



# MEGUMI

慈恩

GARDENA BUDDHIST CHURCH



CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
1926 - 2026



## September

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**Rev. John Iwohara**

### "Breaking the Silence"

Last month, in August, our Ichi-mi group hosted another successful seminar. This last seminar was titled, "Breaking the Silence."

This seminar was meant as a follow-up to the previous seminar that

was titled, "A Profound Silence." Because Ichi-mi is a Jodo Shinshu group, one that is named after a phrase found in the Shoshin Nenbutsuge, "profound silence" may sound like it was meant to have a positive connotation. Unfortunately, the "profound" in "profound silence" was meant to highlight the tremendous negative impact that not recognizing, and not speaking about the prejudice that the LGBTQIA+ community has to confront has on the lives of the members of those communities, even within our temples.

Whereas religion talks about universals, it also has its focus on human lives. If religion cannot help individuals discover meaning in their lives, then there really is no point in having religion. Perhaps this is the main reason why religious attendance appears to be dropping: fewer people appear to be looking towards religion to help them find meaning. According to a 2023

Gallup poll<sup>1</sup>, about three in four Americans identify with a religious faith. On the other hand, the same poll indicated that 45% of Americans stated that religion is "very important" in their lives, 26% stated that religion is "fairly important" and 28% said "not very important." This can be compared to data from 2020, when 48% answered "very important," 25% answered "fairly important," and 27% answered "not very important." Comparing this with data taken 10 years earlier in 2010, 54% of Americans answered "very important," 26% stated "fairly important" and 20% said "not very important." During the same period, in 2023, 32% of adults said that they had gone to a religious institution within the past seven days. In 2020 that number was 30%, and in 2010, the number was 39%. Gallup also reported that in "2000, 44% had gone to church in the past seven days, and in 1958, 49% had."<sup>2</sup> In other words, the numbers do not look good.

I believe that one possible reason why younger Americans, in particular, have stopped going to church (meaning any house of worship) is because the universal message of religion is

1 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/358364/religious-americans.aspx>

2 *ibid*

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being lost in our “separateness.” I doubt that many would disagree with me when I say that we, as Americans, are more divided than ever. For example, politically, we have always had a two party system. Unfortunately, it seems that now—instead of being a reason for discourse—our political affiliation has become a reason for mistrust and enmity. Our current political landscape has our leaders openly talking about deliberately redistricting voting jurisdictions for the reason of political (party) gain. In the past, at least there was the presumption that redistricting was done to make the new district better represent the electorate. It also probably doesn’t help when churches now appear to be choosing political sides when we are so politically divided as a nation. Within all these divides, political and social, it has clearly become “us” versus “them.”

Hopefully, religion and religious institutions can re-focus again on universals while it focuses on human lives. In Jodo Shinshu, one of the universals that is expressed is through the phrase “grasped, never to be abandoned” or sesshu fusha (摂取不捨). It is such an important phrase that it appears almost immediately in the Kyogyoshinsho<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, we also haven’t been doing such a good job at expressing this universal when it comes to

embracing our LGBTQIA+ members. In terms of “grasped, never to be abandoned,” it was mentioned at the “Breaking the Silence” seminar that if being LGBTQIA+ is neither supported nor recognized then this does not allow a person to feel “grasped,” even if they have “not been abandoned.” This revelation really opened my eyes to the depth and breadth of the universal nature of “grasped, never to be abandoned” or sesshu fusha. Fortunately, we have been getting better at supporting and recognizing people for who they are, especially as we teach each other the universal qualities of Jodo Shinshu or the religious truths and the tradition that we share. Hopefully, this will motivate us to do more, because there is still a lot more to do.



<sup>3</sup> See *Collected Works of Shinran*, p 4.

## ABA News

September promises to be a busy month for ABA.

On Sunday, September 21, ABA will be hosting its annual bingo. It will be held in the area between the Temple and Building 1, and will be right after the Ohigan service. Lunch will be donburi or “Anything Over Rice”. We will have our Cup Raffle as well as baked goods. Come out for an afternoon of fun, under the sun!



ABA meetings are usually held on the third Sunday of the month. However, for September, our meeting will be on Sunday, September 14 to finalize our plans for the bingo.

If you would like to help with the bingo, join us at our meeting on Sunday, September 14. See you soon!





# BEACH PARTY BINGO

**Gardena ABA Bingo** is coming back... but with a slight twist. We are moving outdoors, enjoying some family & friends time with a beach picnic style lunch .... (no sand or beach) .... But lots of fun. Dress up in your favorite beach wear & bring your own beach or lounge chair (we will have tables and chairs for you to use),

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2025**

**LUNCH BEGINS AT 11:30 AM**

**BINGO STARTS AT 1:00 PM**

**COME JOIN US FOR THE FOOD, FUN AND PRIZES**

**COME FOR THE FOOD**

Start your lunch by creating  
Your own donburi with  
"Anything on Rice" ( \$10.00)  
Then enjoy our Bake Sale items  
(\$2.00) To snack on throughout.  
The day.

**COME FOR THE FUN**

Meet up with Friends  
and Family and enjoy  
the day of BINGO with  
Opportunities to play  
SPECIAL BINGO GAMES  
( Packet of 5 for \$10.00 )

**COME TO WIN**

"Cup Raffle" (\$1.00) returns with a  
chance to take home items  
for both young and old.  
The more you play, the  
more chances you have to  
WIN!

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**"ANYTHING ON RICE "** Donburi style lunch for \$10.00. Salads and tsukemomo will be offered as sides.

