

*"They saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage."* **Matthew 2:11**

### **Magi Are No Kings**

As we prepare our hearts and homes for the celebration of our Savior's birth this Christmas, my thoughts have been drawn to the Gospel account of the visitors who traveled from the East to worship the newborn King. It is a familiar story, often retold with images of three crowned "kings" on camels bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Yet, as we examine Matthew's account in the second chapter, we find the text simply describes them as *magi*—wise sages, likely astrologers or scholars of their time. Ironically, the Gospel account of the magi describes them in stark contrast to the power-hungry, wealth-hoarding empire-approved king of the Roman province of Judea, that was Herod the Great. The *magi* were seekers of truth, people who recognized a divine sign in the heavens and possessed the courage and conviction to follow that light, despite the distance and hardship of the journey. Their visit reminds us that Christ came not just for one people, but as a light to all nations, inviting all who seek him to come and worship.

These wise ones were not part of the established religious elite or political power structure of the day; they were outsiders led by faith. Their pilgrimage is a powerful metaphor for our own spiritual journeys. Like them, we are called to look beyond our immediate circumstances and fix our eyes on the star that leads to Jesus.

This Christmas, let us embrace the spirit of the *magi*:

- **Be Seekers:** May we approach this season with a hunger and thirst for God, eager to find where the God is moving in our lives and our community.
- **Be Worshipers:** May our celebration be an act of genuine adoration, offering the gifts of our time, talent, and resources as expressions of our love for Christ.
- **Be Obedient:** Like the *magi* who "returned to their country by another way" (Matthew 2:12), may our encounter with Jesus this Christmas change the direction of our lives, leading us down paths of greater obedience and faith.

In a world often filled with noise, distraction, and power-hungry, wealth-seeking tyrants in the tradition of King Herod, the quiet determination of these *magi* invites us to refocus on the true miracle of Bethlehem: that God came to us in the humble form of a child, making himself accessible to all who would seek him.

To encourage our emulation of truth-seeking posture of the *magi* this Christmas season, we will continue to include pictures of our families with babies as our Holy family images for our Nativity Pageant, this time with a *magi* themed story. (This also helps avoid the seemingly impossible task of getting all our families with young children to show up on the same Sunday for a live pageant.)

Here's this year's Christmas pageant preview:



*Magi Kyler presenting treasure*



*Adoration of Madonna Jocelyn and Child Amara by Magi Annie and Rumi*

May the light that guided the *magi* illuminate your Christmas season, bringing you and your families profound joy, peace, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Merry Christmas, In Jesus' Kin-dom Kingdom,  
Pastor Mitchell



# 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

**December 2025**

*Volume XLIV No. XII*



## A Message from our Moderator...

*Lori Katayama*

End of year greetings to everyone! It sneaks up on us every year because we become so singularly focused on Christmas and, dare I say, all the trappings that come with it. I pray that you will join us in celebrating not just the Christmas season but Christ himself.

The church continues to prepare for 2026 and there are many ways you can help and be a part of it. There are still several openings on the boards and council that need to be filled by the end of the year. Please consider serving in some capacity because this year will be a pivotal time in the life of our church especially as we prepare to say a very fond farewell to the Young family.

Please contact me or the Members at Large, Ron Yamasaki or Evelyn Yoshimi.

## A Message from our Treasurer...

*Bien Reyes*

### Financial Summary - October 2025

	Month	YTD
<b>Total Income:</b>	\$27,772.69	\$233,108.88
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	\$24,242.84	\$219,623.79
<b>Surplus/(Deficit):</b>	\$3,529.85	\$13,485.09

## Christian Education Board

*Steven Woo, chairperson*

Hi Everyone,

I hope you all had a great thanksgiving with family and friends. For December the CE board will host a matinee movie showing at the church on December 13th at 11AM with a light lunch and afterwards, if others would like to join our Christmas carolers spread some holiday cheers to our inbound members. We will be showing "I Still Believe" which is about the true story of Christian singer Jeremy Camp. Also, Our Christmas pageant will be on December 14th. Join us for another rendition of the Christmas

## Worship Schedule

### December 7

Holy Communion  
2nd Sunday in Advent  
"A Branch Shall Grow"  
Isaiah 11:1-10

### December 14

3rd Sunday in Advent  
Christmas Pageant  
Stewardship Sunday  
"Heartbeat of Justice"  
Isaiah 35:1-10

### December 21

4th Sunday in Advent  
"God With Us"  
Isaiah 7:10-16

### December 24

Christmas Eve Service  
"From This Time  
Onward"  
Isaiah 9:2-7

### December 28

"In God's Love"  
Isaiah 63:7-9

story and Pastor Mitchell's last Christmas pageant!

