

The HERALD Newsletter

Japanese Church of Christ
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Worship Schedule:

Canceled until further notice
due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Pastor's Message

February 2021

Before you begin reading this article, I would like to ask a favor: would you please grab your Bible and turn to Luke chapter 7, and read verses 1-10.

We have talked a lot about "faith" this past year; because it is a necessary component to waiting on the Lord. Specifically, being able to hang in there until the day our church doors open up once again. And so I want to share with you this great passage in hopes that our Lord will encourage us through the example of faith on the part of the Roman centurion.

Now, as you can observe in the passage, this Roman commander is looking for Jesus of Nazareth to heal one of his servants. He is so confident in Jesus' ability to do the miraculous, that he tells Jesus that there is no need for Him to be present to do the healing; "just give the word, my servant will be healed". I hope we can appreciate this bold act of trust. Jesus is so impressed; He announces to the crowd that "not even in Israel have I found such faith". Can you imagine that? A pagan soldier demonstrates a level of faith not seen among the Jewish nation.

So, what can you and I learn from this story that will strengthen us during difficult times? David Garland offers two important points for our consideration;

1. "Like the believers who read Luke's gospel, the centurion trusts Jesus without having ever met Him in person. He has only heard the reports but believes and acts on faith".
2. "The centurion shows love for another by being willing to humble himself that his servant might receive healing. He casts aside his earthly honor as worthless in his humble appeal to Jesus".

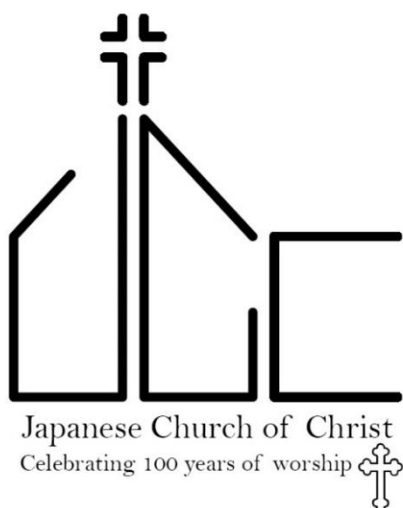
As we continue to persevere through this pandemic, I would encourage all of us to develop a consistent pattern of humbly coming before the Lord in prayer; asking Him to strengthen our faith and learn to joyfully trust His will not only regarding the COVID crisis, but in whatever circumstances we encounter. We serve an amazing God. Let us experience the peace of a growing faith in Him.

God Bless You Richly,
Pastor Brad

The JCC Mission Statement

To proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and seek spiritual growth for the entire congregation through:

- Worship, prayer, and Bible study
- Outreach and evangelism
- Loving service to the Church and community
- Fellowship
- Cultural activities unique to our ethnic congregation

**THE HERALD**

A monthly publication of the Japanese Church of Christ, Salt Lake City, UT.

Pastor Brad Kramer

Clerk of Session: Allyn Nakashima

Session

Lorraine Crouse
Steve Fukumitsu
Yoko DeRose
Daniel Cheung
Greg Paige
Lynne Ward

Deacons

Karen Okawa, Akiko Oki, Julee Mori, Jean Kobayashi, Laura Olson, Elaine Iwasaki

Newsletter articles are due on the **last Saturday of each month at noon.**

Send your articles to [jccherald \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:jccherald@gmail.com).

Website: www.jccslc.net

2021 Congregational Meeting

Due to the pandemic, the 2021 JCC annual congregational meeting will need to be held virtually via Zoom. The meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, February 21, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.**

This is an important meeting where the budget and other items regarding the JCC will be presented and new JCC officers will be installed. We realize that some of our members do not have access to the internet in order to attend the meeting; but under the current circumstances, this is the only way we can assemble a group together.

So we are asking that at least for this one Sunday, if those individuals can ask a family member or friend that owns a laptop, iPad or smartphone to bring that media device to your house and get you set up to view the congregational meeting. Pastor Brad will be delivering a short message before the start of the meeting and everything should last 45 minutes or so.

