



The newsletter of Christ Church – Sei Ko Kai, San Francisco

Lent, 2004

Facing our Wilderness

Lent begins, as did Jesus' public ministry, in the wilderness. Our wilderness at Christ Church this year is very dear to me. I preached about it at Ash Wednesday, and following this is a part of my message from that day. It's a stark picture of where we are and the challenges we face. . .

But it isn't the last word, I promise you. In fact, the rest of Lent is going to be about following in Jesus' footsteps. Even as he faced the cross, he healed the sick, gathered his disciples, and proclaimed the Good News of the Reign of God to the suffering and poor: to those journeying in their own wilderness.

And that is my pledge to you for the rest of Lent. It is time again to talk about the Reign of God. And there is always reason to hope in that. As you'll see later in this season's Messenger, some of us are starting to work on the problems in front of us with the Reign of God in mind. Be sure to join us!

A Reflection for Ash Wednesday

Dear Friends in Christ:

Lent is a season of truth-telling, of re-learning to tell the hard truths to each other in love. The hard truth we must face together again as a community this Lent is that our church is dying.

Our present active membership is declining due to attrition and age. Since our Annual Meeting, we have learned that dry rot is doing substantial damage to the windows and siding on the church facility. In a short time, we will need to move forward with very expensive repairs and repainting for our building's exterior. This will put considerable strain on our financial resources and necessitate a capital campaign.

I am increasingly hearing the refrain from many of you that there isn't enough energy, time, or people to commit to the work necessary to turn Christ Church around, and not even enough to keep it going as it is today.

Within a year, we will be hard-pressed financially, we will be even more short of working hands in our membership, and we will be faced with cutting our budget, activities, and ministries. We may end up forced to reduce the Vicar's position to part time.

A few of you have already reminded me that we've done this before. Indeed we have. For decades, Christ Church has lived at the brink of death, struggling with meager resources and not quite enough hands to do the work. During our history, the Vicar's position has been full-time some years and part-time in others. But I should tell you now, with a heavy heart, that if we reach the point again of reducing this position to part time, it will be impossible for me to continue serving as your Vicar.

But more importantly for our future, the Gospel for Christ Church is not: "We've done it before, and we can do it again." The Gospel for Christ Church is that we don't have to live anymore at the brink of death. And that challenge remains before this community whether I am here or not. Are we really ready to live into this Gospel?

If so, we must pursue a radical transformation of who and what Christ Church is. It's time to get serious about our charge of making new disciples for Christ. We need to become a community of formation: one where we are in the business of deepening our relationship with God and calling others into that

relationship. And we need to reach out to people who are different from us – reach out and welcome them into this community. And then when they come, we will need to allow ourselves to be changed; because new faces, new voices, and new vision will transform us, too. That is what resurrection and renewed life in the Spirit would mean for us.

It's up to you. And it's up to all of us together.

Remember that I am here with you as long as I can be. And I love you. Please call, write, or come and see me if you want to discuss any of this with me.

Faithfully, R+

灰の聖日（アッシュ・ウエンスデー）に当たって

聖公会の皆さん

大斎節（レント）は真実を語る時期です。耳に痛い真実でも好意を持って語りあえるように、改めて努力する時期です。今年の大斎節にあたって、私たちが教会として直面しなければならない真実とは、今や私たちの聖公会は死滅する寸前であることです。

現在、聖公会の日曜礼拝に出席なさっている信徒の方々は、年々歳をとって外出もままならなくなるばかりです。先日の年次信徒総会以後に、教会の窓回りと建物の側面が腐って傷んでいることが判りました。早急に非常に多くのお金を費やして修理をし、外側のペンキを塗り直す必要があります。このような出費は、現在の財政状態では非常に困難ですので、資金募集をする必要があります。

私は皆さんから、もうこの教会には、教会を再興させるため活力も時間も残っていない、そのような仕事に打ち込んでくれる人々もいない、それどころか、現状を維持することも難しいと、耳にたこができるほど聞かされます。

