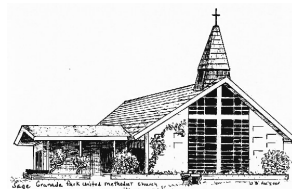




# Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church

1850 West Hellman Avenue, Alhambra, California 91803



## September 2020 E-Thymes

phone: (626) 284-3229 | email: [sagegrandapark@gmail.com](mailto:sagegrandapark@gmail.com) | web: <http://www.sgpumc.org>

### Our Vision:

To be a light on a hill for our community (Matthew 5:14).

### Our Mission:

We are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### Our Values:

We reaffirm our values as a multi-cultural and inclusive community united in the love of Jesus Christ.

### Our Congregational Goals for 2019:

- To start a Saturday night fellowship with young adults.
- To develop a welcoming program.
- To encourage every member to tithe their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service.



Rev. Dr. George Martzen, Pastor  
[gmartzen@gmail.com](mailto:gmartzen@gmail.com)

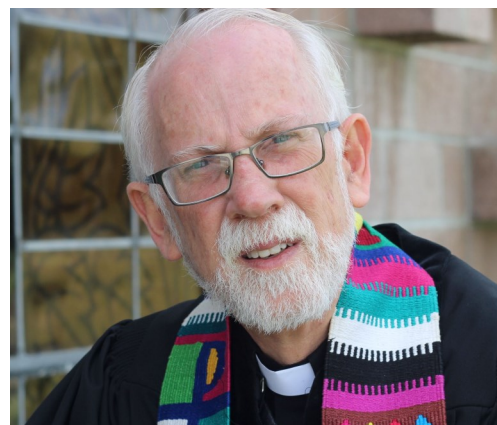
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—by Rev. George Martzen



E-Thymes September 2020

"Moses and American politics"

*"But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'"*  
--Exodus 3:11

Moses in the Bible was a man of many ironies. The child born as a slave, was raised in a palace. The mother who gave him up was allowed to raise him. The prince of Egypt turned into a murderer and eventually turns into the great law-giver. The quiet shepherd became the national leader and liberator of slaves. The old man was a visionary prophet who didn't get to see the fulfillment of the vision. He is revered today by at least three major religions, and has been a guide to numerous political movements.

By the time you read these words, two political conventions have made their claims. Joe Biden was officially nominated as the Democratic candidate for U.S. President, and the incumbent, Donald Trump, is the Republican candidate. Under other political climates, this year might have been a good time to sit it out. After all, the Covid-19 virus has killed over 180,000 people in the U.S. alone, and so we're a little more nervous about doing anything public in nature.

In fact, a new national survey by the [Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/), shows increased concerns over procedural difficulties in this year's election. For supporters of Trump, 35 percent are more concerned and for supporters of Biden, 60 percent are more concerned. That is up from 10 and 17 percent, respectively, in 2018. The survey also shows Trump supporters prefer voting in person and more Biden supporters prefer voting by mail.

Ironically, given these concerns, enthusiasm for voting is higher than it has been in 20 years. According to same survey, 83 percent of registered voters believe their vote "really matters," as opposed to 16 percent who think that it won't matter who gets elected. Back in the year 2000, those two trends were much closer – 50 percent said it really matters, and 44 percent said it didn't make any difference. That could actually be good news for our country. American voters are charged and ready to vote, assuming we are guided by wisdom and not misguided by something else.

Continued on Page 2

Could the biblical story of Moses offer us such wisdom for today's realities? What do you think? When Moses first stood before the elders of the Israelites in Egypt, they had to make a political choice, between him or Pharaoh. Note also that the ironies of Moses' life serve as a reminder that our lives and our politics are also full of ironies. The situation that looks like a disaster right now may, from a future perspective, be the critical turning point for a better future. The child of slaves becomes the one who saves the slaves through the sea. But such ironies don't happen automatically. Someone must be vigilant, open to the spark of divine grace in that moment, like the Egyptian princess who responded to the baby's cries in the reeds, and the shepherd who stopped at the burning bush.

