Good News

Montebello Plymouth Congregational Church
A United Church of Christ
144 S. Greenwood Ave. Montebello, CA 90640
(323) 721-5568 MontebelloUCC.org

October 2026
Volume XLV No. X

A Message from your Moderator…
Lori Katayama

Fall greetings everyone!

I encourage everyone to check the October calendar and see if you can volunteer in some way.

The various boards and committees are working hard to provide continuity in our worship, our Christian education and fellowships, and our outreach. I would like to remind you of MPCC's long tradition of volunteerism and giving.

Our founders over 113 years ago were mostly flower farmers in the Montebello area who began meeting in a building a few blocks from our current location. Through this association a desire for spiritual community grew. They received some help from a church that recognized that need. People volunteered and contributed their hard earned money towards purchasing land and erecting buildings. They built the foundation with Christ as the cornerstone.

Years passed. There were difficult years filled with times of persecution and discrimination. There were times of sadness and despair but also hope and trust in God's goodness. So the Issei persevered and returned to again contribute and volunteer.

Much of the hard work has already been done over these 113 years. With gratitude, we have property and buildings fully paid for. With gratitude, we are supported and encouraged by our local United Church of Christ. And with utmost gratitude, we have each other and the community we sustain and continue to build together.

Thank you, everyone, for your spirit-led hard work. You are each a blessing!

Worship Schedule

October 4
Holy Communion w/ Rev. Dennis Alger
"Kokokahi: Of One Blood"
Psalm 19 & Acts 17:22-28

October 11
Speaker Rev. Jenn Tafel
"The Guest List"
Matthew 22:1-14

October 18
Speaker Sandra Low
"The Bible Tells Me So"
1 Corinthians 13:9-13

October 25
Church Clean-Up
Speaker Rev. Joyce Kirkmoore
"Where is Your Heart?"
Matthew 22:34-46

A Message from our Treasurer…
Bien Reyes

Financial Summary - August 2026

	Month	YTD
Total Income:	$10,857.26	$170,703.71
Total Expenses:	$18,502.28	$186,823.46
Surplus/(Deficit):	($7,645.02)	($16,119.75)

Board of Trustees
Annie Yamasaki, chairperson

Greetings church friends and family,
We are coming to the end of a tumultuous year and are doing ok. Although we are in constant deficit in our monthly income, the work we have to do to maintain the church comes from a different budget that had been set aside for that purpose. Trustees has a long 'to do' list of items that have been put off. The list includes the aged and failing plumbing and electrical systems that threaten to stop working. We have been debating whether we need to bite the bullet and have the entire campus rewired and replumbed. This work will need congregational approval when it becomes an urgent need. We will be getting work proposals to see what these improvements will entail.

As much as we are saddened by the departure of the young family, the silver lining of not having a pastor at the moment is that there is no need to pay a pastor's salary, which offsets this year's income deficit. Of course this is not something we can count on long term. November will be stewardship month and you will again be asked to be generous.

All the boards are reviewing their budgets to determine the practicality of each line item and are reducing them as needed. Everyone will get a chance to review the changes at the budget meeting later in the year.

Since as early as 1972, the MPCC board of trustees was entrusted with administering the Fukushima scholarship fund. The Fukushima scholarship honored the memory of the late Reverend J.K. Fukushima who was a pioneer pastor among Japanese-American Christians and served as pastor for fifty-five years. Rev. Fukushima affirmed the value of Christian living and this scholarship seeks to assist persons in pursuit of a Christian education. The scholarship was available for third or fourth-year college students, or graduate/ professional students.

A few years ago, the Fukushima family made a request to MPCC to accelerate the depletion of the scholarship fund. To that end, the scholarship committees started giving larger awards. This year, 2026, the last Fukushima Scholarship was awarded.

Many recipients of the Fukushima scholarship have visited MPCC as guest preachers and all have shown much gratitude and acknowledged the impact the scholarship had on their journey in their pursuit of a Christian education.

The MPCC trustees board would also like to thank the Fukushima family for the opportunity to be stewards of the fund that made such a difference on the lives of the recipients.

Christian Education Board
Steven Woo, chairperson

Our Halloween party is on October 24th Saturday from 6-9 PM. Bring your kids and grandkids and enjoy dinner, play games, do crafts, and trick or treat on our campus. If you don't have a costume, that's OK! No costume needed to join the festivities. See you there!

We can also use some help with desserts. We will have a sign-up in Mori hall for volunteers.

Diaconate Board
Lynne Hanamoto, chairperson

In Addition to the guest speakers, that were printed in the Sept. Goodnews, Rev. Sam Pullen, also brought Rev. Nori Ochi, to speak to our Congregation on Sept. 20. Rev. Ochi is an ordained American Baptist Pastor, who is the youngest son of immigrant parents from Japan. He was born and raised in CA. While in college, he experienced his calling to ministry and later became an intern at Evergreen Baptist Church. He then served as a family pastor at a predominately black church, Panaroma Baptist Church, then he planted a church in Skid Row area of L.A. For the past twelve years Nori has been a stay-at-home parent, finding time to do ministry whenever possible: annual mission trips to Oaxaca, Mexico to assist in medical clinics for indigenous communities, advocating for the rights of immigrants, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and serving on various boards: Evergreen Baptist Church, Central City Community Church Outreach, Aldama Elem. School and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. Thank you, Rev. Nori, for sharing with us!