教会のお金は、あと一年も経たないうち底をつきます。その頃には、教会のために奉仕できる会員も減っていることでしょう。教会の予算、活動や牧師の時間も減らさなければならない問題に直面するでしょう。牧師は非常勤になるかも知れません。

私は、このような事態は以前にも発生したと聞きました。事実、キリスト聖公会は過去数十年間にわたり、死にかかったり、貧しい財政をやりくりして切りぬけたり、何をやるにも人手が足りないことがありました。牧師は常勤の時代もあり、非常勤の時もありました。私の問題をありのまま申し上げれば、キリスト聖公会で牧師が非常勤に切り下げられた場合は、私はもはや、聖公会において牧師として奉職を続けることは不可能となります。

しかし、キリスト聖公会にとって本当に重要なことは、神様は聖公会に対して「以前に何とかなっただことがある、だからまた何とかなるに違いない」とは言っていません。神様が私たちに賜る御言葉とは、「今後も引き続き、死にかかった状態で生きよ

うとする必要はまったく無い」ことです。この問題は、私が聖公会に今後も続けていても、いなくても、付きまとう問題です。皆さん、瀕死の状態から抜け出したくはありませんか。

抜け出したいのであれば、今すぐ、キリスト聖公会の性格と内容を徹底的に変えてゆく必要があります。私たちの、キリストを信じる人々を増やす責務を真剣に実践しなければなりません。私たちはキリスト聖公会を、私たちが神様より深く結び付く場所としなければなりません。また外の人々をお招きして、同じように神様と結び付けていただく場所とする必要があります。私たちとちがう人々に対して手を差し伸べ、聖公会に迎える。新しい人、新しい意見、新しい考え方が入ってくると教会も変わってゆくでしょう。変わっても良しとすることが必要です。これこそキリストの復活と、私たちが霊的に新しく生まれ変わることの意義なのです。

実行に移すか移さないかは、あなた方の決断にかかっています。私たち皆で解決にあたる問題です。

私は可能な限り聖公会に残って、皆さんのために尽くしたいと思います。この問題について、お話になりたいことがあれば、どうぞお電話でもお手紙でも、あるいは私に会いにこられてあなたのお考えをお聞かせください。

主を信じて、

R+

Christ Church Annual Meeting, 2004: **Working for a more Hopeful Future**

Our new mission statement, adopted at our Annual Meeting on January 11th:

Christ Church is a community church with broad and diverse membership. We value our history and heritage as a Japanese-American church as we embrace all the cultural communities we welcome and serve. We are growing in our life together with God by actively reaching out to our neighbors to share our heritage and to strengthen our understanding of others. We provide programs that support and fulfill both young and old, contemporary and traditional.

At our Annual Meeting, we began three development groups:

Growth and Development

The Growth and Development group met in mid-February, including **Jim Key, Kei Nagai, Mary Vargas, Kuni Koga, and Richard Helmer.**

We reviewed our website, we're developing welcome materials for newcomers, and we're preparing to begin an advertising campaign in the local neighborhood ahead of each of our major events this year. Our first leaflets will be distributed to front doorsteps late in March, inviting the neighborhood to come and celebrate Easter with us.

Social Activities

The social activities group has not yet met.

Cooperation with Alta Plaza Preschool

Minoru Akuhara, Satoko Boris, and Richard Helmer met with **Sharon Bricker**, the director of Alta Plaza Preschool, to begin planning joint work. Working with **Myma Tsukamoto**, we're hoping to contribute to the children's celebration on May 5th and we're making plans to engage in more joint work with the preschool in the future.

Godly Play: The Faces of Easter

During the season of Lent, our children are learning more about the Holy Family and the path of Jesus leading up to Easter.

In February, Frances Morioka, Florence Small, Larry Small, and Richard Helmer cleaned out the Sunday School area of the sacristy to prepare it more for Godly Play materials and make it a special focal point for the Sunday School students.