Is your vote merely one in a million, or is it the one vote that will change the course of history?

During the next few weeks, we will be hearing from the lectionary readings in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. I won't tell you how to vote, but do consider how the story of Moses could be a spiritual guide to your political choices this year. Join us each Sunday at 10 a.m. on Zoom.

## SGPUMC Re-Opening Process and Precautions

The Church Council last month approved in principle a limited reopening, including immediate opening for the Preschool. **Outdoor Fellowship at Sage Granada Park?** We may not be able to gather for regular worship inside until there is a vaccine for the Covid-19 virus, but we might be able to enjoy family fellowship on the church lawn. The Reopening Task Force is considering protocol for in-person fellowship and worship outdoors. That is currently allowed by LA County Health Department, but we must have our protocol approved by the District. We would have in place the mandated safety precautions, including facemasks, physical distancing, health screening, etc. If you could come and enjoy fellowship with other families on the church lawn, would you prefer Saturday evening or Sunday evening? Email your preference to [sagegranadapark@gmail.com](mailto:sagegranadapark@gmail.com) or call 626-284-3229.

### August 2

Attendance: 53

Offering: \$714.35

### August 9

Attendance: 55

Offering: \$126.05

### August 16

Attendance: 62

Offering: \$228.90

### August 23

Attendance: 56

Offering: \$649.95

### August 30:

Attendance: 56

Offering: \$61.05



Because there are no in-person offerings, you may give to the church by mail or online at our website [www.sgpumc.org](http://www.sgpumc.org). Click on [Make a Donation](#). Please make note of your name and contact information on the memo line. Thank you for supporting our church and ministries! \*Please note that our general offerings year to date are \$ and our general offering budget for 2020 is \$102,000.



### **Serving SGPUMC this month:**



### September 6

Online Worship

Liturgist:

*Ruth Chon*

### September 13

Online Worship

Liturgist:

*Ratheesh Pillai*

### September 20

Online Worship

Liturgist:

*Janice Hurtado*

### September 27

Online Worship

Liturgist:

*Alicia Marquez*

Thank you to our Zoom Worship Crew: Ruel Reyes, Kris Taniguchi, Sally Bell, Ruth Chon, Jim Bell, Doreen Bolten, Louise Garcia, Kai Garcia, Walter Martzen, Ratheesh Pillai, Jim Bell, Walt Martzen, Kai Garcia, Sarah Wong & Rev. George Martzen.

### **Shoobox School Supplies delivered**

A big thanks to all who contributed to Catalyst SGV's drive for Shoobox School Supplies. Tina Dunn from Catalyst picked up 34 boxes the other day and dropped them off at Marguerita Elementary School, where parents were picking up other supplies for online learning. They were very excited to receive the boxes of supplies.







—by *Rev. Dickson Kazuo Yagi*

## Our Mother Who Art in Heaven

Of course, **God is not a Father**. When we say Father, we mean a Human Father, not an Alligator Father, nor an Octopus Father. Alligators need an Alligator Father, and Octopuses need an Octopus Father, and we Humans need a Human Father as our God. Or we could not think or talk about God at all. Of course, God as God really is a thousand times more wonderful than a Human Father—a thousand times more wonderful than the human mind can think and human languages can express.

If God as Father is not really, really, true, what's wrong about **God as Mother**? The pain of God in the betrayal of Israelites worshipping Canaanite fertility deities is described as the **pain of childbirth**! (God as female). Truth be told, God Our Mother is just as good as God Our Father. Most world religions began as primitive religions in which men dominated in hunting, village raids, marital beatings, and occasional all-out tribal wars. In primitive sections of the Old Testament women were considered as mere personal property of men, no different than cattle, or sheep, or slaves. They were left out of earlier genealogies—The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (no women).