Instructions: **Do this before February 19.**

1. Register for the meeting on Zoom. Go to bit.ly/jccmeeting2021 and enter your first name, last name and valid email address. Upon completing your registration, you will receive an email with details on how to join the Zoom meeting.
2. If you do not have the Zoom application installed on the device you will be using to access the annual meeting, go to the JCC website, jccslc.net, and click on [Online Bible Studies Instructions] from the home page. There you will find installation instructions for various devices (iPad, iPhone, Android, etc.) and browsers.

On Sunday, February 21st, at 10:30 AM, click on the Zoom meeting link provided in your registration confirmation email to join the meeting.

New JCC Officers

The new officers for the JCC (3 year term) are:

Session: Greg Paige and Lynne Ward (in addition to current members Session members Allyn Nakashima, Daniel Cheung, Yoko DeRose, Steve Fukumitsu and Lorraine Crouse)

Deacons: Laura Olson and Elaine Iwasaki (in addition to current Deacons Karen Okawa, Julee Mori, Akiko Oki and Jean Kobayashi)

Board of Trustees: Karla Paige and Victor Homma (in addition to current Trustees Hiro Iwasaki, Ron Nishijima and Jani Iwamoto)

Nominating Committee: Yoko DeRose (in addition to Laura Olson, Julee Mori and Allyn Nakashima)

These officers will be installed during the Congregational Meeting on February 21, 2021.

We also wish to acknowledge the outgoing officers for their service to the JCC the past 3 years:

- Session – Patty Price, Keiko Ikeda and Pauline Vosburgh
- Deacons – Jan Aramaki, Misako Bowker and Wilma Kimura
- Trustees – Rick Aoki and Doug Murakami
- Nominating Committee – Elaine Iwasaki

Annual Per Capita Reminder

Thank you to those that have sent the Annual Per Capita! The one-time amount per JCC member for the year 2021 is **\$39.00**. Please indicate on your check that it is your Per Capita remittance. Remember to send the payments to the JCC post office box, P.O. Box 1495, Salt Lake City, UT 84110.

Task Force Update

In an effort to keep the JCC congregation spiritually connected, Pastor Brad has started recording short devotionals which will be delivered on a biweekly basis. These devotionals will be posted online every other Wednesday starting **February 3rd**.

To view, please visit the JCC website homepage at jccslc.net and click on the banner which reads [New: Biweekly Devotionals], where you'll be taken to a YouTube playlist of Pastor Brad's devotionals.

Stay connected! Stay safe!

