



SOULFIRE

VIRTUAL TENRIKYO FAITH CONFERENCE

Rekindling our spiritual and social connections

Sunday, June 27, 2021

Sponsored by Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America

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MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

June 27, 2021

Dear SoulFire Participants:

Thank you very much for participating in the SoulFire Virtual Tenrikyo Faith Conference.

As you know, various functions and activities, including events within our Tenrikyo diocese, were cancelled due to the novel Coronavirus pandemic in 2020. In fact, even today, many countries and regions around the world are still experiencing these challenging circumstances. As a result of the current state of affairs, the SoulFire faith conference, which had been scheduled to take place at a hotel in Palm Springs in June 2021, was postponed to the following year.

However, these challenges caused by the coronavirus crisis have spurred us to make full use of the technology we have available today, and made it possible to host a conference online, which is something we had thought was not conceivable for several years to come.

When thinking of it this way, I believe that this virtual conference was a positive outcome resulting from our response to the coronavirus pandemic. In other words, one can say the silver lining of this pandemic is that we were able to conceive and launch this virtual conference, allowing us to come together like this today.

There are three goals for the “SoulFire” Conference:

- Discover/rediscover pride in our faith as a meaningful and joyful spiritual practice.
- Inspire participants to live each day with joy and gratitude and arm them with the spiritual tools to address daily challenges with a Tenrikyo mind set.
- Create and strengthen bonds among family and friends.

Since we are hosting a virtual conference this time and there are some limitations that come with it, we may not be able to fully cover the three goals of the SoulFire faith conference. However, this virtual conference is designed to lead into the in-person SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conference scheduled for next year (2022). Therefore, we hope you would attend this virtual conference in anticipation for next year's SoulFire faith conference.

Many staff members have been working diligently and sincerely in making it possible to host this conference, as well as the in-person SoulFire faith conference next year. I would like to first express my deep gratitude to the three co-chairs of this conference, Rev. Koji Uesugi, Rev. Paul Tomizawa, and Mr. Toshimasa Kayama for playing a central role in leading this project. I would also wish to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Planning Committee, the presenters, panelists, facilitators, and moderators for their countless contributions to this conference.

I hope that you enjoy this year's virtual conference, find it worthwhile and inspirational, and join us for next year's in-person SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conference in Palm Springs.

Bishop Hiroshi Alexander Fukaya

Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Conference Schedule	HAST	PDT	CDT	EST
Meet & Greet (optional)	7:30 AM	10:30 AM	12:30 PM	1:30 PM
Opening Prayer/Welcome	8:00 AM	11:00 AM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM
Keynote Address	8:20 AM	11:20 AM	1:20 PM	2:20 PM
Break	8:50 AM	11:50 AM	1:50 PM	2:50 PM
Panel: "Heroes from the Frontlines..."	8:55 AM	11:55 AM	1:55 PM	2:55 PM
Ice Breaker Activity	9:55 AM	12:55 PM	2:55 PM	3:55 PM
Group Photo	10:25 AM	1:25 PM	3:25 PM	4:25 PM
Chill Time (social connection time)	10:30 AM	1:30 PM	3:30 PM	4:30 PM
Workshop Sessions (A, B, C, D)	11:00 AM	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM
Break	12:15 PM	3:15 PM	5:15 PM	6:15 PM
Wrap-up Activity	12:20 PM	3:20 PM	5:20 PM	6:20 PM
Closing Prayer/Remarks	1:00 PM	4:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM

TENRIKYO FAITH CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Alyssa Yuge
Amy Morishita
Erika Hsu
Hiroko Okazaki
Zen Yukimoto

Koji Uesugi
Michael Yuge
Paul Tomizawa
Ray Tadokoro

Shino Hirai
Steven Yukimoto
Toshi Kayama
Youichi Nakagawa



Additional Acknowledgements:

Video Production
Website Design and Updates
Technical Support

Logo & T-Shirt Design
Program Booklet

Tenrikyo Creatives
Michael Yukimoto
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Grant Inouye
Michael Yukimoto
Raymond Morishita
Sean Yukimoto
Jun Nakagawa
Aya Morishita

MEET THE PRESENTERS

Keynote Address:

