



GATEWAY



March-April 2024 - - Vol. LVIII No. 2



The 2024 WCBT Board of Directors were officially installed at our recent Eitai-kyo and General Meeting. Our President Johnny Martinez and our newest board member Carol Fujii were installed at our March Shotsuki Service.

Shift Happens

Reflection on Gratitude: A Path of Awakening

Seminar Presentation by Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi

Gil Correa

I recently had the good fortune of being able to experience the teachings of Reverend Dr. Kenji Akahoshi. The theme of Rev. Akahoshi's discussion was to impart a reinterpreted, contemporary viewpoint of Shinran's teachings and the fundamental practice of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism that could be easily understood and followed by all.

This was how Rev. Dr. Akahoshi's online seminar began:

"Let's start with Nembutsu gassho. Put your hands together, Namu Amida Butsu Namu Amida Butsu Namu Amida Butsu

That was our major practice in Jodo Shinshu. What did you feel right now? What was your experience of it?" If there is no experience behind the action, then there is no meaning in it.

Honestly, when I recite the Nembutsu, I'm not really sure I feel anything. No flashing lights, no sublime glow, no overwhelming sense of oneness with the universe. Maybe that's because I have only been practicing saying the Nembutsu for a couple of years, or perhaps I need more time to build and create my experience with it? But as I listened to Rev. Akahoshi's presentation and his explanation of what saying 'Namu Amida Butsu' means, I actually started to see, and feel, that "beneath the clouds and mists, there is brightness". Pieces of my understanding of Buddhism shifted and started to fall into place. The realization that I actually had a lifetime of experience behind the Nembutsu was there all along. I just need to shift my perspective, to see things from a different point of view.

Rev. Akahoshi explained that say-

ing Namu Amida Butsu was simply a way to express our gratitude. The Nembutsu is a physical practice to remind us to change our perspective and negative mindset from that of trying to always achieve, to one in which we express our thanks and gratitude for all that we have already received. We don't need special language or cultural experiences to say "Thank you" for the abundance of gifts we have already received. Gratitude is the initial practice for ordinary people on the path of awakening. Expressing gratitude brings the Buddha's teachings to our ordinary lives and the simple act of practicing the Nembutsu allows us to express our gratitude to all those who have come before us. It allows us to awaken to the fact that we have been receiving our entire lives. What have we been receiving? Maybe a question

Please see SHIFT, con't on page 8



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Spring is nearly upon us. Cold, rainy days will soon give way to warm, sunnier ones.

In March, we celebrate Spring Ohigan. Fall Ohigan is celebrated each September. Both Ohigan times occur when the number of daylight hours equal the number of night hours. These are considered the most pleasant times of the year. The two equinoxes give us the opportunity to reflect on our lives. It is a good time to reacquaint ourselves with the Six Paramitas which help to guide us each day. Ohigan is also a time to give thanks to, and honor our ancestors, without whom we would not exist. How fortunate we are to be alive and to be able to listen to the Dharma!

Our Spring Ohigan will be held on March 17 at 4:30 p.m. Otoki will be served after the service.

This year's Hanamatsuri service will be held on April 10 at 10 a.m. This special service will celebrate Baby Siddhartha's birth. He was born near the border of Northern India and Nepal about 2600 years ago. It is said that he was born in a beautiful garden called Lumbini, and that sweet rain poured from the heavens at his birth. He came from a small kingdom called Shakya and his name, Siddhartha, means "he whose purpose is accomplished". Please join us to honor the Baby Prince with flowers and sweet tea on April 10.

A Lunar New Year's greeting will soon be on its way to our Dharma School students through the mail. Our older students will receive a short lesson that is more suited for their academic abilities. This will be included in their lesson packet.

We hope that our students are keeping all their lessons in a notebook. We would like to share some of their work in our Dharma School display during Obon.

Hope to see you at Ohigan and Hanamatsuri!

