



GATEWAY



June 2013 -- Vol. XLVII No. 6

Living Dharma News

www.livingdharma.org

This August will mark the 1st anniversary of our Facebook page. While in Japan for the World Dobo Convention, I was able to post pics and comments to our page almost as they were being shot, and it was very enjoyable to share my experiences with our Facebook friends. If I had waited until I got home to post these pics, I would probably have forgotten the who, what, when, and where of each shot. If you are on Facebook, please check out our World Dobo Pics photo album. And "Like Us" if you haven't already!

Selected E-mail

From: Olivia Merino
Hello, I was looking at your website.. and I am very interested in attending the class that introduces Buddhism. I would like to know if there are any for the month of May.
Thank You.

Dear Olivia,

Please see L.D. NEWS, con't on page 5



During WCBT's Tanjo-e Service, three adorable children and their parents participated in the Hatsumairi Ceremony (left to right, flanked by Rev. Fred Brenion and Rev. Peter Hata), Jakob Jucksch and parents Kendra and Randy Jucksch; Josiah Gutierrez and parents Anthony and Monic Gutierrez; Koa de Leon and parents Sachi and James de Leon

Obon Coming!

Obon 2013 takes place on Saturday, June 29, from 2 pm to 9 pm. Setup starts Friday, June 28, at 1 pm. We ask for your help setting up the booths, yagura, tables & chairs for both outdoors and in the gym, food prep, and

stringing the Manto-e lights. We request your donations of rice, chili, and raffle prizes for kids and adults. As usual, the *age* (outer shell) for inari-zushi will be passed out two weeks before Obon for those volunteering to make sushi. Raffle tickets will be sent out to everyone so please sell as many as possible!

And don't forget all those homebaked

Please see OBON, con't on page 5

THE LIVING DHARMA

The Tokudo Experience

By Rev. Michael Jitoshō

Hello everyone! This is Michael Jitoshō writing from Tokyo, Japan. To those of you that may not know I am a recent college graduate and a member of WCBT. For the past 10 months I have been living in Japan on a one-year internship with a non-governmental organization called Ashinaga. Ashinaga is an organization supporting Japanese and international orphans who have lost one or both parents to cancer,

Please see TOKUDO, con't on page 4



At the last of the four Introduction to Buddhism classes on April 29, 2013, Rev. Peter discussed the diversity of the Mahayana Buddhist traditions found in America but emphasized that all authentic traditions are based on the same core Buddhist teachings. The class had a very good turnout and over half of the participants were from the local community.

Temple Event Highlights:

- May 31 Dance Practices Begin
- June 1 Oldies Dance 45
- June 23 Dads & Grads Service
- June 29 OBON FESTIVAL
- June 30 Obon Cleanup
- Please See Temple News



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

The strains of Pomp & Circumstance will be ringing in our ears as we say "Congratulations!" to six of our terrific Jr YBA students. Please join us in giving recognition and thanks to the following high school graduates on June 23rd: Stephanie Akune, Leo Kowalski, Matthew Ormseth, Taylor Saucedo, Sean Underwood, and Yazmin Whang. We at West Covina Buddhist Temple have been the recipients of their talents and support while growing up before our eyes. There is no doubt that these fine young people will make a contribution of positive energy wherever they may go.

No, we have not forgotten that on that very same day we will also be wishing a resounding "Happy Father's Day!" to the dads, and grandpas who have been there to encourage the Jrs. all along the way.

Lastly, see you all at the Obon Festival on June 29. If you haven't practiced the dances, please join in anyway. Smile and just "do it" with the rest of us who have two left feet...

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

Quote of the Month

Buddhism doesn't talk about the problems we have; Buddhism talks about the problem we are.

-Dr. Nobuo Haneda

May Activities



Above: The closing service in the massive Goeido at Higashi Honganji's memorable 11th World Dobo Convention and Tour in Kyoto, Japan, which took place from May 5-13. Below: in the group pic, can you find WCBT members Merry and Stephanie Jitoshio? How about Rev. Peter and FOUR previous ministers of WCBT? (you'll need to zoom in) More pics will be in a future issue.