“Our Faith as a Source of Inspiration and Hope to Create a Joyous Life World for All People”

Reverend Tad Iwata - Head Minister, Tenrikyo Honolulu Ko Church

Rev. Tad Iwata is in his 15th year as a Tenrikyo head minister. He serves as Vice Chair of the Tenrikyo Hawaii Boys and Girls Association and Vice Chair of the Hawaii Missionary Committee. Reverend Iwata earned a master’s degree in Counseling and Guidance from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and spent 15 years as a teacher and counselor in the Hawaii public school system before becoming a full-time head minister in 2017. Reverend Iwata has a supportive wife and three boys, and believes we are provided opportunities everyday to bring joy to and nurture others toward the Joyous Life.

Panel:

“Heroes from the Frontlines: Tenrikyo Followers Who Put Others Before Themselves During the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Ms. Julia Yuge - Yoboku, Registered Nurse

Ms. Yuge is a registered nurse at NYU Langone Health’s cardiovascular/surgical ICU. In March 2020, she was deployed to the COVID ICU and worked through the pandemic. During this difficult time, she learned how to cope with the stressful experience through the Tenrikyo faith.

Dr. Reid Honda, M.D. - Yoboku, Emergency Medicine Physician

Dr. Honda is a Yoboku who has been working as an emergency medicine physician in Honolulu during the COVID-19 pandemic. He was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, and was raised in a Tenrikyo household, in which his father has served as the Head Minister of North Honolulu Tenrikyo Church. After graduating from Loyola Marymount University in California, Dr. Honda worked as an EMT in Los Angeles, before returning home to enroll in medical school in Hawaii. He then

completed a residency in Emergency Medicine at UC Irvine, and returned home, where he has been practicing as an emergency medicine physician in Hawaii at the Queen's Medical Center throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Reverend Audrey Suga-Nakagawa, MPH - Head Minister, Tenrikyo Lanai Church, Honolulu
Advocacy Director of AARP Hawaii**

Rev. Suga-Nakagawa is a third generation head minister of Tenrikyo Lanai Church in Honolulu, Hawaii. She earned her master's degree in Public Health and works as the Advocacy Director for AARP Hawaii, a nonprofit organization for people 50 years and older, and with 145,000 members statewide. During the pandemic, AARP led a coalition of 30+ public and private sector partners to feed thousands of homebound seniors too fearful and unable to obtain meals and groceries during the statewide lockdown. Using her administrative and planning skills and background, she was one of the key organizers of a food security effort that delivered over one million meals to the seniors on Oahu.

Mrs. Etsuko Okui-Isada - Yoboku, Wife, Mother, Skin Care Consultant

Born in New York City, Mrs. Okui-Isada grew up at New York Center during her father's first term as Head Minister. She served for 10 years (2010-2020) as a Board Member of the New York District Women's Association. After her family of four survived Covid-19 last spring, she started to make masks for healthcare/essential workers to show their gratitude for the blessings they received. Donating blood was something they always did, but she and her husband also started donating convalescent plasma after they fully recovered. Most recently, they assisted all the senior members of their congregation in booking appointments for the Covid-19 vaccination.

Workshop A:

"How to Help People Dealing with Anxiety and Mental Health Challenges"

Reverend Owen Nakao - Head Minister, Tenrikyo Pearl Church

Rev. Nakao worked in the Japanese optional tours industry in Honolulu for 18 years and has

served as head minister at Pearl Church for 27 years (full time for 20 years). His church focuses on door-to-door Nioigake (ministry) and administering the Sazuke while posting their sermon videos and transcripts on the church's Facebook page and website. Due to the pandemic, Reverend Nakao temporarily stopped door-to-door Nioigake to focus on posting messages on their Facebook and Livestream their services to their members.

Mr. Ben Tadokoro - Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Mr. Tadokoro has worked in the mental health field professionally for 30 years, 22 of those years have been with his current health organization at Kaiser Permanente. He holds a master's degree in Social Work and is licensed through the state of California as an LCSW. Mr. Tadokoro also grew up in a Tenrikyo church setting where his parents instilled in him the basics of the Tenrikyo faith. Before college, he attended and completed the Tenri University Bekka Program where he studied Japanese for 2 years and attended the 3-month Shuyoka course. Following completion of Shuyoka, he completed Koshu, a 3-week Minister Qualification Course, and in his early adult years, he was active with Shonenkai and Seinenkai.

