



Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Letter # 18 - May 6, 2020

(You may click on the links in this letter to take you to the website listed)

In Today's Letter:

Roger's Greeting Prayer List

Reflection by Rev. Jon Visitacion - "A Cord of Three Strands..."

Today's reflection comes from Rev. Jon Visitacion as he shares about "cords" that ties us to God. Along with this reflection, I include some photos from the Okamoto's. Amanda shared these photos on Facebook along with her story about similar "cords". These cords turned out to be the perfect ties for her homemade masks that she shared with friends and many of our church seniors. The Spirit truly links us all together in ways we cannot imagine.

Okamoto Family Pics During Thai Buddhist String Ceremony

Upcoming Zoom Schedule

Center for Spiritual Life/Healing Arts

From the Center for Spiritual Life, Ben and Joy have shared a full 3-part set of Pal Dan Gum Qigong movements that can be done in less than 10-minutes. These movements are easily accessible for most of us. Thank you Ben and Joy!

Video 1: Basic Self-Reiki and Distant Healing

Video 2: Qigong Movements with Ben Hashiba

New - Video 3: Pal Dan Gum Qigong - Part 1

New - Video 4: Pal Dan Gum Qigong - Part 2

New - Video 5: Pal Dan Gum Qigong - Part 3

Friend of a church member has these rocks in her side yard: This young man painted his rocks "to make people happy!"

Tsuru for Solidarity Correspondence and Update

Roger's Greeting



I would like to thank you for the variety of responses to last Sunday's Aldersgate Online Worship Experience! Your responses feed the ongoing spiritual inquiry and build the bonds of community among us. Please keep the responses coming and I'll try to include as possible.

Responding to Chris' "Walk Rocks", one member sent a photos of rocks in her side yard that were painted by a young neighbor. I've included those rocks in this letter. Chris also found a few more today that I have included below. Let's call it our "Virtual Rock Garden."



Within minutes of each other, two church friends emailed me the exact same youtube video called "The Great Realisation". Evidently, the coherence to the sermon moved these two to send me the same video at the same time... nice "coincidence". Please watch if you have not seen it, you appreciate it:

"The Great Realisation" (click here)

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These words from another church member were poetic and filled with wisdom: "I was so moved by the musical performers, Chris' narration, the visuals, and especially your words. Despite the sadness of what is going on, we are able to spend time now appreciating that which we take for granted, our immediate surroundings as well as the beautiful scenes we can enjoy and give thanks for every day. To see without preconceived thoughts or ideas but emotionally respond to the beauty that surrounds us daily. Make every day a good day was something my father lived by. As an artist I like living in the moment, yesterday is a memory, tomorrow is unknown and today is beautiful. As I take my 3 deep breathes, I am appreciative of your message this morning and give thanks for all my blessings."

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Correction: In Sunday's video, I made the mistake in identifying "Komaki Befu" as Yosh's father. Komaki was his mother. My apologies. However, I had a nice chat with John Befu (Yosh and Kay's son). Kay is doing fine at the Terrace but he is not able to visit in person.

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Another church member connected the sermon to a recent video from the "Rubin Museum of Art" in NYC from February 2018. The video features a psychiatrist, Dr. Mark Epstein, and a spiritual intuitive, Laurea Lynne Jackson who reflect on how the present and future actually affect the past. You may wish to check out this video and even check out the Rubin Museum of Art online:

Laura Lynne Jackson and Dr. Mark Epstein
(click here)

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Our Prayer List:

We have added Bonnie Pennebaker, the younger sister of John Pennebaker. Bonnie is recovering from a stroke.

Haruye Ng, Paul Osaki, Sue Nakamura, Tak Nishiura, Sam Nieda, Kiyo Shizuru, Lea Haratani, Kamila Young, Hitoshi Tachibana, Chloe Gong, Ginger Powell, Jieun Lee, David Nelson, Patricia Orr, Jamie Campbell, Mel Imai, Harry Hatasaka, Ray Narimatsu, Mayumi Takeda, Rev. Mariellen Sawada Yoshino, Sue Lemba, Martha Tanji, Edith Yanagisawa and Bonnie Pennebaker.