But as societies progressed, the worth of women became obvious to all. The amazing devotion to the elevated Virgin Mary as “Mother of God,” **theotokos** in the Roman Catholic Church was strongly criticized by Protestants—Notre Dame (Our Lady), Our Lady of Guadalupe (1831), Our Lady of Lourdes (1858), the Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Birth, the Assumption of Mary (Nov. 1950), and the Sacred Heart of Mary. It is notable that criticism of Mary devotion has diminished or vanished with the Women Liberation Movement (Protestant and Catholic), where the elevation of Mary symbolized the elevation of all women.

In any case, it is not exceptional for Christian prayers in progressive communities to begin with, “**God, our Father and our Mother.**” What do you think?

## Granada Park United Methodist Nursery School & Kindergarten

—from *Theresa Laib, Director*



~ Daycare Now Enrolling ~

Granada Park United Methodist Nursery School and Kindergarten

Safely re-opening on Tuesday, September 8

### Daycare priority enrollment

5 days a week  
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. \$800/month  
8:30 a.m. – 3:00 pm. \$725/month

Other programs, including 3-day, Pre K/Kindergarten will be available soon.

Space is limited due to Covid-19 restrictions.

[Enroll now!](#)

Give a referral and earn a bonus

Contact the office for more information

(626) 284-5006 [gpumns1850@gmail.com](mailto:gpumns1850@gmail.com)

Granada Park United Methodist Nursery School and Kindergarten

1850 W. Hellman Ave. <http://www.gpumnsk.org>  
Alhambra, CA 91803 [www.facebook.com/gpumnschool](https://www.facebook.com/gpumnschool)



Enrollment form link: <http://sgpumc.org/schools/>

## Alhambra Performing Arts Center Postpones Concerts

—from *Bill Yee, Artistic Director*

Chef/Artistic Director Bill Yee in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has reluctantly cancelled the Alhambra Performing Arts Center 2020 Season. 2020 would have been the 14th year for this popular free monthly community program featuring world-class artists located at Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church. Both artists and audience are at risk as well as for the Hospitality Industry where Yee is also an award-winning professional Chef which has deeply affected his Alhambra Culinary School, LA Omelets Catering Services and Hospitality Consulting business along with his participation in several renowned choral groups. “We’re all hoping to see some clarity by the end of 2020 so that the 2021 Performing Arts Programs and Hospitality Industry can be revived. I would also like to thank the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce, Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church and the Alhambra Historical Society for supporting the free performing arts programs over the past 14 years.”

### Meet the missionary

Rev. Claudia Genung Yamamoto, United Methodist missionary in Kobe, Japan, has a place in many of our hearts. This year they are speaking to friends online rather than itinerate. Claudia will be presenting on Sunday, September 10 at 3 p.m., PST. Limited spots are open on Zoom for that day. If you would to participate, register online at <https://gbqm.zoom.us/meeting/>





### Welcoming! —by Ratheesh Pillai

#### Grace empowers our freedom in Christ.

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. -- Galatians 5:1*

August 15 is a remarkable day for several countries. On this day, many countries (India, South Korea, and Bahrain, etc.) celebrate Independence Day, freedom from colonization. I remember my school, parents, and society taught me how we gained freedom from the British.

However, today, when I look around the world, I see millions of people still enslaved to bad things like human trafficking, but also to obsessions with social media, culture and even religion. They are not enjoying the ultimate freedom that they have. Why is this so? Have you ever thought about it? Although we talk about equality, human rights, freedom, and so on, why are people still in modern slavery? What causes it, and who can deliver them?

Although global Christianity repeatedly dialogues about freedom, we see many Christians living in some form of slavery and still do not benefit from the freedom which God award us. They may go to church from generation to generation, or they may do all types of activities in the church, yet they do not benefit from the intact package of freedom in Christ. Have you ever thought about what makes “Christians” lack enjoying freedom?

When we come across the Bible, we can witness that God’s Grace is the foundation of our freedom, which has been part of God’s redemptive purpose. In another way, displeasing God means saying that I am a Christian but paying no attention to his Grace and freedom that God offers. Rev. George’s sermon preaches that Grace enables dedication to God to live in love, which produces a new kind of freedom. Therefore, understanding God’s Grace liberates us from slavery, and living in the fullness of freedom is the foundation of being a Christian. In addition, saying that I am a Christian is not necessarily sufficient, but presenting the evidence of salvation and a personal encounter with Christ to society is vital.