**BINGO PRE - ORDER PRICES** (2 CARDS FOR \$10.00). **Price at the door will be \$15.00.**

**SPECIAL BINGO GAMES PACKET OF 5** WILL BE SOLD FOR \$10.00 CASH ONLY.

IN GASSHO,

GARDENA ABA BINGO COMMITTEE

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CUT HERE AND RETURN IN ENVELOPE WITH PAYMENT. **ACCEPTING CASH OR CHECKS ONLY !! CHECKS PAYABLE TO GARDENA BUDDHIST CHURCH.**

ABA FAMILY BINGO DAY, SUNDAY, SEPT 21, 2025 – ORDER FORM. **ORDERS MUST BE RETURNED BY 9/14/25**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PRE – ORDER BINGO GAMES: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 EA = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PRE – ORDER BENTOS: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 EA = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## Fujinkai / BWA Buddhist Women's Association

### Happenings:

- ◇ The GBC 100th Anniversary Committee meets every month after the regular BWA monthly meeting.
  - o Update: The BWA will be gifting the temple with new carpeting for the hondo as our gift for the GBC's 100th anniversary. We've also decided to move our luncheon to the social hall, as it will be newly constructed in early 2026. This will save on the hotel meals, fees & other overhead expenses. We're looking into asking a restaurant to cater our luncheon. The change in venue means a change in the date of our event to June 28, 2026. We have invited Rev. Kodo Umezu as our guest speaker.
- ◇ August 10th (Sunday) – Monthly BWA meeting. Thank you B/c gumi for providing the delicious snacks at our meeting.
- ◇ August 16th (Saturday) - Social Hall Clean up. Thank you to all members who came out to help move all items out of the social hall in preparation for the demolition and renovation for our new social hall & kitchen. With everyone's help, we were able to accomplish this task in a few hours. And thank you to Kathy Hori for providing the lunch, and to everyone else who brought food to feed all the volunteers. Thanks to all!
- ◇ August 24th (Sunday) – Shadows For Peace: Hibakusha Documentary. This event was sponsored by the BWA. Thank you to Imogene Imada, who attended as a BWA representative.
- ◇ September 7th (Sunday) – Monthly BWA meeting. We thank C/d Gumi who prepared the snacks for our meeting.
- ◇ September 20th (Saturday) Fall Ohigan Seminar with guest speaker Rev. Cyndi Yasaki. Japanese session from 9am-11am; English session 1:30pm-3:00pm. Thank you to C/d gumi for arranging breakfast for the ministers and the snacks for the morning session.
- ◇ September 21st (Sunday) Ohigan Service. Thank you to C/d gumi for preparing the otoki and osonae for this service. Since there will be no access to the social hall and kitchen during the renovation period, the BWA has arranged to have daifuku as the Ohigan otoki.
- ◇ September 28th (Sunday). BWA 80/88 Birthday Party. This year we do not have any birthday recipients; however, we have decided to go out to a group lunch on this day. Location is still being discussed.
- ◇ October 12th (Sunday) – Lady Eshinni/Kakushinni Service & BWA Memorial Service. We'll be preparing the program and deciding the chairperson soon.
- ◇ February, 2026 – Japanese seminar. Reverend John is still looking for a guest speaker for our seminar.
- ◇ October, 2026 – FBWA Conference in San Diego. FBWA Conference Committee is asking OCBC & GBC BWA members if chartering a bus would encourage more Japanese speaking members to attend this 3-day conference. GBC BWA has inquired if a 1-day bus (for the Saturday workshops and banquet dinner) is available. Julie will inquire with the FBWA Conference Committee and report back to GBC BWA at next month's meeting.

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### Announcements:

- ◇ September 6th (Saturday) – SDBWA 3rd Quarter Meeting via Zoom 10:00am. Imogene & Julie will attend
- ◇ September 7th (Sunday) - September BWA Regular Monthly Meeting 11:15am (hybrid). C/d Gumi
- ◇ September 7th (Sunday) Shotsuki Hoyo service (in person) 2pm
- ◇ September 16th (Tuesday) - Meinichiko Service – via Zoom
- ◇ September 28th (Sunday)- Coordinating Council Meeting 11:30am. Imogene will attend
- ◇ October 5th (Sunday) – October BWA Regular Monthly Meeting 11:15am (hybrid). D/e Gumi
- ◇ October 16th (Thursday) - Meinichiko Service – via Zoom

### BWA Appreciation:

- ◇ Fundraiser Komatsu, Janett Akiko
- ◇ Orei for Ichi-Mi Seminar Breakfast Ichi-Mi
- ◇ Donation for Obon Snacks Shimono, Natsuye

## The Community Projects Group

The Community Projects Group members thank everyone who supported us at our Crafts Boutique booth during the Obon carnival. Make up of volunteers who donate their time, materials, and skills to the Church, your purchases enabled our Group to have another very successful Obon!

After a short break, the Group will meet again on Monday, September 8 – we meet on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Mondays in the Meeting Room at 10 am. Please consider coming – we work year-round on projects of all sorts (knitting, crocheting, sewing, bead work, paper crafts, etc.). We welcome new people and new ideas!



## TUESDAY SOCIAL

Thank you for helping with the Obon festivities: set-up before, volunteering on a shift, and clean up after, phew! Lots of work, but also lots of fun.

I hope everyone enjoyed the summer break and is now ready to come back to our Tuesday Social gathering starting on August 26 and every Tuesday thereafter.

We meet every Tuesday from 9:30 - 11:30am in the Hondo Meeting Room. A new season of fun, games, and refreshments. We will try to change things up a little and add new games and activities. Please come and meet new friends. It's an opportunity to chat, share stories and recipes, and some days we even do stretching exercises. See you on Tuesdays.



**Megumi Deadline is Monday, September 15, 2025**

## Sangha Teens

Thank you to all the Sangha Teens, parents, advisors, and other church members who made our drink booth a success this year at Obon. We sold thousands of soda and water! We also sold UCC coffee this year which was sold out each day and Asahi generously donated barley tea which was a big hit! We appreciate all the help we received. We could not have been successful without it.

We would especially like to thank Debbie Hiramoto for taking lead for Sangha Teens and for all her hard work supervising, coordinating and cleaning.



## Hui Aikanes

The anticipation of planning, meeting, and disseminating shifts for working in the Obon booths has come and gone. Thank you to Nadine, Sharyl and the Obon Committee for another successful year. Thank you also to our members who helped work in the various booths during the Obon festival.



Some of our members attended the performance of "Something Rotten" at the Armstrong Theater on August 10th. Everyone who attended was entertained by the many talented actors, production team, and clever script. We would especially like to recognize Louise Mayemura for assisting with the costume design for the performers. She is quite talented!

