



# BUDDHIST CHURCH OF MARYSVILLE

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## Hiking the Path, with Team Castle

### Message from home, Number 3.

April 28, 2020

In the last Hiking article, I wrote about our current stay-at-home restrictions as being a great reminder to me that Buddhism in America did not start with churches and beautiful altars, but began in homes with families gathered around home Obutsudans.

The more things change, we often find ourselves back at the beginning! With the MBC temporarily closed, we all find ourselves back home and maybe start wondering how do we practice our tradition?

If we can each carve out only 5-10 minutes each day to sit quietly and focus our thoughts, then we can all be together as our Nembutsu is all the same. By placing our hands together In Gassho, we too come together by reciting our own shared Namu Amida Butsu.

For this, my third "message from home", I think I would like to simply talk about change, one of the universal truths that the Shakyamuni Buddha taught in his first dharma message in the Deer Park.

The world has just recently been given a huge dose of the reality of change. Regardless of our religious background and path, regardless of our political outlooks, and regardless of where we live on this planet, change is truth in our lives...just as it has always been.

While change has impacted all of our lives because of this COVID virus, it is still very difficult to deal, accept, and live with this change. Why is it so difficult? Because we are attached to life as we all knew back in late 2019. All we want is for life to simply go back to normal. It is difficult to accept that maybe life will not be back to 2019 normal, but we think and hope that it WILL GET BETTER!!

I look back at the times and events that our teacher Shinran Shonin lived in. War, poverty, and famine were all a part of the reality in Shinran's time. But it was during

this time, that Shinran's teaching of the Nembutsu path was so meaningful to the people who lived in such troubling times. Placing our hands together In Gassho, let us think with gratitude for the easy path that Shinran helps us walk.

The changes brought by COVID are indeed a reality, but our teachings would also show us that many things in our lives have not been changed or cancelled. Certainly, our Marysville teaching of PMA, positive mental attitude, has not been cancelled either. So while we all find change difficult right now, our perspective is often all we need to change.

To close out this message, I would like to share something I saw just the other day on FaceBook. Thank you to SimpleStencils.com for posting this simple reminder. There is still so much in our 2020 world to be positive..PMA!

#### NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELLED

Sunshine is not cancelled  
Spring is not cancelled  
Love is not cancelled  
Relationships are not cancelled  
Reading is not cancelled  
Naps are not cancelled  
Devotion is not cancelled  
Music is not cancelled  
Dancing is not cancelled  
Imagination is not cancelled  
Kindness is not cancelled  
Conversations are not cancelled  
HOPE is not cancelled

In Gratitude,

Namu Amida Butsu

Keep on Hiking!!

Team Castle



## TEMPLE UPDATE

We have all seen so many examples of change recently. As we approached the beginning of March, I looked forward to Spring and Hanamatsuri...one of Rev. Carol's favorite services of the year. But this year's Hanamatsuri, like so many services before and since, has been observed in our homes. And that was OK, because we knew that closing down the Marysville Buddhist Church meant taking care of our most important asset, our Sangha.

After the difficult decision to close was made, we now look to the future and maybe the second most difficult decision of when to re-open?

On Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>, the MBC Board will be having our first Board Meeting since closing down. We will make sure to take all the appropriate safety measures and keep appropriate social distancing. But this meeting will be the first step to bringing the MBC back to our standard of "open every Sunday."

While this meeting is a huge first step, let us still keep our eyes wide open to the reality of our times. When will we re-open? What will services look like? Will we still observe our annual Memorial Day weekend cemetery services? What is the status of Obon Service, Obon Odori, and Chicken Dinners? These are all great questions and easy to answer..."We don't know yet!"

But meeting in and of itself, is the first step to answering all of these questions. So let's remember that the Shakyamuni Buddha and Shinran would tell us to simply be mindful of today. Today, let's stay safe, stay healthy, and stay home!! But let us also be mindful that tomorrow will come. And things will slowly get back to a place that feels more normal and yes, we will be open again for service in the future. It may look and feel different, but better days are ahead!!

Rev. Tim