



"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good." **Romans 12:9**

Black History, Lent, and Seeing Good

Grace and peace to you in the name of the One who walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death. Today, we are at a profound, intersecting moment—the unfolding aftermath of a tragic injustice in our nation, the start of Black History Month, and the quiet beginning of the Lenten season. It is a time that calls us to deep reflection, honest lament, and renewed courageous action.

We hold in our prayers the family and loved ones of Renee Nicole Good, a mother, poet, and advocate who was shot and killed by a federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer in Minneapolis on January 7, 2026. Renee was known as a woman of deep faith and compassion, remembered by her family as an "agent of peace" who cared for others throughout her life. She was acting as a community observer, standing in solidarity with neighbors, when she was killed. Her death has sparked national outcry, highlighting ongoing, urgent questions about justice, human dignity, and the use of force in our communities.

It is particularly poignant that we

bring her name into our consciousness during Black History Month. Black history is not just about the past; it is a living, breathing, and sometimes painful present. Renee's story reminds us that the fight for justice, equality, and the protection of vulnerable neighbors is continuous. Her life stands within the lineage of Christian witness, summoning us to be present with the oppressed, not merely in prayer but with our actions.

So, as a community of faith, we are called to:

Lament: We mourn the loss of a life dedicated to kindness.

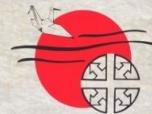
Stand for Justice: We honor the memory of all who have questioned structures that protect power at the expense of the vulnerable, who have demanded accountability, and who have striven for a world where all are safe.

Celebrate the "Good": We are encouraged to hold fast to what is good—to compassion, peace, and love—even in the face of fear and division.

Let us use this Black History Month to look deeper into the stories of our neighbors, to stand against state violence, and to work for a "Beloved Community" where everyone is valued.

February 2026

Volume XLV No. II



May the legacy of Renee Good inspire us to live with compassion, and may we continue to build a world where all come home safe to the people we love.

In solidarity and faith,

Pastor Mitchell

Worship Schedule

February 1

Holy Communion
JRV Offering
"What is Good"
Micah 6:1-8

February 8

"Stretched Them Out"
Isaiah 58:1-12

February 15

"Wait"
Exodus 24:12-18

February 18

Ash Wednesday
"Break Forth"
Isaiah 58:1-12

February 22

Bento Fundraiser
"Led by the Spirit...Backed by the Word"
Matthew 4:1-11

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

For those of you who celebrate the Lunar New Year, this year beginning on February 17th, I'm sure you're excited to know that this will be the year of the Fire Horse. And for people like me who don't typically observe it, I'm willing to find any excuse to find some joy and optimism in what has been a very dark year. Our knowledgeable friend, Google, describes it this way:

"2026 is the rare Year of the Fire Horse, the most dynamic combination in the 60-year Chinese zodiac cycle, bringing intense energy, transformation, freedom, and bold action, following the introspective Snake year. This auspicious yet powerful period favors rapid progress, innovation, and major changes, amplifying the Horse's traits of strength and adventure with Fire's passion and drive, encouraging people to break old patterns and move forward with courage and enthusiasm."

As you all know by now, Pastor Mitchell will be retiring this year at the end of July. There will be many changes coming and the church council is aware that many of you are nervous and concerned about the future of our church. I have long felt that change is a good thing; that doesn't mean that it is an easy thing though. Just as the description of the Lunar New Year above, we will need to "break old patterns and move forward with courage and enthusiasm."

I ask everyone, however, to focus on this first task: Celebrate the continuity, love, and leadership that Pastor Mitchell has provided for the last 20+ years. We have approximately 26 weeks with the Young family. Please participate, show up, give back, and show your support as they prepare to enter a time of retirement. You will soon hear of plans for a celebration as well as plans to coordinate a time of transition. Please stay tuned.

As I'm writing, we have not yet chosen an annual theme for our church this year. I'm sure that it will be a theme that will express our hopes for the entire year, both during the next seven months and after the Young family returns to Hawaii. In reference to the year of the Fire Horse – let's also look forward to progress, innovation, and major changes. In reference to the holy scriptures: "For everything there is a season and a time for every

matter under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1 Amen.

Christian Education Board*Steven Woo, chairperson*

Happy New Year! We started our new year with our usual Mochitsuki making. We had such a great turnout with lots of kids wanting to participate. Thank you to the C.E. board and everyone who volunteered to help, especially the Low family for making the soup, Denise Wada, and Steve and Naomi Furogawa for their mochi cookers & cutters. We sold extra mochi and the funds will help cover for our youth and young adult joining the PAAM (Pacific Asian American Ministries) convocation in June.