On August 27th and 28th, a few of the Hui Aikane members volunteered to help JACCC with their "Kokoro: The Heart of the Community" fundraiser. Hui Aikane members helped with displaying donations for the silent auction, and setting up for the main event. Thank you to our members who helped with the JACCC fundraiser.

On Sunday, September 20th, after Sunday service, ABA will be hosting their annual Bingo fundraiser. Due to the renovation of our Social Hall, ABA decided to change the original format for Bingo to "Beach Party Bingo". The "Beach Party Bingo" fundraiser will be conducted outside with a beach, picnic like atmosphere. Food and drinks will be sold. Hui Aikane members will be supporting ABA by helping serve the food at the fundraiser. Looking forward to seeing everyone at Bingo!

Finally, some of the Hui Aikane members will be attending Nishi Hongwanji's Dance Benefit on Saturday, September 27th. Nishi Hongwanji will be celebrating their 120th Anniversary. A primary priority is the repair and improvement of their Gym/Social Hall. Congratulations Nishi!

Our next meeting has been changed to 1 PM October 4th from September 27th in the Meeting Room. We are planning to discuss future Hui Aikane activities and enjoy each other's company. For more information regarding our meeting, please contact either Charlene Nation, David Nakamoto, or Jane Nakamoto. Please join us!

New members are welcome to attend! Hawaiian ancestry is optional!

**Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 17 at 7PM  
Via Zoom**

# GBC Forward!

**-DOUBLE DOWN... TRIPLE DOWN... WHATEVER!!-**



Thank you to all those who have donated thus far to the GBC Forward! Fundraising Campaign. We've happily achieved 25% of our overall objective. While we are very grateful for the funds collected, \$2 million is still quite a distant goal.

Did you know there are many ways to multiply your donation? For example:

- Many larger companies and non-profit organizations offer employee match programs. In other words, for every dollar donated to a non-profit/charitable organization (like GBC) companies will match up to 'dollar for dollar', potentially doubling your personal donation. To participate in these programs, enrollment will often entail a short online form or a quick call to your Human Resources department with:
    - o Charity Name – Gardena Buddhist Church 1517 W. 166th Street Gardena, CA 90247
    - o Phone – 310-327-9400
    - o Proof of donation – usually our thank you receipt/letter or canceled check copy
    - o GBC tax ID number – 95-2255400
    - o If you are considering this option, please contact us for application language that will facilitate approval. [gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org](mailto:gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org)
  - Many companies, Fed/State/Municipalities and charitable organizations offer grant programs. If you are aware of ANY, please forward any information to: [gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org](mailto:gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org)
  - Organizations like 'Giving Multiplier' and likely many others will add additional matching funds for personal donations through pooled corporate funding donations. If you find other organizations and Gardena Buddhist Church is not listed, we will register with them so please email us info at: [gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org](mailto:gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org)
  - Sending to us your company's corporate giving contact information (i.e. Name, title and physical address; also helpful are email address and/or phone number). We will respectfully make contact with a formal donation request letter and brochure of our project.
  - And for those of us who are over 70 ½ years old, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows individuals to make tax-free donations directly from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). QCDs can be used to fulfill your Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)
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without adding to your taxable income. This is especially beneficial for individuals aged 73 or older. Unlike standard charitable deductions, you can benefit from a QCD even if you don't itemize deductions on your tax return. But the funds cannot pass through your hands; they must be sent directly from your IRA administrator to the charity. So, if you are considering this option, please contact your IRA administrator.

Like fertilizer, water and sunlight, additional resources can help your donations to grow!



## Dharma School News

Welcome back Dharma School students and parents. Hope you had a great summer.

The first day of Dharma School will be September 7th. We will have our Ice Cream Social on that day so make sure you don't miss it.

Thank you to all the Dharma School parents and students who helped out at the games, soda booth, spam and Central Processing Pick up at Obon. We really appreciate all your support. It was great to see our Dharma students dancing in the circle and enjoying themselves. Thank you to Nadine Kakimoto who was teaching us the dances with the help of Ms. Mitzi, Ms. Arleen, Ms. Kim, Ms. Claire, Ms. Imogene, Ms. Irene, Ms. Hope, Mr. Alan, Ms. Irene, Ms. Yasuko, Ms. Charlene. A special thank you to Brian Imada and Brendan Kato for setting up the sound and playing the music for the dancers.

September 20th is our Fall Ohigan Seminar at 1:30 pm. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Cyndi Yasaki, who was a former Dharma School student of Gardena Buddhist Church.

We hope the parents can make it to the seminar.

We will have our Fall Ohigan service on September 20th and after the service ABA will be having their ABA Beach Party Bingo. Lunch will start at 11:30 create your own donburi for \$10.00 and Bingo pre order is \$10.00 and \$15.00 at the door. They will also have a bake sale items are \$2.00 each. Hope you will join in the fun.







Ross Nishimura

## From GBC Board Chairperson

As we move into September and the observance of Ohigan, I'm reminded of one of the fundamental truths of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism: Impermanence. While change can sometimes feel tough, we learn that impermanence helps us let go of clinging to what is temporary and instead find genuine joy in the present moment. I've been thinking about this a lot lately, as I prepare for a backpacking trip where I'll be carrying everything I need to survive (albeit comfortably) for a 4-day trip. It's a personal way for me to embrace impermanence, shedding excess, learning to adapt, and finding balance between necessity, comfort, and weight. I encourage you to do the same by intentionally altering a small part of your routine. By doing so, we make more space for new possibilities and personal growth in your life and those around you.

### A Metamorphosis for Our Social Hall

Speaking of impermanence, the principle of change is now very visible right here at our temple as we begin our Social Hall refurbishment project. We've officially started demolition and construction! Much like a caterpillar entering a metamorphosis, our Social Hall is now surrounded by construction fencing and internal changes are well underway. This is a clear sign that our vision for a renewed and vibrant space is becoming a reality.

