

Pastor's Reflections

"¹¹For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹²Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴I will let you find me, says the Lord...."
Jeremiah 29:11-14a

I'm not sure if I ever used this text for a Reflection before; but it is one of my favorites. A plaque of verse 11 hangs above my desk in my office. Perhaps I did write about verse 11; but it is verses 12 to 14a that I want to reflect on this time. The scripture passage was written by the prophet while the Israelites were in exile in Babylon. It is the word of hope from God that Jeremiah shares with the people.

As I reflected on it this time, I am reminded that we are all in exile from God. We live in a foreign spiritual land that pulls at us from every direction, such as a magnet drawing us away from God. Some of us may have been able to resist that force; and have a more intimate relationship with God. Some, still resisting, have not yet found the heart of God. To all, the word of promise from God is that *"when you call upon me . . . I will hear you. When you search for me . . . I will let you find me."* Our God of love, searches, too, for us, and longs for us to return. Drawing near to God, resting in the arms of God, is a desire of the heart. Does your heart long for the presence of God? Do you long to return to your spiritual birth place, just as salmon do?

The psalmist wrote in Psalm 42: *"As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."* Does your soul thirst for God? In order to have a deeper relationship with God, we must have that desire within us. It is a desire that searches and searches until one finds rests in the presence of God; just as a thirsty person in the desert searches and searches for that

drink of precious water. Once found, one never wanders far from the oasis. God is our oasis, ready to quench our every need!

As many will attest, such a search is not always easy. Yet, there is a hymn which comes to mind: *"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"*: *"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace."* When we turn our eyes upon Jesus, those forces of this earth, which continue to pull us away from God, does become strangely dim. Their pull on us diminishes. Are your eyes fixed on the One who called you into being? Our Divine Creator longs to hold us again; longs to lavish us with love, mercy and grace.

Do you love the Lord, your God with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your heart, and with all your strength? Jesus said we should. God wants to be your lover! Have you ever looked at your relationship with God in that light? How differently would you live your life if that was true for you? How would you go out of your way to show your love for God?

Last month I asked, "Are you zealous for the Lord? Is your heart ablaze with the love of God and do you desire to know God intimately?" How did you answer those questions? When we are madly in love with God with our whole being, we do become zealous for the Lord and our hearts will be ablaze with love for God.

Let us all search our hearts – search our priorities – search ourselves, knowing that God will hear our pleas and will allow us to find the heart of God. May your search lead you to a place you may not have been before; but a place where God's love and peace shine bright.



Blessings always,

Barbara

In and Around Lake Park

By Sachi Kajiwara



It's time for Annual Conference to begin. Reverend Barbara will be going as clergy and Ron Fujie as Lay Member. Sachi Kajiwara will be attending as the Alternate Lay Member. This is the year that Conference Delegates are elected to go to General Conference in 2008. Some of the possible candidates campaign vigorously while others quietly just ask voters to vote for them. At the General Conference, legislation is reviewed, revised as submitted by United Methodists from all over the world. This becomes the Discipline that is applicable for the next 4 years for all United Methodist churches. Sometimes, just as few words are changed in a given paragraph which gives a different interpretation to what was written up before. It is an interesting time whether you agree or not.

Congratulations to all of you! The Cal-Nevada Conference Treasurer has notified Rev. Barbara that once again, Lake Park has paid their 2006 apportionment of \$27,590 in full. A Certificate has been received. Good work! For the coming year, our share has gone down to \$25,890 (\$1700 less).

And speaking of money, as of June 6, \$8,835 has been collected for the various Trustee projects. This money is not a part of the General Fund monies. It is set aside strictly for major renovations, such as the lighting in the sanctuary. By the way, the old refrigerator and freezer have been replaced by a new refrigerator in the kitchen. The old refrigerator was leaking; and the freezer was not being used, both costing more to maintain.

