



# Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Letter # 24 - May 27, 2020

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

## In Today's Letter

Roger's Greeting and Reflections

The Loss of Loved Ones

Response to the easing of restrictions on churches

Birthday Sunday's Are Back

Pet Parade to continue...

Recognizing Graduates...

OWE and Juggling...

Prayer List

Upcoming Zoom Schedule

Please Note! Choir STARTS AT 6:25 PM (5 min. early) Wednesday, May 27th

Admin and Program Council, May 27th at 7:30 PM

CSL/Healing Arts

Video 1: Basic Self-Reiki and Distant Healing

Video 2: Qigong Movements with Ben Hashiba

Video 3: Pal Dan Gum Qigong - Part 1

Video 4: Pal Dan Gum Qigong - Part 2

Video 5: Pal Dan Gum Qigong - Part 3

NEW - Meditation Video!

## Roger's Greeting

Dear Friends,

Unfortunately, I share with you the sad news that Brad's mother, Helen Shirakawa, passed away on Sunday afternoon. Helen had been in and out of the hospital during the past week or so due to pneumonia and breathing issues. On Friday, she took a turn for the worse. Brad returned to Fresno Friday night to be with his sister, Leslie (and her husband, Nick) as they brought Helen home from the hospital on Saturday. Helen passed peacefully on Sunday. (This was not related to the coronavirus.) Brad will be in Fresno for a while but you can send correspondence for Brad to the church.

Brad has put together a memorial video in memory of Helen, his mother. [CLICK HERE](#) to view video!

More sad news as Sachiyo Yamasaki received word her youngest sister, Mayumi Takeda, passed away in Japan on Sunday. Sachiyo's other sister was allowed in the facility to be with her in Mayumi's final hours. Sachiyo was able to talk to her sister though her Mayumi was not able to respond. (Her passing was not related to the coronavirus.)

**Our prayers for Brad and his family and Sachiyo and her family in their loss.**

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**The following articles regarding the re-opening of churches and Rev. Jon's resource on "Coronavirus Anxiety" are important so I repeat them in this Letter #24.**

On Monday, Gov. Newsom announced an easing of restrictions on worship as he still left local health officials the power to limit worship. From my perspective, this was an unfortunate action for it gives a false impression that we have reached a level of safety that we have clearly not achieved. The coronavirus is a live active, uncontrolled, and dangerous virus. There is no vaccine, no cure, no real contact tracking, and systematic testing. The availability of disinfectant and proper shielding is also absent. I suspect the governor felt political pressure to open up churches. As I state below and in the previous letter, we will NOT abide by decisions based on politics but only consider the issue of safety.

Needless to say, I believe Aldersgate is a long way from opening up. (I believe the long SIP has worn on many, many people and many have become numb to the loss of life and dangers of the pandemic. The coronavirus is still an active and dangerous virus.)

Our board will address this issue this evening at our regular board meeting.

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**On Friday, Bishop Carcano responded to Trump's call to re-open churches this weekend:**

Obviously, Aldersgate is far from considering opening on any level; but Bishop Carcano had to send out an email on Friday afternoon to address concerns from pastors and laity asking if they were "required" to open up this Sunday. Obviously, her response was "no!". Here's her full text: **Click Here**.

These are difficult and confusing times for all of us in all aspects of our lives. For our churches, it is no different. While we may not agree on the dangers and severity of the pandemic, nor on the approach, it is clearly not helpful for rash polarizing declarations from leaders. Such action is synonymous with pouring gasoline onto a fire. It engenders confusion and fears at a time when exactly the opposite - cooperation and genuine concern for safety - is needed.

At this time, I feel compelled to share my own perspective:

1) Safety is paramount when considering re-opening churches. The safety of our people is primary. While we all miss church and our fellowship together, none of us want to endanger the lives of each other. I believe, metaphorically, living through this pandemic is like we are in a war and living in a war zone. We cannot do the "normal things" until hostilities cease or are managed. Until we have testing, tracking, cures, and vaccines along with protocols in place, we will only endanger one another and sow further confusion.

Here's a recent example of sowing confusion and endangering lives: In Butte County in Northern California, one church opened on Mother's Day with 180 persons in attendance. The day after, an asymptomatic person became ill and tested positive for Covid 19. Now, the 180 persons are being asked to self-quarantine for 2 weeks. These episodes are not helping anyone. Here's the story - **CLICK HERE**

In the meantime, we need to put the safety of our constituents first and to continue to support each other emotionally as best as we are able.

2) I will reject any re-opening that is driven by a political agenda.

3) Working our way to a “new normal” is going to take a long, long time. We need to be patient (remember, in a previous email Letter, I shared that “Love is Patience!”) Covid 19 is an active, uncontrolled and dangerous virus. Again, until there are protocols in place that have elements of tracking, tracing, cures, and vaccines, re-opening churches would be irresponsible and reckless.

