

March 2020 SPECIAL BULLETIN
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



NOTICE - Coronavirus

The decision to suspend Sunday Service through the rest of March and all of April has been made. Out of an abundance of caution and considering that the majority of our sangha is higher risk, the next anticipated service will be May 3.

Wednesday group will meet March 18, however the Wednesday group gatherings will be suspended after that until further notice.

The Gigantic Wabi Sabi Yard Sale may be postponed. Because much of the preparation would be done in April, we are considering this until more is known of the situation.

Questions? Please contact Mike Iseri, 541 889-8691 or mikeiseri@fmtc.com

Staying Connected in Challenging Times

by Rev. Anne Spencer

Last month at temple, I gave a Dharma talk that started with these words from Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani's "Our Pledge":

*Breaking out of my shell
I will share a warm smile and speak gentle words
Just like the kind Buddha.*

In that Dharma talk, I encouraged people to break out of their shells, meet new people, and appreciate our connections to each other. During the service, everyone stood up and introduced themselves to someone new—it was a fun time! How ironic that now, just a few weeks after giving that dharma message, we find ourselves suspending our temple services until the end of April. The goal of suspending services is to slow the spread of the Corona virus and to keep our sangha members--and the larger community--healthy! We are confident that this is the right thing to do.

But that leaves us with this question: How can we break out of our shells if we are staying away from each other? How do we celebrate our connections with each other while also practicing "social distancing" to keep people from getting exposed to the Corona virus? It seems like a riddle. But I believe it is possible and I would like to offer some suggestions for maintaining relationships and connecting to others while still following good social hygiene.

- Spend time each day reflecting on all that we have received, on all that we are grateful for. A great way to do this is to hold a service at our Obutsudan (home altars) every day. Amida's compassion helps protect us from fear and loneliness.
- Connect with someone we've lost touch with. Write a letter. Pick up the phone. Send an email. Perhaps being forced to reduce our usual activities will actually give us more time to reconnect with old friends.
- Ask for help. Yes, part of breaking out of shell is becoming humble enough to ask for help when we need it. I know this is hard, but it is so important. Others want to help us, but, especially now that we are not seeing each other around town, they aren't going to know that we need help unless we ask.
- Offer help. Go through your address books and see if there is anyone who might have been forgotten in the sudden changes that are happening in the world. Check with friends and ask them to contact you if they need anything.
- Remember that IOBT leadership and ministerial staff are still available even though services are suspended. Please let us know if we can help you or if you just want to chat!