Reverend Michael Yuge - Executive Director, Tenri Cultural Institute

Rev. Yuge is the Executive Director of Tenri Cultural Institute of New York and the former head minister of Tenrikyo Mission New York Center. He has been an instructor for the Spiritual Development Course and Minister Qualification Course in Jiba and has been in charge of the Three Day Course and Joy Workshop programs in New York. He has a master's degree in public health. Originally from Los Angeles and raised at Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, he is the father of three daughters and has been living in New York for 25 years.

Workshop B:

"Nurturing Our Children and Families in Faith"

Reverend Susumu Yuge - Head Minister, Tenrikyo Heritage Church

Rev. Yuge is the second head minister of Tenrikyo Heritage Church, located in Boyle Heights, CA. In addition to his church duties, Rev. Yuge is actively involved in the Public Relations

Committee and is an editor for the Tenrikyo Newsletter, which is published by Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America. He is a stay-at-home parent to three children and the primary caregiver to his mother, the former head minister of Heritage Church, who is diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. Rev. Yuge earned a bachelor's degree in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley, completed the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, LAUSD Intern Program, and taught elementary 4th and 5th grade for 13 years.

Reverend Lynn Nagata - Head Minister, Tenrikyo Waikiki Church

Rev. Nagata is a third-generation follower of the Tenrikyo faith who was born and raised on the island of Oahu in Honolulu, Hawaii. After high school, she attended Bekka (TLI) and the Spiritual Development Course in Tenri, Japan. A self-proclaimed "late bloomer in most things," Reverend Nagata married at the age of 40, had her daughter at 42 and became the head minister of Waikiki Church at the age of 45. The faith experiences of conception and birth of her daughter, as well as her mom's illness, are events that have strengthened her faith in the teachings.

Mrs. Masako Okui - Yoboku, Wife, Mother, Grandmother

Mrs. Okui grew up in a Tenrikyo church in Los Angeles, CA and attended Tenri High School and Tenri University in Japan. She worked alongside her husband, who served twice as minister (2nd & 5th) of Tenrikyo Mission New York Center, and first Executive Director of Tenri Cultural Institute of New York while raising three children. She served for over 40 years as a member of the Translation Committee and Board Member of the Tenrikyo Women's Association of America and New York District Women's Association. Mrs. Okui served as an instructor for the Spiritual Development Course at Church Headquarters and at Mission Headquarters in America.

Ms. Christine Yukimoto - Fifth Grade Teacher, Minister, Broad Path Fellowship

Ms. Yukimoto has been attending the Central Fresno Church since 1990. In 2007, she became the head of the Broad Path Fellowship, after her husband passed away for rebirth. She has a 17-year-old son, whom she has raised on her own since he was two years old. She currently works full-time as a 5th-grade teacher in a Title I school.

Mrs. Erika Koyama-Hsu - Lay Minister, Mother, and Early Interventionist

Mrs. Koyama-Hsu is a wife and a mother to 2 young children. She currently serves as an Early Interventionist working with babies and toddlers, 0-3 years of age at-risk or have a developmental delay or disability, and their families. Previously, she was a special education teacher of a preschool autism class. Mrs. Koyama-Hsu's Tenrikyo education and experiences include: 5th generation follower, OS, former president of America Tenrikyo Young Women's Group, Shuyoka, Koshu Course I, former committee member for Sunday School at Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, current LA Shonenkai board member, and participates in various Tenrikyo activities.

Workshop C:

"Using Our Faith to Stay Joyful Through Life's Challenges"

Mrs. Yumi Litke - Lay Minister, Intensive Behavior Intervention Specialist

Mrs. Litke is a first-generation Tenrikyo follower. A psychology degree and a master's degree in education have helped her understand how people view faith and how behavior (such as hinokishin) has the greatest impact on people's lives. She became a Yoboku because she experienced salvation and healing from cancer, so she took the Lay Minister's course to become more helpful in the church. Being a cancer survivor has also helped her understand the doctrine of Tenrikyo and Oyasama's teachings that are related to hinokishin and being a teacher. She enjoys sharing and teaching others the wonderful things she learned in Tenrikyo.