Reflection by Rev. Jon Visitacion

“A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” - Ecclesiastes 4:12

When I finished the first year of my chaplain residency, my cohort ended the year with a ritual based upon the Buddhist protection cords. We tied string around the arm of each of our peers and shared a blessing for one another for the future. We were told at the time that depending on the wear and tear, these cords can either last for a few months, to years. I was not expecting it to stay on this long, but as I approach the 2-year mark the protection cord still stays tied around my right wrist. In that time, my watch has broken twice, I've cut my hands numerous times, and this cord has never broken, frayed, or come apart. And when I see that piece of string tied around my wrist, I think of everything I have gone through, and the blessings that carry me forward.



I think it is interesting that only in these last few months I've noticed that this string has stretched during the time of Covid. It sits loosely on my arm, and yet still tight enough that I cannot slip my hand through. And as I have been going through some of the most challenging moments as a chaplain in the hospital, I remember a scripture verse from the end of Ecclesiastes 4:12: A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

A scripture that is commonly referred to in weddings, this scripture passage for me brings a space of protection, perseverance, and hope. Just like the piece of string tied around my wrist, it is a gentle reminder for me that God still walks this journey with us all, and will continue to be with us always.

Rev. Jon



**Okamoto Family Pics
During Thai Buddhist
String Ceremony**



Upcoming Zoom Meeting and Online Gatherings:

Choir Practice, Wednesday, May 6th at 6:30 PM
Topic: AUMC Choir Meeting May 6th at 6:30pm

Join Choir Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/511182912>
Meeting ID: 511 182 912
Password: 012345

Kaizen Living, Tuesday, May 12th at 7:30 PM

Join “Kaizen Living” Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87555229706>
Meeting ID: 875 5522 9706
Password: 012345

I hope you're all doing well and are thriving the best you can. I just want to remind you of Kaizen Living Zoom talk which is planning to take place on Tuesday night at 7:30pm (May 12th). I have a few topics in mind but would like to hear suggestions or interests you might want to hear about.

You can just come and listen and not be visible on video or you can also listen on your phone. We'll give you the Zoom code later with the announcement of the topic.

Attached are ideas you can checkout for Meaningful May. If you want me to send you out a nice printed version of this, let me know. Some of these take only just a minute or just mindfulness throughout the day. Stay Strong, Safe and Sane,

Nan Kitaura

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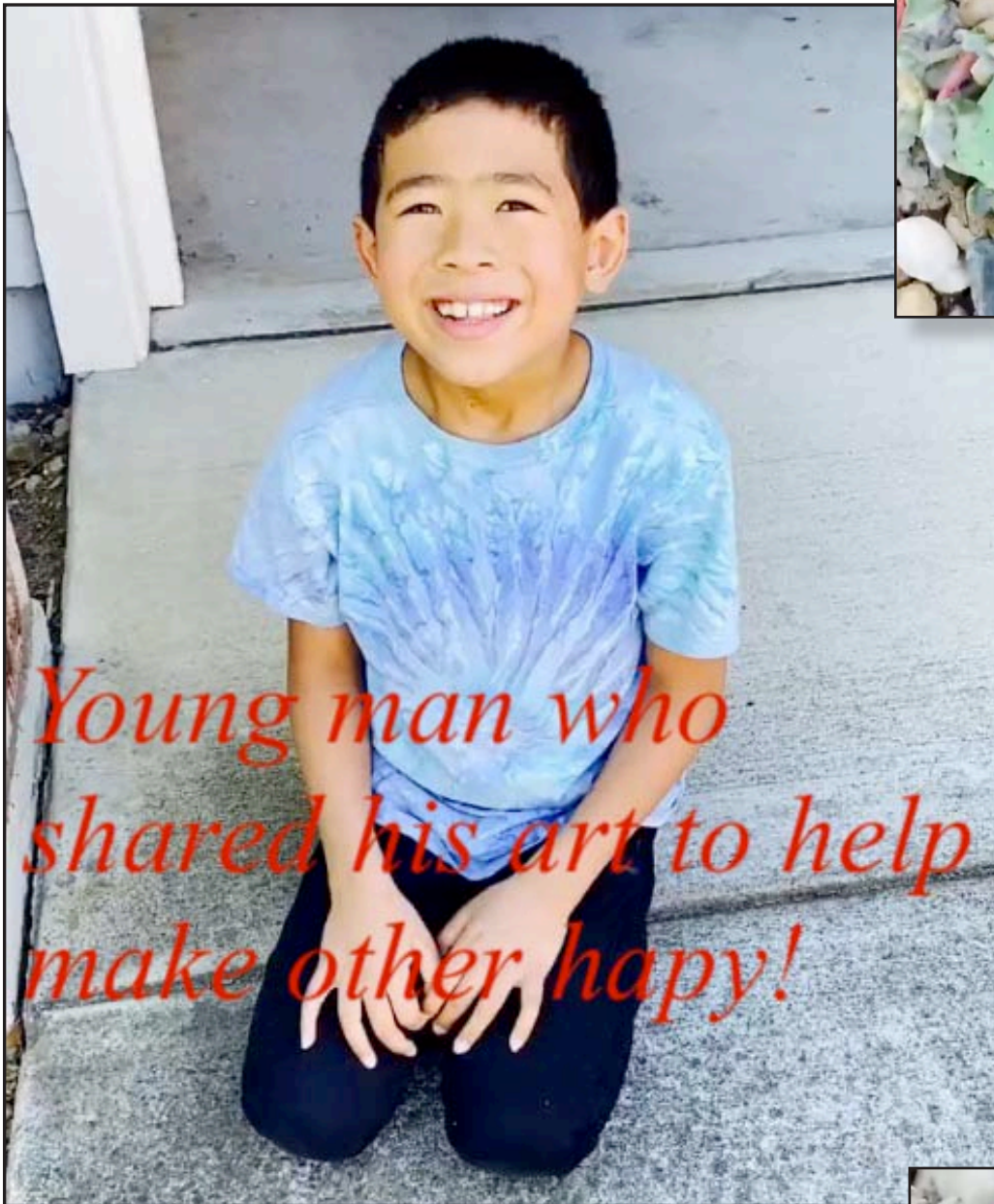
Center for Spiritual Life - Healing Arts