At left: On April 28, WCBT hosted its first "Chili-Bingo" family get-together. The computerized bingo was a trial for our upcoming Obon while the old fashioned chili cook-off saw the spicy chili of Mr. Dick Koga edge out the entries of 8 other contestants! Erratum: on last month's cover, we mistakenly identified Mitzi Oshita (at hanamido) as "Mitzi Wexler."



Above, left to right: Edith Ariza, Hisa Konno, and Mary Hatakeyama take in the sights and sounds at the Tanjo-e/Hatsumairi Service.



T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E M E N T S

Oldies Dance XLV

"Be Alive! Dance at Oldies XLV (45)!" will be held on Saturday, June 1. Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution will be back again to provide our favorite hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. The dance begins at 8:00 PM and will end at 12:00 AM with lots of dancing and fun in between. Presale tickets are \$15 or \$18 at the door. For info and song requests, call Joanie at (626) 300-8947 or Lillian at (626) 780-9866

Your Toban chairs will contact you about work shifts and assignments. Plan to come by the center about 6 PM to help with the set-up. Donations are welcome for raffle prizes and drinks. Sign-up sheets for drinks will be at the Sunday service.

Bon Odori Practices

Bon Odori (dance) practice will begin on Friday, May 31 then continues every Tuesday and Friday in June, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. The dates are May 31, June 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 21 and 25. All you need to bring are your kachi-kachi (castanets) and tenugui (Japanese towel) or fabric of equivalent size. The fans will be provided.

Everyone is invited to join in the fun. See you there!

Bonbu Class

The Bonbu Class will meet on June 11 and 25 at 10:00 AM. Discussions will focus on deepening our knowledge of Buddhism as well as how we can reflect Buddhism in our everyday life. The class meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. For more information, please call Rev. Peter, (626) 337-8373.

Dads & Grads Family Service

A Father's Day & Graduation Family service will be held on June 23, at 10:00 AM. All graduates will be honored so please contact Diane Hata or Rev. Peter with the names of graduates in your family.

Join us for this special event.

OBON FESTIVAL!

Obon 2013, June 29, is just a few weeks away. Preparations are beginning but much work is still needed to make this exciting annual event a success.

Set-up will begin on Friday, June 28, at 1:00 PM. Help will be needed setting up outside and inside the gym as well as food prep and general hands-on help.

In the mean time, we are accepting donations for rice, chili and children's and regular raffle prizes. Age for inarizushi will be passed out before Obon for those volunteering to make sushi. Raffle tickets will be sent out and don't forget to get your favorite dessert recipes out.

Sign-up sheets will be passed around at Sunday Services or contact Merry (714) 271-3803 to see how you can help.

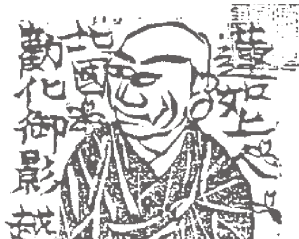
Obon Clean-up will be Sunday morning, June 30 at 9:00 AM.

Obon & Hatsubon Service

Obon & Hatsubon Service, on July 21 at 4:30 PM, will be a joint English and Japanese Service. Come and join us for this special service with Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa giving the Japanese talk and Rev. Peter giving the English talk. Please remain for the complimentary *otoki* dinner that will follow the service.

Betsuin Obon Festival

The Betsuin Obon will be held on the weekend of July 27-28. WCBT will again be selling our delicious tamales. Sign-up sheets will be at upcoming services so please find a time you can help out in the tamale booth and join in the dancing and festivities at the Betsuin Obon.



GATEWAY Staff

Layout & Editing: Rev. Peter Hata, Hisako Koga, Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa

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West Covina Buddhist Temple Mission Statement:
In the spirit of universal brotherhood, West Covina Buddhist Temple provides the opportunity for all to listen to and share the Teachings of the Buddha in order that we may awaken to our true selves, living our lives fully and dynamically.

