

FROM PASTOR TOM

We always have human spiritual resources to offer help:

During a recent conversation I discovered my early experience of thunderstorms in the Connecticut River valley was different from that of folks who had grown up in other parts of our country. I remembered the distinct fresh smell of ozone in the aftermath of the thunderous rain. Ozone isn't particularly good for us, but it always had a clean fresh scent lasting only a few minutes following the deluge of rain and flashes of lightning. I had assumed most thunder storms left a similar impression.

Hans Wilhelm's small book about *Courage* offers this quote: "As every storm cleanses the earth and the air, so does every storm in our life cleanse us from that which is no longer needed. The stronger the storm, the greater the LOVE that blows through us."

As we track weather reports and look to the heavens to try to predict just how long the next storm will last – we realize that this part of our life is well beyond anyone's control. Storms happen. Natural disasters happen. People wherever they are seek ways to cope and need the help of each other across the vast expanse of our communities to render aid and assistance. Hurricane Sandy is just a recent example of the power and scope of the natural world reminding us our personal agendas out of necessity may need to be side tracked when placed along side the health, safety, and recovery that calls for communities to pull together to help each other. We can understand, and empathize with the human experiences and difficulties faced in the aftermath of such disasters.

Even when Federal budget issues seek to reduce expenses, we can also appreciate our national response to help communities rebuild and restore their hopes for the future. We can also endorse international cooperation that stretches our commitments to help beyond our borders. People are people just like us.

We offer help as we would also seek help if we found ourselves in similar circumstances. The golden rule of doing unto

others as we would have them do unto us – lets us set aside local and national preoccupations and prejudices – and even to forgive any grievances and animosities.

We discover our compassion helps us grow beyond our expectations of yesterday's limited perspectives. Following any storm in life, we can focus and see so clearly our help is required. We all need each other as equals in our human family.

I am reminded Ben Franklin gave the advice that the best way to turn any adversary into a friend and co-worker is to ask for their help in our time of need. There is no shame in needing and asking for help – it is actually an opportunity to grow in mutual reliance and appreciation.

Like the ozone in the air that I smelled in my youth let me know the storm had a cleansing atmosphere, so the compassion needed following storms and disasters - big or small - reminds us how real clarity comes from recognizing and responding with a sacred respect for the situations people are caught up in. We don't live for ourselves alone.

Yes, the stronger the storm, the more powerful the challenge, the greater will be the LOVE that can be expressed in compassionate caring when we exercise our character as we open up and help one another.

Warmest Blessings,
Pastor Tom

FROM PASTOR NEIL

The Weather Is Changeable

One of the best parts of living in the parsonage is our picture windows. I can see the sun rise every morning that I get up by 6:30. (Except when it's raining.)

After six weeks of abnormally dry days in October and November, the weather in Hilo has decided to live up to its reputation of rain. Passing showers. As we look out our windows we can see the rain sweeping across the town – coming our way from the airport. Then the sky turns blue and the sun comes out.

It's fun to watch, but it's hard to predict. I've been hanging our clothes out to dry on the line beside the house. I wait to do the wash until a day when the weather looks sunny. It has usually worked out. But there have been two or three times when I had to bring the laundry in from the line to spin it dry in the washer before I put it in the dryer. A real soft water rinse.

Coming from Wisconsin where we are lucky to get 35 inches of rain a year, we've been intrigued by the rainfall. We bought a rain gauge just so we could keep track. (I just emptied 1.3" for the last 24 hours.)

Life can be like the weather. We'd like to be able to predict what will happen. But it doesn't always work. We can be surprised - and even dismayed - by events. So we take an umbrella. We smile when we get rained on. We expect the unexpected. And we know that the sun of God's love is always shining - even if it's behind the clouds.

On Sunday, just before choir practice, there was a shower - and a rainbow. I ran to the bedroom to see it. It ended in the Holy Cross parking lot! I thought of how the church family is the treasure at the end of the rainbow. Thanks for being here.

Pastor Neil
deupreen@charter.net

UPDATE FROM JAPAN

May the Hope and Peace of this season remain with us throughout the New Year! I am resorting to an email greeting this year - though I always prefer to write "real" cards!! I am spending the holidays in California this year with my mother. My sister and brother and his family are also here. It is of course a real blessing to have this family time!

