



DELTA DHARMA

The Walnut Grove Buddhist Church Newsletter

JULY 2025

CALENDAR OF SERVICES, MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Tuesday	1	7:00 PM Board Meeting (Hybrid)
Friday	4	Prep for Bento fund raiser
Saturday	5	Prep for Bento fund raiser
Sunday	6	Bento Fund Raiser
Saturday	19	7:00 PM Obon Odori
Sunday	20	1:30 PM Hatsubon/Obon/Shotsuki Service Guest Speaker Dr. Rev. Kenji Akahoshi
Sunday	20	TBD "Growing your Sangha" Seminar with Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi at the Buddhist Church of Stockton
Sunday	27	10:00 AM Adult Study

The Busy Month of July

Fundraiser Update

We are well on our way to our annual Teriyaki Chicken/Bento sale. We hope that all able bodies are marking the dates for the volunteer work we so greatly need. Starting on Thursday July 3 and through Saturday we will be prepping the food that will be included in the bento. From chopping, to cooking, and packaging we work hard to ensure that we are serving the best product. If you need info on when and how to help, please contact us on the church phone or email. Arigato gozaimasu!!

Combined Service

Please join us on Sunday July 20 for the very special service honoring our recently deceased, our ancestors, and family church members who passed in the month of July.

This combined service will follow the Obon Odori the preceding evening. Please come dressed in your finest yukata, or come as you are. It will be a meaningful evening.

How Do We Meet Grief?

Growing up I heard that deaths happen in 3's. An old wives' tale or perhaps a superstition? Although as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists we are encouraged to not believe in wives' tales or superstitions, this condition of impermanence in my life and for those close to me, became a harsh reality. Sadly, my brother's passing occurred in March, my dear uncle passed away in May, and one of my best friends (Doreen) lost her mother in June. Each of these deaths have deeply affected me and I feel like my grief has been impacted by the preceding and by the following passing of each loved one.

I have known my best friend, Doreen, since college. I was a transfer student from San Joaquin Delta College and was preparing to transfer to California State University, Sacramento. I was introduced to Doreen by our mutual best friend, Valerie, as they were classmates pursuing degrees in speech pathology and audiology, respectively. Doreen and I hit it off right away and before I knew it, the three of us were arranging to move into an off-campus townhouse together in Sacramento.

I had the pleasure of meeting Doreen's parents, Anthony and Marjorie, shortly after we met and they always welcomed me to their home in Vallejo. They treated and loved me and our friends like their own daughters. They were very hard-working parents and commuted to San Francisco from Vallejo for work in the hospitality and hotel industry. They looked forward to their retirement to rest, relax, and travel together.

Shortly after Uncle Anthony's retirement, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. In the midst of his treatment and as he urged his daughter to continue planning, Doreen was preparing for her wedding as well. While I was attending the Institute of Buddhist Studies for graduate school, Doreen's father lost his battle to pancreatic cancer just three months following her wedding day.

Doreen's mother suffered a major stroke nine years ago and she became the primary caretaker for Aunt Marjorie. Although it was a very trying time for their family, Doreen mentioned that this time was a precious opportunity for them to spend time together and for Doreen to care for her mother, as her mother lovingly took care of her when she was little. To our surprise, Aunt Marjorie was admitted to the hospital on May 30, 2025. It was determined that she suffered a heart attack and was also diagnosed with pneumonia. I was fortunate to have the day off and I traveled to Vacaville to visit Doreen and her mother on June 2nd. Later that evening, I was told that Aunt Marjorie passed away.

We never know when impermanence will strike and leave us in unimaginable pain of losing a parent or a loved one. While on the phone with our two mutual best friends I remember repeating, "Are you sure??? I was just there. I just saw her...I *just* saw her." I immediately thought about Doreen and could not imagine how she was feeling as I realized, cried, and said, "Both of her parents are gone. She doesn't have her parents anymore."

The Buddhist doctrinal part of me says that Doreen's parents are always with and guiding her. They are no longer suffering from the ailments of birth, old age, sickness, and death. They are no longer blinded by greed, anger, and ignorance and they see things just as they are as enlightened beings. Yes, doctrinally this is true and I believe this as a Buddhist minister.