The Temple's mailing address is:

West Covina Buddhist Temple

P. O. Box 1616

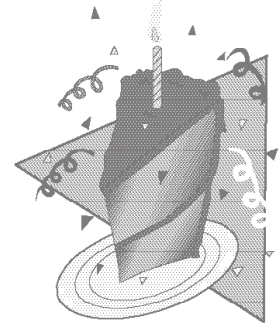
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JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Laurie Hansen, Terri Takemura, Joshua Gutierrez, Kay Yamashita, Tosh Tawatari, Ray Maekawa, Mia Lynn Meites, Jason Iwama, Kiyoshi Earley, Jerry Earley, Nicholas Ishibashi Jung, Noah Kowalski, Tor Ormseth, Craig Yanase, Andrew Jung, Ikuo Matsukiyo, Linda Chen, Mitchell Kozono, Joshua Gutierrez



T H E G A T E W A Y

TOKUDO, con't from pg. 1



Rev. Michael poses with Bishop Ito just before the tokudo ordination ceremony at the Honzan; the canvas outer garment is worn to symbolize the simple robes Shinran wore at his ordination; in the ceremony, the priests change into the traditional black robes worn by Higashi priests.

AIDs, natural disaster, suicide or have a physical disability. It has since been an invaluable opportunity thus far having had the opportunity to learn so much about how office management styles, psychological care programs and the experience of working in a Japanese company. Before leaving for Tokyo I completed the first ordination towards becoming a priest called *tokudo* under the former head minister of WCBT, Rev. Kawawata who is now bishop of the Hawaii district. I was able to receive my tokudo ordination at Honzan, our mother temple in Kyoto, a day before the world Dobo conference. So here are my reflections from my tokudo experience.

Right before any tokudo ceremony all male participants are asked to shave their heads completely for the purpose of, as Rev. Nori explained to me, "entering the Sangha with nothing from life up till that point." Although female recipients are not asked to shave their heads they are asked to arrange their hair in a very specific and uniform manner. The idea is to make all equal and also to get rid of one's vanity. Overall the entire process of receiving

the tokudo from the Higashi Honganji sect was very spiritual and refreshing. I felt I was warped back in time to Shinran's era leaving behind all my westernized clothes in exchange for an unbearably tightly fastened kimono. After this experience I will no longer poke fun at my sister Stephanie's grimacing face each time she is dressed with her obi for bon odori. The first part of the morning ceremony, held exclusively for tokudo participants, was conducted in the dimly lit hondo giving the participants the chance to calm the mind from all the distractions of the preparations leading up to the ordination and experience an evening ceremony as Shinran experienced it.

Even before the actual ceremony itself, waiting in line at the barbershop gave me the opportunity to think about how our hair requires so much maintenance. My mom who also waited with me at the barbershop line was worried about me because I was not in a joyous and festive mood as some of the other participants. I was in a serious yet reflective mind frame through the entire process in order to fully take in the entire experience and realize what receiving the tokudo meant to me. Every day my hair evokes a certain message to others about the "I" that is me, which desires vanity to gain status and approval from others. With the buzzing sound of the hair clipper I envisioned receiving my Buddhist name and tokudo certificate in my hands from the Honzan representative. As a tokudo recipient I would move forward, not as a college graduate would a college diploma with all the fanfare and celebration sticking it in faces of who are without, but as my opportunity to enter Buddhism as a student with open ears.

After having donated a good 1/4 pound of hair to the Honzan barbershop I returned to work in Tokyo. I was greeted in shock by so many who remarked, "You look like a monk" by friends, students and co-workers who all had no idea about my ordination in the first place. I detested the coming weeks because of the now shiny

beacon that sat on top of my shoulders I would be asked the same questions over and over by those who all inevitably asked the same questions, "What happened? Why did you shave your head?" I felt naked being constantly judged now that I adorned a freshly shaven bald head in a society where having no head hair is the style for primarily only two groups of people the elderly and or priests. Well, I could not physically age 50 years over the duration of a two day trip to Kyoto so it must have been clear to them what happened. I never before felt embarrassed or shy about being a Buddhist, but now I could not hide the personal choice I made to enter the priesthood and would have to explain myself.