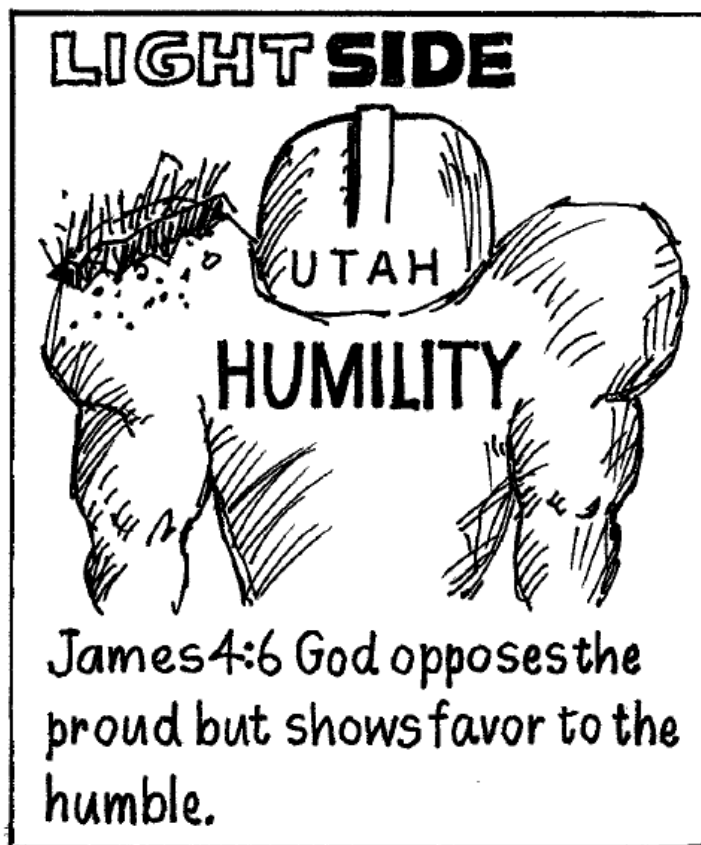
Zoom Bible Study

Remember that Adult Bible Study is held via Zoom every Sunday beginning at 9:30 a.m. sharp. Instructions for "signing up" are found on the JCC website. Please join us! We are continuing study of the book of Genesis.

After the class, remain signed on for "virtual coffee fellowship" and visit a few minutes with others! It is BYOC (coffee), but nice to see other faces. We even reach coast to coast, from California to New York and Virginia!

Community Events

The Salt Lake Buddhist Temple is holding a virtual Valentine's fundraiser craft boutique from January 31 through February 13, 2021. Go to the website lumbinistgarden.com for more information. Handicrafts, gift boxes, manju, caramels and more.



Remember in Your Prayers

Due to COVID-19 and the fact that we have not been able to be together in person, it has been difficult to keep this prayer list up to date. If you or know of someone that should be added or removed from this list, please email the JCC website, jccslc.net, and indicate what should be updated. Thank you!

Please remember the following friends and family in your prayers:

Toshiko Marse	Chris Miya
Kenta Naraoka	Saeko Nakashima
Toy Shimizu	Susan Fukushima
Betty Morishita	Steve Fukushima
Kai Ronning	Susan Rosvall
Dorthie Conway	Sumiko Rosvall



Living with COVID-19: Vaccine

Submitted by Allyn Nakashima

In the past two months, several COVID-19 vaccines have become available and distribution has begun. Currently, healthcare workers, critical emergency responders, and persons >70 years of age are eligible to get vaccine in Utah. Roll out of vaccine has been somewhat chaotic, but should improve over time. The quantity of vaccine is still quite limited, but should increase as the new federal administration focuses on increasing production.

The current vaccines that have received emergency use authorization from the FDA are the Pfizer vaccine and the Moderna vaccine; the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which is a single-dose vaccine, is expected to receive authorization soon. Most of the vaccine being distributed in Utah is the Moderna vaccine.

To get the vaccine in Salt Lake County, you need to sign into the Salt Lake County Health Department website (<https://slco.org/health/COVID-19/vaccine/>). This website will be updated on a daily basis as more vaccine becomes available. So if you find you cannot sign up immediately, check back regularly. In counties outside of Salt Lake County, check on the local county health department website for instructions on how your county is distributing vaccine.

For elderly church members, who are unable to use the websites, please contact Jan Aramaki (801-718-2006) or Elaine Iwasaki (801-651-8389) to identify a person who can assist with getting an appointment for vaccination.

Q&A about vaccines:

1. *What are the side effects from vaccines and how safe are they?*

The authorized vaccines have gone through rigorous safety testing procedures and are safe for the vast majority of people. There are side effects, e.g., sore arm, fatigue, etc., for some people, but these are usually minor and will resolve within a week. There have been reports of deaths in elderly people following vaccination with the Pfizer vaccine in Norway. However, these reports need to be more thoroughly studied to understand which deaths really were likely to be due to the vaccine versus other causes in a very frail and elderly population. Norway has also given out a lot of vaccine to elderly people so the deaths may not represent excess deaths in this population. This report should not keep people from getting vaccinated. The risk of dying from COVID-19 infection in elderly people is much higher than expected from any side effects due to vaccination.

As vaccine is being rolled out, CDC is collecting data on a large number of persons getting vaccinated to look more closely at side effects from the vaccine. When you get vaccinated, you may ask to participate in these studies.