Gassho,
Claire Hansen

Sangha Social Gathering

WCBT invites you to the first Sangha Social Gathering (adults only) to be held on Saturday, April 27th, Noon – 3pm at the home of Haruko Mayeda in Walnut. There will be food, activities, a fun and relaxing time to spend with the WCBT Sangha. WCBT has slowly come out from the pandemic period by meeting in-person for services, otoki meals, mochizuki and fundraiser events. This is an opportunity for long-time and new members to connect/reconnect to strengthen the WCBT Sangha. The event is free, but we request that you RSVP for food planning and for access to event. RSVP: Rev. Miyoshi – revnobuko@gmail.com or Pat Sato - pishsato@gmail.com NOTE: Let us know if you have any mobility issues so that we can accommodate special parking or parking assistance for those in need. Special thanks to Haruko Mayeda for opening her home for this event.

27th Annual Golf Classic

The 27th Annual Golf Classic will be held on Monday, June 3, 2024. The tournament will be held at one of Southern California's premier golf course, Hacienda Golf Club in La Habra Heights.

Last year we had over 100 golfers and anticipate an even larger field this year. But this can only be achieved by you as a golfer participating. If you are not a golfer, invite and encourage your golfing relatives and friends to join the fun.



There are other ways you can support this event and WCBT. You can be a tee sponsor at various levels as well as asking your favorite restaurants, professionals, and other businesses to be a proud sponsor. Also, raffle prizes and items for the player's goodie bags can be donated. Volunteers are always needed to assist on the day of the tournament. So, mark your calendar for June 3rd.

More information will be available in the near future.



T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

Sunday Services

All Sunday Services are now hybrid with both in-person and Zoom participation. In-person participants are asked to submit proof of vaccination to the Community Center and masks are now optional. If you're not quite ready for social contact just look for an email from Rev. Miyoshi or Rev. Fred inviting you to the services with the Zoom meeting ID and password. Whichever way you decide, please join us because it's always a pleasure to see all of your familiar faces!

Discussion Class

The weekly discussion class will be every Thursday at 10 am via Zoom. There is a different topic of discussion each week and a lively dialogue with a growing number of participants. Look for the email invitation with meeting ID and password or contact Rev. Miyoshi for the information

Study Class

A virtual evening Study Class is held every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm and we invite those who are unable to attend the Thursday morning Discussion Class to join us. The Study Classes will focus on the history and teaching of Jodo Shinshu. If you are interested in purchasing "The Teaching of Jodo Shinshu and the History of the Honganji Community" book which will be used as reference, or to get an email invitation, please contact Rev. Miyoshi.

Spring Ohigan Service

The hybrid Spring Ohigan Service will be held on Sunday, March 17, at 4:30 pm. Our special guest Rev. Patti Nakai is from the Chicago Buddhist Temple. We are very lucky to have Rev. Patti speak to us while she is in town. Please join us as we welcome her back and listen to her thoughtful message. An otaki dinner will follow the service.

NAD Joint Retreat

A hybrid NAD Joint Retreat will be

held on March 30 (Sat) & 31 (Sun) at the Los Angeles Higashi Betsuin. To participate in person or via Zoom, register on [this form \(https://forms.gle/Ax9Zt9mj2xR3EdJU8\)](https://forms.gle/Ax9Zt9mj2xR3EdJU8). Participation fee is \$20. See pg. 5 for more info.

No Sunday Service on March 31

Due to the NAD Joint Retreat on the weekend of March 30-31, WCBT will have NO Sunday Service on March 31.

LABTF Hanamatsuri

The Federation Hanamatsuri Service will be held in a hybrid format on April 7 beginning at 1:30 pm. at Koyasa Buddhist Temple.

WCBT Hanamatsuri

WCBT will hold its Hanamatsuri Service on April 14 at 10:00 am. If you can attend this service in-person, we encourage you to bring flowers and help decorate the beautiful Hanamido.

WCBT Sangha Social Gathering

The Temple Communication Staff will have its first Sangha Social Gathering on Saturday, April 27. Haruko Mayeda has graciously opened her home for the launch of this new, more social, gathering. Join us for this fun event. For more info, see pg.5.

