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THE PASSAGE

MAY - OCTOBER 2016

This time of year, I usually talk about the changing seasons, falling leaves, and perhaps the bitter nip in the air. While it is a beautiful season as the leaves are ablaze with color and the cool weather brings a reprieve to the sweltering heat of summer, I want to focus on the change that happens within.

I've always been a lover of good music. Powerful melodies, angelic harmonies, and deep lyrics have always intrigued me and left me wanting more. It seems that this is part of the human condition as evidenced by Bob Dylan's recently being awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his lyrics.

Sometimes, it's the simplest songs that are the most beautiful - both lyrically and musically. One such example is the Bee Gees's *I Started a Joke*. So often, we focus on what the world is doing to us and how much injustice is being perpetrated against us. Rarely, though, do we stop to take the other person's perspective and see what we are doing to them. This is the theme in this short, yet deep song:

*I started a joke which started the whole world crying
But I didn't see that the joke was on me oh no
I started to cry which started the whole world laughing*

*Oh If I'd only seen that the joke was on me
I looked at the skies running my hands over my eyes
And I fell out of bed hurting my head from things that I said
'Till I finally died which started the whole world living
Oh if I'd only seen that the joke was on me*

It seems as though this is another "woe is me" kind of song until we get to the line that says "I fell out of bed hurting my head from things that I said." What is it that he said? We'll never know, but we can assume that his own words were intended to hurt others and ended up in his own suffering.

We feel that we are justified in much of what we say and feel. We adhere to a certain set of principles that are sometimes dictated by societal "norms," but are more often created within our own minds. We treat others as they deserve to be treated, or more accurately, how we *think* they deserve to be treated. As humans, we have a great propensity for being wrong, so we need to remember this when forming opinions and ideas about others.

If, in this season of change, we decide to do things differently - let it start from within. Some see autumn as a season of decay and dying, but I prefer to see it as making way for new birth in the spring. How can any new thing be created if the old isn't allowed to pass away?

If transformation is essential, then why wait? There will never be a better day to look inside ourselves and see who we really are. Change begins here and now - with *you* and *me* and then with *us*. Don't worry, it won't stop there because change is always contagious. We don't have to die

DONATIONS

Thank you to all the Friends and Members of Christ Church of Chicago for your generous donations during the months of August -October.

Donna and Santos Santiago (2)	Offering
Mikiko and Henry Shimabukuro (8)	Offering
Bill Steele	Garden Donation
Lovestrand Family	Garden Donation
Tuesday and Jordan Webb	Peoples Fund
Neil Brown	Yard Sale Donation
Neil Brown	Welcome Bag Donation
Peggy Sakai	In Memory of Yosh Amino
Marcia Kushino	In Celebration of Neil and Bruce's Birthday
Lois Shikami	In Celebration of Neil and Bruce's Birthday
Juana Wong	In Celebration of Neil and Bruce's Birthday
Nancy Takagi	In Celebration of Neil and Bruce's Birthday
Betty Moriguchi	In Celebration of Neil and Bruce's Birthday
Fran Walker (2)	Building Fund
Juana Wong	In Memory of Kiyō Takemoto
Pat and George Schlauder	Karate Donation
Janice Yamami	In Memory of Kiyō Takemoto
Eiko and Robert Engling	Passage Appreciation
Jackie and Ken Nitahara	In Memory of Kiyō Takemoto
Karin and Pat Kushino	In Memory of Kiyō Takemoto
Donna and Scott Nitahara	In Memory of Kiyō Takemoto
Dorothy Miyake	In Memory of Kiyō Takemoto
Elaine and Darrell Kaneshiro	In Memory of Kiyō Takemoto
Alyce and Rocky Yamanaka	In Memory of Yosh Amino

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Thank You.*

Christ Church of Chicago is an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. We invite you to join us at our weekly church service held at 10:30 Sunday mornings.

- Vacuumed each crease on all the pews (Brent!!) plus the floors
- Dusted the entire sanctuary
- Erased all the grime from our bathrooms
- Juxtaposed the benches in the sanctuary
- Swept all the corners and removed cobwebs
- Landscaped the yard
- Carpets cleaned (coming soon – Elaine and Darrell are going to handle this!!)

I know you know...All Church Clean-Up is one of my very favorite days---you can see why based upon all we accomplished. Plus we all ate amazing food during our lunch break!

