

West LA Connections

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church Monthly Newsletter | JULY 2024 ISSUE

JULY 2024

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church
1913 Purdue Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90025



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Growing More
Christlike Together

West LA UMC welcomes all persons
regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Word from the Pastor

I must admit that during my childhood I was unconcerned about the condition of the world. Such was the innocence and naiveté of my childhood. My high school years were the beginnings of becoming more acutely aware of how history has shaped and impacted my own life. I became more awakened to the realities of our nation and world and such injustices as prejudice and racism, sexism, and the importance of why the civil rights movement came about. Oh I had my personal experiences of prejudice and racism but I didn't understand it from a historical and institutional perspective. My awakenings were not so much learned through my public and private school education; rather, my awakening to

Theology, be ordained a United Methodist pastor, become a District Superintendent and a Bishop and now come back full circle to be the appointed President of the Claremont School of Theology. Though I give much credit and appreciation to Bishop Grant Hagiya for his early influence on my life, it is and was the church that shaped my understanding, my sensibilities and my concern for the world. Grant just happened to be deeply attuned to the truth of the mission and purpose of the church.

Though we value the church as a safe shelter and sanctuary from the ills and troubles of the world (a place of acceptance and welcome, a balm of comfort and consolation amidst the harshness of life;

included a list of everything troubling that I see happening in our nation, but that list kept getting longer and longer and so I am sparing you my lengthy troubling list that might only escalate your fears and concerns. I am quite sure if you make your own list we would have many of the same concerns.

All these troubles we see in our nation and world are hard realities to face to be sure. How easy it is indeed to become overwhelmed, disillusioned, apathetic, fearful and hopeless. But friends, I hope you understand that it is because of the condition of the world today that the church is ever the more vital and necessary to help make things better. The church should not stand idly by in addressing the troubles of the world. Do not lose hope! The best way to avoid and remedy falling to despair is: get involved! However small or large our efforts may be, sometimes the smallest things we do can bring about the greatest changes.



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some of the more painful and troubling realities of our nation's history of injustice came mainly from my participation and instruction through the church.

I attribute much of that awakening to the instruction of our church youth director/ advisor Grant Hagiya (a young, San Jose State University undergraduate, who also grew up at the Wesley United Methodist Church in San Jose). Grant Hagiya would go on to seminary at Claremont School of

and thank God for that!), the church is more than a hideout and safe harbor; the church is a launching pad from which we muster the courage to go out and to be in mission for God; to be changemakers, peace and justice seekers. We are CALLED by God to be light and hope in times of darkness and trouble. Friends, are these not dark and troubling times? Is not the church needed for such a time as this?!

For this Pastor's Reflection, I had originally

Grace and peace,

Rev. Keith



Rev. Keith Inouye

**CHORAL
DIRECTOR
POSITION**

If you are interested (or know of someone) in our part-time Choral Director position, please notify Rev. Keith or Sonia Dixon, SPRC Chair via info@wlaumc.com for information and details.

「石巻 MissionTrip」

5月27日ー6月5日 まで石巻 MissionTrip 引率奉仕をしてきた。今年 WLA & Faith & Clovis 教会とジョイント青年チーム6名。そしてフェイス教会の大人チーム6名。コロナが終わり、4年ぶりである。チームメンバーのエネルギーと勢いに負けそうになるほどであった。今回の奉仕は、日々様々で、休みがない忙しい MissionTrip であった。

火曜日に羽田到着したが台風で移動をキャンセルし、東京で一泊。水曜朝早くに石巻へ出発。水曜午後は青年リードのフラダンスミニストーリー。癌で亡くなったハワイ出身の宣教師が始めた石巻フラダンスミニストーリーは今も続いている。生徒は10名。今回は新しい生徒が見学に来ていた。色々なイベントでダンスを頼まれるらしく、町では有名ならしい。素晴らしい！

木曜日は、石巻の牧師宣教師ファミリーを励ます食事会。コロナで閉鎖した教会もあり、石巻を離れ母国に帰った宣教師も多くいる。教会の出席率が0人、1人と少ない状態に悩む牧師たちもいる。悩む主の働き人を励ますディナーは、すき焼きと餃子。喜ぶ子ども達や涙を浮かべる牧師婦人を見て、私たちは感謝に満たされた。主の奉仕を頑張してほしい！

金曜日は女川復興住宅へ訪問。お茶っちは、クラフトと聖書のお話しが中心になり、参加者10名は、お茶を飲まず、一生懸命クラフト

をエンジョイしていた。久しぶりに会う村の方々は喜びで溢れ、お茶を飲む時間を惜んでいた。自治会長さんは「私たちは忘れられていたと思っていた。」と嬉しくて泣いていた。