Thanks again for the hard work and dedication of our teachers: Satoko Boris, Candace Kika, Kuni Koga, Frances Morioka, Florence Small, Larry Small, Ryoko Tadakuma, and Nat Wong.

And a big thank you to our students: Issey Akuhara, Matthew Boris, and Kenneth and Connor Morioka!

A Time for Forgiveness 2004 Soko Bukai Lenten Series

Christ Episcopal Church, Christ United Presbyterian Church, and Pine United Methodist Church are presenting this year's Lenten series that began on Sunday, February 29th at Christ Episcopal Church – Sei Ko Kai. Our next meeting will be at Pine Church, 33rd Avenue at Clement, on Sunday, March 14th. Lunch begins at 12:30 p.m. followed by a program from 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Leading our Lenten series this year is The Rev. Stina Pope. Using the Lord's Prayer as the basis, we will look at the practice of forgiveness as a way to emotional and physical healing. Each session will focus on different issues in our lives and forgiveness. Be prepared for some interesting and fun exercises. The Rev. Stina Pope has worked as an Episcopal priest for more than 25 years. In addition to interim work in parishes, she engages in healing ministry with individuals as well as groups in workshops and retreats. Stina is also a certified massage therapist.

Celebrating the Baptism of Daniel Akira Helmer

Special thanks to everyone who made Daniel's baptism on February 2nd such a wonderful event! Over 40 people attended the service, which was followed with delicious food and fellowship.

Michiko Saito in Recital

Congratulations to Michiko Saito, whose concert of Japanese art song and opera drew a full crowd to the Imperial Room of the Miyako Hotel on Sunday, February 29th.

Christ Church Summer Frolic, 2004

One of our most important fundraisers, our annual *Summer Frolic*, will be held at Pine United Methodist Church on **Sunday June 27th, 2004**. The price per ticket will be \$15.00, the same as last year. Mark your calendars now, and please sell all the tickets you can. Our goal is to raise \$5,000.00 to keep our 2004 budget in balance. In order to meet our goal, we need everyone's effort and participation. Thank you for your cooperation and enthusiasm.

From the Fundraising Committee:

Frances Morioka
Larry Small
Joe Tondo
Ryoko Tadakuma

East Bay Nikkei Singles Scholarship

East Bay Nikkei Singles is offering a \$500 scholarship for 2004. Application is open to the following:

1. Students of single-parent families
2. Residents of Northern California
3. Persons of Nikkei (an American of Japanese descent) heritage

Deadline for application is April 15, 2004.

Please contact the church office if you'd like an application or know someone who might be interested in applying for this annual scholarship.

Kokoro Blessings and Update

On Sunday afternoon, February 29th, **Richard Helmer**, in conjunction with other clergy from the Japanese American Religious Federation, had a service of blessing for the new residents of Kokoro. In addition to blessing the building, they blessed the entryway, offices, nurse's stations, and residents' rooms. A regular worship service will now be held on the last Sunday of each month. Some will be interfaith. Others will be led in turn by JARF member churches.

At the beginning of March, Kokoro was well on its way to full capacity. 32 residents now live at Kokoro, including our long-time friend, **Nancy Oyama**. Kokoro also recently secured a substantial grant from the city.

Life in the Spirit. . .

Re-introducing an Ancient Tradition

We continue gathering once a month at 8:30 a.m. on the last Sunday for Morning Prayer, Rite I. Come join us for this time of prayer, reflection, and discussion!

A Message from Brother Antonio

Dear Fr. Richard & the People of SEIKOKAI,

A greeting from Sao Paulo! I arrived safely at Sao Paulo. Weather is good and food is excellent here. On February 22 I assisted Japanese Mass and Portuguese Mass at St. John's Church where Br. Cezar, a Franciscan is the rector. It is a modern, beautiful church and the people are very friendly there. On February 29 Bp. Hiroshi Ito of this diocese took me with his wife and another Franciscan Brother to the Church of Christ the Savior for his official visitation, the Confirmation, and the Installation of the new rector.