Mrs. Hisako Horikoshi was able to come to church on Sunday following breast biopsy surgery on the previous Friday. She says she feels fine. When you look at her, no one would even suspect she had surgery a few days before. And she thanks God that it was benign!

The Inouyes, Ari and Ida, in Roseville send their regards to their friends at Lake Park. Ari had his 92nd birthday last September. As he said on the telephone, "I'm slowing down a lot, and I've been in and out of the hospital several times, but I feel okay now."

As of early June, Kenta Maniwa (Sachi's grand-nephew) was able to get rid of his crutches and is able to walk around, even if it is a bit slow. It has now been a year since his leg bone cancer was diagnosed. Having had surgery and chemotherapy, he is now concentrating on physio-therapy. Kaz and Masako (and Sachi, too) thank all of you for your prayers, cards and notes to Kenta which helped him in his recovery.

George Alexander recently had a pace-maker inserted in his chest, after hip replacement surgery. He is home now and doing very well.

Some of you may remember Rev. Peter Yuichi Clark who came to speak to us almost 2 years ago . . . just after he got married. At the time, he brought his new wife, Tilly, and his mother-in-law, Peggy Roche. They came again at their 1st Anniversary. Sad to say, Peggy Roche, Peter's mother-in-law, passed away on June 8th, of a major stroke which paralyzed her on the right side of her body when Sachi found her on June 1st. Our sympathy goes to her family. Please remember them in your prayers.

Our thanks to Elfrieda Langeman who provided Special Music on Mothers' Day. We also thank James Manley who spoke to us on "Happy Mother's Day." He is a member of the Berkeley Methodist United Church and very graciously agreed to come even though he was asked at the last minute as Rev. Mary Washington was unable to come because of illness. Though he had gone to a Theological Seminary, he chose not to be ordained. But he still went to Japan as a Missionary Associate for 4 years. Bishop Roy Sano spoke to us on May 20. He spoke on "The God Unknown and Known." Before he said benediction, he thanked Lake Park for the outstanding music he had heard that day. And we thank Bishop Sano for

being our preacher and Celebrant in the absence of Rev. Barbara who was on a well-deserved vacation.

The Rev. Nobuaki Hanaoka retires as of June 30th. He has served churches in San Francisco, Sacramento, Alameda as we came to know him. He writes in the *Retiree's Reflection* on the "Gratitude" he felt throughout his ministry. The Rev. Hope Kawashima also retires at the same time. Her article is titled "Journey of Hope" which includes 50 years of being a Choir Director. We wish them both our Good Wishes as they begin another new phase of their lives.



This Year's Graduates

As of this writing the following names were provided:



Proud grandparents Hugh and Irene Lee report that **three** of their grandchildren have graduated this year: **Gregory Lee** from University California at Davis, **Rachel Lee** from California High School in San Ramon, who will be going to U. C. Davis in the fall; and **Megan Lee**, graduating from Piedmont Elementary, starting Piedmont Middle School in the fall. Chiyo Futagaki reports that her grandson, **Kevin Futagaki** graduated from California State University, Long Beach, with his Masters Degree in Sports Management. Ruby Ouye announced that her grandson, **Randy Ouye**, graduated from Pleasanton High School and will be going to Harvard University in the fall. "Congratulations" and God's Blessings to all of them!



Heaven on Earth Definitions

In the January issue of the *Plowshare*, I asked for people's vision of "Heaven on Earth". At the Forgiveness meeting, Marlene Yamashita solicited peoples' vision. The following are what we received:

"Heaven on Earth: Freedom from want. Freedom from fear. A warm place to sleep. Clean clothes to wear. Having a purpose in life. Having people to care about."

Ron Fujie

"Heaven on Earth: where there is love --- redemptive love."

Mrs. Hisako Horikoshi

"Waking up to LOVE in my heart. Living the day with LOVE in my heart. Seeing and aware of everything and everyone with LOVE in my heart. Going to sleep with LOVE in my heart. 'In spite of killings, ugliness, hurts, pride, politics, hatred, belittlements that surround us."