Being at the receiving end of the stereotype that all Buddhists are mahogany and orange robed monks who live in monasteries and are subjected to ascetic practices; I felt obliged to correct their misconceptions even with my slowly progressing Japanese language ability. Are these misconceptions so widely held because others in my similar situation have not spoken up? So I shared with them that I was Buddhist, a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist from America and explained about Higashi Honganji in West Covina and the ritual of the tokudo, including the ceremonial shaving of the head. I only wish I had printouts so I would not have to verbally explain the reason for my bald head to each and everyone I met. Now I understand a possible reason as to why ministers often give books to their students when asked questions. Unknowingly the experience of explaining to others about my experience and essentially about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, I guess, as been the unofficial beginning of my training towards priesthood.

As for what is next and if I will attain the second ordination called *kyoshi* or not, only time will tell. I admire the appreciation that both Rev. Peter and Rev. Fred have for the teachings. I am not sure if I will ever get to their level of understanding, but I am ever

Please see TOKUDO, con't on pg. 5



T H E G A T E W A Y

TOKUDO, con't from pg. 4

so curious about what Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is to a modern sangha today especially after explaining to so many people about the reason for my bald head to such a limited degree. I want to deepen my understanding of the Dharma and find a way to demystify Jodo Shinshu to make it more relatable to modern day young adults. Thank you for reading and allowing me to share.

In gassho,
Michael Jitoshu

OBON, con't from pg. 1

goodies for the dessert booth.

Manto-e lanterns will be available for those wishing to honor the memory of departed relatives and friends. Sign-up sheets will be passed around at Services for shift assignments.

See more Obon details in Temple

L.D. NEWS, con't from pg. 1

Sorry for the delay in responding—right after I completed our first Introduction to Buddhism series (4/8 to 4/29), I had to take off for a world conference in Kyoto. I'm writing to you from Takayama, Japan as a matter of fact. If you have access to Facebook you can see pics of this conference and tour on our temple's Facebook Page.

As to your question, there aren't any classes scheduled in May of course, but we will be offering the series again. The response to the first series was very positive and encouraging. Thank you very much for your interest. I'm not sure of the date yet, but I can let you know via e-mail. We're also planning on starting Buddhism classes on other topics related to Buddhism and the challenges we face in our daily life.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata

The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

From: Olivia Merino
To: The Living Dharma Website
<dharma@livingdharma.org>
Subject: Thank You
Thank You so much I will definitely check out the link you

forwarded...and will appreciate any updates.

Have a great time at Japan :)
Best wishes, Olivia

From: Adrian Solis

Hello, my name is Adrian Solis and I am student currently attending Cal Poly Pomona. Right now I am partaking in an ethics class that covers the many different religions found in the world. As such, the class asks us as individuals to visit/attend a religious site that is unknown to us. I had done some research looking up nearby Temples and your website was very appealing. I had visited your facilities during the week at the East San Gabriel Japanese Community Center and was told by the lady at the main offices that I could reach someone through this email about possibly attending your services. As such, would it be possible for me to attend? My professor requires that we get a permission slip signed to assure that as guests we are complying any needs for being guests, so if you would be so kind to let me attend I will send out a copy of the permission slip in case of anything. I would be very excited and honored to partake in visiting your services. Thank you for your time.
-Adrian Solis

Dear Adrian,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, you are welcome to attend any service. We regularly receive student visitors from area colleges such as Azusa Pacific, Citrus, Claremont Colleges, Cal State Fullerton, etc. We don't require permission slips and actually have never seen such a thing.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata

From = Joshua
Subject = Buddhist services?
Message = Hello,
I'm quite interested in Buddhism, and I am very, very happy I came upon your website. I do have a question: when is your prayer service, or "Sunday Service," if that is what it is called? When

do you generally hold your services? I am most interested in attending.