**Diaconate Board**  
*Lynne Hanamoto*

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families. Last year, over 1,800 congregations joined together to secure the physical, financial, and spiritual health of those engaged in the life of the Church.

This year's Christmas Fund theme is "When they saw the star, they were filled with joy" from Matthew 2:10, and our church will be collecting this offering during the month of December.

Receiving the Christmas Fund this year ensures more ministers, church workers, and their families receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need. The theme for the UCC 2025 Christmas Fund is "When they saw the star, they were filled with joy" from Matthew 2:10. Thank you to our community for your continued support!

Join us as we celebrate the season with our Poinsettias 2025! You may pay for a beautiful poinsettia to help decorate the sanctuary for the holidays. Each poinsettia is \$25.00 and after they decorate our Sanctuary, they will be given to homebound people who are part of our church community and we will take them to people when they go Christmas Caroling. Please sign up with your name and give your payment to Diaconate Chair Nitaya Young.

Let's fill our church with love, remembrance, and the beauty of Christmas!

**Wednesday Group**  
*Art Hanamoto*

**10/22/2025** Terry H., Suzy H., Kiku K., Jean K., Ed Y., Alice H., Ernie A., Lynne H., and Pastor Mitchell folded, labeled and mailed the Good News publication.

Additionally, Frank E. (electrician), Christine K., Ernie A., Nitaya Y., and Art H. 1) installed an illuminated exit sign in the sanctuary, 2) fixed a light in the parsonage's kitchen, 3) adjusted the outdoor sprinkler timer and pulled weeds from Angel lot, 4) pulled weeds from the flower base next to the entrance of the outer restroom, 5) trimmed plants along the outside office alley, and 6) cleaned and painted the shed located next to the trash bin.

**10/29/2025** Alice H., Christine K., Nitaya Y. and Art H. 1) cut up rotten wood pallets and threw them in the trash bin, 2) painted a second coat of paint on the Ad-

vent candle table, 3) swept and picked up trash in the Greenwood parking lot parkway, 4) maintained the dirt berms surrounding the trees in the Angel lot, 5) dug out the dirt clogging up the garden pipe draining water from Angel lot into the Greenwood parking lot and put ground cover around it to help prevent it from clogging, 6) replaced two hose reel connectors attached to the garden hose reels, 7) organized items in the kitchen cabinets and draws, and 8) washed and cleaned the mop heads used when waxing the floor in Mori Hall during church clean up.

**11/5/2025** Alice H., Ernie A., Lynne H., Nitaya Y., and Art H. 1) organized items in the kitchen cabinets and drawers, 2) cleaned and cleared items in the refrigerators and freezer in Mori Hall, 3) sorted and hung up the nativity costumes in preparation for children nativity photo session, 4) watered the plants in the Los Angeles and Greenwood parking lots, 5) pulled weeds from the flower base next to the entrance of the outer restroom, 6) pulled weeds and maintained the berms surrounding trees in Angel lot, and 7) trimmed and adjusted the wood planks used as flooring in the shed by the trash bin,

**11/12/2025** Pastor Mitchell, Nitaya Y., Christine K., Lynne H. and Art H. 1) propagated calamansi trees, 2) cleaned the freezer located by the Mori Hall hallway, 3) planted three red tea leaf plants in Angel lot, 4) removed overgrown succulents in Angel lot, 5) planted ground cover in Angel lot and 6) attempted to stop the rainwater in Angel lot from carrying dirt into the Greenwood parking lot. This is being done to prevent dirt from spreading onto the Mori Hall lanai during a rainstorm.



**BE THE CHURCH! BE INVOLVED!**

The Diaconate Board is seeking volunteers for **lay-readers, ushers, & greeters**. Please contact diaconatechairperson@montebelloucc.org for more info.

Are you a techie? You could join the **AV Team** rotation. Contact Steven Woo if you are interested.

And more...

There's a seat waiting for you! A seat on a MPCC board or committee that is. Members of the Nominating Committee are searching for volunteers to fill the seats on the boards and committees listed below beginning of December 2025. If you are interested please contact the church office.

**Church Council**– The Council is the governing board of the church. It will work with the Pastor to promote the church's mission within the community. The Coun-

cil will recommend to the congregation any adjustments and improvements concerning church policies and administration.

*Open Position - Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, & Historian*

**Christian Education Board**—is the coordinating body for educational programs, the fellowship groups and the social activities of the church.

*Open Position - 1 (1 year) , 3 (2 years), & Sunday School Superintendent*

**Diaconate Board**—advises and counsel the church's spiritual welfare, worship services, and other areas related to the church and community.

