President’s Message

Hello All,

Once again, I am at the helm of the WGBC. But this time I am sharing the position with Holly Pauls as co-president. She has been a long-time board member with many of these years as board secretary. She is very familiar with temple activities and nuances. If you have any concerns, gripes or questions concerning the temple, don’t hesitate to share them with Holly! Yes, you may contact me, also. But I see Holly as the president, and I am the “co”.

Holly [916 270-5312] is also our resident medical nurse who we turn to with medical questions. During this urgent time with COVID-19, she has been able to filter some of the information and misinformation being disseminated. For now, we are trying to keep scheduled temple activities and services. However, these are all subject to change as more information and directives are issued. The health and safety of the members and community are our first priorities. We will try to post the latest information on the church website. The primary method of sharing the updates will be by Christy Ishizuka sending out emails to those she has on the newsletter list.

We have been encouraging members to receive the newsletter digitally and many of you have switched from the mailed copies. Please consider receiving the newsletter by email, that way we have your email address to also update you on the latest important temple information, such as schedule changes. You can do so by sending your email address to 

walnutgrovebuddhistchurch@gmail.com.

The government is now recommending people stay isolated from each other as much as possible to hinder the spread of this contagious virus. As much as we value the religious and social activities at the Walnut Grove Buddhist Church, we will postpone or cancel these events in the near term.

I am writing this message a week before printing so I may not be giving the most current temple information on this very fluid situation. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for the latest news. We will also be emailing any schedule changes that do not appear in the newsletter to those we have email addresses.

Be safe. Stay healthy. Check in on your elderly family members, friends and neighbors. Being in isolation doesn’t mean we need to be entirely alone or lonely. We will eventually make it through this unprecedented event together. Namu Amida Butsu.

Gassho,
Craig Nakahara
CANCELLATIONS

We deeply regret having to cancel the following events at the Walnut Grove Buddhist Church:

April 5, 2020 BWA Meeting. This meeting was canceled previous to the recent health concerns, so this is just a reminder.

April 5, 2020 Shotsuki Service. We are including the Shotsuki List in this newsletter, and encourage you as mourner, and anytime, to take a moment to do your own service at your personal butsudan. Don’t have one? See article included in this publication for some information.

April 11 Board Meeting. The board co-presidents will be in contact with members of the board as needed during this time.

April 12 Hanamatsuri Service. We are including donation envelopes, but please know that the church understands the possible economic hardships some may be facing. Give if you can.

April Dharma Study As with all other events, the group will cancel all meeting until further notice. Please see the note from our dharma study superintendent Sharon Yokoi.

The temple building and associated building are closed to the general membership, excepting certain board members with duties deemed essential by that board.

Cancellations and closures are until further notice. We all hope it is sooner than later, but we will follow guidelines suggested and mandated by the state and nation for the health of our membership and community. We have also included a letter from the Bishop and the President of the Buddhist Churches of America, feeling that the information is so vital that we cannot be reminded too many times the importance of keeping ourselves and everyone safe.
AUXILIARY CHURCH REPORTS

CHURCH BOARD
This meeting occurred before the cancellations and closures due to the COVID-19 were known. Therefore, this report will consist of items that have not since been changed, for the sake of not adding to any confusion to the status of events and decisions made prior to the current health situation.

A board meeting was held on March 14, 2020 at 10 AM at the WGBC, Holly Pauls presiding. Duties and dates of the substituting ministers were discussed. A report on the Dharma Study workshops was made. They were very successful in attendance and substance. A new carpet was installed in the front entrance landing by Tom Shinmoto, with the help of Ken and grandson Sano and Gerald Sakai. An abbreviated report on the Music Festival was given. Minister’s orei and temple compensation for Reverend Motoyoshi and Stockton Buddhist Church were reported. Bazaar plans were discussed, including entertainment and raffle tickets.

WALNUT GROVE BUDDHIST WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION

The women of the WGBWA are a feisty group that is difficult to hold down. I know that you want to get out and be of help to those in need. Please, if you are older, remember the best thing you can do is stay home. If you need supplies, please call on someone younger to bring you what you need. If you are lonely, call someone. We will get through this, together in spirit. Please feel free to call me for anything you need. If I can’t help, I’ll find someone who can.

Christy Ishizuka, WGBWA President, 916 796-5765

WALNUT GROVE DHARMA STUDY

For those of us now sheltered in our homes, the situation might feel like a scene out of a science fiction story. Unfortunately, this is our new reality. And it’s being defined by SARS-COV-2 which causes COVID-19.

This new reality has helped me to better understand all those things for which I am grateful. Hugs, haircuts, lunches with friends, playing with grandchildren, church services, adult study, family dinners...are all things I took for granted and are all now put on hold. All those things are no longer within my grasp for the near future. So, in the meantime I will be grateful that I had all of those things in my life and will look forward to a time when they will again be my reality. So, during this time, why not take a few minutes and think about all those things you are grateful for.