This week I am going to visit IKOI NO SONO (the old people's home for Japanese Brazilians) and attending the Prayer meeting of Japanese Churches Association. Please pray for my life and ministry in Brazil.

Love & Peace,

Antonio Sato, SSF

Br. Antonio will be visiting Brazil until April.

Mark Your Calendar

March 7th (Sunday):

11:30 a.m.: ECW Meeting

1:00 p.m.: ECW Luncheon at the Hotel Nikko

4:00 p.m.: Worship in Japanese followed by dinner

March 11th (Thursday):

6:00 p.m.: JARF Meeting at Christ Church – Sei Ko Kai

March 14th (Sunday) 12:30 p.m.:

A Time for Forgiveness: Soko Bukai Lenten Series II
Pine Methodist Church (33rd @ Clement)

March 20th (Saturday):

8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon: All Saints' Feeding Program

Marc 25th (Thursday):

7:00-9:00 p.m.: Bishop's Committee Meeting at Frances Morioka's

March 28th (Sunday):

8:30 a.m.: Morning Prayer, Rite I

12:30 p.m.: A Time for Forgiveness: Soko Bukai Lenten Series II

Pine Methodist Church (33rd @ Clement)

April 4th (Palm/Passion Sunday):

10:00 a.m.: Liturgy of Palms and the Passion

4:00 p.m.: Worship in Japanese followed by dinner

April 8th (Maundy Thursday)

6:30 p.m.: Foot washing/Eucharist/Agape meal
(bring finger foods to share)

April 9th (Good Friday)

12:00 p.m.: Worship and Contemplation

7:30 p.m.: Worship and Contemplation

April 11th (Easter Sunday):

10:00 a.m.: Festive Worship

11:15 a.m.: Easter egg hunt and Lunch

April 18th (Sunday):

Theological Education Sunday

The Rev. Jennifer Baskerville, guest preacher and presenter

April 22nd (Thursday):

7:00-9:30 p.m.: Asian Commission Meeting, St. Ambrose,
Foster City

April 25th (Sunday):

All Church meeting following worship

May 9th (Sunday):

Mother's Day

Regular Sunday Worship in English with Sunday School is at 10:00 a.m.

Breathing with God, a time for contemplative prayer, is every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m.

***Ted Thompson's Installation as
Rector of Christ Church, Alameda***

On Saturday, January 24th, several members of Christ Church – Sei Ko Kai attended a festive celebration of Ted Thompson's installation as rector of Christ Church, Alameda. The worship included a full band, choir, a crowd of a few hundred people, and numerous clergy from the Diocese, including Bishop Swing. During a blessing of a new children's playground after the service, the Bishop thanked the members of Christ Church -- Sei Ko Kai for their support of Ted in his new position. Congratulations, Ted! Our best prayers and wishes are with you in your new ministry.

In the Back Pages . . .

A Reflection on the Martyrs of Japan for Radio Mainichi.

With special thanks to Yuki Nagai, who translated this reflection into Japanese and delivered the broadcast on February 5th.

初めに、日米宗教連盟について少しお話しいたしましょう。

日米宗教連盟とは、サンフランシスコ市内の11の仏教、キリスト教、神道、その他各種の宗教団体の連盟です。

その主旨は、日系人の福祉に貢献し、社会と国に奉仕をし、世界の平和と正義を促進することです。

また宗派を超えた形式の礼拝を行い、宗教家相互の交流を活発にし、日系社会や、一般社会における、重要な問題があれば、その解決に尽力したいと思っています。

このように日米宗教連盟は、いろいろな活動を通して、博愛の精神をもって、社会の為に役立ちたいと考えているのです。

次に、キリスト聖公会の Richard Helmer 牧師からのメッセージをお届けいたします。翻訳並びに朗読は ゆき永井 です。

今日は“日本の殉教者”についてのお話をしたいと思います。

今日、2月5日は “殉教者の日” です。

フランシスコ ザビエルと言う伝道師がはじめて日本でキリスト教の教会を開いたのは、16世紀ですが、日本のキリスト教信者の数は16世紀末には20万人をかぞえました。幕府はその頃キリスト教には寛容であったのです。しかし、後になると、幕府はキリスト教の教会というのは、外国の侵略計画ではないかと恐れて、キリスト教信者への迫害をはじめました。