However, the best friend and pastoral care-giver in me also acknowledges that Doreen is not in a place to hear and receive this point of view just yet. Her grief is raw and she is still in disbelief that her mother has passed away. So, how do we comfort our friends when they have experienced such a loss?

Perhaps like Amida Buddha, what I can strive to do is meet Doreen just where she is at in her grief. Just be there. Support her with the basics like bringing over her favorite foods to encourage her to eat. Just sit with listening ears and open arms as needed. Accept where she is and how she is feeling and just embrace her with love and compassion as she learns how to navigate and maneuver through these uncharted waters.

As we know, there is no guidebook when dealing with death. Maybe we can just meet our friends and loved ones where they are at, sit together with their grief, and tell them we love them.

July Shotsuki

Joyous Monthly Memorial

Deceased

Chuzo Yoshimi
 Ei Kawahara
 Ryan Kawahara
 Raymond Kawahara
 Asato Okamoto
 Wesley Matsumoto
 Hiromi Norikane
 Sei Oto
 Sakiko Oto
 Hideo Oto
 Tetsu Ito
 Kanekichi Ito
 Sato Ito
 Yoshiko Sugimoto
 Take Heisen
 Minoru Hirotsu
 Jerry Akio Sakata
 Isamu Ikeuchi
 Masae Nakayama
 Misayo Nakahara
 Sadako Okada
 Jane Matsumoto
 Takeshi Kawahara
 Yae Kusaba
 George Iseri
 Frank Soliven

Chief Mourner

Darrell Yoshimi
 Kawahara Family
 Kawahara Family
 Kawahara Family

 John Matsumoto Jr.
 Mitsuko Norikane
 Oto Family
 Sally Oto Opgenorth
 Sally Oto Opgenorth
 David Ito
 David Ito
 David Ito
 Judy Young
 Gary Hirotsu
 Gary Hirotsu

 Betty Kimura
 Emiko Ishimoto
 Frances Nakahara
 June Okada
 Vickie Ong
 Linda Kawahara-Matsuo
 Henry Kusaba Jr.
 Kirby Iseri
 Linda Soliven



The Walnut Grove Buddhist Church Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations

SHOTSUKI

Judy Young	
IMO Ralph Sugimoto	100.00
Cheryl Tanaka	
IMO Dennis Katsuki	50.00
Ted & Mary Oda	50.00
Naomi Sakai	100.00
Nancy Nakahara	
IMO Asako Nakahara	50.00
Amy Yamamoto	
IMO Asako Nakahara	25.00
Tom Shinmoto	30.00
Janet Sakata	
IMO Sam Sakata	100.00
Carol Tang	
IMO Masayoshi Ito	100.00



SPECIAL DONATIONS

Steve & Donna Hiromoto	
Upcoming 100 th Anniversary	100.00
Carol Tang	
Memorial Day	100.00
Holly Pauls	
Keirokai Event	25.00
Thomas & Lorriane Sakata	
IMO Shigeo & Mitsu Kato	
Fred & Mary Sakata	2000.00

Adult Dharma Study

With the guidance and expertise of Rev. Candace Shibata the annual cleaning of the onajin was undertaken last Sunday during Adult Study. A small crew assembled to learn the process of carefully cleansing each metal object adorning the altar known as Omigaki. First, pieces such as the candle holders, incense burners and hanging light fixtures were removed and dusted then placed in a special cleansing solution brought from Japan by the Reverend. Once the pieces were thoroughly cleansed and dried the detailed polishing began. Many hands and soft cloths were used to return these sacred objects to their brilliant shine.

During this time Sensei explained the significance of the objects and their placement on the Onajin (altar). The crew performed a task done annually over many years by those who came before us. We are grateful for their care and preservation of our small but significant temple. We send a special thanks to this years cleaning crew: Christy Ishizuka, Sandi Kawamura, Holly Pauls, Tom Cappelletti and Rev. Candace Shibata.

In Gassho, Holly Pauls

The return of the Buddha Belly Laughs

After a long hiatus which started with the not so funny pandemic, it seems again appropriate to share some silly pokes at ourselves. Life should always include lots of giggles.