Sharon Yokoi, WGDS Superintendent
Careful Considerations for Ministers and Temples in Dealing with the Coronavirus

Introduction

The recent Coronavirus has affected all of us as human beings and more specifically as ministers and members of our churches and temples. Services, fundraisers, and organizational activities and events have been put on hold. In light of this threat to our health and well-being, certain precautions, considerations, changes must be made at our churches and temples.

Temple closures

The majority of the BCA churches and temples have cancelled their services, activities, and meetings. Some have cancelled major fundraisers that were scheduled. If your temple is still having services because you fall under the “50 or less” number for services, you still might want to consider cancelling services and activities.

Office closures

Some temples have also closed their offices to protect office employees, ministers, and the general Sangha. Phone calls should be directed to an office person to their cell or private number.

Funerals and memorial services

Recent CDC directives have indicated gatherings of more than 50 are discouraged. Today, (March 16), the White House statement was “gatherings of more than 10 are discouraged.” Obviously, we cannot cancel funeral services all together, but for the time being, if a funeral is not going to be postponed, then it must be limited to small, private funerals of immediate family only. If funerals are conducted, the following is recommended procedure:

- No handshaking or hugging the family.
- No oshoko. (Having people all put their hands into the same incense container is a risk.) Instead, have people come to the front, gasho, and bow to the casket or urn.
- Encourage family members present to sit spread apart, rather than next to each other.
- No otoki after the service.
- Wipe the pews with disinfectant wipes before and after the service, as well as the lobby door handles, etc.

Makuragyo services

At this time, given the circumstances, it is not safe for a minister to go to a hospital to conduct a makuragyo service. Families and temple leaders must understand the risk involved to the minister and be willing to forego the makuragyo at this time, or have it conducted in a private room at the funeral home the next day.

Memorial services [next page]
Preferable to postpone. If the family decides to hold the service, then it must be limited to a small number of people. Same as funerals, wipe pews before and after service. Perhaps eliminate oshoko at memorial services or do as funerals and have family come forward, gassho and bow.

**Weddings**

1. Only very small, private weddings would be acceptable at this time.

2. Weddings at the church would require the same procedure of wiping the pews before and after, etc.

**Interacting with people now, and once services begin again.**

1. Social distancing should be practiced. Handshakes should be avoided. Hugging should be avoided. Standing close to someone to talk should be avoided.

2. If anyone has a cold or the flu, they should stay home.

3. Wash your hands often, as has been encouraged. Use disinfectant wipes for the temple door handles, office door handles, tables, desks, etc. that you or others use.

**What can we do to help our Sangha with the fear, tension, and anxiety of this situation?**

1. Many temples and ministers are recording their Dharma talks and posting them on Facebook or on YouTube. This should be encouraged. The BCA will be compiling a list of the temples and ministers creating such videos/live streaming/etc., and will make that available to all temples.

2. Since ministers will not be working in the office and available for in person meetings, they can make ourselves available to “chat or talk” with members on the phone by facetime or audio. Designated times can be created, like “office hours” where members can feel free to talk to their minister if they wish to be counseled or just to have some human connection through this difficult time.

3. Ministers can write more essays or Dharma talks and share them by email or by the use of blogs.

4. “Chat rooms” or Dharma discussions can be created through the internet, or book club discussions can be held that way.

5. Reading and study of the Dharma can be encouraged at this time, since we are all more confined to our homes.

In Gassho,

Rev. Kodo Umezu Kent Matsuda
Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America President of the BCA
Obutsudan, or Home Altar

Here are some excerpts from the book “JODO SHINSHU A GUIDE”, pages 124-129

“For all Buddhists, the butsudan, or Family Alter, holds a deep spiritual meaning...
In the Hongwanji tradition there is no hard and fast rule which dictates the type of altar that is correct for use in the home.
First and foremost, the reason for having a butsudan is to enable people to awaken their spirituality consciousness.
The altar’s central image of reverence is Amida Buddha, represented by a scroll or card with the Name or picture image, or a statue.
...adornments are essentially only symbols or external emblems of the Truth of the Buddha Dharma.
...the placement of received gifts, or the presentation of cooked rice (buppan) and other foods...are used as a symbolic means for [practitioners] to acknowledge Amida’s compassion to all life.
The basic adornments for the alter are candles, flowers, and incense.
The light of the candle...represents the dispelling of the darkness...
Cut flowers are used to represent the impermanence of life...Although we place them in water and they continue to live for some time, they are nevertheless dying. However, we are able to appreciate their beauty and vibrancy.
...incense is a symbol of purification...associated with cleanliness...reminds us of the transiency of all existence.
...[the butsudan] placed in a location that is central and easily accessible to all members of the family...flowers are always fresh, and that it is always dust-free and uncluttered.
Photographs [of departed loved ones] may be placed within a close proximity
...observances...may be in the form of Gassho, recitation of the Nembutsu, or chanting...most important is that the observance be an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving for the benevolence of the Buddha.”
Along with doing daily observances at your home altar, we are sharing this information from the BCA, who has compiled a link of temples that are live-streaming services and/or have recorded temple services and dharma talks. The Walnut Grove Buddhist Church hopes that it presents opportunities for your continuing pursuit of the dharma.