I am pleased to share that our fundraising campaign is progressing. We have reached 25% of our \$2 million goal, which is a significant milestone, but we still have a long way to go, with \$1.5 million still needed to complete this large-scale project. To make it easier for everyone to contribute, we have set up a convenient and flexible payment process. You can make a pledge of any amount—whether it's \$100, \$500, \$1000, or more—to be automatically billed monthly, quarterly, or yearly to your credit card. Your generous donations and pledges go directly to fund this project, which will create a functional, welcoming space for our Sangha and the community for generations to come. If you have any questions at all about the project, please don't hesitate to contact us at [gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org](mailto:gbcforward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org).

### A Time for Flexibility

During this exciting period, we kindly ask for your patience and understanding. Most events and activities that were previously held in the Social Hall have been moved to different locations, temporarily paused, or "metamorphosized"—check out ABA Bingo which has become a daytime outdoor event! Enjoy time with family and friends at this beach-themed Bingo, enjoy "anything on rice" donburi-style bowls, and have a chance to win some one-of-a-kind items. This new format, Beach Party Bingo on September 21st, is a great example of our ability to adapt.

### Breaking the Silence: A Powerful Voice for Change

I also want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for those who participated in the "Breaking the Silence" seminar. I am incredibly proud of the individuals in the Ichimi organization who stepped forward and led a charge for change. By choosing to break their own silence, they have set a powerful example for all of us. Their courage and willingness to use their voices shows

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us what it means to be a champion for change and truly live the values of the Nenbutsu. They are using a simple & clear voice as a powerful tool for compassion and change, and I hope we can all learn from their example.

I am so proud of our Gardena Buddhist Church for the ability to adapt, to lead the charge for change, and to find compassion and joy as we continue to evolve together.

## *In Sympathy*

**We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of the following who have left our world to be One with Amida Buddha. Namo Amida Butsu.**

**Ando, Junn (44)**  
**Tanaka, Lois Rurie (86)**

**June 30, 2025**  
**July 31, 2025**



### September 2025

- |    |                                         |         |
|----|-----------------------------------------|---------|
| 1  | Temple Closed Labor Day Holiday         |         |
| 3  | DS Teacher's meeting via Zoom           | 7:00pm  |
| 7  | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)       | 9:30am  |
|    | BWA mtg (In-Person & Zoom)              | 11:15am |
|    | Shotsuki Hoyo Service                   | 2:00pm  |
| 10 | GBC 100 Operations Comm. mtg via Zoom   | 7:00pm  |
| 11 | BEC Monthly mtg via Zoom                | 7:30pm  |
| 14 | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)       | 9:30am  |
|    | ABA mtg (In-Person & Zoom)              | 11:00am |
| 15 | Megumi deadline                         |         |
| 16 | Meinichiko Service via Zoom             | 7:00am  |
| 17 | GBC Board meeting via Zoom              | 7:00pm  |
| 20 | Fall Ohigan Seminar w/Rev. Cyndi Yasaki |         |
|    | Jpn                                     | 9:30am  |
|    | Eng                                     | 1:30pm  |
| 21 | Jr. YBA mtg                             | 8:45am  |
|    | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)       | 9:30am  |
|    | Fall Ohigan Service w/Rev. Cyndi Yasaki |         |
|    | ABA Beach Party Bingo                   | 11:30am |
|    | (Bingo starts at 1pm)                   |         |
| 24 | GBC 100 Golf Comm. mtg via Zoom         | 7:30pm  |
| 27 | SDDSTL mtg via Zoom                     | 1:00pm  |
| 28 | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)       | 9:30am  |
|    | Coordinating Council mtg                | 11:30am |
|    | BWA 80 & 88 Birthday Service & Luncheon |         |

### October 2025

- |    |                                                  |         |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1  | DS Teacher's mtg via Zoom                        | 7:00pm  |
| 4  | Hui Aikane mtg                                   | 1:00pm  |
| 5  | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)                | 9:30am  |
|    | Sangha Teen mtg                                  | 10:30am |
|    | BWA mtg                                          | 11:15am |
|    | Shotsuki Hoyo Service                            | 2:00pm  |
| 6  | Ich-Mi mtg                                       | 6:00pm  |
| 8  | GBC 100 Operations Comm. mtg via Zoom            | 7:00pm  |
| 9  | BEC Monthly mtg via Zoom                         | 7:30pm  |
| 12 | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)                | 9:30am  |
|    | Eshin-ni/Kakushin-ni Memorial Service            |         |
|    | BWA Memorial Service                             | 11:00am |
| 14 | GBC Forward mtg via Zoom                         | 7:00pm  |
| 15 | GBC Board mtg via Zoom                           | 7:00pm  |
| 16 | Meinichiko Service via Zoom                      | 7:00am  |
| 19 | Jr. YBA mtg                                      | 8:45am  |
|    | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)                | 9:30am  |
|    | ABA mtg (In-Person & Zoom)                       | 11:30am |
| 20 | Megumi deadline                                  |         |
| 22 | GBC 100 Golf Comm. mtg via Zoom                  | 7:30pm  |
| 25 | 2025 Southern District Conf. at San Fernando VHB |         |
| 26 | Sunday Service (In-Person & Zoom)                | 9:30am  |
|    | Coordinating Council mtg                         | 11:30am |

### <Regular Activities>

**Sunday:** Isami Taiko Practice @12pm  
**Monday:** 2nd, 3rd & 4th Community Projects @10:00am  
 2nd & 4th Cub Pack 1230 mtg @6pm  
**Tuesday:** Tuesday Social @9:30am  
 Odori Exercise Class (\$5 donation) @1:00pm

**Tuesday:** Boy Scout Troop 242 mtg @7pm  
**Wednesday:** Ikenobo/Ikebana Class @2pm 3/month  
**Thursday (& or Saturday)** Tea Ceremony Class @9:30am  
**Thursday** Isami Taiko Practice @7pm  
 1st & 3rd Boy Scout Troop 242 mtg @7pm  
 1st BS Eagle Board @7pm  
**Friday:** 2nd & 4th Girl Scout Troop 4345 mtg @7pm