APRIL BIRTHDAY

Kevin Kawawata, Tyler Koji Isaksen, Susan Oshima, Lauren Miyake, Randy Maekawa, Nancy Maekawa, Jacob Kato, Adriana Kochi, Kellie Komoda, Kristen Hiranaka, Tammy Lespron, Phillip Underwood, Lexi Shams, Maria Whang, Yuechen Zhou Chen, Mario Alberto Gonzalez, Nancy Hombo, Maddie Akari Mayeda, Sienna Mirai Martinez, Stella, Reynolds-Hale, Cole Reynolds-Hale, Shakyamuni Buddha

GATEWAY Staff

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Circulation: Rev. Fred Brenion, Joy Kitaura

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:

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P. O. Box 1616
West Covina, CA 91793
(626) 689-1040

Website: www.livingdharma.org

Facebook: facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple

E-Mail: wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com

MARCH BIRTHDAY

Brandon Kawaguchi, Kendra Kagawa Jucksch, Brion Martinez, Brooks Martinez, Cathy Nakano, Glen Fujimoto, Karolyn Fujimoto, Mae Horie, Joy Kitaura, Kelley Sakoda, Kathy Masai, Danny Iwama, Lee Ezaki, Karen Ezaki, Andrew Kenji Ezaki, Claire Hansen, Dick Koga, Leo Kowalski, Miki Fukusumi, Tamara Teragawa, Alyssa Arnheim, Dana Yamada, Gavin Godoy, Kai Godoy, John Erickson, Bruce Whang, Emi Wexler, Reiko Ikehara-Nelson, Mitsuru Oshita, Tatsuo Okamura, Manuel Ortiz, Oscar Rodriguez, Patricia Endo, Steve Underwood, Cayla James Yoburn, Donatello Yasuo Elmatari, Brooklyn Megumi Le, Toshiye Kanegawa, Rev. Akira Miyoshi



T H E G A T E W A Y

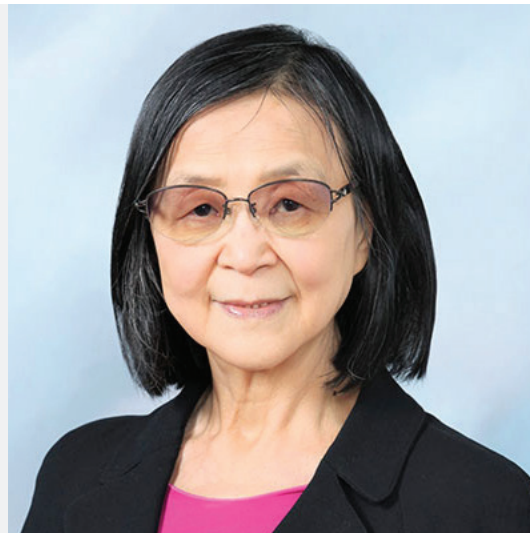
HIGASHI HONGANJI NORTH AMERICA DISTRICT 2024 JOINT RETREAT (ENGLISH & JAPANESE)

Shinshu Teachings in Our Daily Lives

A Spiritual Turning Point in Our Lives

Prof. Zhang Wei (Shinhō Morimura)

Professor, Dōhō University, Nagoya, Japan



March 30 (Sat) & 31 (Sun), 2024

At Higashi Honganji Los Angeles Betsuin & Zoom Video Conferencing

To participate, please register using [this form](https://forms.gle/Ax9Zt9mj2xR3EdJU8) (https://forms.gle/Ax9Zt9mj2xR3EdJU8).

Participation fee is \$20. You can pay the fee via [PayPal](#). You can also pay by cash or check payable to Higashi Honganji North America District, 505 E. 3rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90013.

For those who cannot participate in person, you can join us via Zoom from this [link](#) or use the meeting ID 853 5003 5601 and passcode 066574 to join.

Retreat Schedule

March 30 (Sat)

- 2:30 pm Opening Service
- 3:30 pm Keynote Lecture 1 by Prof. Zhang Wei
- 5:15 pm Q&A, Discussion
- 6:00 pm Dinner & Discussion
- 8:00 pm End of Retreat

March 31 (Sun)

- 10:00 am Sunday Service at Betsuin
Dharma Talk by Prof. Zhang
- 12:00 pm Lunch
- 1:00 pm Keynote Lecture 2 by Prof. Zhang
- 2:45 pm Q&A, Discussion
- 3:30 pm Closing Service
- 4:00 pm End of Retreat