Amy Eto

"Heaven on Earth – The earth is the Devil's domain – so in order to have heaven on earth, we have to get rid of Satan."

Dr. Leo Saito

"Heaven on Earth is attainable when the guiding force in peoples' lives is LOVE; when they live self-sacrificing lives, putting others before themselves."

Rev. Barbara

Highlights from the Administrative Council Meetings on May 2 & June 6, 2007

Reports:

- Spiritual Growth: no report
- Finance/Treasurer: Handed out the reports for April and May. In "General Fundraising" income account, the money collected from the Trustee Projects Money shows up in this line of the report. Refer to the reports for more details.
- Care & Nurturing: no report
- Staff/SPRC: Rev. Barbara has requested for vacation for Sept 17- 30. Council passed this.
- Trustees: These major projects have been completed: roof repairs, electrical outlets in parsonage (except for a few), termite abatement plus yearly contract, five toilets replaced, and replaced kitchen refrigerator. Discussed replacement of linoleum coming up and needing to be replaced because of the hazard. This was approved by Council. Trustees are waiting for a bid on parking lot. They asked Council to communicate with Helen Campbell as 95% of the parking lot use is by Montessori. However, an estimate should be secured before talking to Montessori. A few years ago there was an estimate of \$26,000. Another option could be to patch the bad spots and re-skim, approximately \$4,000 - \$5,000. Received \$35 rebate for the freezer (being disposed). Getting estimates for kitchen linoleum replacement. Single sheet versus tile squares is being examined. One estimate is \$1,600 another is around \$4,500 and still getting estimates. In the process for getting estimates for dry rot and termite damage for Wesley Room window and some windows in the sanctuary. Other items on the list are water pressure when parsonage and church facilities being used at the same time, light fixtures in the sanctuary, and professional cleaning of the carpet in the

Wesley Room. Asked for another article to be put into the Plowshare regarding donations still being accepted towards the Trustees Projects.

- Worship: Trying to get a Presbyterian minister for June 24th (during the Methodist annual Conference).
- Music: Discussed proposal that Lake Park sponsor Jim's Sonos Handbell Ensemble and Oakland Lyric Opera to use the facilities at the church.
- JASEB: There was a \$17,000 gross, net \$7,000 from the crab feed. JASEB is projected to run at about a \$70,000 deficit. The new President, Bruce Hirōnaka, is going to look at a new investment strategy. JASEB received a \$150,000 donation from an estate. With 20% JA residents in Eden Issei Terrace, JASEB will be contemplating what its role is going to be. JASEB committees continue their work; for example, the Vision Committee is putting together a vision statement. Ed Oshika is in charge of the Board Restructuring and the Communications Committee. The Finance Committee is looking at the investments. There are issues popping up -- JASEB looking into releasing its interest in Eden Issei Terrace. Another issue coming up is Channing Way House and JASEB Home in Hayward because the facilities are not licensed and JASEB serves only as a landlord. Some statistics about the JA community were distributed.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Henok Tseggai from the Eritrean group asked if they could use the social hall and kitchen downstairs, however, the Trustees met and decided not to allow it. There were a variety of facility usage requests for May, including Piedmont Gardens, children's handbell group, and vocalist. Additionally, there has been a request to use the sanctuary on Friday, August 8, 2008 for a wedding. Thanks to all who sponsored Rev. and Marlene for the CROP Walk around Lake Merritt. Also, see Lake

Park's future, in New Business, below. Annual Conference is coming up. \$100 check for Conference offering was approved. Our apportionment is going down from \$27,590 this year to \$25,890 next year. As of today, we've collected \$8,835 for the Trustees Projects. Discussing future planning with Marlene for people to connect with God and each other via activities that would run from October to the Spring. Rev. spoke with Martin Rutte, Director of Project Heaven on Earth, who says we are on the right track and that there is a movement taking place around the world to implement it. See the website: www.projectheavenonearth.com. Lake Park received certificate for our 100% payment of Apportionments. Groundbreaking for Seven Directions Healthcare Facility is June 14th at 4pm. D'Shane Barnett (the Native American guest speaker we had) invited people to attend this celebration. Refer to the full Pastor's Reports for more details.