Thank you so much,
Josh

Dear Josh,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, our Sunday Services are usually every Sunday at 10:00 am, and everyone is welcome. Occasionally, we have major services (e.g., services honoring an important Buddhist teacher or important day in the Buddhist calendar) in the afternoon. Please check the calendar page on our website for an up-to-date schedule:

<http://www.livingdharma.org/Calendar.html>.

Also, please feel free to browse our website, which has a wealth of information about the temple and the teaching of Buddhism.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata

Subject: Re: Buddhist services?
From: Joshua Reinke
To: The Living Dharma Website
<dharma@livingdharma.org>
Thank you!
Sincerely,
Josh

Hello, my name is Mitch McDonough. I am a 23 year old college student and I have always had a fascination with Buddhism. I struggle daily with slight symptoms of depression and sometimes I cannot see optimistically in everyday life. I have casually studied Buddhism for a few years and I have seriously contemplated joining a temple to learn more about the religion, and eventually become a serious student of the religion. But I like many others I'm sure, do not know where to start despite surfing the web about the religion. What steps must I take to begin this process?
Thank you so much and I look forward to chatting,
Mitch McDonough
Covina, CA

Please see L.D. NEWS, con't on pg. 6



T H E G A T E W A Y

L.D. NEWS, con't from pg. 5

Dear Mitch,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. Your question about "how to begin" is indeed quite common. The daunting task is deciding which of the seemingly dozens of schools of Buddhism is best for you. However, judging by the surprisingly good turnout by members from the local community with similar questions as yours, our temple's just-completed "Introduction to Buddhism" lecture series--an introduction to the basic teachings, themes, and history of Buddhism--might be one suggestion. It can provide a foundation from which you can then visit local Buddhist temples on your own with confidence that the temple or tradition is authentically Buddhist. West Covina Buddhist Temple will offer this lecture series again in the not-too-distant future.

You are also welcome to browse our website (<http://www.livingdharma.org>), which has an extensive collection of writings, and of course, visit our temple anytime. Check our calendar for dates/times (<http://www.livingdharma.org/Calendar.html>).

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata

From = Dina Lattuga
Subject = Sunday Service
Message = Is the Sunday service delivered in English?

Dear Dina,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, yes, our service is in English. Of course, at the beginning of the service, we do some sutra chanting which is not in English, but it is fine to not do it. The main Dharma talk (sermon) and all other announcements, etc. are in English.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

From = Chaplain Amanda Ramsey
Subject = Evening Services and Teen Services
Message = Hello!
I am the chaplain at McKinley Children's Center and I am looking for an evening service for my client. Also do



you have any services for Teenagers?
Please let me know. Thank you.



T H E G A T E W A Y

メモリアルデイ法要

五月二十七日のメモリアル・デイ(戦没将兵追悼記念日)に合わせて、多くの墓地において、お墓参り法要が行われています。

仏教の寺院においては普段から、お墓参りや祥月法要、年忌法要など、亡くなった肉親やご先祖に哀悼の意を表し、彼らへの思いを通して仏教の教えを聴聞する法要を勤めますが、こうした法要は英語で memorial service と呼ばれています。言うまでもなく memorial は memory、つまり記憶、思い出、記念という言葉と関連しています。亡き方々は、ご縁が尽きてすでにこの世を去っていかれましたが、私達の記憶の世界において生きておられると言えるのです。今は亡き方々を思い起こす時、彼らとその全存在をもって、今生きている私達に対して語りかけて下さっているように感じたことがある方もおられることと思います。いわば「願い」というものをそこに感じ取ることができるのではないのでしょうか。私達は彼らのその願いを自分自身の願いとして、それを日々の心の糧として生活していくことができます。私達が彼らの願いに心から耳を傾ける時、亡き方々とこの現在という時において共に生きていけるのです。例えば、現実に苦しい状況に追い込まれてしまったような時でも、縁ある人たちの願いを思い起こして苦境を乗り切った、といった経験をされた方も多くおられることと思います。