Living in Grace and freedom is also an ingredient of our missional life that allows us to be the evidence of hope to the broken world. Therefore, every individual Christian’s life is a missional life that convinces the world we are no longer slaves, but we are free by God’s Grace. Until and unless we understand God’s Grace, we fail to understand God’s mission. Therefore, it’s crucial to understand God’s Grace and freedom; they are co-related to the mission of God that we carry every day.

I like the way Rev. George unpacks the “Grace Sermon” series. He effectively elaborates about God’s prevenient Grace. We can’t understand God’s Grace if we have not experienced Jesus and being bonded with Christ. The Grace of God can only be understood through an authentic relationship with God that leads us to know that we are free, no longer slaves. The 66 books in the Bible indubitably elucidate God’s mission story. It is all about “*God’s Grace and Freedom.*” Simply, Grace + Freedom = MISSION

In this season of Covid-19, what are you fearful of? Look around your home, family, church, workplace, and even at yourself. Think about how many individuals we know who are hampered or living in fear of habits, addictions, bad attitudes and the future. We do not have any superpowers and we are not efficient in offering Grace or freedom to people; however, we can exemplify God’s Grace through God’s love to help others experience Grace on their own.

Grace and Peace!



### Birthdays

**9/1: Mark Kishana**  
**9/3: David Tokeshi**  
**9/4: George Shafer**  
**9/5: Toni Tomita**  
**Sommer Kitsuse**  
**9/8: Sengdeuane Tom**  
**Ernest Tom, Jr.**  
**9/11: Lachlan Morrison**  
**9/15: Amanda Wissman**  
**9/16: Damien Echavarria**  
**Arpita Baryia**  
**Nathan Hutchins**  
**9/21: Casandra Echavarria**  
**9/25: Paul Wong**

### Anniversaries

**9/13: Paul and Florence Nagano**  
**9/18: Ryan & Janet Taniguchi**  
**9/20: Michael & Janice Hurtado**  
**9/26: Wesley & Erin Tanaka**  
**Gabriel & Leelana Hurtado**

### IN OUR *Thoughts and Prayers*

Family of Tien Luke Chong; Family of Sam Nieda, Family of Seng Phong (father of Ashley Parks); Family of Yoshie Tomei, Damien Echavarria, Steve and Roberta Echavarria; Marilyn McIver, Theresa Laib; Higashi family, Ratheesh Pillai; Mary Sue Lodwick; Ken Okuda; Sharon Mori; Nancee Iketani; Mat Nakamura; Alfred Chu; Phillip & Nenita Marquez; Derek Tani; Jillian Marquez, Cindy Matsumoto & family; Ernest Tom and Ernie Tom; The Dhar family; Families facing new fire season; Families of essential workers and all those who work during the pandemic; Families physically or mentally affected by Covid; Families harmed by racism

# September 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 1:00 pm Zoom Bible Study  5:00 pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	3 Discipleship Huddle 5:30  7:30 pm Youth Zoom	4 Scouts Program via Zoom 6:30-9:30	5
6 10 am Zoom-Worship	7	8  Via Zoom 7:00	9 1:00 pm Zoom Bible Study  5:00 pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	10	11 Scouts Program via Zoom 6:30-9:30	12
13 10 am Zoom-Worship	14	15 PAC 7:00	16 1:00 pm Zoom Bible Study  5:00 pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	17 7:30 pm Youth Zoom	18 Scouts Program via Zoom 6:30-9:30	19
20 10 am Zoom-Worship	21	22	23 1:00 pm Zoom Bible Study  5:00 pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	24	25 Scouts Program via Zoom 6:30-9:30	26
27 10 am Zoom-Worship	28	29	30 1:00 pm Zoom Bible Study  5:00 pm Zoom Prayer Meeting			