Ms. Alisha Herrick - Yoboku, Executive Coach, Learning and Development Manager

Ms. Herrick was raised in the N.C. Tenrikyo Church community and attended Oyasato Seminar in '04-'05. From 2017-2018, she served as the Sunday School Coordinator at Dendocho in Los Angeles. For many years, she has been coaching individuals and couples toward spiritual and personal growth, primarily focused on self-compassion and emotional healing. Ms. Herrick's work with others is based on her own self-healing journey and Oyasama's teachings. She hopes to share her insights on how the teachings can support individuals in managing depression and support long-term healing from trauma.

Mr. Jimmy Do - Yoboku

Mr. Do is a first-generation Tenrikyo follower and is a member of the NC Church. In 2016, he attended the Three-month Spiritual Development Course in Jiba, did hinokishin at the Overseas Department assisting with the preparations for the Tenri Forum, and took part in the International Hinokishin Corp. In 2019, Jimmy was in a near-fatal accident when his motorcycle was hit by a car and subsequently run over by a truck and a car. Although he is still in pain, he considers it a miracle to be alive and is happy every morning when he wakes up to his wife and twins- a boy and a girl. The teaching of tanno has pulled him through his most difficult times.

Reverend Ray Tadokoro - Head Minister, Tenrikyo High Sacramento Church

Rev. Tadokoro currently serves as the head minister of Tenrikyo High Sacramento Church in Sacramento, CA. He was born and raised in Sacramento and attended UCLA (Class of 1998, BA History). Rev. Tadokoro is a third-generation Tenrikyo follower who is actively involved as a faith leader in his community and is engaged in numerous church programs serving in various capacities from planning to staffing.

Reverend Hiroko Okazaki - Head Minister, Tenrikyo Hollywood Church

Rev. Hiroko Okazaki was born in Kathmandu, Nepal and attended an American school K-9. She continued her education in Tenri and after graduating from Tenri University (Religious Studies with an emphasis on Tenrikyo), worked at the Translation Section of the Overseas Department and Tenrikyo Language Institute. Presently, she has been the head minister of the Tenrikyo Hollywood Church since 2007. Rev. Hiroko Okazaki is also a proud mother of 4 children.

Workshop D:

“Understanding and Applying Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as Followers of the Path”

Dr. Lui Amador - Dean, Student Equity & Success

Dr. Amador is the Dean of Student Equity and Success at Cerritos College. He has over 26 years

of leadership experience that spans across various community colleges and universities in the greater Los Angeles region. Dr. Amador joins the SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conference to co-present on the topic of DEI, for which he has extensive knowledge and experience leading throughout his career in higher education.

Reverend Koji Uesugi - Head Minister, Tenrikyo Pacific Valley Church

Rev. Uesugi is a proud father of two daughters and a fourth-generation Tenrikyo follower who serves as the second head minister of the Tenrikyo Pacific Valley Church, in West Covina, CA. He is also an active member of various committees with Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America and is one of the co-chairs of the SoulFire planning committee. In addition to his Tenrikyo responsibilities, Rev. Uesugi has been an educator for 26 years, working primarily with access and equity programs, and currently serves as a dean at Mt. San Antonio College.

Activity Leaders

Mr. Toshi Kayama - Minister, Ina-Makoto Fellowship

Mr. Kayama grew up in New Jersey and spent a good portion of his academic and professional life in Boston and Tenri, Japan. He currently lives with his family in North Hollywood, CA, and has been serving as the Fellowship Head of Ina Makoto Fellowship since 2014. Although he has an eclectic professional career working in various industries, his true passion has always been in nurturing human resources and educating the younger generation. Thus, he takes great joy in being an active member of various nurturing committees, such as the Tenrikyo Student Association (TSA), HARP (Heart Awakening Recreational Program) subcommittee, and the SoulFire planning committee.

