

SACRAMENTO NICHIREN NEWS

Sacramento Nichiren Buddhist Church

May 2026

5191 24th Street, Sacramento, CA, 95822

(916) 456-8371

www.sacramentonichirenchurch.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 2026

3	11:30am	Sunday Service
10	11:30am	Izu Persecution Service
17	—	No Service
24	11:30am	Eitaikeo Service
31	11:30am	Kaji Kito Church Meeting

JUNE 2026

7	11:30am	Sunday Service
11	8:00am	Food Sale Cooking
		Clean the Chicken Shed
12	8:00am	Food Sale Cooking
	10:00am	Prepare the Chicken
13	5:00am	Food Sale Cooking
	12:00pm -2:00pm	Food Sale Order Pick Up
14	11:30am	Sunday Service
21	—	No Service
28	11:30am	Kaji Kito
		Church Meeting

CHURCH MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 8, 2026

- A new refrigerator will be purchased for the social hall.
- The social hall kitchen will be renovated (repaint the walls, replace the floors, etc.).
- A car accident occurred in front of the church on March 1st, resulting in a two-day power outage while the city made repairs.

APRIL 26, 2026

- Discussed the summer food sale (please see "Summer Food Sale" for details)

SUMMER FOOD SALE

JUNE 13, 2026
(SATURDAY)

All Church members, family and friends are asked to help at the upcoming food sale (pre-order/pick up). Please see the "Calendar of Events" for details.

Orders can be placed online or using the attached form. The deadline to place orders is **May 31st**.

SOCIAL HALL KITCHEN RENOVATION

Thank you to everyone who helped with the renovation of the social hall kitchen.

- Kitchen: Brian Tsuda, John Hughes, Mike Okamoto, Kenjo Igarashi, Takeaki Igarashi
- Painting: Kiyoko Kuwabara, Merry Hitomi, Lily Hitomi

We are pleased to share that the project was completed in April.

The cost of the renovation was covered by the food sale fund:

- Renovation materials (flooring, paint, window shades, cabinet and drawer handles, etc.): ~\$1,800
- Refrigerator: \$4,432.57

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please send your annual church membership dues (\$240) to the Church if you have not already done so.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge our generous donations.

MEMBERSHIP DUES (\$240)
Fusako Okamoto; Lily Hitomi; Merry Hitomi; Renee Dennis.

SPECIAL DONATIONS
Fusako Okamoto/flowers; Lily Hitomi/three security cameras; John Hughes/\$100 for pest control; Mary Hughes/chocolate; Kenjo Igarashi/\$500 for the new church refrigerator (kitchen renovation); Hitomi family/battery-powered leaf blower and two electric heaters; Merry and Jane Hitomi/\$385 for shelf liners; Anonymous donor/1500 mailing envelopes.

MEMORIAL

In memory of Thomas Tanaka/\$500, Dave and Gail Tanaka; In memory of Joe Hitomi/\$1,000, Lily Hitomi; In memory of Harold Sano/\$500, Sano family.

EITAIKYO

For Joe Hitomi/\$500, Lily Hitomi.

SPRING OHIGAN

Takashi Mizuno/\$75; Peter Kato/\$60; Yurimi Sawamura/\$50; Keiko Lucas/\$100; Keiko Tsuda/\$50; Elizabeth Nettle/\$100; Elizabeth Kono/\$100; Thomas and Patricia McCreery/\$100; Deandra Murray/\$40; Kathy Mine/\$40; Fusako Okamoto/\$30; Ruby Gotow/\$50; Yoshiko Hitomi/\$40; Kiyoko Kuwabara/\$20; Mary Hughes/\$150; Brian Tsuda/\$40; John Hughes/\$100; Lily Hitomi/\$50; Gail and Dave Tanaka/\$50.

HANAMATSURI

Kiyoko Kuwabara/\$20; Gail and Dave Tanaka/\$50; Ruby and Gary Gotow/\$30; Kathy Mine/\$20; Lily Hitomi/\$50; Brian Tsuda/\$40; Vivian and Ed Zander/\$50; Mary and John Hughes/\$20; Keiko Lucas/\$150.