This year has been another full and busy year. I continue to teach full time in the Social Work Department at Doshisha University, and am involved with the YWCA, our church conference in Kyoto, and our coffee house ministry.

I continue to be concerned about the situation in Fukushima, and the reality of nuclear contamination. The Kyoto YWCA hosted 20 children from Fukushima again this spring and summer, so the kids could play outside

without the fear of high levels of radiation. My social work students have been working with "evacuees" from Fukushima living in the Kyoto area, to offer support and to get the word out about their situation. In early December I attended the "Inter- religious Conference on Nuclear Issues", and learned more about the serious situation there, and also how Christian and Buddhist organizations are working to support the people who still live in fear and with anxiety.

The recent elections in Japan have been disappointing to those of us working for peace and justice, (including the nuclear issue). So, I anticipate that the New Year will need more prayers, educating and advocating -- to be in solidarity with those who suffer from the threat of nuclear radiation, militarism and poverty. In my spare moments I try to get to the hills to do some trail running and cycling. In 2012 I ran my first full marathon and my third triathlon race. To active outdoors in nature keeps me healthy.

With prayers for health and happiness for you and all those you love,

Martha Mensendiek

CONGRATULATIONS, TAKERU!

Congratulations to Takeru Hayashi who earned and received his Eagle Scout Award on January 5th for the community service project he completed at our Church of the Holy Cross for the benches outside our sanctuary, for screening to discourage nesting birds, and for the handicap ramp at the lower parking lot. We were glad to have Takeru with us on his break from school in Japan.

MEMOIRS OF HENRY OPUKAHA`IA

A dramatic program and book launch featuring the newly revised edition of "Memoirs of Henry Obookiah" (AKA Henry Opukaha'ia), from 5-7pm on Thursday, January 17, at Haili Church. on 211 Haili St. A festive reception and book signing will directly follow the program at the Lyman Museum and Mission House located just up the street. The event is free. Since space is

limited, reservations are required. Call 935-5021 to secure a place on the guest list. The book will be available the night of the event for \$20.

Known as the first fruit of the Christian faith amongst the Hawaiian people, the story is told thru Opukaha'ia's own perspective, as recounted through his personal dairy entries and letters to close friends.

MEET AND GREET

Clara Priester, Executive Director of the Woman's Board of mission and several WBM members will be at our church from 2-4 pm, on Saturday, January 19th, to meet and greet women from our island churches. A brief presentation about the activities of the organization will be included as part of the program. The Woman's Board of Mission is an affiliate organization of our Women's Fellowship

SENIOR MINISTRY

Our Senior Ministry will be meeting on Thursday, January 24th, 10 – 12 noon. Pastor Neil Dupree will be our speaker. Mark your calendar as this is a program you'd surely enjoy attending!!! Don't forget to sign upyou may call the church office or sign up on the Senior Ministry bulletin board.

FROM LILY INOUYE

COLUMBINE STUDENT'S FATHER 12 YEARS LATER !!.... On Thursday, (12/27/12) Darrell Scott, the father of Rachel Scott, a victim of the Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colorado, was invited to address the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee. What he said to our national leaders during this special session of Congress was painfully truthful.

The Committee was not prepared for what he said, nor was it received well. It needs to be heard by every parent, every teacher, every politician, every sociologist, every psychologist, and every so-called expert! These courageous words spoken by Darrell Scott are powerful, penetrating, and deeply personal. Was this man's voice crying in the wilderness? The following is a portion of his transcript:

"Since the dawn of creation there has

been both good & evil in the hearts of men and women. We all contain the seeds of kindness or the seeds of violence. The death of my wonderful daughter, Rachel Joy Scott, and the deaths of that heroic teacher, and the other eleven children who died must not be in vain. Their blood cries out for answers.

"The first recorded act of violence was when Cain slew his brother Abel out in the field. The villain was not the club he used.. Neither was it the NCA, the National Club Association. The true killer was Cain, and the reason for the murder could only be found in Cain's heart.