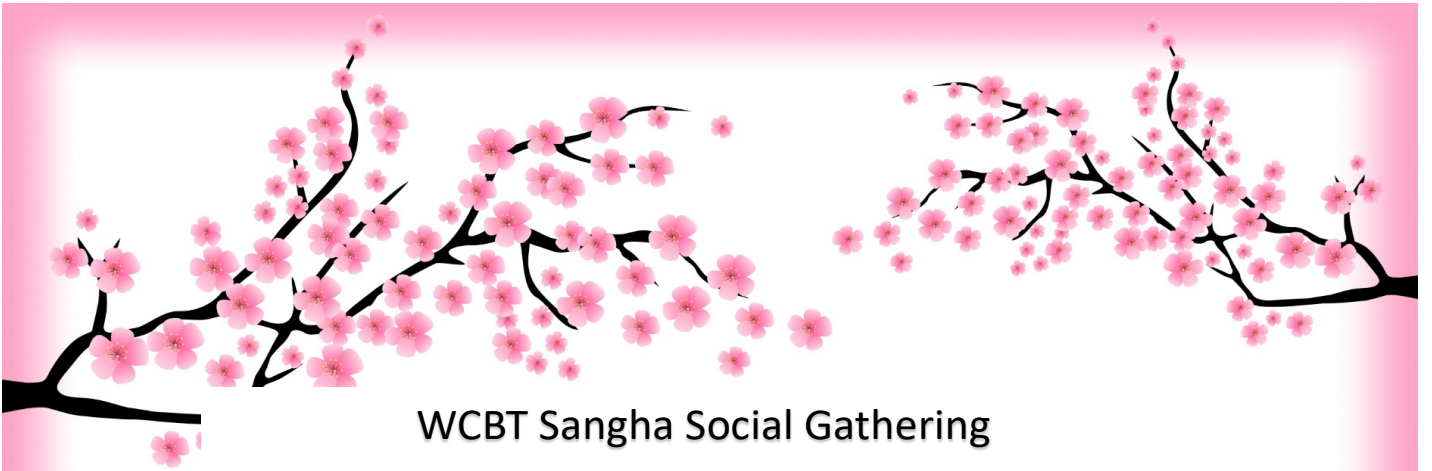
About the Lecturer

Prof. Zhang Wei (a.k.a. Shinhō Morimura) was born in Changchun, China in 1956. As part of the Down to Countryside Movement, she was sent to a countryside where she began translating Japanese literature into Chinese while supporting herself as a teacher and factory worker. After publishing her translation of Hiroshi Noma's major work, *Dark Pictures (Kurai e)*, she began studying under Noma and also researching Shinran's Buddhism.

In 1993, she entered Fukushima University where she would obtain a master's degree in Japanese literature. In 1996, she received her PhD in Japanese literature at Daitō Bunka University. From 1998, she began teaching at Ōtani University and Dōhō University. In 2006, she started the translation of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* into Chinese, which she completed in 2014 and published in 2016. She has authored numerous books including *Noma Hiroshi to Shinran* and also appeared in TV and radio programs in Japan.



T H E G A T E W A Y



WCBT Sangha Social Gathering

WHEN: Saturday, April 27, 2024

TIME: 12pm – 3pm

WHERE: Walnut, CA – Home of Haruko Mayeda

WHAT: FREE Event

12 – 1 Lunch

Ice breakers / activities

Social Time

WHY: Come and join the Sangha for a relaxing afternoon of food, fun and laughter.

WCBT has slowly come out from the pandemic period by meeting in-person for services, otoki meals, mochizuki and fundraiser events. This is an opportunity for long-time and new members to connect/reconnect to strengthen the WCBT Sangha.

RSVP: Rev. Miyoshi - revnobuko@gmail.com

Pat Sato - pishsato@gmail.com

NOTE: Let us know if you have any mobility issues so that special parking or parking assistance can be planned.

