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The HERALD Newsletter

Japanese Church of Christ
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JCC in-person Sunday worship services are suspended until further notice.
Go to www.jccslc.net to view the weekly sermon.

Christmas Message

December 2021



¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” ²¹ She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

In comparing the gospel accounts of Jesus’ birth, we find that Luke places his focus on the appearance of the angel to Mary, Jesus’ mother. While Matthew relates the appearance of the angel in a dream to Mary’s betrothed, Joseph. Both stories are to be treasured; but for this article I would like to consider Matthew’s account, partly because I am fascinated by Joseph, but more so because verse 21 is such a pure expression of the gospel.

Joseph was in a very tough position having a pregnant fiancé, whom he had not known intimately. But once he hears the words of God’s angel instructing him to take Mary as his wife, he responds in humble obedience, even though there would be public shame. Let us step back and admire his courage and devotion to God.

But as I indicated, the highlight is verse 21: She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

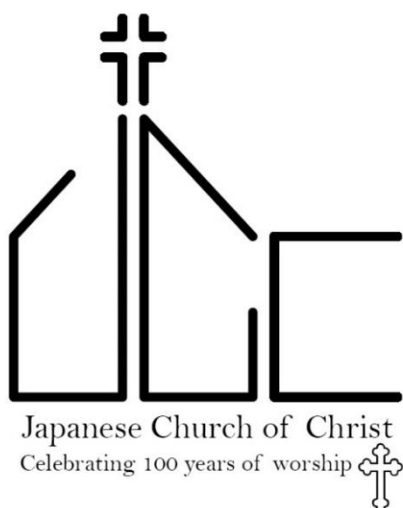
Jesus came to earth, taking the form of a man and sacrificed himself on a roman cross so that sinners like you and me could be saved from our sins. That is love. That is Christmas.

May 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: **Daniel Cheung**

Session

Lorraine Crouse - Worship
 Steve Fukumitsu - Stewardship, Building and Grounds
 Yoko DeRose - Nichigo
 Allyn Nakashima - Membership
 Greg Paige - Education, Personnel
 Pauline Vosburgh - Finance

Deacons

Karen Okawa (moderator), Jan Aramaki, 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@gmail.com.

Website: www.jccslc.net

A Message from Session

The decorations and music (and cold weather!) remind us that another year is coming to a close. For some, this year passed like a flash; for others, it may have felt unbearably long. The Christmas season reminds us that no matter what happens in the world around us, we are assured by the Good News that Christ is our source of love, joy, peace, and hope (Romans 15:13).

The Session announced last month that we will not be renewing Pastor Brad Kramer's contract at the end of this year. We are enormously grateful for his 11 years of faithful service to the church and to the JCC community. We ask that you continue to pray for Pastor Brad and his family as they enter into this new season. Information regarding a celebration of Pastor Brad's contributions to JCC and wishing him well in the next chapter of his life will be forthcoming.

This also means that JCC will begin a mission study and pastoral search in the new year. We ask for your prayers, and for your input and engagement as we look to the richness of JCC's past to inform the church's future mission. Whether you are a regular attendee, occasional guest, or extended community, we are all one JCC family and you are important to us (1 Cor 12:12-13).

The Session also continues to monitor COVID-19 developments closely, and we are exploring ways that we can safely resume the life of the church. We ask for your prayers and patience as we take steps to bring the JCC community back together.

We know that some of you are eager to return, and others are not yet comfortable. We honor and acknowledge both of those feelings. Christ is our Immanuel, "God with us," who meets us where we are, not with rebuke but with perfect love (1 John 4:18). If you are feeling anxious or lonely, or are in need of prayer or material assistance, please reach out to us - we love you and we are here for you!

We are reminded of Paul's encouragement in 1 Thes 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." We ask for prayer for the church, for Pastor Brad, and for our beloved JCC family. Merry Christmas!



Remember in Your Prayers

If you or know of someone that should be added or removed from this list, please email the JCC website, jccslc.net.