## JR. YBA (Jr. Young Buddhist Association)

### 2025 Jr YBA Trip to Japan

By Gerald Kato

This past June, members of the Gardena Junior YBA and their families had the opportunity to visit Japan on a religious and personal endeavor. This trip took 2 years of planning and fundraising. It all started back in 2019, when my son Brenden and the rest of the Sangha Teens were thinking about restarting the Sangha Teen Hawaii trip. Unfortunately, Covid was upon us in 2020 and all plans were scrapped. Fast forward to fall of 2023, where in my mind I wanted the Junior Y to have an opportunity to travel whether it be Hawaii or Japan. In speaking with Junior Y members and their parents, Japan was the consensus. My initial idea was sort of personal, as a reward for the Class of 2025 graduates, which included my son. We opened it up to all those in Jr. Y from the Class of 2024 all the way to the Class of 2028, as long as you participated in the fundraising to help subsidize the Juniors cost. 10 total Junior Y members along with their family members signed up for the trip. We had a total of 34 in the travel party. This was a special trip, as aside from parents and siblings, we had cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents also along for the trip. We started our fundraising in July of 2024 with a church wide recycle drive and concluded the fundraising in April 2025. In between we receive donations from the Gardena BWA and individuals along with a Spaghetti/Bingo fundraiser, more recycle drives and a Boba fundraiser. The Junior Y is forever grateful for everyone's support.

We ended up working with Kintetsu International to help us with our trip planning since they have worked with our BWA, OCBC and Yonsei. Coming up with the dates were a little challenging due to the 2025 academic year endings, Wisteria Chugakko, Saishin Dojo, student's summer schedules and obons. We ended up choosing mid-June through July 1 with the first part of the trip in Kyoto and second half of our trip was spent in Tokyo.

The Kyoto portion of the trip was jam packed starting from the first full day. We started our first full day with a 6AM service at Nishi Hongwanji followed by the Kikyoshiki Ceremony (Buddhist Name) which was presented by the Gomonsu Emeritus and culminating in a tour of Nishi Hongwanji. After a quick trip back to the Miyako Hachijo Hotel for breakfast, we visited Sanju Sangendo, Ohtani Hombyo and Kiyomizu Temple. Lastly, after 10s of thousand steps, our day ended with a welcome shabu shabu group dinner.



Day 2 we visited Fushimi Inari in the morning and we went to Todaji Temple and Nara Deer Park in the afternoon. The third day we spent in Osaka with a trip to the Nissin Cup Noodle Factory where we created our very own Cup of Noodle, a quick lunch trip to Dotonbori and ending our day at Osaka Castle.

Our 4th day we visited Hiroshima and Miyajima Island where we visited Itsukushima Shrine and had lunch and time to explore the island. In Hiroshima we visited Peace Memorial Park and Museum. This was a somber moment and gave us a moment to reflect on the horrors of war. It was a little more personal for my wife Amy as her mom lived in Hiroshima before the bomb was dropped. Thankfully, she moved just prior to the bomb. Our Hiroshima trip concluded with a group Hiroshima Okonomiyaki dinner.

We had a free day on the 5th day. Some families went to explore Kyoto more, some families took

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pictures in traditional Japanese Yukatas. My family took the day to explore downtown Kyoto and Gion. I would have liked to spend more time in Gion, but unfortunately the heavy downpour ended that.

Day 6 we departed Kyoto for Tokyo. We had a relaxing Shinkansen ride to Tokyo. Upon arriving in Tokyo we had a tour of Asakusa and Tokyo Skytree before checking into the Keio Plaza Hotel in Shinjuku.

In Tokyo, every family was free to explore on their own. Day 7 most families went to Tokyo Disney Sea and those who didn't go went to Yokohama.

On our 8th day, Friday, we went to Tokyo Dome to watch the Tokyo Giants play the Yokohama DeNA Bay Stars. Everyone who attended had a blast. The food was amazing and the atmosphere of the supporters for both teams was off the chart.



Days 9-12 was more of personal sightseeing. Some families went home on day 9 and the rest extended their stay an additional 3 days in Tokyo. Much of the remaining free days, families spent time in Shinjuku, Shibuya, Ikebukuro, Ginza, Kabukicho, Hakone, Yokohama, Kamakura and Tokyo Disneyland. Families had the opportunity to shop, drive the go karts in Shibuya, experience the Shibuya Crossing. My family went to Ikebukuro to visit Namjatown, where Brenden visited their Gyoza Stadium to try different gyozas. Garrett and I did the ninja experience.

I would like the Junior Y to be able to go on a trip every 2-3 years be it Japan or to visit another temple(s) in the US. As of right now, I believe the next Japan trip is being talked about for 2029 or 2030.

While the planning was sometimes overwhelming, being that I had never been to Japan and I had no idea on the itinerary planning (places to visit), I can unequivocally state that it was worth it. The Junior Y group was strong to begin with, but this trip saw them and their families grow closer. I am really proud of the group and am looking forward to the next groups of Jr. Y members and families.





English translation of the Hongwanji Shimpo (newspaper) article, dated July 20, 2025

## American youth get first-hand experience at Hongwanji



### YBA graduates visit Hongwanji to commemorate high school graduation

#### Gardena Buddhist Temple Jr YBA

Twelve members and their families totaling a 34-member delegation of the Gardena Buddhist Temple (Buddhist Churches of America) Jr. YBA, comprised of junior and senior high school students visited Hongwanji on June 20. (Photo above)

YBA advisor Gerald Kato cheerfully shared "I had initially planned this visit to Hongwanji as a graduation trip for my son and his friends who have graduated high school along with YBA. Approaching the other YBA members led to a group this size." Following the daily morning service, 21 delegates took part in the Kikyoshiki Confirmation Ceremony. They were encouraged by fellow temple goers and resident minister Rev. John Iwohara that "If you're visiting Hongwanji, you should definitely [receive your Dharma name]."

Kato's son Brenden (17), who had served as treasurer of Gardena's YBA shared, "My YBA friends are like family. This was my first visit to Hongwanji. Being able to see Zemmomsama during the morning service and Kikyoshiki was a meaningful experience. In receiving my Dharma name, I was able to confirm that I am a Jodo Shinshu follower and my feelings to live life as a Nembutsu follower came together." Classmate and fellow YBA member Tyler Higuchi (18) took part in the Kikyoshiki together with his parents and two younger brothers. In taking a family photo in front of the Goeido (Founder's Hall) Higuchi shared "I was able to renew my self-awareness as a Buddhist. It has become a good memory."