A Message from our Treasurer...*Bien Reyes***Financial Summary - December 2025**

	Month	YTD
Total Income:	\$29,704.00	\$284,608.60
Total Expenses:	\$27,694.33	\$268,003.22
Surplus/(Deficit):	\$2,009.67	\$16,605.38

Wednesday Group*Art Hanamoto*

12/23/2025 Terry H., Suzy H., Kiku K., Jean K., Ed Y., Alice H., Ernie A, June Y., Lynne H., and Pastor Mitchell folded, labeled, and mailed the Good News publication.

1/7/2026 Christine K., Alice H., Nitaya Y., and Pastor Mitchell 1) cleaned behind the storage container, 2) took down and put away the Christmas tree, arch, ornaments and lights, and 3) changed the paraments and banners.

1/14/2026 Ernie A., Alice H., Nitaya Y., Lynne

H., and Art H. 1) cut down two guava trees and a mulberry tree in the parsonage back yard and 2) arranged and organized items in the kitchen drawers and cabinets.

Thanksgiving Donation 2025

Ernie Agcaoili	Ron & Nancy Nitta
Chris Chun	David & Kay Osorio
Yasuko Hagihara	Dean & Karen Petersen
Ken & Meg Hamabe	Bien & Mac Reyes
Art & Lynne Hanamoto	Edith Sakamoto
Alice Higashi	Chris & Grace Sato
Glenn & Tomoko Hino	Les & Judy Shima
Terry & Suzy Hino	Ann Mori & Peter Shimizu
Janet Iwata	Tricia Tao
David & Lori Katayama	Glenn Tsunekawa
Kiko Kawamoto	Carolyn Watanabe
Kenzo & Mari Katsura	Darrell & Karen Yasukochi
Kiku Kobashigawa	Ken & Joy Yogi
Jean Kobata	Evelyn Yoshimi
Jane Kubota	Pastor Mitchell & Nitaya
Jane Masuda	Young
Tak Matsuno	
Minnie Mekata	
Irene Murakami	

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.

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.

Special Offerings and Gifts

Chun, Chris	In Memory of Sets S., Carol K., & Ron T.
Hino, Terry & Suzy	In Memory of Bob M. & Wade W.
Iwata, Janet	Music Ministry
Mekata, Minnie	In Memory of Toshiye Shintaku
Shimizu, Peter & Ann Mori	In Memory of Giichiro Joe M.
Tao, Tricia	In Memory of Mits M. & Howard S.
Yoshida, Beverly	In Memory of Ray Y. & Betty F.
Yoshimi, Evelyn	Holiday Season, Mochitsuki, & Family Fund

Jesus Reigns Victoriously Church Child Support Offering February 1, 2025

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.



**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**
a just world for all

Prayers of the People**With deepest sympathy to the family/families of:**

- Jim T. requests prayers of sympathy for Tad A. and family in the passing of his wife Marsha.
- Carolyn W.'s prayers for neighbor and friend, Alice H. who passed away on January 8th and prayers of comfort and strength for friend's husband, Hank, and son, Kevin.
- Nitaya Y. requested prayers for friend Lisa U. who lost her son Mitchell at the age of 26 years old.

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.
- Jennie W.'s sister Liang who's dealing with emotional stress. Pray for her peace and wisdom to handle her issues everyday.
- Jan and Jay F. asks for prayers for friend Donna who is having health issues. Also, prayers for Jay's cousin's daughter, Brenna D., who fell and has a swollen ankle.
- Desiree M. lifts up prayers for family and friends during the holidays and coming year. Also, congratulations to Brittany for her Master's degree in nursing education.
- Rosa R. has been hospitalized since her recent fall. However, Rosa is slowly recovering at home and asks for prayers for a speedy recovery.
- Lori K. requested prayers of healing for Kimiko H. who fell at Sakura Gardens and spent one night at USC Medical Center.
- Lisa M. requested prayers for uncle Ralph (father's brother) whose cancer has spread.
- Pastor Ernie R. requested prayers for complete recovery for Pastor Mitchell.
- June F. who is hospitalized because of breathing problems.
- Maria M. requested prayers of healing and concern for Juan M. (brother-in-law) who is losing his eye vision.
- Julie T. requested healing prayers for family who are recovering from the flu.
- Annie Y. requested prayers for granddaughter Rumi who has the flu.