A special thanks for the following “whirling dervishes”* for their hard work: Gary & Joy Fujiwara, Brent Hope, Kent Ijichi , Amy Kato, Elaine Kaneshiro, Russ Katahira, John Lovestrand, Betty Moriguchi , Scott Nitahara, Lois Shikami, Jon Shima, Bill Steele, Mary Mantel, Dahlia Toyama

- **Whirling dervishes defined:** Dervishes perform a dance **called** the sema. It is a religious dance performed to express emotion and achieve the wisdom and love of God. It originated in Turkey, in the Islamic sect of Sufism, which was founded by Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi. In the US, "whirling dervish" has a connotation suggesting that someone is a "whirlwind of activity", always busy, etc.

Robin

to start the whole world living, but it never hurts to stop and reflect while we bring joy to the world and to ourselves.

God's Peace,

Brandyn

Youth Group Celebration

The CE Board would like to thank our Tri-C Family for joining us in blessing the newly renovated Youth room this summer. Creating a welcoming and fun space for the Youth was a passion of John Lovestrand's, and his energy was contagious. So many people volunteered their time and creativity to develop the space (and to work with John!) The blessing began with Brandyn's thoughtful opening prayer and consecration, followed by Robby's heartfelt words of assurance and wisdom to our 2016 graduates. Congratulations to Sara Fujiwara, Kara Fujiwara, Jake Lovestrand, Joshua Shimabukuro, Bruce Takagi, Jordan Yamagiwa, Tyler Hirano, Mikey Nitahara, Christine Nitahara, Westyn Simmons, Matthew Sugai,



Alyson Schlauder, Taylor Nakagawa, Clara Imon Pedtke,

John Imon Pedtke, and last but not least, Naima and Atreyu! Thanks to Tina and Anni for the wonderful sandwiches, Lois for the fabulous crab dip, appetizers from Jackie and Sue, and to Marcia for helping us set up. What a wonderful way to recognize the amazing Youth in our Church Family!

Thanks To All For the Yard Sale

On Sept 9 and 10 Neil Brown hosted a Yard Sale in his front yard. There were many interesting pieces that Neil had collected for sale. Although it was short notice so many church members and friends rallied to help set up the items, sell them, pack up and put the items away. A huge thank you to the following people: Brent Hope, Daryl Kaneshiro, Elaine Kaneshiro, Russell Katahira, Marcia Kushino, Mary Mantel, Betty Moriguchi, Atsumi Ozawa, Lois Shikami, Nancy Toyama, Tuesday Webb, and Juana Wong.

On Sunday, Sept 11, Neil presented a check to the church for \$1,338.75. In addition, Neil also invited the helpers to a celebratory lunch on Sunday Sept. 25. A great, big, thank you to Neil!

Brent Hope: An Introduction

Two years ago, I rode my bike by a small corner church in the neighborhood. I didn't know anything about it except the rainbow flag above the door. Now here I am partnering with Elaine as co-moderator! Finding a church family has been a wonderful experience, and at the suggestion of our fantastic Lois, I wanted to tell everyone a little more about

Juana

Thank You for Help With the Cookie Walk!

Thank you all for your generous and delicious contributions to the Cookie Walk, and for supporting us year after year! A special thanks also to Barbara, Christine, Jane, and Sandra for enthusiastically helping with organizing and selling throughout the day!

*With our sincere gratitude,
Joy and Diane- Cookie Co-chairs*

All Church Clean-Up

OMG!! I am hopeful you noticed how sparkling clean the sanctuary is, how much less clutter is around, how nice the youth rooms look, and just how clean your church home is!! Let me tell you what happened during All Church Clean-up!

We had an amazing crew come out on October 15 to give our church a face lift! We tackled the following jobs big jobs:

- Tossed out the old heavy wood tables (which were immediately snatched up by scrap metal seller)
- Put away all bazaar remnants & divided up all the left over supplies for sale
- Cleaned out the office by Brandyn – the door closes now and the fridge is out of the hall
- Scrubbed and organized the fridge & kitchen

-Rob Martorano

Thanks again....Explore Chicago!!

Silent Auctions with a Japanese Flair!!

A special thanks to Neil Brown, Russell and Erin.

Neil donated several unique and beautiful Japanese collectibles for a silent auction. Aki Matsuri attendees has the ability to bid on and “win” Shoji screens, kimos, a chess set,.....just to name of few of the collectibles auctioned. Thanks to Neil’s generosity and the interest of the numerous auction winners!!

We also auctioned 2 gorgeous and complex bottles of exquisite sakes thanks to Russell and Erin’s donation. John Lovestrand won the "Daishichi" sake and Amy Kato won "Dreams Come True" sake.

Thank You from Baked Goods Booth!