The group later visited the Otani Mausoleum in the afternoon.

(Hongwanji Journal. July 20, 2025. P. 8.)

# OBON 2025 - THANK YOU!!

Obon 2025 is now done! What a wonderful weekend we had! We hope that everyone enjoyed themselves and ate delicious food, had fun playing games and danced the night away! On Sunday, we had over 1,200 dancers moving gracefully in their beautiful, colorful *kimonos* and happi coats.

## Many Thanks to:

- **Obon Committee** who spent many hours in the planning of the event. Your dedication to Obon is greatly appreciated.
- **Booth Heads, Affiliated Organizations, Volunteers and Friends** who worked in the booths during the event.
- **Sangha Members and Volunteers** who came to help set up, tear down, and work at Obon.
- **Dharma School Teachers** for leading the dancing.
- **Boy Scouts** for volunteering throughout setup, tear down and during the Obon event.
- **Girl Scouts** for volunteering during Obon.
- **Ministerial and Office Staff** for your support.
- **Tech Crew** for setting up all the dance practices and the dance circle.
- **Isami Taiko and Jodaiko (UCI)** for the taiko performances.
- **Afuso Ryu Kenkyuu Choichi Kai** for the live music during dancing.

## Thank You to Our Donors:



Your donations helped to make our Obon a success.

**Thank You** to our Sangha, the Community Members and Other Temple Members who came out to support our Obon. **Thank you** to every attendee, whether you came from near or far, out of town or from out of state. A special **Thank You** to our neighbors who are inconvenienced during our event.

Our Obon theme this year was "With Gratitude for the Past, Present and Future". So, as we close out Obon 2025, we would like to express our final Gratitude to everyone for their support. See you next year!

In Gassho,  
Nadine Kakimoto & Sharyl Yamada-Oda  
Obon 2025 Chairpersons

*We truly appreciate your continued support!*

**The Church acknowledges the following donations received from 7/21/25 - 8/17/2025  
with gratitude and appreciation.**

## Funeral/Makurakyo/Burial/Memorials Donations

Hamaguchi, Osaji

Ishikawa, Yoko

## Shotsuki Hoyo Donations

Akahoshi, Masato  
Altuna, Carolyn  
Anonymous(3)  
Buck, Peggy  
Fujimoto, Fumie  
Fujioki, Ruby (3)  
Hamaguchi, Osaji  
Hedani, Daniel  
Igawa, W.T.

Inazaki, Hideo  
Inoda  
Inose, Kay  
Inouye, Juliann  
Ishikawa, Yoko  
Kontos, Joanne  
Maeda, Stacy  
Maeda, Tom  
Maesaki, Kazue

Mashiko, Jane  
Matsuda, Mark  
Matsumoto, Shunji  
Mikami, Lynn  
Morimoto, J.M.  
Moromisato, Yasuichi  
Ronne, Robert  
Taketomo, Chieko  
Taketomo, Rick

Tanaka, Shirley  
Tsukimura, Allison  
Uyeno, Chris  
Yamachika, Kazuko  
Yamada, Joyce  
Yokota, Gladys  
Yokoyama, Elaine  
Yoshiba, Yoshie  
Yuki, Toyoko

## Obon/Hatsubon Hoyo Donations

Anonymous  
Ito, Hedy  
Kubota Mortuary

Moyer, Stanford &  
Harriet  
Ota, Sharon

Saito, Harry  
Ushiro, Leslie & Ryoko  
Yamasaki, Marilyn

## Special Donations

Mitsunaga, Faye/Jim Eng Salt Lake YBA

Shirota, Wallace

## 2025 GBC Membership Dues (Received from 7/21/25 - 8/17/25)

Mizuno-Moyer, Harriet

Moyer, Stanford

Sasaki, Masao &amp; Janice

## BCA Assessment

Mizuno-Moyer, Harriet

Moyer, Stanford

## Nokotsudo

Anonymous





**Osaisen**

Nagao, Norris

**General Donation/Facility Use/ Miscellaneous**

Baba, Miyako

Kobayashi, Izumi

Odori Exercise Class

**2025 Obon Raffle Winners**

1st \$1,000

2nd \$700

3rd \$400

4th \$250

5th \$150

6th \$100

7th \$100

8th \$100

9th \$100

10th \$100

11th \$100 Lowe's Gift Card

12th \$50 Color Me Mine Gift Card &amp; 4 Free Studio Fees

13th \$50 Color Me Mine Gift Card &amp; 4 Free Studio Fees

14th \$50

15th Meiji Pharmacy Gift Bag

16th Meiji Pharmacy Gift Bag

17th Meiji Pharmacy Gift Bag

18th Brookstone Drip Coffee Machine

Debbie Henson

Kelly Kika

Linda Nishihira

Gail Shimokochi

Yoshiko Tsujimoto

Ann Matsuoka

James Uyeda

Dianne Inouye

Diane Iwamoto

Emma Fujioki

Shiro Toyooki

Daniel Iwamoto

Kathy Sasaki

Hiroko Sumi

Rodney Okamura

Rose Sakurai

Edward Sugita

Doris Iinuma

what's coming up in

## SEPTEMBER

**Fall Ohigan Hoyo**

Date &amp; Time: Sunday, September 21st

Time: 9:30 AM

Guest Speaker: Rev. Cyndi Yasaki  
(White River Buddhist Temple)**Fall Ohigan Seminar**

Date: Saturday, September 20th

Time: 9:30 AM - Japanese

1:30 PM - English

Guest Speaker: Rev. Cyndi Yasaki



## GBC Forward Donations

The GBC Forward! project greatly appreciates the following donations towards remodeling the Social Hall. Your donation will help ensure the Social Hall will be updated for use for future temple and community events. Your support will enable us to continue efforts in spreading the Dharma and building strong ties with our community. Donation amounts below are cumulative from the start of the 2024 campaign.