Thanksgiving:

- Tony M. gives thanksgiving for being able to light the advent candles with her family. She also asks prayers for everyone and thanksgiving for Christmas baked goods and dessert from church families. She also thanks the deacon's note for remembering her and her family in prayer. Lastly, thanksgiving for daughter Drina who is doing much better
- Rev. Mitch and Helen's daughter Liz give thanks that her breast cancer was diagnosed very early. With treatment, she will get to life as normal.
- Maria M. requested thanksgiving prayers for daughter Alexandra M. who is turning 18 years old. Maria asked for health and guidance prayers for her.

Traveling Mercies:

- Carolyn W.'s son, Mark, who will be flying to Los Angeles from Japan to spend the holidays with family and friends. Also, for granddaughter, Ashley, as she flies home from school for winter break, and Ashley and 5 friends will be flying to Japan on January 4th and returning on January 17th.
- Joe P. for Rose who will be traveling from Colorado to Los Angeles.
- Yvonne and Mike P. for their children and grandchildren as they return to their respective abodes in Covina, San Leandro, Santa Cruz, North Carolina, and Washington DC.
- Lori K. for Dani, Enzo, Nami, and Dave who are flying from San Antonio but flights were delayed.
- Bien and Mac R. will be traveling to the Philippines from December 30th to January 17th, 2026.
- Rosa R. for Stevie and her family as they fly back to Hawaii.

NOTE:

For prayer requests in the month of February 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.

**February
Birthday
Celebrations**

1	Patsy Matsuda
1	Lisa Tanaka
2	Cassandra-Schwamborn
4	Aubrey Pablico
8	Mamie Okamoto
9	Vicki Iwata
10	Harper Ng
11	Kristyn Lee
12	Anakin Ferrer- Jenkins
13	Andie Cardenas
13	Jason Hino
15	Carolyn Barragan
17	Andrea Phillips
18	Carmen Alimboyao
19	Heather Guerrero
20	Glen Tsunekawa
22	Brandon Iwata
23	Eileen Purisima
24	Janelle Tapia
25	Laura Sakamoto
25	Kiko Kawamoto
26	Beverly Yoshida
26	Kristin Iwata
26	Jean Kobata

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

Ladies' Tea

I am forming a committee to organize the Ladies' Tea on Saturday, April 25th. The tea falls under the umbrella of the Farewell Committee and therefore is part of our plans to celebrate the Young family. If you would like to help, please contact Lori Katayama for more information.



Bento Fundraiser February 22, 2026

Pre-order your bento to Christine Kizuka kamnha6@yahoo.com and pick it up on Sunday, February 22. \$25 Bento with goodie bag. Funds will go towards our General Fund. Last day to pre-order Feb. 15.

Bento includes: Cod, Chicken Teriyaki, Kinpira Gobo, Tamago yaki, Vegetable nimono, Futomaki, & Inari sushi (*subject to change*)



Everyone Welcome!

ASHES

Distribution of Ashes from the church parking lot.

Walk-in + Drive-thru

8-11 AM, 1-5 PM

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

Followed by simple service of ashes at 7 pm.

FAT TUESDAY
FUNDRAISER AT
BJ'S RESTAURANT IN
MONTEBELLO

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Fundraiser will help fund our Youth/Young Adult joining the PAAM Convocation this June
**bring attached flyer*

Last Month's Photos



January 3, 2026

Planning Meeting for Church Officers & Boards. We still have open positions to fill the boards.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Holy Communion C.E. Board Meeting @11:30am JRV Offering	2 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	3 Bible Study @10am	4 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	5	6	7 Choir Practice @10am
8 Trustees/Diaconate Board Meeting @11:30am	9 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	10 Bible Study @10am	11 Wednesday Group @8am *Jets/Jetts Meeting @7pm	12	13	14 Choir Practice @10am
15 Council Meeting @11:30am Goodnews Articles due	16 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	17 Fat Tuesday Fundraiser @BJ's Restaurant Montebello Bible Study @10am	18 Ash Distribution 8-11am & 1-5pm Goodnews Mailing @9am Ash Wednesday Service @7pm	19	20	21 Choir Practice @10am
22 H.S./College Fellowship Bento Fundraiser	23 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	24 Bible Study @10am	25 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	26	27	28 Choir Practice @10am

**Coming in
March
2026**

15 **One Great Hour of Sharing Offering**
 Cookie Walk Fundraiser
 Palm Sunday
 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