2. *If I have had COVID-19, should I get vaccinated?*

People who have recovered from a recent COVID-19 infection should have adequate antibodies to keep them from getting infected again in the short term. There have been very few well-documented cases of reinfection. However, current CDC recommendations allows such people to get at least one dose of vaccine, which would act as a booster; this should be safe.



Faith Journey

Personal Testimony by Sandy Ronning

Philippians 4:6:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Derivative quote: "Give it to God and let it go"

Such a powerhouse of a quote, even if you don't understand what it means. I know I didn't until it would come to turn my life right side up again.

When my son was born, it was important for me to give him something bigger than life to believe in. We started to attend JCC because it offered two things: first and most importantly, a way to practice faith without identifying with a certain denomination. A bonus would be that this family embraced all that was important to my mom, her Japanese heritage. However, as my life became filled with ambition and raising my son, I became too busy for my faith. Life was good, I was at the top of my world. My son thrived academically and grew into a social butterfly. I climbed the corporate ladder so quickly, only relying upon myself and the support of my amazing parents to make things happen. I also became the fixer of everything, both personally and professionally. If there was ever a problem, give it to me to fix. I thought I could handle anything, and strong enough to need no one. What would I need to give to God, and let go?

Within a blink of an eye, my perfect world came crashing down on me. Within 5 years, I lost my father, my mother, and my dog of 11 years. In between all that my only son got lost in a very dark place and when he finally started to come out, a cancer diagnosis pushed him even farther back. I struggled to deal with so much loss while trying to help my son heal. I was suffocating underneath the weight. And once again, that phrase I read so many years ago would come into play, only this time through a very close friend: "Give it to God and let it go."

But by then I was too angry at God for taking everything away that was important to me. For taking away the only support system I came to rely on. For making me watch as my only child fought off the horrendous effects of chemo. I needed someone, something to blame as nothing in my life made sense anymore. Years of no sleep and trying to remain strong caused my life to spiral. I wrecked 2 cars, lost my house and could no longer work. Every moment of my life was taken over to help those I loved. I prayed every night, begging God to stop. Put it on me, I prayed. My son is too young for this.

What could he have possibly done to deserve so much pain? However, being angry with God didn't change a thing. My life continued to crumble from the weight I was meant (I thought) to carry. This is too heavy for one person to bear. And the phrase I read so many years ago, the one that kept following me for years after, finally became clear. Give it to God and let it go.

I will never forget the day I finally did just that. My son and I started to attend the JCC services after many, many years of hiatus. During one of these services, Jan Aramaki approached me and asked if I would like to attend the annual Lake Tahoe retreat. Jan had no idea of the struggles that I faced and the crisis that my life was in. It was also at this time that I approached Pastor Brad and started to seek out spiritual advice. These two single events turned my life around.

I attended the retreat and was asked to be a Faith Journey speaker. This meant that I had to make the most personal events of my life public. Details that no one knew, not even my closest friends. It was easy to say yes, but so very hard to deliver. Telling a group of strangers the most intimate details of my life in crisis. Likened it to that proverbial dream of walking on stage with absolutely no clothes on. Yet as I started to speak and stutter, I suddenly stopped shaking and spoke directly to God, from my heart. In my mind, everyone in the room disappeared as I spoke to God and let it go. When I finished, reality came back and the audience was on their feet and in tears. They embraced me, just as God had done, with no judgement.

The sense of peace that came over me was incredible. In all of those years that I was too busy for my faith, God never stopped listening. The sense of forgiveness and the weight that was lifted off my shoulder left my heart clear. I gave my worries, my fears, my guilt to Him in order for me to start living again.

Happiness is having faith when it seems impossible. There is no weight too heavy, no trauma too big to give to God. He forgives all and understands our pain. We, as His followers, need to trust that unconditionally. My life is on the mend now. My son has been in remission for 5.5 years and I am slowly accepting and dealing with the loss of my parents and furry companion. While I may have lost everything, I have gained back all that is important to me; my faith, my family and my sanity. And I did that by giving it to God and letting it go.

If you would like to share your personal testimony, submit it to the JCC email address, info@jccslc.net. Herald submission deadline is always the last Saturday of the month, by noon.