SOCIAL HALL RENOVATION PROJECT

WE NEED YOUR HELP

3 YEAR GOAL  
\$2 MILLION



FOYER RENDERING



SOCIAL HALL RENDERING



### **Wisteria (\$100,000+)**

- ☆ Masaji & Kiyoko Mitsunaga Memorial Trust
- ☆ In Memory of Ben and Suzuye Fukuzaki



### **Bamboo (\$50,000-\$99,999)**



### **Lotus (\$25,000-\$49,999)**

- ☆ In Honor of our parents: Noboru & Ayako Nakatani, Seijiro & Yoshiko Inose



### **Chrysanthemum (\$10,000-\$24,999)**

- ☆ In Memory of Henry and Yoshiko Miwa and Ronnie Takao
- ☆ In Memory of our parents, Frank & Chiyoko Yamane and Naoichi & Mikiyo Ikegami
- ☆ Nobuko Okada
- ☆ Anonymous
- ☆ Tom & Kiyoko Sasaki
- ☆ In Memory of Akiko, Kent, Umeno and Takaichi Maeda
- ☆ In Honor of George & Masako Ota
- ☆ In Memory of Kazuma & Kameno Nakaoka and Masaaki & Fumiko Nakaoka

(Continued on page 18)

(GBC Forward Donations continued from page 17)



### **Cherry Blossom (\$5,000-\$9,999)**

- ☆ In Memory of John & Peggy Tsuruta
- ☆ Dave & Terri Mitani
- ☆ David & Cathy Uyemura
- ☆ John & Kimberley Aponte
- ☆ Louise Mayemura
- ☆ Joe and Violet Nishihira Family
- ☆ Wallace T. Yuki



### **Iris (\$1,000-\$4,999)**

- ☆ Kenneth & Doris Nakakura
- ☆ Raymond Fujii
- ☆ In Memory of Tad & Chiyoko Sugita
- ☆ In Memory of Fred and Lily Fukuwa
- ☆ In Memory of Sue Okada
- ☆ In Memory of Tom Okada
- ☆ Susann Takaki
- ☆ Tom & Judy Shigemitsu
- ☆ Bob. S. Nakamura
- ☆ In Memory of Dad, Joyce, and Iris
- ☆ William and Shigeko Yamane
- ☆ Ken & Kay Inose Family
- ☆ Yuriko Suda
- ☆ The Craig and Cheryl Tateishi Family
- ☆ Derrick & Dean Kawamoto - In Memory of Masao & Akiyo Kawamoto
- ☆ Robert & Gail Higashiyama
- ☆ Stan & Charlene Hirotsu Family
- ☆ Norman & Cindy Morishige
- ☆ Rafu Shimpo Foundation
- ☆ Joyce Ouchi & Craig Ouchi
- ☆ Marian Takamura
- ☆ Anonymous
- ☆ In Memory of Sam and Eileen Takemoto
- ☆ Gardena Buddhist Church Hui Aikane
- ☆ Susan Tenpo
- ☆ Helen Tenpo
- ☆ The Rikio Inn Family
- ☆ In Memory of Kaizo and Koko Nishi
- ☆ Anonymous
- ☆ Glenn & Donna Sanada

(Continued on page 19)



(GBC Forward Donations continued from page 18)



## Peony (\$500-\$999)

- ☆ Dennis & Jan Masaki
- ☆ Tadaaki Maeda
- ☆ Dennis Nakatani Family
- ☆ Anonymous
- ☆ Suzanne Yoshida
- ☆ Haru Watanabe
- ☆ Suzuko Kuwahara
- ☆ Patty Nishi
- ☆ Gay Kurahashi
- ☆ Gale Sasano
- ☆ Anonymous
- ☆ Anonymous
- ☆ In Memory of Rosie and Shinji Okubo
- ☆ In Memory of Shizumi Okada
- ☆ Wayne Nakatsu
- ☆ Emiko Sasaki
- ☆ In Honor of Michiko Higashida and Dr. Esther Nagao
- ☆ Susan Miya
- ☆ Haruye Nakawatase

**LOOKING FORWARD**  
PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURE

**GBC FORWARD!**

**2026 SOCIAL HALL  
RENOVATION PROJECT**



GBC FORWARD!



GARDENA BUDDHIST CHURCH  
1517 166th St, Gardena, CA 90247  
GBCForward@gardenabuddhistchurch.org 310-327-9400

GARDENA BUDDHIST CHURCH



宮地信雄師

## —宗教は本当に必要?—

最近の世界情勢はだんだんと混沌の色を濃くしてきました。世界中の人が、今どうなるかということに一生懸命に模索しているところでしょう。核戦争とすることが、いかにも尤もらしく取りざたされる時が来ています。核戦争が起きたら、多分地球は全滅するだろうともう何年も前から言われています。そんな忠告があるにもかかわらず、今や地球はまさに薄氷を履むような状態です。一步判断を誤れば、地球の最後です。悲しい時代になりました。そんな時、私たちに一体何が本当に頼りになるかということが真剣に考えられなければならないのではないのでしょうか。

話は変わりますが、今年の盆踊りは各お寺とも大変な賑わいを見せていました。ガーデナ仏教会でも去年よりだいぶ多くの人が集まってくださったようです。オレンジ郡仏教会でも、踊るのに前の人にぶつかって困るほど人が来ていたそうです。このことは、毎年の行事ですので、それほど驚くことではないように思えますが、私はことに今年の盆踊りの賑わいを少し違うなと思っていました。それは、世界がこのように混乱の状態にあるということと決して無関係ではないような気がしたからです。

親鸞聖人が出られた鎌倉時代の日本はまさにこのような状態ではなかったかと思われまふ。承久の乱を始め、日本全国各地で政権争いという争いが絶えなかった時代だったのです。そんな時日本の人々は本当の安らぎを求めて、たどり着いたのが宗教だったのです。人間がどうしてもない不安に襲われた時、知らず識らずのうちに求めているもの、それが宗教というものです。人間の

