested travel mercy prayers. They will be traveling for two weeks, 1st week to Japan and 2nd week to the Philippines.

Thanksgiving:

- Toni M. thanks God for healing for her family who all got Covid after Christmas. They are all better now.
- Ron and Michi T. testify that Prayers are powerful. Colton 1-month old baby, had all his tubes removed and is back home. Thank you, Lord!
- Mike and Yvonne P. are grateful to the congregation of MPCC for their prayers and well wishes for a quick recovery from the devastating event in their family life.

March Birthday Celebrations

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 1 | Courtney Kobata |
| 1 | Emiko Kaneoka |
| 1 | Chris Low |
| 1 | Bien Reyes |
| 3 | Kaytlyn Matsuda |
| 3 | Mike Quach |
| 5 | Katrina Reyes |
| 5 | Sets Shinto |
| 8 | Yasuko Hagihara |
| 9 | Grace Sato |
| 14 | Sandra Low |
| 14 | Kyle Yasukochi |
| 14 | Theodore Jang |
| 15 | Nancy Matsuda |
| 16 | Irene Murakami |
| 17 | Jude Camberos |
| 19 | Desiree Martinez |
| 19 | Joy Yogi |
| 20 | Howard Sakamoto |
| 21 | William Okamoto |
| 22 | Roger Ng |
| 23 | Lynne Hanamoto |
| 30 | David Tapia |
| 30 | Ed Kobayashi |
| 30 | Jane Masuda |
| 31 | Pam Hagihara |

NOTE:

For prayer requests in the month of March e-mail Pastor Mitchell at myoung@montebelloucc.org or call (323) 893-2672 by the Friday before the Sunday service to be included in the Pastoral Prayer.

Save Used Stamps Update "Thank You"

A medium size Priority box is al-most filled! Hopefully after the holidays more will come in to fill the box. Thank you to all who have been diligently collecting "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



BAPTISM AND MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

Sunday, March 23
(after worship service)

Contact Pastor Mitchell if you are interested. Thank you!

YOU ARE INVITED



INSTALLATION OF
CONFERENCE MINISTER
REV. RACHAEL PRYOR

SATURDAY, MARCH 29 1:00PM
MONTEBELLO PLYMOUTH

MPCC is hosting the installation of our new Conference Minister!

Let's show our UCC pastors and sister churches our wonderful MPCC hospitality! We need volunteers in parking lot, ushering, kitchen and distributing/selling clergy stoles. Ask Pastor Mitchell or contact the church office to volunteer to help. Thank you!

Altar Flowers Donations 2025

Sign-up sheets for Altar Flower donations for 2025 now available. If you would like to donate flowers in memory of a loved one or to celebrate an event in the life of you family, please sign up in Mori Hall or call the church office to check on available dates. We ask for a \$40 donation to cover the cost of the arrangement prepared by our local florist. Thank you for beautifying our worship space!

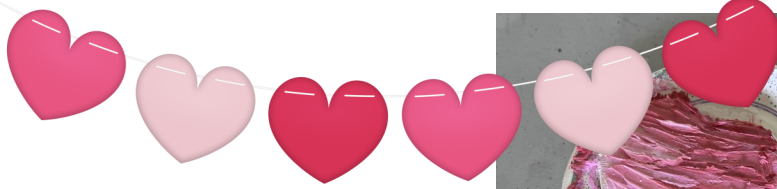


Inochi/PAC Reunion Hana Hou (Encore)!

Saturday, March 22, 2025 at MPCC at 5 pm, potluck



Last Month's Photos



February 9, 2025

Celebrating Valentine's Day



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|----------------------------|---|--|-----|-----|--|
| | | | | | | 1 Choir Practice @10am |
| 2 Holy Communion C.E. Board Meeting @11:30am | 3 *Japanese Class @2pm | 4 Bible Study @10am Fat Tuesday Fundraiser @BJ's Restaurant | 5 Ash Wednesday Service @7pm (Lenten Season begins) | 6 | 7 | 8 Choir Practice @10am Movie Day @2pm |
| 9 Diaconate/Trustees Meeting @11:30am | 10 *Japanese Class @2pm | 11 Bible Study @10am | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 Choir Practice @10am |
| 16 Cookie Walk Council Meeting @11:30am | 17 *Japanese Class @2pm | 18 Bible Study @10am | 19 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm | 20 | 21 | 22 Inochi Reunion @5pm SoCal PAAM Children's Arts Camp |
| 23 Goodnews Due | 24 *Japanese Class @2pm | 25 Bible Study @10am | 26 Goodnews Mailing @9am *Dance Class @7pm | 27 | 28 | 29 Installation of New Conference Minister @1pm |
| 30 Youth Mammoth trip | 31 | <div>NOTE: Events marked with an asterisk (*) are private classes and not church events. Please contact the church office for more information.</div> | | | | |

Coming in
April 2025

2-4 Spring Exploration
13 Palm Sunday/Easter Egg dyeing for Sunday School
17 Maundy Thursday @San Marino UCC
18 Good Friday Service @MPCC
20 Easter Sunday/Easter Egg Hunt

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