Links to Live-Streaming and Recorded Temple Services & Dharma Talks

Berkeley Buddhist Temple
Ekoji Buddhist Temple
Fresno Buddhist Temple (Twitter)
Midwest Buddhist Temple
Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple
Mountain View Buddhist Temple
New York Buddhist Church (YouTube Channel)
Oakland Buddhist Temple (YouTube Channel)
Orange County Buddhist Church (Online School: Everyday Buddhist)
Orange County Buddhist Church (Homepage)
Orange County Buddhist Church (YouTube Channel)
Orange County Buddhist Church (Podcast)
Oregon Buddhist Temple (YouTube Channel)
Buddhist Church of Sacramento (YouTube Channel)
Salt Lake Buddhist Temple (Facebook page)
Buddhist Temple of San Diego (YouTube Channel)
Buddhist Church of San Francisco (YouTube Channel)
San Mateo Buddhist Temple
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple (YouTube Channel)
Tacoma Buddhist Temple (YouTube Channel)
Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple
Watsonville
APRIL SHOTSUKI
joyous monthly memorial

Deceased

Shigeko
Hidezo
Shigeto
Zensuke
Mitsu
Ikuzo
Yoshimi
Haruko
Noboru
Takeo
Mitsuko
Sugizo
Jisaku
Asano
Kaga
Yoshito
Chiyoko
Yoshiko
Shizue
Yuriko

Shintaku
Shintaku
Oto
Yamagata
Goto
Sano
Sugimoto
Kawata
Kunioka
Shinmoto
Shoji
Uyesugi
Norikane
Norikane
Sakata
Okamoto
Furuta
Tokuyoshi
Ito
Ishizuka

Mourner

Spencer
Spencer
Mollie
Ted
Sakai
Ken
Hiroko
Ted
Clifford
Thomas
Bruce
Bruce
Mistuko
Mitsuko
Donald
Tom
Kiku
Gale
David
Joanne

Hirotsu
Hirotsu
Oto
Oto
Family
Sano
Sugimoto
Oda
Oto
Shinmoto
Shoji
Shoji
Norikane
Norikane
Sakata
Okamoto
Ishimoto
Hamatani
Ito
Ishizuka
The Walnut Grove Buddhist Church Gratefully Acknowledges
The Following Donations

SHOTSUKI

Carol Tang (Feb) 25.00
Carol Tang (Mar) 25.00
Mitsuko Norikane 25.00
Mikio Nagoshi 50.00
Shizue Nagoshi 50.00
Toshiko Hamada 25.00
Wayne Ogawa
    IMO Yuichi Ogawa 50.00
John & Charlene Krug
    IMO Isao Hamada 40.00
Elleen & June Okada 25.00
Hiroko Sugimoto
    IMO Ralph Sugimoto 25.00
Bill & Judy Young
    IMO Ralph Sugimoto 100.00
Dorothy Koga 35.00
Joanne Ishizuka
    IMO Kunisaburo Ishizuka 50.00
Naomi Sakai 20.00
Dorothy Koga (Mar) 25.00
Ted & Mary Oda 25.00
Dorothy Tokuyoshi 25.00

SPECIAL DONATIONS

Carol Matsumoto
    1 Year Memorial for Gladys Katsuki 100.00

Dennis Nishi
    Kuniko Nishi Memorial Service 500.00

Steven Mican
    Dana Temple Sharing 15.00
What to do in

On sunny days:

Watch the sun rise with extended cups of hot beverage. Weed, plant flowers and vegies, talk with neighbors (at a safe distance of course) over the fence. Go for walks and bike rides. Check on your older community, keeping a safe six foot distance. Meditate in your favorite lawn chair. Throw a ball for the dog. BBQ and eat outside. Hang your clothes to dry, and smell the fresh air on them for days. Let the housework go for a bit...no one is going to see! Take a nap in a hammock. Watch the sunset with your extended cold beverage. Be thankful for all you have.

On rainy days:

Watch a movie first thing instead of the news with extended cups of hot beverage. Clean out the closets, or whatever you have been avoiding for a while. What about those unfinished craft projects? Or start a long-desired project. Cuddle with the cat. Read a book from cover to cover in one sitting (maybe not War and Peace...) Take a nap on the couch. Call your friends and talk as long as you (and they!) like. Check on your older community, from a safe six foot distance. Go for a walk with proper rain gear. Meditate in your most comfy spot. Do your own version of the show “Chopped” where you have to take a group of unsimilar food items and figure out some new way to prepare them. Be grateful for your life and those you love.

See all the things you CAN do, might even out-number the things you can’t!

“Fear is not real. It is a product of thoughts you create. Do not misunderstand me. Danger is very real. But fear is a choice.” Will Smith