For the Month of October:
October is our UCC Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering. Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. In 2025, the Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy. Thank you for

your support and generosity! When you give to Neighbors in Need, you help build a just world for all.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us.
Ephesians 5:1-2 (NRSVUE)

Wednesday Group
Art Hanamoto

8/26/2026 Terry H., Suzy H., Kiku K., Alice H., Ernie A., June Y., and Lynne H. folded, labeled, and mailed the Good News publication.
Lori K., Christine K., Ernie A., and Art H. 1) inspected the parsonage and began compiling a renovation task list, 2) sorted items and took them to the recycling center, 3) moved electronics and appliances from Sunday School room 6 to room 9 to make more room for the rummage sale, 4) watered the grass and plants along the Greenwood parkway, in the Los Angeles parking lot, and the parsonage yard.

9/2/2026 Ernie A., Alice H., Christine K., Jesse E., Margaret E. 1) repaired the mailbox with Ernie's help, 2) cleaned the kitchen in Mori Hall, 3) moved items from the 'Free' table to Sunday School room 6, 4) checked and repaired the parsonage sprinklers, 5) cleared space in parsonage garage for storage, 6) pulled weeds from behind the shed, and 7) watered the front walkway lawn, plants near the sanctuary entrance and trimmed leaves.

9/9/2026 Jesse E., Margaret E., Christine K., Alice H., Lynne H., and Art H. completed the following parsonage renovation tasks: 1) removed one carport, 2) inspected all windows and interior doors for working parts, 3) tested the A/C wall units, 4) detached bookshelves from the walls, 5) moved the TV and chairs to storage, and 6) removed the towel bars. They also cleaned the kitchen in Mori Hall and organized items on the 'Free' table.

9/16/2026 Ernie A., Jesse E., Margaret E., Christine K., Alice H., Lynne H., and Art H. 1) removed the parsonage window drapes and covered the windows with butcher paper, 2) moved the bookshelves to the parsonage garage, 3) cleaned the kitchen in Mori Hall, 4) took recyclables from Mori Hall and sorted them in the parsonage backyard, 5) took linens home to launder for the rummage sale, 6) moved the 'Free' table items to the Sunday School room until after the rummage sale, and 7) pulled weeds, watered and trimmed plants in the Los Angeles parking lot and the parsonage yard.

Special Offerings and Gifts

Bender Family	Summer Ex & Congratulations to Brian C.'s marriage
Kobashigawa, Kiku	Family Fund
Yoshimi, Evelyn	Summer & Winter Ex

To: Bible Study, Japanese Classes, Dance Class, Jets/Jetts
From: MPCC Main Office

Monday through Saturday usage of facilities
Groups and individuals using the church facilities must notify the office and write their activity or responsible party on the church calendar.

All food related trash needs to be disposed of in the outdoor bins.

Leftover food should be discarded or sent home not stored in the refrigerators.

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

Prayers of the People

With deepest sympathy to the family/families of:

- Jan F. for dear friend Emett R. who recently passed. Prayers for wife Michelle and 3 children.
- Rev. Ernie Reyes and family in the passing of his mother.

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.
- Maria M.'s prayers for God's guidance for Erica Armijo. Also, prayers for neighbors Maria M. and Stella G. (mother and daughter) who are in two different hospitals.
- Lori K.'s prayers for Nepal, Tibet, China, and all the people from various countries who were impacted by natural disasters. Also, prayers for healing for Kyoko U. who is undergoing chemo for cancer.
- Toni M.'s prayers for granddaughter Samanta who moved to Colorado and just got married.
- Kiko K.'s prayers for good health for friend Sheila L.
- Rev. Ernie Reyes's prayers for MPCC who is going through Pastoral transition, pray for the church leaders, especially for Lori K. and all the leadership.
- Lynne H.'s prayers for people in Kauai and for Ann H. our church member who has a family business in Kauai.
- Carolyn W.'s prayers for neighbor Ernie P. who is bedridden due to Parkinson illness. Prayers for his wife Kathy who is his caregiver and she's dealing with back pain.

Traveling Mercies:

- Carolyn W.'s travel mercies for son Keith and his co-workers. They are flying to Christmas Island.
- Ku'ulei P.'s travel mercies for grandson Hoipo B. who will be traveling to Atlanta, Georgia for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Internship.

Thanksgiving:

- Thanksgiving prayers for Grace H. for her successful ACL surgery and continued prayers for healing.

October Birthday Celebrations

4	Julie Tapia
5	Czarina Alimboyao
6	Julianna Okamoto
9	Kyle Tabata
10	Samantha Bedolla
10	Ben Fujita
10	Daniel Low
12	Ed Fujita
14	Midori Hamabe
16	Irene Hagihara
20	Tyler Yamada
21	Denise Bender
26	Helen Oyakawa
28	Bing Purisima
29	Mike Phillips
29	Annie Yamasaki
30	Michi Lew
31	Art Hanamoto
31	Carolyn Watanabe
31	Lori Katayama

NOTE:
For prayer requests in the month of October contact our Church office by email mpcc@montebelloucc.org or call our church office (323) 721-5568.