夜は、「ひきこもり」NPO で青年チームがお茶っこ。働かず家においてゲームをする若者が増えている。大きな日本社会の問題である。若者が普通に働いて社会生活が出来るようになるように励ます素晴らしいミニストーリーができた。

土曜日は青年リードの子ども食堂。焼肉弁当を準備して、食べた後はゲームをして遊んだ。同時に大人チームはカフェコンサートの奉仕で忙しい。J-Symphonie が私たちの奉仕に合わせ東京とオーストラリアからやってきた。素晴らしいコンサート。そして Peet's Coffee をエンジョイする参加者。おかわりが続き、計何杯入れたであろうか。。。。

日曜礼拝後、青年リードで子供英語バイブルプログラムをした。21名の子供が参加し、賛美、聖書の話し、クラフト、ゲームとエンジョイしていた。

チーム一同、台風や病気など予定外の事が起こっても、臨機応変に対応でき、助け合うことが出来た。主に感謝しかない！

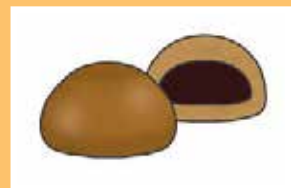


7月6日(土)夏の弁当

教会ではシニアのメンバーに夏の暑い日、栄養あるお弁当を届けます。ご希望の方は教会オフィスまでご連絡ください。

Café Aloha Senior Lunch Bento delivery On July 6 (Saturday)

Café Aloha ministry would like to reach out to seniors 70 and older by delivering summer bento. If you are interested in receiving bento, please contact Church office.



メニュー：鰻丼、梅干し、ワカメスープ、菓子、フルーツ
Menu: Unagi-don, Umeboshi, Wakame Soup, Kashi, Fruits

“Ishinomaki Mission Trip”

From July 24-August 2, I led the Misihonaki Mission trip. This year, we had a joint Young Adult team of six members from West Los Angeles UMC, Faith UMC & United Japanese Christian Church in Clovis, and an adult team of six members from Faith UMC. Because it's been four years since the outbreak of the pandemic, I was overwhelmed by the energy of the team members. Each day, we served in many areas and had very little rest time.

We left Los Angeles on Monday morning and arrived at Haneda on Tuesday. Due to a typhoon, we canceled our train ride and stayed overnight in Tokyo.

Early Wednesday morning, we left for Ishinomaki to serve a hula ministry at 1pm. Ishinomaki Hula Ministry, started by a missionary from Hawaii who died of cancer in Ishinomaki, continues to this day. There are 10 students. We learned that they are asked to dance at various events and are famous in the town. So Wonderful!

On Thursday, we had a dinner to encourage the Pastor & Missionary families who serve in Ishinomaki. Some churches have closed due to COVID-19, and many missionaries have left Ishinomaki and have returned to their home countries. The church attendance rate is super low these days; some days with only one or zero in attendance for some churches. We prepared a sukiyaki/gyoza dinner to encourage them. We were filled with gratitude when we saw their children eating and playing happily. We hope they keep up their good work for the Lord!

On Friday, we visited the Onagawa Government Housing village to do “Ochakko.” The tea time started with prayer, then, a Bible story and crafts. I was surprised to see 10 participants who did not care to drink tea but instead, enjoyed crafts and paid so much attention to the Bible story

and prayer time together. The village people, whom we hadn't seen for four years, were so happy to see us that they didn't even bother to take the time to drink tea! The village leader said, “I thought we had been forgotten,” and cried with joy.

In the evening, the Young Adult team had “Ochakko” at a “Hikikomori” NPO. We learned about a serious social issue in Japan. Many young people are not working and are staying home and playing games. We were able to be part of a new ministry that encourages young people, not to be afraid, but to work and actively involve themselves in the social life. On Saturday, the Young Adult team led a kodomo lunch program. We prepared yakiniku bento together to distribute. After lunch, we played games with the kodomo. During the kodomo program was going, the adult team was busy serving at a cafe concert. J-Symphonie, a flute and guitar duo, came from Tokyo and Australia to perform their Café concert ministry. The concert was very successful. The participants enjoyed Peet's Coffee so much that they kept asking for refills, and I wonder how many cups we made in total...

After the Sunday service, the Young Adult team led a children's English Bible program. Twenty-one children participated and enjoyed Praise songs, a Bible story, a craft, and games.

Even when unexpected things like typhoons and illnesses occurred, the teams were able to adapt and help each other. I can only thank the Lord!