New Business:

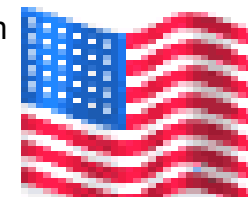
Lake Park's future: While Rev. has brought up this topic a number of times over the years, we have not had a serious discussion about it. Since the recent Trustee letter went out, some people have questioned the need to help pay for the projects, because of the Trustees account. (At the May 2nd Ad Council meeting we had a lengthy discussion about our future. The following are highlights from the discussion.) Ron provided figures on where money has been spent over the last 6 years – Lake Park has raised and spent over \$1 million over that time. Over one third was put into the facilities and the facilities will continue to require more money to bring it up to standards. Where will things go over the next 5 years? Ron also provided figures for that. Apportionment will most likely increase with the new formula. Also, with LP continuing to draw money from the Trustees account to balance income/expenses, we could easily be out of money within the next 5 – 6 years. Rev. Barbara shared figures for comparison

between Lake Park, Berkeley Methodist, and Buena Vista UMC in people and funds. The children and youth at BMU and BVUMC are reflective of the basketball programs which help to bring in young families. However, for LP, trying to attract young families could be “barking up the wrong tree,” as reaching out to persons in their 40's to 60's can also increase membership and introduce younger blood. LP does not have fundraisers, and 42% of our income comes from the Montessori rent. Our pledges are only 30%, while the percentages from pledging at the other churches are much higher. There's no magic bullet. Marlene mentioned that she and Rev. Barbara talk every Tuesday and both agree that the core offering that the church has is for strengthening one's connection to God/Spirit and to each other. That, in fact, is the church's “business”. The difficulty comes in, as the metaphor goes, leading the horse to water, but you can't make it drink. Marlene sees the kindness and caring in the people at LP and wishes there were a way to “market” and “capitalize” on it. Rev. Barbara has seen growth in the people here because they are more warm and welcoming of visitors than they have been in the past. At the end of the discussion, Ron was asked to write an article for the Plowshare.



Calendar Review:

- June 17 – Dads and Grads
- June 19-24 – Annual Conference, Sacramento
- June 24 – guest speaker
- July 11 – Admin Council meeting, 7:30pm
- July 15 – Plowshare items due
- July 29 – guest speaker
- July 29-Aug 3 – Lake Tahoe conference
- Aug 12 – Plowshare items due
- Sept 22 – District UMW annual meeting



Next meeting is Wednesday, July 11, 2007 at 7:30pm



ITEMS TO FOLLOW:

Church usage - kitchen	Referred to the new Task Force on opening church to others.
Annual Church Conference items	Full minutes from Dec. 13 th meeting are forthcoming.
Lake Park's future	Theme for 2007 is "Heaven on Earth." Lengthy discussion at May 2 Admin Council meeting. Article to be put into the Plowshare.
Church structural repairs	roof leak repairs completed; termite treatment completed and yearly maintenance contract secured; parsonage outlet replacement completed except for some dry rot and termite damage around windows – bids to be solicited
Church - other repairs	kitchen refrigerator replacement and freezer removal completed; kitchen linoleum replacement -- bids being solicited; parking lot repaving (safety) – bids to be solicited

Please contact church, Marlene Y., or Rev. Barbara for items you want to see tracked here.



Funds for Trustee Projects Received

We extend our sincerest thanks to those who have donated to the Trustee Project Fund. To date \$8,835 has been collected! Trustees' Chairperson Moses Oshima reports that you may continue to donate to the fund, making payments if that is easier for you. Just put "Trustees Projects" on the memo line of your check.