October Guest Speakers



Guest Speaker for October 4 Rev. Charles Dennis Alger

I'm convinced that the world is filled with friends whose names we've yet to learn. That was my first discovery in Hawai'i as a Church World Service Volunteer in 1967. Through the church, I've been privileged to travel to Cuba (x2), the Philippines (x2), and serve on various meaningful committees. I was ordained by the O'ahu Association, and have served congregations in Arizona, California, Hawai'i, and Oregon; some as interim pastor, having been trained via the Interim Training Network. My most recent interim position was with First Congregational Church in Santa Barbara; when I left there after five years, the Conference considered me retired--I'm not. I currently reside in Oceanside with my spouse of 52 years, MaryAnn.

Guest Speaker for October 11 Rev. Jenn Tafel



Rev. Jenn Tafel is a UCC minister in the Southern California and Nevada Conference with a passion for justice and caring for the planet. She has served in ministry in a variety of settings, including youth ministry and summer camps, leading a campus ministry at Michigan State University, hospital chaplaincy, and, most recently, hospice chaplaincy in metro Detroit. Rev. Tafel recently relocated back to Southern California to help care for her elderly parents. She is a member of First Congregational UCC in Long Beach, where she is in covenant and serves as chairperson of the Board of Social Justice and Outreach. Rev. Tafel's hobbies include creating acrylic paintings on canvas, spending time at beaches, gardening, enjoying family meals and celebrations, and engaging in centering spiritual practices. Rev. Tafel was raised and ordained in the Swedenborgian Church and later transferred her credentials to the United Church of Christ. Her home church in Southern California was Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes. While that church is currently undergoing a transformation, its grounds inspired her love of nature—especially the ocean—and deepened her understanding of the sacred connection between God and creation.



Speaker for October 18 Sandra Low

Sandra was raised a devout Seventh-day Adventist, pretty much living in an SDA bubble and even going as a missionary 2x to Japan. Eventually she left the SDA world for Hollywood. That didn't work out and, in 1996, she ended up at Fuller Seminary, where she met Chris Low, who introduced her to MPCC. In 2002, she graduated with a MA in Intercultural Studies from Fuller, married Chris, and worked at MPCC as the youth director till 2005. She started working for Summer Ex in 2001, took a break to have kids, came back when the kids started attending, and has served as director for the past two years.

Guest Speaker for October 25 Rev. Joyce Kirk-Moore



Rev. Joyce Kirk-Moore is a retired minister living in Claremont, CA with her husband Thomas Moore who teaches physics at Pomona College. Rev. Kirk-Moore served UCC churches in the Southern CA/Nevada Conference since 1993 including Claremont UCC, San Dimas UCC, several interims and part-time conference work. Additionally, she is the Annuitant Visitor for the UCC visiting retirees in her local region. Her work is funded by The Christmas Fund, the yearly special offering supporting retired clergy who find themselves in special need of assistance. She and Dr. Moore have two daughters, one living in Montreal with her husband and 5 year old son, and one who is an attorney in Chicago. They enjoy traveling to Montreal to spend time with their five year old grandson, Benjamin.





Sunday School working together for an activity

September 20, 2026

Guest Speakers Rev. Sam Pullen and Rev. Nori Ochi with Lynne Hanamoto



September 27, 2026

Summer Ex baked goods and curry plate fundraiser







October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	NOTE: Events marked with an asterisk (*) are private classes and not church events. Please contact the church office for more information.			1	2 Rummage Sale Sorting	3 Rummage Sale @8am Choir Practice @10am
4 Holy Communion w/ Rev. Dennis Alger **C.E. Board Meeting @11:30am**	5 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	6 Bible Study @10am	7 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	8	9	10 Choir Practice @10am
11 **Speaker Rev. Jenn Tafel** Trustees/Diaconate Meeting @11:30am	12 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	13 Bible Study @10am	14 Wednesday Group @8am *Jets/Jetts Meeting @7pm	15	16	17 Choir Practice @10am
18 **Speaker Sandra Low** Council Meeting @11:30am **Goodnews Due**	19 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	20 Bible Study @10am	21 Goodnews Mailing @9am *Dance Class @7pm	22	23	24 Setup @4pm Halloween Party 6pm-9pm
25 **Speaker Rev. Joyce Kirkmoore** Church Clean-Up	26 *Beg. Japanese Class @1:30pm *Japanese Class @2:30pm	27 Bible Study @10am	28 Wednesday Group @8am *Dance Class @7pm	29	30	31 Choir Practice @10am

Coming in November 2026

1	Speaker Rev. Gary Oba
7	Night of Champions at APU
8	Speaker Rev. Joyce Kirkmoore
15	Speaker Gillian Garcia
22	Speaker Rev. Dennis Alger Thanksgiving Sunday
29	Budget Hearing First Sunday of Advent

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