仏教もまた、先達を思い起こし、教えの言葉に込められた願いを、自

らの願いとして生きてこられた人々によって今日まで伝えられてきたのです。約二千五百年前のインドで釈尊がご在世の頃には、仏弟子は釈尊に帰依し、釈尊から直に教えを受けることができました。しかし、釈尊が入滅した後は、仏弟子たちはその釈尊を釈尊として成り立たせていたその精神に真実の仏を見出し、その真実の仏を中心として大乘の仏教が興起してきます。釈尊は亡くなられても、その精神に常住の真実の仏をみることになったのです。その真実の仏を阿弥陀(無量寿、無量光)と呼んでいます。そして、仏法によって全ての人間のあり方を明らかにした道として、大乘の仏教が今日まで伝えられてきているのです。

私達の今は亡きご縁のあった方々も、単に抽象的な過去の存在ではなく、私達が彼らの願いに耳を傾け、その願いを受け止める時、彼らは確かな存在として現在していると言えるのです。Memorial service とは現在の命に目覚める法縁なのです。



お寺ニュース

盆踊り練習

本年度の当寺院のお盆祭り(6月29日)もいよいよ近づいて参りました。今年の盆踊り練習は以下の予定にて、ほぼ毎週火曜日と金曜日の午後7時から8時30分まで行われます。どなたでも歓迎いたします。どうぞお誘い合わせの上、お気軽にご参加下さい。

5月31日(金)
6月4日(火)
7日(金)
11日(火)
14日(金)
18日(火)
21日(金)
25日(火)

(6月28日は練習はありません。)

父の日・卒業記念家族礼拝

6月23日(日)午前10時より、父の日・卒業記念家族礼拝をお勤めいたします。お父さんや今年卒業式を迎えられるお子様には、お寺より記念品を贈呈いたします。卒業を迎えるお子様がおられましたら、是非お寺までご連絡下さい。どうぞお誘い合わせの上、ご参詣下さいますようお願い申し上げます。

お盆フェスティバル

今年のお盆フェスティバルもいよいよ6月29日(土)にやって参ります。本年も、法話会の皆様にはソーメンとお寿司のご協力をお願い申し上げます。詳しくは、別便のお盆の案内状にてご案内いたします。どうぞよろしく願いいたします。また、30日(日)午前9時より後片付けを予定していますので、こちらもご協力いただきますようお願い申し上げます。

お盆フェスティバルは、お寺の大切な基金募集行事です。ご協力賜りますよう、重ねてお願い申し上げます。

6月祥月法要 / 法話会

6月6日(木)

午後7時30分より

East San Gabriel Valley
Japanese Community Center, Inc.

West Covina Buddhist Temple
1203 W. Puente Avenue, West Covina, CA 91790
P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91793

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THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE

GATEWAY

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June

Note: Bon Odori dance practices are every Tuesday and Friday at 7 pm from Fri. May 31~Tues. June 25

- 1 8:00 pm Oldies Dance
- 2 8:00 am Center Cleanup (no Sunday Service)
- 6 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 9 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 9 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 16 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 23 10:00 am Father's Day/Graduates Day
- 25 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 28 1:00 pm Obon Set-up
- 29 2-9:00 pm OBON FESTIVAL
- 30 9:00 am Obon Cleanup

July

- 4 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 7 8:30 am Board Mtg.
- 7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 9 10:00 am Bonbu Study Class
- 14 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 21 4:30 pm Obon/Hatsubon Service
- 23 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 28 10:00 am Sunday Service

6月行事予定

- 1日 午後 8時 オールディーズ・ダンス
- 2日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 6日 午後7時半 日本語祥月法要 / 法話会
- 9日 午前8時半 理事会
- 9日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 16日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 23日 午前10時 父の日家族礼拝
- 28日 お盆祭り準備
- 29日 午後 2時 お盆祭り
- 30日 午前 9時 お盆祭り後片付け

7月行事予定

- 4日 午後7時半 日本語祥月法要 / 法話会
- 7日 午前8時半 理事会
- 7日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 14日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 21日 午前10時 お盆 / 初盆法要
- 28日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

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今、いのちが

あなたを

生きている

宗祖親鸞聖人750回御遠忌テーマ