The need for cures and vaccines will mean it will be a long time before we reach a “new normal” in the re-opening of churches.

Our conference is currently working on documents that will address these protocols for that time when it is appropriate to re-open. Last week, they released two elements that address protocols for Drive-In Church Gatherings and Church Preschool. Click on the following to read these protocols:

## **DRIVE IN church**

### **Church Preschools: This will effect Cornerstone Learning, not us**

To date, perhaps the best document on this matter was released last Wednesday, May 20th, from the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UMC (Bishop Elaine Stanovsky) entitled, “Reimagining Life Together”. Please take the time to read at least the introductory paragraphs. To access this document, please **CLICK HERE**

4) We will not be the “first out of the gate”. In this case, “winning” is not being first but being safe. Our membership mostly falls into the category of high-risk individuals. Even when churches appropriately re-open, we will be extra cautious with our re-opening. In the big picture, an extra month or so will not make a big difference but provide another level of safety for our members.

Our administrative and program councils will be meeting this Wednesday, May 27th (online regularly scheduled meeting) to continue our assessment of the situation. Keep us in your prayers as we navigate our congregation these unprecedented times.

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### **From Rev. Jon Visitacion:**

Jon is sharing with us an excellent workbook/tool to address our anxiety and stress during this SIP for the pandemic. It is entitled, “The Coronavirus Anxiety Workbook: A Tool to Help You Build Resilience During Difficult Times”. Please feel free to share this pdf with others. **CLICK HERE**

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**BIRTHDAYS!** The last Sunday of the month will be “Birthday Sunday” with a brief online recognition of birthdays. The first re-activation of birthday Sunday will be May 31st. Please send me the names (and month) of your and other friends and family members’ birthday (no years please). For May 31st, we will be recognizing EVERYONE born in the months of January, February, March, April, and May!!! Of course, we’ll miss some names but let’s get as many names into me so we can have it on the video!

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**Pet Parade continued...** Over the next few weeks, if you did not get a chance to get your pet in the parade... the parade will continue. Please get you video or pic in by the Wednesday before the Sunday. If you did not see your pet, please let me know. It means I missed it as I move the submissions around on my computers.

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**Recognizing our graduates...** On June 24th Online Worship Experience, we will be recognizing our graduates. Please help us by submitting names to us of individuals graduating or transferring on any level of education or training.

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**Response to Online Worship Experience(OWE)...** We have received nice comments and responses to our OWE. Thank you for your kind words; however, I have to say that one dominant theme is how people are enjoying the "Fellowship Time". If I think about it, I have to say this was probably always been true and I am grateful. It's just funny that it generally the favorite part!

... and with that said, next Sunday has some fancy juggling - I'll be opening the fellowship time juggling showcase and one of my apprentices will be following up. You won't want to miss it!

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

Roger

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**Our Prayer List:**

Haruye Ng, Paul Osaki, Sue Nakamura, Tak Nishiura, Sam Nieda, Kiyoo Shizuru, Lea Haratani, Kamila Young, Hitoshi Tachibana, Chloe Gong, Ginger Powell, Jieun Lee, David Nelson, Patricia Orr, Jamie Campbell, Mel Imai, Harry Hatasaka, Rev. Mariellen Sawada Yoshino, Sue Lemba, Martha Tanji, Edith Yanagisawa, Bonnie Pennebaker, Nagi Hashiba, Tim Ome, and Alex Baquiran.

Prayers for Brad and his family in the passing of his mother, Helen Shirakawa.

Prayers for Sachiyo and her family in the passing of her sister, Mayumi Takeda.

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# Upcoming Zoom Meeting and Online Gatherings:

## Upcoming Koyukai Online Gathering

**Choir Practice, Wednesday, May 27th at 6:25 PM**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/511182912>**

**Meeting ID: 511 182 912**

**Password: 012345**

**One tap mobile phone with video and audio:**

**+16699006833,,511182912#,1#,012345#**

**Dial by your location on any phone with audio only:**

**+1 669 900 6833**

**Meeting ID: 511 182 912**

Password: 012345

## Admin and Program Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 27th at 7:30 PM

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.  
<https://www.gotomeet.me/RogerMorimoto>

You can also dial in using your phone.  
United States: +1 (646) 749-3122  
Access Code: 319-768-589

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:  
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/319768589>

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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
- NEW! Video 6: Meditation**

produced/created by  
Joy Nakamura and Ben Hashiba

NEW: Meditation Video from Ben and Joy  
Need help to find that inner peace within you? Check out this new video!

“Pal Dan Gum is a set of eight qigong exercises used to help one stay active and fit while increasing the body’s energy. Doing these exercises can help you feel refreshed, relaxed, and energized. You can complete the set of eight Pal Dan Gum exercises in 10 minutes or less.”

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**see you next letter!**