"In the days that followed the Columbine tragedy, I was amazed at how quickly fingers began to be pointed at groups such as the NRA. I am not a member of the NRA. I am not a hunter. I do not even own a gun. I am not here to represent or defend the NRA - because I don't believe that they are responsible for my daughter's death. Therefore I do not believe that they need to be defended. If I believed they had anything to do with Rachel's murder I would be their strongest opponent

I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy -- it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies! Much of the blame lies here in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves. I wrote a poem just four nights ago that expresses my feelings best.

*Your laws ignore our deepest needs,
Your words are empty air.
You've stripped away our heritage,
You've outlawed simple prayer.
Now gunshots fill our classrooms,
And precious children die.
You seek for answers everywhere,
And ask the question "Why?"
You regulate restrictive laws,
Through legislative creed.
And yet you fail to understand,
That God is what we need*

"Men and women are three-part beings. We all consist of body, mind, and spirit. When we refuse to acknowledge a third part of our make-up, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and wreak

havoc. Spiritual presences were present within our educational systems for most of our nation's history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historical fact. What has happened to us as a nation? We have refused to honor God, and in so doing, we open the doors to hatred and violence. And when something as terrible as Columbine's tragedy occurs -- politicians immediately look for a scapegoat such as the NRA. They immediately seek to pass more restrictive laws that contribute to erode away our personal and private liberties. We do not need more restrictive laws. Eric and Dylan would not have been stopped by metal detectors. No amount of gun laws can stop someone who spends months planning this type of massacre. The real villain lies within our own hearts.

"As my son Craig lay under that table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his very eyes, he did not hesitate to pray in school. I defy any law or politician to deny him that right! I challenge every young person in America, and around the world, to realize that on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School prayer was brought back to our schools. Do not let the many prayers offered by those students be in vain. Dare to move into the new millennium with a sacred disregard for legislation that violates your God-given right to communicate with Him. To those of you who would point your finger at the NRA -- I give to you a sincere challenge. Dare to examine your own heart before casting the first stone!

My daughter's death will not be in vain! The young people of this country will not allow that to happen!"

- Darrell

CHAPEL DECORATIONS for 2013

Thank you for all who have helped to make our altar look great every Sunday. Attached is the schedule for individuals and families to help with the arrangements for this year. We encourage arrangements made from your own backyard. The date is about the date that was assigned last year. If you are unable to continue to do this, would like to sign-up for a date without a name, join someone already on the list, or have questions, please call

Margaret at 935-4071. If you want to join someone to share a date, please check with the person already on the list if it's possible to share that date. We do ask for Easter Lilies and Christmas Poinsettia sign-up for you to purchase and take home after the worship.

JANUARY PRAYER LIST - BIRTHDAYS

Please pray for and send a greeting to these Birthday people

- 04 Knell, Isaac
- 06 Ogawa, Hannah
- 07 Miyamoto, Dorothy
- 08 Chen, Bill
Nakayama, Kyle
- 09 Hayashi, Takeru
Nakashima, Ann
- 12 Matsui, Takashi
- 16 Oshiro, Brian
- 18 Yamauchi, Yuriko
- 19 Chu, Newton
- 20 Inouye, Grayson
Komine, Haruko
- 22 Koizumi, Michi
Kawasaki, Kevin
- 27 Suzuki, Wayne
- 28 Mukai, Theodora
- 30 Iwami, Barbara
Inouye, Vernon
- 31 Olcott, Lois

VOLUNTEERS FOR JANUARY

USHERS: Eileen Shiraishi, Joyce Nakamoto, Lei Jack, Anita Matthews, Michi Koizumi

FLOWERS:

- 1/13: Kay Kawachika (Mem.), Mary Ann Katayama
- 1/20: Saeko Hayashi, Amy Hashimoto
- 1/27: Ethel Yoshimasu (Mem.), Ichiko Hisanaga (Mem.), Teddi Mukai (Mem.)

CHILDCARE:

- 1/13: Shirley Miyake
- 1/20: Millie Uchima
- 1/27: Eileen Shiraishi

LAYREADERS:

- 1/13:
- 1/20:
- 1/27:

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR JENNY WUNG

Memorial Service of Sacred Celebration of her life will be held on Saturday, January 12, at Dodo Mortuary for Jenny Wung starting with visiting hours at 9:00 AM and the Memorial Service at 10:00 AM. Jenny was the mother of Gail Wung and the sister of Beverly Dodo, members of our church ohana. Our prayers are with Jenny's whole family.