To access each video, click on each description:

- Video 1: Basic Self-Reiki Techniques and Distant Healing
- Video 2: Qigong Movements with Ben Hashiba
- New -Video 3: Pal Dan Gum Movements - Part 1
- New Video 4: Pal Dan Gum Movements - Part 2
- New Video 5: Pal Dan Gum Movements - Parts 3

produced/created by
Joy Nakamura and Ben Hashiba

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Friend of a church member has these rocks in her side yard: This young man painted his rocks "to make people happy!"



We did it -- we folded 125,000 cranes! In fact, we not only hit that number, we blasted through it.

To our surprise, the last tsuru update unleashed a flood of emails from around the country which updated us on the number of cranes you folded. Your numbers increased our count, astonishingly, by more than 90,000.

So our current count is 213,277!

Thank you thank you! Together, we are a mighty force. We have received cranes (and tsuru counts) from churches, Girl Scouts, Buddhist temples, families, Nisei seniors, an origami class at San Quentin, activist groups, university clubs and many more.

But we're not done.

Our initial goal was to fold 125,000 cranes, one for each person of Japanese descent who had been incarcerated by the U.S. government during WWII. We wish to continue to fold in remembrance and to show solidarity with detainees who are incarcerated today. The cruel conditions and neglect they have endured are being dangerously worsened by the pandemic.

According to Detention Watch Network, the average daily population of detained immigrants in the U.S. increased from approximately 5,000 in 1994 to nearly 40,000 in 2017. After 30 years of expansion, the detention system now holds as many as 400,000 immigrants annually.

We have therefore decided to set a new goal of 400,000 additional tsuru -- the number of immigrants incarcerated annually -- to add to our initial goal of 125,000. That brings our new goal to 525,000 and we are already nearing the halfway point. We hope that you'll join us as we continue to fold. We wish to show that immigrant children, youths, families and other detainees seeking safety in our country will not be forgotten. Help us stop the indifference.

To celebrate our collective achievement of the initial goal, let's free our cranes from quarantine and share a photo of them on social media with the hashtag #TsuruRising. Please indicate your location and if you'd like, add your name or organization. You may also send your image to tsuruforsolidarity@gmail.com. We eagerly await your images of cranes flying to freedom.

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Lastly, on the May 24th online video, we will be having a PET PARADE!!! Please send me a video (landscape view) of your pets in action or doing tricks or just being cute! Don't miss this opportunity to have your pets join us online!!!

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Please keep our prayers for those who are facing physical and financial hardship in this time of the pandemic. Keep our prayers for our first responders in the fight against Covid 19 and for our essential workers.

That's all for now! Be sure to tune in on Sunday for our Mother's Day Aldersgate Online Worship Experience! We have planned some special music in the service and great entertainment for Fellowship Time.

see you next letter!