Please remember the following friends and family in your prayers:

Toshiko Marse	Saeko Nakashima	Sumi Arakaki
Kenta Naraoka	Susan Fukushima	Dorthie Conway
Betty Morishita	Steve Fukushima	Susan Rosvall
Mary Tabata	Robin Sueoka Puri	Sumiko Rosvall
Chris Miya	Kai Ronning	

Thank You!

Submitted by Steve Fukumitsu

Thanks go out to the Tongan congregation for the fall grounds cleaning. Pastor Tipi Loma Pupua gathered members to help pick up leaves which they coordinated for several Saturdays.



Fall cleaning crew. Photos courtesy: Steve Fukumitsu

Christmas Shoebox Thanks

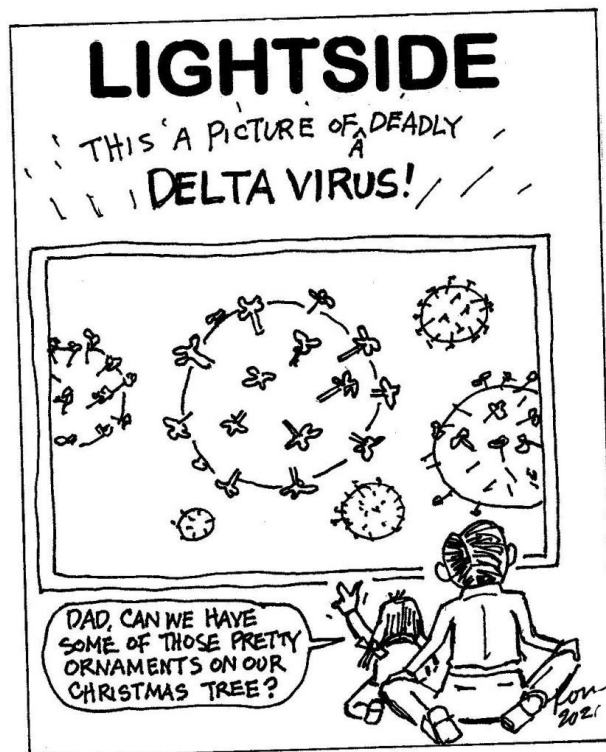
A big thank you to everyone who filled a shoebox for the Operation Christmas Child project. We were able to ship 91 shoeboxes traveling to locations all over the world. We also are grateful to Laura Olson and Karla Paige for spearheading the project every year. Also a thank you to the Tongan congregation for donating items for the shoeboxes and to those that participated online.

Baptism

We welcome Lynne Ward into the family of the Japanese Church of Christ as she received the sacrament of baptism on November 24, 2021.



Pastor Brad, Lynne Ward, husband Mark Ward, father Ron Nishijima and nephew Daniel Nishijima. Photo courtesy: Suzanne Hata



Living with COVID-19: Practical tips for managing a COVID scare

Submitted by Allyn Nakashima

In the last installment, we discussed how important it is for all of us to understand that COVID will be with us for the foreseeable future, and each of us will have to make decisions on what course of action to take depending on factors. The new omicron variant in South Africa appears to have already made it to the United States. Because the genetic make up of this virus is quite different from the viruses used to generate the COVID vaccines, the current vaccines may not be effective. The vaccine manufacturers will be scrambling to get a new vaccine that will be effective in as short a time as possible. Thus the future situation will be similar to seasonal influenza, and every year we will have to get one or boosters that target the latest circulating variants of COVID. In this article, I want to share a personal event that illustrates how we will need to react to COVID in the future.

My daughter Halley arrived on Monday before Thanksgiving after working in Las Vegas at a convention where she sold merchandise. Her observation was that the event was not that safe because it was in Nevada where many people don't wear masks and are not vaccinated. On Tuesday evening (within 48 hours after she arrived), I developed a sore throat and runny nose, but no fever or other COVID symptoms. In other times, I would have assumed this was a typical cold and not done much about it.

(To be continued on Page 6)

Advent Season

The season of Advent is the four-week period before December 25th when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. During Advent we get ready to welcome Jesus into our lives by reading Scriptures, sharing special Advent readings, lighting the candles on our Advent wreath and praying together. Three candles are purple to represent royalty, because Jesus is our eternal King. One candle is pink to represent the joy we feel when Jesus comes to our world. The last candle, the Christ Candle, is white to represent the holiness and purity of Jesus, our Savior. We light the Christ candle on Christmas Eve as we read the story of Jesus' birth in the Gospel of Luke.