Tea Fellowship for July

Leona Narita and Tsugiyu Oshika



Correction to June Plowshare

In the "CROP Walk" article, Suzanne Yamamoto's name was left off. We apologize for this omission.

**Floral Acknowledgements
May 20 to June 10, 2007**



- May 20: Mrs. Hisako Horikoshi, Glory to God
- May 27: Margaret Tsujimoto, in memory of Min and friends
- June 3: Theresa Narasaki, Glory to God
- June 10: Rev Barbara, Glory to God

Thank you to Leona Narita for sharing her beautiful flowers from her garden.



Care Corner

We ask you to pray for George Alexander who is recovering from hip replacement surgery. Additionally, he had a pacemaker put in. Please also pray for Noralee, as she cares for him. Please

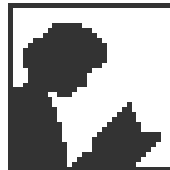
hold the following in your prayers:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| George & Noralee Alexander | Ruby Ouye's brother Yasuko |
| Ari Inouye | Gamo & family |
| Hugh & Irene Lee | Hale Prather |
| Cathy Saito | Daniel Thompson |
| Virginia Tomita | Margaret Tsujimoto & family |
| Elaine Yamada's family | Lake Park's future |

Our servicemen and women abroad, aid workers and journalists serving in dangerous areas in the world and for their families at home.

Scripture Passages for July 2007

July 1: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20;
Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62
"Freedom in Christ"



July 8: 2 Kings 5:1-14, Psalm 30,
Galatians 6:1-16, Luke 10:1-11, 16-20
"Circumcision of the Heart"

July 15: Amos 7:7-17, Psalm 82, Colossians 1:1-14,
Luke 10:25-37 *"Who Is Your Neighbor?"*

July 22: Amos 8:1-12, Psalm 52, **Colossians 1:15-28**,
Luke 10:38-43 *"Image of the Invisible God"*

July 29: Hosea 1:2-10, Psalm 85, Colossians 2:6-19,
Luke 11:1-13
Rev Barbara will be at the Zephyr Retreat; and we will have a guest speaker.

Plowshare Acknowledgements May 13 to June 3, 2007

Special Gifts

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Austin, M/M Raymond | - | In Memory of Barbara |
| Lee, M/M Hugh | - | Thank Offering |
| Umemoto, M/M Tad | - | In Memory of Arthur Miyazaki |
| Yamamoto, Suzanne | - | Gordon's birthday |

Memorial Day

- Ogawa, Helen
- Shigematsu, Diane

The following was not complete in the June issue:
Sawada, M/M Toshio (Leslie Jo) – Loving
Memory of father, Sunao "Chet" Morizono

Food Fund

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| Kajiwara, Sachi | Oshika, Tsugiye |
| Narasaki, Theresa (2 nd qtr) | Saito, Dr Leo |
| Anonymous—1 | |



Conference Offering - Peace with Justice Sunday

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Derreberry, M/M Steve | Oshika, Tsugiye |
| Eto, M/M Frank | Ouye, Ruby |
| Futagaki, Chiyo | Saito, Dr. Leo |
| Iino, David | Takeuchi, M/M Frank |
| Kajiwara, Sachi | Tsujimoto, Margaret |
| Lee, M/M Hugh | Yamashita, Karie |
| Morizono, Rev/M Mike | Yoshida, M/M George |

Trustees' Projects

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Aoki, M/M James | Iriki, Keiko |
| Derreberry, M/M Steve | Kim, Dr/M Kenneth |
| Egan, M/M Ferol | Kondo, Chie |
| Hayakawa, M/M William | Ogawa, Helen |
| Hecht, M/M Peter | Ouye, Ruby |
| Horikoshi-Firebaugh, Rev. Barbara | Yamada, Sachi |