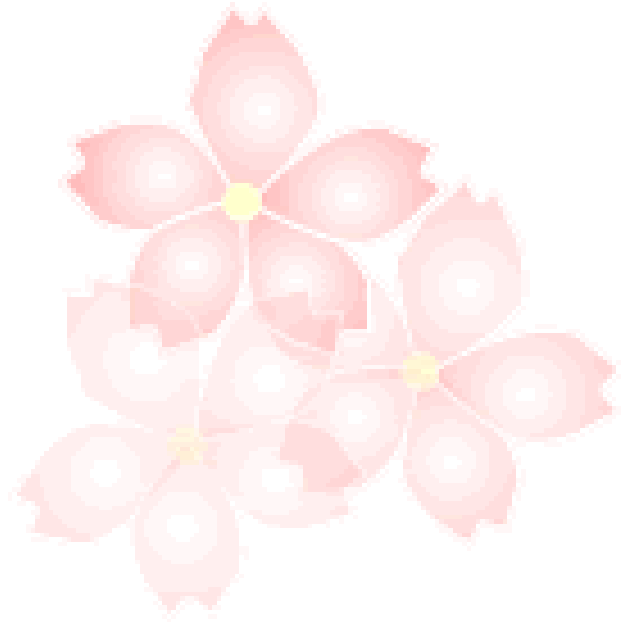


T H E G A T E W A Y



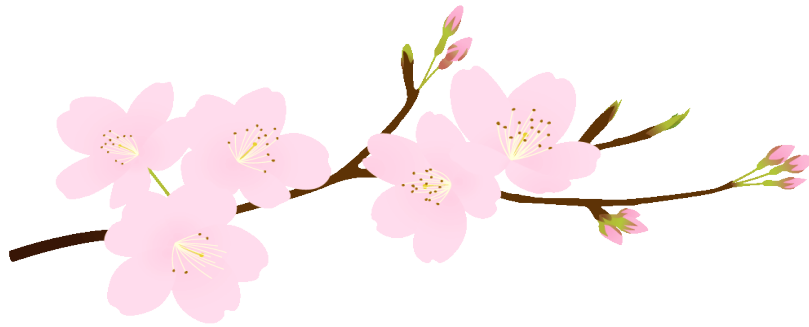


T H E G A T E W A Y





T H E G A T E W A Y



We celebrated Rev. Miyoshi's 10 year anniversary at West Covina on Feb. 4. We enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch and desserts. The only thing missing was sake as we reminisced about how time flies when the Sangha thrives and grows and has a good time.



T H E G A T E W A Y

転換が起こる時

オンラインセミナーレポート

コレア・ギルバート

過日、赤星けんじ師の講義で教える学ぶ機会をいただきました。講義のテーマは親鸞聖人の教えを現代に照らして学び直すことと、誰もが行うことができる浄土真宗における行についてでした。

オンラインセミナーは合掌して念仏を称えることから始まりました。「称名念仏は浄土真宗における行の基本です。念仏を称えて今どのような気持ちですか？」赤星先生はそう私たちに尋ねました。そして「経験の裏打ちのない行動は意味がありません」と言われました。

念仏を称えた時、正直何か特別な気持ちが出たと言われると、はっきりしたものではありません。光が差したとか、世界と一体になる感覚があったとか、そういうことはありませんでした。念仏を称えてまだ日が浅いからだろうか、もっと経験を積まなければならぬのだろうか、そう思っていました。けれども赤星先生から南無阿彌陀仏の意味についての説明を聞くうちに、「雲霧の下、明らかにして聞きことなし」ということが自身のことであると思えるようになってきました。バラバラなピースのようだった私の仏教理解が収まるべき場所に定まったような感覚でした。念仏を通して届けられていたことは常に私の人生と共にありました。私がすべきことは視点を変え、違う角度からそれを見ることだったのです。

南無阿彌陀仏は私たちの感謝の表現である、と教えられました。念仏は私たちの見方を変えることを思い出させる行為であり、もうすでにいただいていることへの感謝の表現なのです。たくさんの贈り物もらった

ことについて「ありがとう」と言うことに特別な言語も文化体験も必要ありません。感謝は私たちのような普通の人間が目覚めの道に立って歩き出す第一歩なのです。感謝を表現することで仏法が私たちの日常生活に呼び込まれ、念仏を称えるというシンプルな行為は私たちの前を生きた人々への深い感謝の気持ちの表現となります。それは生かされているという事実への目覚めとも言えます。私たちは何をいただいているのでしょうか？その問いへの答えは、この問いを別の角度から問い直してみることで明らかになるかもしれません。それは私たちがいただいているもののうちで「おかげさま」ではないものなどあるのでしょうか？という問いです。