まず手始めに、6人の伝道師と20人の日本人のキリスト教信者がかまりました。彼らはさんざんに傷めつけられた上、1か月もの間、村々を引き回されて、遂には、長崎において磔（はりつけ）の刑に処せられました。それが1597年2月5日だったのです。

さて17世紀に入りますと、日本全土のキリスト教信者達が迫害を受け、その結果として多くの人々が信仰を捨てざるをえなくなり、教会は壊されました。日本ではキリスト教の禁止令は1854年迄続いております。また、クリスチアンは全くいなくなったと思われておりましたが、実はキリスト教は地下で存続していたのです。

こんにち、信仰を守りぬいた為に迫害を受けた人々は一般に“殉教者”と呼ばれていますが、“殉教者”という言葉の本来の意味は“信仰の証（あかし）をした人”ということです。これは迫害されても自己の信仰を守り抜いた人ということです。ですから“日本の殉教者”というのは只、単に、1597年に処刑された26人の人達というだけではなく、何世紀にも渡るひどい迫害にも負けなかった何万人にもおよぶ日本のキリスト教信者たちのことなのです。

現在の日本やアメリカの社会では何を信仰しようと咎められる事はありません。キリスト教、仏教、神道、その他の宗教の何を信じたり、実践したりしても自由であり、かえって祝福されるような国に暮らしているということは何と幸せなことでしょう。日本で迫害を受けたキリスト教信者たちのことに思いを馳せますと昔、信仰の自由というものが、いかに簡単に取り上げられてしまい迫害に変わってしまったか、そして、今、信仰の自由というものを、私達はいかに軽々しく当然のこととして受け止めてしまっているかを反省させられるのです。

何千年にも渡り、人類は信仰を人生の基盤に据えていました。人類は、この地球上の短い一生における人生の意義を宗教に求めてきました。また、他の人々を理解する為の一つの方法としてもいました。

これらの宗教を“心の支え、精神のよりどころ”と言う観点から見ると、一番良いところは、人生を人情とか、正義とか、慈悲とか、平和の道に導いてくれることです。おそらく、日本の殉教者が、迫害と死に直面してもキリスト教を守り抜いたのは、キリスト教がこれほど素晴らしいものであることを知っていたからではないでしょうか。

“殉教者の日”である今日、現代における人生の意義ということについて、特に、今夜のメッセージが“あなた”にとって“生きている”ということの価値を見出すなんらかの“一つの出発点”となることが出来たらさいわいです。

聖公会からの今年最初のメッセージをお送りするにあたり、皆様方が平和と希望に満ちた、そして健康に恵まれた日々を保って2004年を送られますようお祈りいたします。

キリスト聖公会は、サンフランシスコの日本町の近く、ピアス ストリートの2140番地にあります。どなたでもお気軽にお立ちよりいただけます。日曜日の礼拝は、午前10時から、同時に、お子様方の為の日曜学校も開いております。毎月、第一日曜日には、午後4時から、日本語の礼拝があります。続いて夕食を共にしてご参会の皆様方との親睦の時を持っております。皆様、お友達をお誘い合わせてお出で下さいますようお願いしております。

イースターを迎える前の行事として、聖公会は他の日系教会と合同で2月29日に学習会を行います。

聖公会について、日米宗教連盟について、学習会についてのご質問、あるいは、ご相談ごとなどございましたら、(415) 921-6395、921-6395へご遠慮なくお電話くださいませ。

また、私共の website - <http://seikokai.org> をご覧になっていただけますと、聖公会についてもっと詳しく知っていただく事が出来ます。

本日はご静聴いただきまして有難うございました。

Do you have something to contribute to the Messenger?

The next Messenger will be published in early May. All submissions are welcome on or before Sunday, April 25th.

<http://seikokai.org>

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