*(Open Position - 1 (1 year) & 3 (2 years)*

**Board of Trustees**—will manage the financial and business affairs of the church and maintain its property.

*Open Position - 2 (1 year)*

## How We Grow

### MPCC's General Fund

The General Fund takes care of the basic day-to-day operations of our church as well as furthering the mission of our church as a whole. Annual pledges (tithes) help the trustees estimate how to distribute and budget our expenses on a monthly and yearly basis. Weekly offerings and special offerings also contribute to the General Fund unless otherwise indicated. Please contact the trustees if you wish to receive a pre-printed box set of offering envelopes.

### Building Fund

MPCC's Building Fund is separate from the church's General Fund. Contributions to the fund must be indicated on your offering envelope or in the check memo area. If you have any questions about your pledge please contact Mac Reyes.

### Church Family Fund

The Church Family Fund assists families known to our church who are in dire need of assistance. Funds are allocated by committee. If you are able, please donate to the fund.

### Youth Mission Fund & Summer Ex Fund

Donations to the Youth Mission Fund will be used to send our youth on trips to serve abroad and locally. The Summer Ex Fund provides scholarships for families who are not able to cover the registration fees. Both are separate from MPCC's General Fund and checks should be written separate from your regular offering.

## **Special Offerings and Gifts**

Agcaoili, Ernie	In Memory of Sets Shinto, Bob Miwa & Ron Tanimoto
Arakaki, Dean & Lisa	In Memory of Bob Miwa & Mits Murakami
Bender Family	In Memory of Ron Tanimoto
Castanares, Anna Marie	Special Offering
Hagihara, Yasuko	In Memory of Ron Tanimoto, Alyce Fujimoto, Bob Miwa, & Sets Shinto
Hamabe, Ken & Meg	In Memory of Bob Miwa
Kawamoto, Kiko	In Memory of Sets Shinto, Bob Miwa, & Ron Tanimoto
Low, Milton	In Memory of Bob Miwa
Masuda, Jane	In Memory of Ron Tanimoto & Carol Koshi
Mekata, Minnie	In Memory of Alyce Fujimoto, Sets Shinto, Bob Miwa, & Ron Tanimoto
Murakami, Irene	In Memory of Mits Murakami, Bob Miwa, & Ron Tanimoto
Tao, Tricia	In Memory of Bob Miwa, Ron Tanimoto, Alyce Fujimoto, Carol Koshi, & Sets Shinto
Tsunekawa, Glenn	In Memory of Bob Miwa & Sets Shinto
Wada Family	For Mari's 93rd Birthday
Wada, Mari	In Memory of Ron Tanimoto
Watanabe, Carolyn	In Memory of Sets Shinto
Yasuda, Ed	In Memory of Bob Miwa & Ron Tanimoto

## Prayers of the People

### With deepest sympathy to the family/ies of:

- Yvonne P.'s cousin Carol Ann S. whose husband Tony passed on Thursday.
- Jay F.'s cousin's husband, Wade W. passed away.
- MPCC lift up prayers of comfort for the family of Betty M. age 98 who passed away recently.

### 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.
- Wes and Mammie O. request prayers for Mamie's medical tests to go well and for brother-in-law, Golfredo, who will be having surgery.
- Maria M. request prayers of mercy, comfort, and concern for Jorge who is going through a family tragedy and for Daniel who is in the hospital with intracranial hemorrhage.
- Ida G. request prayers of healing for Benneth (daughter-in-law in Philippines).
- Christine K.'s prayers of healing for Grace S. who had eye surgery in October 15th. Grace is in recovery and hopes to be better soon. Prayers of healing for Theresa G. (95 yrs) as she recovers from an infection. She was hospitalized for a few days and now recovering at home.
- Sharon I. and the Shinto family asks for prayers for her brother Paul who was diagnosed with colon cancer. He had surgery last week and is recovering.
- Lori K.'s prayers for our good friend Robert H. who is having eye surgery on November 11th and for grandson Enzo who is also having eye surgery on November 13th.
- Ivonne P.'s prayers for Chris (Ivonne's Tai Chi teacher). Chris had heart surgery last Friday. Also prayers on behalf of Cinde D. who is taking care of her 97-year stepfather Mel M. and her youngest daughter Michelle.
- Melody T.'s prayers for friend Edna C. from her bible study group who recovers from a stroke
- Kiku Y.'s prayers for Albert L. and family. They are going through housing insecurity. Also, prayers of healing for sister-in-law Lita who has pain in arm and shoulder.
- Steven W.'s prayers of comfort for brother Brad and wife Cindy. Cindy had a miscarriage.
- Jan F.'s prayers for her friend Rosemary who has a brother-in-law that has a cancer that keeps coming back.
- Frank M. thanks everybody for their prayers and also thank you to all those who served in the U.S. military.
- Prayers for sensei Junko A. from Japanese class for a successful surgery and quick recovery.