ウェストコピナのお寺での私の学びはまだ始まったばかりです。常に煩惱の雲に覆われ、仏教の理解もほとんどない私です。真宗門徒としての私の生活はまだ新しく、よく理解していないことも多いのが事実です。そんな私がこれまで学んだことは、私の目を曇らせている煩惱をこの身から完全に切り離すことはできない、ということです。けれどもそんな私にこれまでいただいたことに対する感謝の気持ちが起こるのです。それは雲に覆われてその光を見ることができなくても、日の光が常に明るく輝いているようなものです。もし私たちが視点を変え、思い込みから自由になった時、初めてそこにあるものの尊さに気がつくことができるのでしょうか。そしてそれが常に私たちと共にあったということにも気がつくことができるのです。その気づきが私たちに深い感謝の気持ちを生じさせるのです。南無阿彌陀仏や他力という言葉は言いにくいかもしれませんが、理解するのが難しいかもしれません。でもそれらの言葉に込められていることを「Thank you」という言葉で表現することは、誰もができるのではないのでしょうか。

ありがとうございます。
南無阿彌陀仏

お寺ニュース

春のお彼岸法要

英語によるお彼岸法要は3月17日(日)午後4時半よりオンラインと対面のハイブリッド形式にてお勤めいたします。シカゴ仏教会で開教使を勤めておられた中井パティ師のご法話を聴聞します。ご家族で是非お参りください。

4月の法話会祥月法要は4月4日(木)、5月の法話会祥月法要は5月2日(木)にお寺にてお勤めします。時間はいずれも午前10時です。

サンガ交流会

お寺における法要、イベントも本格的に復活してきました。改めてメンバー同士の絆を確かめることを目的とし、来たる4月27日(土)正午より、サンガ交流会を開催します。場所や詳細につきましては5ページをご覧ください。土曜日の午後のひと時を皆さまと過ごすことができることを楽しみにしています。

花まつり法要

本年の花まつり法要は4月14日(日)午前10時よりお勤めいたします。この花まつりでは、毎年皆さまにご持参頂いたお花で花御堂を飾り、お釈迦様のご誕生をお祝いいたします。また4月7日(日)午後1時半より、小東京の高野山米国別院にて仏教連合会主催の花まつりがお勤めされます。ご家族お誘い合わせの上、ぜひご参詣下さい。

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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DATED MATERIAL

THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE

❁ **GATEWAY** ❁

March - April 2024 - - Vol. LVIII No. 2

- March**
- 17 4:30 pm Spring Ohigan Service-hybrid
 - 21 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
 - 24 10:00 am Sunday Service-hybrid
 - 26 6:00 pm Study Class-online
 - 28 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
 - 30-31 NAD Join Retreat-hybrid
 - 31 No Sunday Service
- April**
- 2 7:00 pm Board Meeting-online
 - 4 10:00 am Howakai Japanese Service
 - 4 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
 - 7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service-hybrid
 - 7 1:30 pm LABTF Hanamatsuri-hybrid
@Koyasan Buddhist Temple
 - 9 6:00 pm Study Class-online
 - 11 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
 - 14 10:00 am Hanamatsuri-hybrid
 - 18 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
 - 21 10:00 am Sunday Service-hybrid
- 2024年3月行事予定**
- 17日 午後4時半 春季彼岸法要ーハイブリッド
 - 24日 午前10時 日曜礼拝ーハイブリッド
 - 30ー31日 北米開教区合同リトリートーハイブリッド
 - 31日 日曜礼拝お休み
- 4月行事予定**
- 2日 午後7時 理事会ーオンライン
 - 4日 午前10時 法話会
 - 7日 午前10時 祥月法要ーハイブリッド
 - 7日 午後1時半 仏連花祭り
(於高野山米国別院)
 - 14日 午前10時 花祭りーハイブリッド
 - 21日 午前10時 日曜礼拝ーハイブリッド
 - 27日 正午 サンガ交流会

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「敵」をやっつけるのが戦争ですが
壊れるのは自然であり
失われるのは生活であり
死ぬのは人間です

長田 弘