Another successful Aki Matsuri event. Thanks to all the members and so many friends of Tri-C who generously donated so many delicious items for the Baked Goods Booth. There were pies, cakes, cobblers, different pastries and of course, Japanese goodies like ohagi, mochi, kurimanju and tsukemono.

Thanks also to all the helpers who manned the booth. You put on long hours, most of you from the beginning to the end. Such dedication, THANKS.

myself and what I’ve already received from Tri C.

I’ve lived in the neighborhood 21 years. I work for MetLife managing a clinical team of nurses, mental health therapists and vocational rehabilitation counselors. Previously I worked at Howard Brown, the LGBTQ health center, managing research studies and providing psychotherapy. My graduate degree in clinical social work is from Loyola. Outside of work, I love riding my bike around the city and the forest preserves, traveling, photography, going to the botanical garden, and attending symphony concerts at Symphony Center, Grant Park and Ravinia throughout the year.

Growing up in Indiana, I knew I wanted to move to the big city. On my Dad’s side, my grandfather began working in coal mines at age 14. He lived into his 90s, but his only trip out of the Midwest was to France during World War I serving in the calvary. He was proud his two sons were the first in the family to attend college. Likewise, my mother was the first in hers. She loved to sing and perform! I have cherished pictures of her as an energetic, full of life beauty in her high school years. Sadly though, by the time I was born she struggled with bouts of deep depression. On an early December evening when I was 9, Dad faced the difficult task of telling my brother and me she had passed. Like so many families touched by mental illness and suicide, her life for me is both a source of pain and motivation to live a life of meaning.

My father was teaching at the time of her death in a northern Indiana city called Wabash, so rather abruptly I moved to the place I call my hometown. Wabash is the classic American small town. The first electrically lighted city in the world, history abounds, and learning about the

past became a passion. In high school I ran cross-country & track, and was a big choir, band and drama club geek.

A year after my mother's death, my dad met Jane while attending graduate school. They married not long after, and she brought a new stability to my brother and my life, as well as a new brother and sister. I have wonderful siblings, and now seven fantastic nieces and nephews.

I'm a proud alum of Indiana University. My junior year the Hoosiers won the NCAA basketball championship. I'm excited college basketball season is just around the corner. Hoping for a good year!

So that's my story, but why did I join our church? I enjoy my work, but it isn't a job where I get to do what I call **real** social work. I was searching for a place where others are dedicated to social justice and giving back to the community. Also, like so many of us when we reach middle age, I have some deeper questions about life's meanings. I love that Pastor Brandyn doesn't stand up every Sunday and hand out the answers he has for us. He helps us explore our own truths.

And while I'm extremely lucky to have a family that is very supportive of me as a gay man, being part of an open & welcoming community is a wonderful gift. During our leadership retreat last year in Michigan, I learned about the history of Tri C. The Japanese American experience during World War II, like LGBT individuals in Europe, was one of pain, discrimination, and lives torn apart. This church is a wonderful symbol of resilience. To use a phrase that has become a signal of hope for LGBT youth, "It gets better." Our church is a beacon to our neighborhood and

THANK YOU!

Ticket Purchasers

THANK YOU for purchasing a raffle ticket or two – both to support Tri-C and to hopefully win a prize. Here is a list of our winners:

- Grand Prize (Chicago Sports Team Tickets)...Hang Nguyen
- 1st Prize (Parachute/Third Eye).....Derrick Yamagiwa
- 2nd Prize (Int'l Film Festival).....Nick Ribaldo
- 3rd Prize (Renga Tei).....Jackie & Ken Nitahara
- 4th Prize ("Taste of Peterson Ave": Fondue Stube, Pride Sushi & Thai, and Wolfy's...Marsha Kushino & Robert Takagi
- 5th Prize (Bulls Tickets).....Sandip Patel

- Runner Up Prize: Pride Sushi & Thai Gift

Certificates

- Corwin Eng
- Brent Hope
- Darrell Kaneshiro
- Heidi Maruyama
- Jordan Yamagiwa
- Jack Kleisner
- Mike Naito

thank you's for this year's raffle...

Raffle Committee

Without the committee, we would not have had the prizes, the tickets, the advertising...you name it...all because of the following people: Amy Kato, Tuesday Webb, Erin Payton, Susan Yamanaka, Corey Toyama and Robin Hirano. THANK YOU!

Ticket Sellers

Twenty-eight people plus our website sold over 280 tickets in advance of the bazaar. John Lovestrand wins the prize for most tickets sold -- 30 tickets!! No matter the number you sold, you all helped to make the bazaar so successful! THANK YOU!