The Privilege of Chanting the Sutra Part Two: San Francisco Nichiren Buddhist Temple

Kenjo Igarashi

As I began my responsibilities at the San Francisco (SF) temple, I encountered a different set of challenges from those I had faced in Los Angeles (LA). The SF temple was not a traditional building, but a one-bedroom apartment where I also lived. This was very different from the temple life I had expected. Although the SF temple covered the apartment rent and associated expenses, I did not receive a salary. Once a month, I held services at the apartment and also traveled to LA to conduct services for the Shintokai members, who kindly paid for my airfare and provided me with a place to stay in their homes. During these visits, the Shintokai offered me a donation of \$50, which became my only source of income. As mentioned in a prior newsletter, Mr. Yoshiaki Nunome, who operated a restaurant in Japantown and whose father and brother were Nichiren Shu ministers in Japan, supported me during this time by bringing food to my apartment.

While learning how to survive was one challenge, another was how to fulfill my duties as a minister. My master had taught me that a priest should not take on secular employment, and I followed this teaching strictly. He also emphasized that one of the most important daily responsibilities of a minister is to chant the sutra. During my training in Japan, I had always been able to do so freely—at my master's temple, at Minobu, and later while studying in Tokyo. In SF, however, this became nearly impossible. Even chanting in a low voice led to complaints from neighbors and I eventually had to resort to chanting in a whisper. The only time I was able to chant in a normal voice was during the monthly services.

As I was still navigating these difficulties, another challenge arose. A couple years after I moved to SF, I was informed by the bishop of the Nichiren Shu Order of North America (NONA) that the SF temple would be officially closed, as the San Jose temple had been recently established. Members in the Bay Area would be asked to attend services there. The rent would no longer be paid, and I would need to leave the apartment by the end of the month. With no salary and no means to afford housing in SF, I was forced to consider my next steps. Although I thought about returning to Japan, I felt a deep responsibility to continue serving the Shintokai. At the same time, many of the SF members were elderly widows, who could not easily travel to San Jose. I remember one member asking, "Will we no longer have a place to pray together?" Hearing this, I felt a renewed responsibility to support their practice and resolved to remain in SF, even though I no longer had a place to live.

Once again, Mr. Nunome came to my aid and offered me a space in his apartment that he was renting. Without his support, I would have had no choice but to become homeless. I am to this day, extremely grateful for his kindness. However, even there, I faced the similar difficulties—I could not chant the sutra in a normal voice, as neighbors would complain by knocking from below. Realizing that we could not hold services there, one of the members, Mrs. Masako Sano, a devout follower of Nichiren Shu, offered her home as a place to gather. Each month, I would drive and pick up the elderly members, bring them to her home for services, and take them home afterward.

Approximately a year later, a Shintokai member who learned of my situation began providing financial support in appreciation for the kito services I performed. Mrs. Sano's son also supported me by asking me to teach judo to his sons in his garage a few times a week, for which he offered meals and a monetary donation to help cover transportation costs. With their support, I was eventually able to save up enough money to rent an apartment of my own. Like with my prior residences, I still could not chant freely in a normal voice. However, I was able to hold services there for the SF members, continuing to bring them together each month. In this way, the Shintokai members made it possible for the SF members to continue their practice, while the SF members, in turn, allowed me to continue traveling to LA to support the Shintokai. As I will share in Part Three, even after I became the head minister of the Sacramento temple, I continued traveling to SF each month to hold services for these members until they were no longer able to attend due to age.

Like the Shintokai, this is a story of individuals who, despite having no temple or formal place of worship, remained deeply committed to their practice. However, this is also a story of my own struggles to fulfill my duties as an overseas minister. I was able to continue serving both the Shintokai and the SF members due to the support of various people. Yet, I often felt that I was not fully carrying out my duties as a minister in the way I had been taught, especially in something as fundamental as chanting the sutra each day without concern. Through these experiences, I came to realize that the ability to chant the sutra freely, in an appropriate setting, is not something to be taken for granted. This understanding would ultimately shape both my practice and how I view my responsibilities as an overseas minister in the years that followed.