

BCO CLOSURE UPDATE

July 6, 2020

With BCO entering the summer break from regular Sunday services, it is an appropriate time to review BCO's service and office guidelines with Sangha members as we continue to respond and adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter in place situation. An ad hoc committee and the BCO Board have been monitoring the guidance and best practices issued from federal, state, and county agencies regarding the resumption of religious services.

In developing BCO guidelines, we are reminded that our communities remain very vulnerable to the pandemic and there continues to be much uncertainty; information and guidance are ever changing. The health and safety of our Sangha members are our highest priorities. The guidelines outlined below are consistent with our approach from when we began to shelter in place and will remain in effect until August 31, at which time we will review and reassess our guidelines.

Services

- **Video Dharma messages will continue over the summer**, which can be viewed separately or in a service format. Links to the YouTube videos will be sent out via e-mail.
- **All in-person services will continue to be suspended until further notice** to ensure that Sangha members, their families, and others who may attend remain safe and well. These services include regular Sunday services, Shotsuki monthly memorial, family memorial, and funeral services. Shotsuki services and Dharma messages will continue to be delivered via online videos through YouTube. Please contact and consult with Rev. Bridge regarding a death in your family for an appropriate makuragyo service, as well as to discuss arrangements for when and how a memorial or funeral service may be held in the future.
- As part of its deliberate and cautious reopening plan, **Alameda County is strongly encouraging places of worship to continue virtual/remote services**. We feel that following this recommendation is appropriate for us at this time. While Alameda County is permitting outdoor and indoor religious services contingent on meeting limitations on the number of attendees, eliminating/modifying high health risk rituals and practices, and implementing stringent safety and health protocols, we feel the health risks remain too high to ensure the safety and health of service attendees and we especially are very concerned for seniors and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Church Office

- **The church office will remain closed to the office staff and visitors**, unless there are critical and/or time sensitive church activities/maintenance that require individuals to be at church.
- The number of church members will be limited to only those essential to complete the required activities. Face coverings and adherence to social distancing are required at all times, unless outdoors with social distancing observed.
- If someone is ill or not feeling well, they will be advised to remain at home.
- Here is contact information for the church office (phone and e-mail messages are picked up regularly).
Phone: 510-832-5988
E-mail: officebco@gmail.com

Thank you for your continued support and patience. We know we all miss seeing each other and while we are unable to meet together at this time, the BCO will continue to afford opportunities to hear and receive guidance from the Dharma and support Nembutsu practice. In August, we will review reopening guidelines and best practices and send out an update to the Sangha. In the meantime, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rev. Bridge (revharry3@gmail.com) or Ron Nomura (rnomura96@gmail.com).

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