Advent Season Participants

- November 28, 1st week of Advent: HOPE (purple candle) - Cheung family
- December 5, 2nd week of Advent: PEACE (purple candle) - Oki/Croft family
- December 12, 3rd week of Advent: JOY (pink candle) - Mori family
- December 19, 4th week of Advent: LOVE (purple candle) - Iwamoto/Fukumitsu family
- December 24, Christmas Eve: CHRIST (white candle) - Kramer family



December 2021 – Virtual Worship Service Participants

	December 5	December 12	December 19	December 26
Liturgist	Jan Aramaki	Greg Paige	Julee Mori	Greg Paige
Scripture Readers	E) Karen Okawa J) Keiko Ikeda	E) Karen Okawa J) Akiko Oki	E) Elise Mori J) Akiko Oki	E) Chris Miya J) Keiko Ikeda
Special Music	Daniel Cheung	Allyn Nakashima	Daniel Cheung	Allyn Nakashima

JCC December 2021 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 -Parking, Jazz, 7pm	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 -Parking, Jim Gaffigan, 7pm	11 -Parking, Jim Gaffigan, 7pm
12	13	14	15 -Parking, Jazz, 8pm	16 -Parking, Luke Combs, 7pm	17 -Parking, Jazz, 7pm	18 -Parking, Jazz, 7pm
19	20 -Parking, Jazz, 7pm	21	22	23 -Parking, Jazz, 7pm	24 CHRISTMAS EVE	25 CHRISTMAS -Herald deadline -Parking, Jazz, 8:30pm
26	27	28	29	30	31 -Parking, Jazz, 7pm	

*Calendar current as of Herald printing, 11/27/2021.

For up to date building use information, go to www.iccslc.net, Events/Activities tab, JCC Building Usage Schedule link

No Agape Holiday Luncheon

Due to low response and concern for the health and safety of our members, the Agape Holiday Luncheon proposed to be held in December is canceled.

Taiko Workshop Wrap Up

Submitted by Jean Irwin

Kenshin Taiko attended the On Ensemble's concert at Kingsbury Hall on November 5. The following day, JCC welcomed some 50+ attendees to the free taiko workshops taught by two members of the On Ensemble. The beginners' workshop took place in the morning. After their workshop, the advanced class participants joined the group and both classes enjoyed lunch in the courtyard, followed by the advanced workshop. Participants came from Brigham City, Ogden and Salt Lake Valley.

The On Ensemble established in 2002 is one of the most respected ensembles in the taiko world. On Ensemble was the first American taiko group invited to perform at the National Theater of Japan for the prestigious Nihon no Taiko concert series. Shiro and Maz of the On Ensemble performers taught the workshops. Shoji and Maz were taught taiko at an early age (8 and 6) by Maz' parents, pioneering taiko players Jeanne Mercer and Russel Baba. Shiro and Maz have been playing and making music together for over 30 years and recognized as two of the brightest stars in taiko.

Funded by the Utah Division of Arts & Museums (UDAM) Arts Education and Folk Arts Programs, the National Endowment for the Arts and UtahPresents, one attendee commented, "I'd love to see more activities like this in this space." Officials from the University of Utah's UtahPresents and others had never been to JCC and asked many questions about JCC's history, its congregation and Japan-Town

Al Kubota handled the Disney on Ice parking. Steve Fukumitsu helped set up the space and assured our participants parking across the street. Steve managed to do all of that AND surprised Jani with an early anniversary get away. Thank you and bless both of you!



Workshop Participants. (And a big thanks to Jean Irwin for coordinating the event.)



27 drums and drummers in that space is a LOT of drumming. Good times!