Ms. Alyssa Yuge - Yoboku, Musician

Ms. Yuge belongs to Heritage Church in Los Angeles, California and is a community member of the Tenrikyo Mission New York Center. She has been in the faith from Shonenkai and continues as a staff member, along with being in the Young Women's Group and Women's Association in New York. She has also attended the Oyasato Seminar and Spiritual Development Course at the Mission Headquarters in America and Canada.

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conference Planning Committee, we welcome and thank you for joining us for our virtual faith conference! We are excited to have nearly 300 participants from our Tenrikyo community and friends from around the world connect with us through Zoom to rekindle our spiritual and social connections in this virtual space. It has been an incredibly difficult year in which many have experienced the loss of loved ones, jobs, social connections, and disruptions to various aspects of life. As our brothers and sisters from different parts of the world continue to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, we will keep them in our prayers and renew our commitment to care for and love one another to create a joyous life world for everyone.

It is our collective desire that the SoulFire Virtual Tenrikyo Faith Conference will provide us the space to reflect on the importance of our interconnectedness with one another and our spiritual connection to God the Parent and Oyasama. We are extremely grateful to Bishop Hiroshi Alexander Fukaya of the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America for empowering us to design and plan a Tenrikyo faith conference for the English-speaking congregation from the ground up. His support for the SoulFire concept and providing us resources, has allowed us to offer the virtual conference this year and the in-person multi-day conference next year in Palm Springs, CA.

We are also indebted to the SoulFire planning committee members who have been engaged in the planning process for the Tenrikyo Faith Conference for the last two years. In the midst of planning for the in-person conference, they were forced to pivot during the pandemic to develop a virtual conference for 2021. Each member has brought their talents, knowledge, perspectives, and commitment to ensuring an enriching conference for all participants. And a special shout out to Ms. Amy Morishita for playing such a critical role with the conference promotion, fundraising efforts, and lending her organizational and technical talents behind the scenes. Also, a big thanks to Ms. Alyssa Yuge for agreeing to be the emcee for a virtual audience of nearly 300 people from different parts of the world. This is not an easy task, but we know Alyssa will be flawless as our host!

There are of course many others who have contributed a great deal of time and effort towards this conference, including our keynote speaker, Reverend Tad Iwata, panelists and presenters, SoulFire T-Shirt designer, Ms. Jun Nakagawa, SoulFire program designer, Ms. Aya Morishita, and the technology support team. It takes a village to produce a conference like this, even virtually, so we are humbled and grateful to everyone's contributions and support.

With gratitude.

Paul Tomizawa, Toshimasa Kayama, and Koji Uesugi,
SoulFire Planning Committee Co-Chairs

SOULFIRE 2022



JUNE 24-26, 2022

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**@ THE DOUBLETREE IN
PALM SPRINGS, CA**



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TENRIKYO FAITH CONFERENCE

[Igniting Our Joyous Faith]

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Future Path Monthly Zoom Discussion

The Tenrikyo Future Path Advisory committee started conducting monthly virtual Zoom discussions in 2020. The monthly virtual discussions allow people from different geographical areas to connect and share thoughts on our Tenrikyo faith.

The discussion topics change each month and are based on current events that impact our Tenrikyo and surrounding communities. The following are a few examples of topics discussed thus far:

- Relevance of the Service
- Restoring our Focus of Faith
- Promoting Emotional Wellness
- Our Vision of the Future of Tenrikyo

If you would like to join the conversations, the 90-minute sessions are held on the fourth weekend of each month. The sessions are flexible to your participation style and there is no ongoing commitment. If you would like to be placed on the email distribution list for discussion invitations, contact Zen Yukimoto at zyukimoto@earthlink.net.

Through the power of meeting virtually, let's connect and learn from one another about our faith.

Joy Workshop - "Learn to live life more joyously"

Visit us at <https://tenrikyo.com/joy-workshop> to learn about the Tenrikyo Joy Workshop. And coming soon, we will offer virtual Joy Workshops to access remotely from wherever you are!

If you are interested in receiving updates about the virtual Joy Workshop, email us at soulfiretfc@gmail.com.

Other Resources

For more updates, events, and information, check out the resources below:

www.tenrikyo.com



www.tenrikyo.or.jp/eng/



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