叡智ではどうにもならないと思うような状態が出てきた時、人は人間の叡智に頼ることができなくなって、それを超える力に頼ろうとするのです。これが人間の歴史です。それはこれほど科学が発達して時代にあっても結局は同じことを繰り返しているのです。盆踊りに人が多く集まってきたというのも、何も理由がなく人が集まってきたのではないと私には思われます。去年と全く同じものを売り、同じ曲の盆踊りをしたのにも関わらず、今年は去年をずっと上回る人々が集まってきたのです。確かに何が不安なのかまだ私たちにははっきりしていませんが、何か底知れぬ不安の様相が出てきている今日この頃、本当の宗教の目的をはっきりさせて、しっかりとその要望に応えなければならないと思います。 南無阿弥陀仏





## 婦人会便り

### 婦人会の通常の活動（以下敬称略）

- ▽ GBC 100周年記念委員会は、毎月のBWA定例会議の後に開催されています。
  - 最新情報：BWAはGBCの100周年記念の贈り物として、本堂に新しいカーペットを寄贈することになりました。昼食会は2026年初めに改築完成予定のソーシャルホールに移すことに決定しました。これにより、ホテルでの食事代や会場費などの経費を削減できます。現在、レストランのケータリングサービスを利用する方向で検討中です。会場の変更に伴い、イベントの日程も2026年6月28日（日）に変更となりました。ゲストスピーカーとして梅津広道先生をお迎えすることが決定しています。
- ▽ 8月10日（日）BWA月例会を開催しました。おいしいお菓子を提供してくださったB/c組の皆さん、ありがとうございました。
- ▽ 8月16日（土）：ソーシャルホールの片付け作業が行われました。解体・改修工事の準備のため、物品の移動にご協力くださった皆さま、ありがとうございました。皆さんの助けにより、数時間で作業が完了しました。昼食を用意してくださった堀 キャシーさん、その他にも差し入れを持ってくださった皆さん、本当にありがとうございました。
- ▽ 8月24日（日）「平和のための影：被爆者ドキュメンタリー上映会」がBWAの主催で開催されました。BWA代表としてご参加いただいた今田イモジーンさんに感謝いたします。
- ▽ 9月7日（日）BWA月例会。お菓子の準備担当のC/D組の皆さん、ありがとうございます。
- ▽ 9月20日（土）秋のお彼岸セミナーが開催されます。ゲストスピーカーは矢崎シンディー先生（Rev. Cyndi Yasaki）です。日本語のセッションは午前9時～11時、英語のセッションは午後1:30～3:00に行われます。
- 朝食と午前のセッションのお菓子を準備してくださったC/d組の皆さんに感謝します。
- ▽ 9月21日（日）お彼岸法要が行われます。お斎（おとき）とお供え物担当のC/d組の皆さん、ありがとうございます。ソーシャルホールと台所が改修中のため、BWAでは代わりに大福をお彼岸のお斎として用意することになりました。
- ▽ 9月28日（日）BWA主催の80歳・88歳の誕生日会を予定しています。今年は該当される方がいらっしゃらないため、この日は皆で外食ランチに行くことに決定しました。場所は現在検討中です。
- ▽ 10月12日（日）恵信尼公・覚信尼公法要およびBWA追悼法要が行われます。プログラムや司会者は近日中に決定予定です。
- ▽ 2026年2月 日本語セミナーを予定しています。庵原ジョン先生が現在、講師の候補を探しています。
- ▽ 2026年10月 FBWA（全米仏教婦人会）大会@サンディエゴが開催されます。FBWA大会実行委員会では、3日間の大会にもっと多くの日本語話者の参加を促すため、OCBCとGBCのBWA会員にバスのチャーター利用の希望を確認中です。GBC BWAでは、土曜日のワークショップと晚餐会に参加するための1日バス運行が可能かを問い合わせました。宮田ジュリーさんがFBWA大会委員会に確認し、来月の婦人会会議で報告予定です。

### アナウンスメント:

- ▽ 9月6日（土）：南部教区仏教婦人会の第三四半期会議 午前10時（ズーム）今田イモジーン&宮田ジュリーが出席予定
- ▽ 9月7日（日）：9月のBWA定例会（ハイブリッド）午前11時15分 C/d組担当
- ▽ 9月7日（日）：月例祥月法要（対面）午後2時
- ▽ 9月16日（火）：命日講 午前7時（ズーム）
- ▽ 9月28日（日）附属団体連絡協議会 午前11時30分 今田イモジーン出席予定
- ▽ 10月5日（日）：10月のBWA定例会（ハイブリッド）午前11時15分 D/e組担当
- ▽ 10月16日（木）：命日講 午前7時（ズーム）



Excerpt from the Hongwanji Shimpo (newspaper), dated July 20, 2025

# アメリカの若者が本山



## 仏青卒業記念に参拝

### ガーデナ仏教会ジュニアYBA

北米開教区ガーデナ仏教会（米国カリフォルニア州）のジュニアYBA（中・高生で組織する仏教青年会）のメンバー12人とその家族ら総勢34人が6月20日、本山に参拝した（写真）。

同YBAアドバイザーのジェラルド・カトウさん（54）は「高校卒業を機に、ジュニアYBAを卒業する息子と同級生の記念にと本山参拝旅行を計画した。ほかのYBAメンバーにも声をかけたら、これだけの人数に」と笑う。晨朝のおつとめ後には、21人が帰敬式を受けた。帰敬式は、同仏教会の庵原ジョン開教使や周囲から「ご本

山に参拝するなら、ぜひ」と勧められたという。

同YBAで会計役を務めてきたカトウさんの息子、ブレンデンさん（17）は「仏青の仲間たちは家族のような特別な存在」と話し、「本願寺に初めて参拝した。お晨朝と帰敬式で前門さまにお会いでき、いい経験となった。帰敬式を受けて、浄土真宗のメンバーであること、念佛者として生きていくことの気持ちがまとまった」とほほ笑んだ。同級生のタイラー・ヒグチさん（18）は両親、弟2人と一緒に帰敬式を受けた。「仏教徒という自覚があらためて生まれた。いい思い出になった」と、御影堂を背景に家族写真を撮った。

一行は午後には大谷本廟に参拝した。