Prize Donators

We had amazing prizes this year!! We branched out from sports tickets to explore our city and our church neighborhood.

All prizes were donations either from people or organizations. Following is a list of contributors:

- Parachute, Renga Tei, Pride Sushi, Fondue Stube and Wolfy's. While the restaurants listed donated the meals & gift cards, special thanks to Kelly Iijichi for procuring the 1st prize (Parachute Chef's dinner) .
- Third Eye Theatre Ensemble – Nancy Toyama
- International Film Festival – Erin & Roger Payton
- Bulls Tickets – Richard Yamada (Jon Shima's Uncle) and Robin Hirano
- Black Hawks Tickets – Brian O'Hern (Robin's friend)
- White Sox Tickets – Roger & Erin Payton
- Cubs Tickets – Kim & Randy Morton
- Bears Tickets – Greg Miller (Robin's brother)

the world that communities get stronger by the deeds and cherished lives of all of us on the journey together. I'm honored to be a part of this church and all it stands for!

Christ Church Peace Garden—Fall 2016

If you've been to church lately, you've already seen the amazing results of the garden team's recent efforts to beautify our front lawn. As a result of the generous donations from church members, sufficient funding was obtained to implement phase I of the long anticipated garden remake. All of the labor-intensive work was completed last fall by a small cadre of men who dug and pulled out the root balls of the existing shrubbery, jack-hammered out the concrete footings that anchored the original church sign and flag pole, and created soil beds for the new installation. For that we have Bill and Evan Steele, Robbie Williams, Kent Ijichi, Gary Fujiwara, John Lovestrand, George Schlauder and Brent Hope to thank! (If I left out the names of anyone else, I truly apologize as that would fall under the category of an unintentional slight!). And earlier this summer Robbie directed a small group of our youth, Trent and Jarrett Takaki, Nicole & Cameron Fujiwara to maintain the soil beds and clear them of the weeds prior to the installation of the berm, trees and boulder.

We also give our most heart-felt thanks to Howard Curran, from Curran Landscapes Ltd, who was hired by yours truly to work with us on the purchase and installation of our half-dozen newly planted trees and soil hill. Howard was very generous in donating weed killer, pre-emergent weed suppression, lawn seed and netting, and mulch at no extra cost to the church. He also waived delivery and planting

costs on the Korean Blue pine. Because of his generosity more than what we ever envisioned as realistic was accomplished in Phase I! So now we find this is a very good place to rest as the trees need time to take root and the soil needs to settle.

We are probably a little more than half way done with the garden make over. All of the labor-intensive heavy-lifting has been accomplished and what is left are the creative design elements and much easier installation of shrubs and flowers next year. Our hope is to complete the garden by early summer of 2017. But that will only happen if we are fortunate enough to raise funds for the remaining garden stock. I estimate those costs will be lower than the costs for phase I, so we eagerly look forward to future donations from inspired members.

The garden team will be meeting again later this fall to discuss the design and installation of phase II. Will we stick to the original plan created by landscape architect and friend of the church, Maelo Maldonado, or incorporate more of a Japanese garden design now that we have already installed elements of it? We are interested in hearing your opinions!

I also must give thanks to those church members who so generously donated to make this dream of mine become a reality: Lois & Jim Shikami, Sandra & John Lovestrand, Bill Steele, Juana Wong, and Jackie Nitahara. And, of course, I cannot end this article without giving Sue Takaki a very well-deserved and hearty thank you for lovingly taking care of the garden over all these many years!

*Regards,
Russ*

Aki Matsuri 2016

After months of planning for this year's Aki Matsuri, it's hard to believe that it's now a happy memory. From the time that the doors opened at noon, Fellowship Hall was filled with laughter and great conversation. It was terrific seeing folks chatting and enjoying themselves with friends that they likely hadn't seen since last year at this time. It was nice to see some new faces in the crowds, too. We were also blessed to have support from friends and family traveling from out of state. From all reports, Aki Matsuri was a huge success!

A big thank you to each and every one of you who pitched in at all levels to make Aki Matsuri the success that it was. From those of you who were involved with the planning, marketing, food preparation, set up, transportation, serving, cooking, grilling, baking, tear down, clean up as well as those of you who sent your moral support our way – we couldn't have done it without you!

*Your 2016 Aki Matsuri Co-Chairs
Amy, George and Pat*

Explore Chicago Raffle—A HUGE Success!

This year, the raffle raised \$7,900 which is ~35% of our total funds raised (~\$23,000). We accomplished this through all of your support. As such, I have 4 specific