### Traveling Mercies for:

- Joe P. request safe travel for Rose who will be traveling to Colorado for 3 months.
- Carolyn W. asks for God's travel mercy for granddaughter Ashley coming home for the Thanksgiving break.
- Wes and Mammie O. who will be traveling to Hawaii.

### Thanksgiving:

- Yvonne and Mike P.'s prayers of thanksgiving on behalf of their son's family as David and Joelle celebrate 24 years of marriage and a new home.
- Lori K.'s thanksgiving prayer for her neighbors, the Heradas, who will go to the Sakura gardens in November.
- Carolyn W.'s thanksgiving prayer for Jessie E. who is back after a successful surgery.

## December Birthday Celebrations

1	Margaret Endo
1	Jay Fukushima
2	Joan Pablico
2	BJ Woo
3	Janet Iwata
3	Aimee Tsunekawa
4	Nancy Nitta
6	Jasmine Tapia
9	Ashley Pablico
10	Ana Ferrer-Jenkins
11	Glenn Hino
13	Ken Hamabe
13	Melissa Shimizu
18	Evelyn Yoshimi
21	Justin Iwata
21	Haru Yoshitake
22	Carol Fujita
23	Kyle Matsuda
23	Ken Yogi
27	Ron Nitta
28	Lisa Endo
28	Alex Martinez



### Save Used Stamps

*With the Holidays approaching, you may receive more communication through the mail. SAVE those stamps (even pre-sorted stamps are accepted)!*

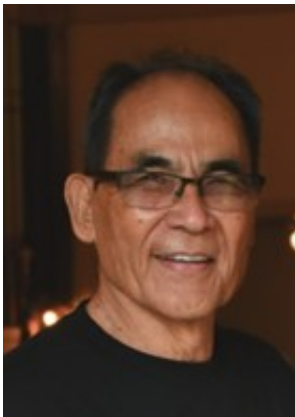
*I will cut them for you and please leave at least 1/8 inches on the edges.*

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

*Our goal at MPCC is to help the church, community, and other nations. With other UCC churches, collecting "used stamps" we can make a difference! Thank you - Evelyn Y.*



### From Hawaii Conference UCC "Coconut Wireless"



Tom Fujita Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award from PSR.

Tom Fujita, retired pastor who served several churches in Hawai'i, has been awarded a 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in Berkeley, CA. The award was presented at the opening night of the Earl Lecture Series on Friday, October 17, at PSR.

After receiving his Master of Divinity in 1985 from PSR, Tom served as the settled minister of Līhu'e Christian Church on Kaua'i. He then returned to California to become the Senior Pastor of Ocean View UCC in San Diego before moving to back to Hawai'i to serve as the Senior Pastor of Nu'uuanu Congregational Church, from where he retired in 2006. He went on to serve as interim minister for several other churches in the Hawai'i Conference. He and his wife, Sachi, moved back to Southern California earlier this year.

### End of the Year Fundraiser!

**December 7, 2025**

**Come Support MPCC's**

**End of the Year Fundraiser**

**Homemade treats and more!**





*Last Month's Photos*




**October 25, 2025  
Annual Halloween Party**



**November 2, 2025  
Celebrated Nitaya's Birthday**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Bible Study @10am	3 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm-9pm	4	5	6 Christmas Caroling
7 Holy Communion 2nd Sunday in Advent C.E. Board Meeting @11:30am	8	9 Bible Study @10am	10 Wednesday Group @8am	11	12	13 Christmas Caroling Movie Day @11am
14 3rd Sunday in Advent Christmas Pageant Trustees/Diaconate Board Meeting	15	16 Bible Study @10am	17 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm-9pm	18	19	20 Choir Practice @10am Youth Christmas Party @4pm
21 4th Sunday in Advent Council Meeting @11:30 Goodnews Due	22	23 Bible Study @10am	24 Goodnews Mailing @9am Christmas Eve Service @7pm	25 Christmas Caroling @Keiro 	26 Winter Ex Staff Training	27 Choir Practice @10am
28	29	30 Bible Study @10am <i>Winter Exploration</i>	31 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm-9pm <i>Winter Exploration</i>			

Coming in January 2025

2	Last day for Winter Ex Planning Meeting
3	Mochitsuki
4	Installation of Officers and Board Members
11	Annual Congregational Meeting
25	

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](http://www.youtube.com/mpccucc))

\*Contact our Church Office for more info