Lovely Setting. Photos courtesy Jean Irwin

Living with COVID-19 (Continued from page 3)

The incubation period for COVID is usually 3-5 days at a minimum so I doubted Halley exposed me. Because of the convention, though, Halley was planning to get tested in the next few days after she arrived. I had been to a play, gone shopping and eaten with friends at restaurants in the prior week. Another factor was that we are here in Utah with moderately high transmission rates (about 300-500 cases per day in Salt Lake City) and low vaccination rates (about 60% fully vaccinated). I was also planning to go on a trip leaving the Monday after Thanksgiving. Finally, Clarence, Halley's husband was set to arrive Wednesday evening, and we didn't want him to come if either of us had COVID. All these considerations made me decide that both of us should get a COVID test.

So where and what test should we get? There are many places and different types of tests that are useful for different purposes. One of the simplest ways to get tested is at one of the public health testing sites. To pre-register, look under the 'COVID-19 Mitigation Information' tab on the JCC website and click on the location most convenient for you. I used the Utah Department of Health's drive-thru testing site located at 288 N 1460 W, Salt Lake City, UT 84116. This site allows for people who are pre-registered as well as walk-ins. The site open from 7 am to 7 pm most days and the wait was less than 15 minutes. The test being used at this site is the Abbott BINAX rapid antigen test and is provided to the patient free of charge. The results are sent to the patient within 1 hour by mobile text or email. This test is about 70% sensitive for detecting COVID-19, and there are very few false positives.

Since I was symptomatic, the likelihood of a false negative is low so I felt this test was good enough for my purpose. PCR and NAAT tests are more sensitive (>90%) and are available at some sites and at the Utah Public Health Laboratory, but these tests usually require 1-3 day turnaround time for results. These tests have very few false negatives and are good for screening asymptomatic persons. Rapid PCR tests are available in Emergency Rooms for diagnostic purposes. These tend to be more costly unless covered by insurance as part of the initial ER work up. If you have questions about whether you need to get tested and what test you should get, contact your primary care provider.

Fortunately, both Halley and I tested negative and I recovered quickly from my cold symptoms.

Situations like the one presented here are going to become increasingly common. So it is important to know where to get tested and under what circumstances one should get tested. Contact your primary care provider or a public health expert for questions.

おせち料理 (Osechi Ryori) Symbolism

Traditional O-Shougatsu (New Year's Day) delicacies are prepared before New Year's Day and meant to last for 7 days, which are non-cooking days. The purpose of non-cooking days is to give Japanese housewives a rest during the New Year's holiday; since they work so hard preparing food until New Year's Eve. "Osechi Ryori" (special Japanese New Year's delicacies) is very complex and intricate. The base is a good dashi and holy trilogy of sake-shoyu-mirin and the ever-vigilant sesame seed oil.

Each dish has symbolism:

- Kuromame or Black Soy Bean: Good health (protein) for the coming year.
- Kazunoko or Herring Roe: A wish for abundance and fertility.
- Kimpira Gobo or Burdock Root: Rooted deep in the ground for physical strength and health.
- Datemaki or Omelet: Egg rolled like a scroll for scholarship and culture.
- Kamaboko or Fishcake: The shape resembles the first sunrise of the new year.
- Ebi Shrimp: Long antennae and curved body symbolize the curved back of elderly – longevity.
- Namasu or Japanese Vinegar Salad: White daikon radish or orange carrots represent a good omen.
- Kuri Kinton or Chestnut and Sweet Potato: A wish for economic fortune for the new year.
- Yakisakana or Grilled Fish: Pray for a successful career.
- Renkon or Lotus Root: Lotus root with its many holes symbolizes an unobstructive view of the future.
- Konbu Maki: Rolled kelp or konbu; a play on words (yoro kobu means happiness).
- Satoimo/Taro: One taro root produces more roots that symbolize fertility.
- Tatsukuri or Sardine: Ta is rice field and tsukuri is planting that symbolizes a good harvest.
- Tai Shioyaki or Grilled Red Snapper: "Mede Tai" means celebration. The fish must be the whole red (celebrating color) snapper including the head and tail.

Thanks to Miya Iwataki, (article "And Then Came Oshogatsu," published in the Rafu Shimpo) and to Tomoko Moses for contributions to this article.



**Happy New Year!
Here's to 2022!**