平田



Rev. Rebecca Hirata



Special Children/Youth Ministry Worship Sundays Ahead!

Summer is a special and busy time for children as youth with Kids Camp (vacation bible school) and Youth summer camps. We want them to share their experiences with the church family in some upcoming worship services. You won't want to miss it!

August 4 | Kids Camp Celebration Service

Participants of all ages, campers and volunteers, will lead worship and share about their Kids Camp experience through music, displays and personal reflection.

August 11 | Youth Camp Reflection Service

Many have heard that summer camp has been a wonderful, growing and even life changing experience for some, but what happens at camp? Hear personal testimonies as first-time counselors and campers reflect upon their week and the impact it has personally had on each of them.

August 18 | RALLY SUNDAY!

Rally Sunday marks the start of a new God's Garden school year! Special festivities and a blessing of the backpacks will take place.



2024 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS | MIKE DOTE

Sawahata Scholarship

We are pleased to recognize the scholarship recipients for this year. Karolyn Maeda and Jennifer Yamashita were awarded the Sawahata Scholarship. Both recipients were involved with church activities such as the Christmas program, Vacation Bible School, the Asian Cultural Festival, and other volunteer events. Karolyn will attend the University of Washington and Jennifer will attend UCLA in the Fall. We wish them the best in their studies!

Sasaki Murakami Ethnic Ministerial Scholarship

We are pleased to announce that Lynne Onishi was awarded the ministerial scholarship for this year. Lynne is from the Seattle area where she has been active in youth ministry at Blaine Memorial UMC, a historically Japanese American church. She will attend Claremont School of Theology in the Fall. We wish her the best as well!

Asian Camp is Celebrating 50 Years of Ministry!

God has richly blessed the Asian Camp community in countless ways. We have so much gratitude in our hearts as we reflect upon special memories, the nurturing of leadership, a sacred space for all to explore, grow and discover more about their faith and deepen a relationship with God and the gift of lifelong friendships that have lasted even decades for the those that went to camp during the earlier years.

Mark your calendar for a momentous celebration to celebrate 50 years of ministry! The event will be held on October 12th at

the Quiet Cannon Conference and Event Center in Montebello. We hope this to be a re-connecting and re-kindling time of grace filled fellowship, joy and celebration!

If you would like to be on the emailing roster for updated information and receive the link for AC 50 weekend events, please contact us at AsianCamp50years@gmail.com.



Countdown to AC 50!

As we get closer to the Anniversary celebration, there will be opportunities to gather in faith, hope, love and celebration of iconic Asian Camp activities. Mark your calendars!

Journey to the Highlands Worship **July 27 (7:00 pm) Wesley UMC**

Come worship as we explore the impact of the camp community and reflect on our personal journeys with God. Connect with friends, enjoy fellowship, and celebrate as we approach the 50th anniversary of Asian Camp!

Return to the Campfire-Singspiration Concert! **August 3 (7:00 pm) at Faith UMC in Torrance**

3V3 Basketball Tournament **August 17 (11:00 am-2:00 pm) Quartz Sports Facility (Carson)**

A game for fellowship, to reconnect and come together in the spirit of God's love. Open to all ages who love playing basketball!

August 24 (time TBD) Blaine Memorial Church (Seattle, WA)

SUPPORT FOR 580 CAFÉ NEEDED!

580 Café is a campus ministry adjacent to the UCLA campus whose mission is creating community dedicated to building justice through dialogue, creative expression, belief and activism.

The 580 Café opened in 2010 and since its beginning has been providing safe and supportive community for countless students who have benefitted through the years. It's Executive Director & Chaplain is our own much loved Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith supported by Administrative Assistant Emily Wang, the 580 Board of Directors and the 580 Student Leadership Cohort. Our West Los Angeles UMC congregation has been one of many churches that have partnered and supported 580 Café.

One of the issues that many UCLA students face today with the high cost of living in the area and education expenses is the issue of food insecurity. Supplying hot lunches and pantry grocery supplies for students is a godsend to these students who benefit from the care and services that 580 Café provides.

Lately, 580 Café has experienced greater need to help supply the 580 Café pantry for UCLA students facing food insecurities. If you can help, You may drop off your donations to church on Sundays or contact United Methodist Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith directly,

OR contact our Mission and Social Concerns Chairs Mark and Helen Holmes OR Rev. Keith to make arrangements to drop groceries off at church during the week OR simply bring grocery contributions to church on Sundays and place them in our 580 Café collection bins. In addition, if you would like to help periodically prepare and cook lunches during the week, please let us know so we can call upon you for help on a scheduled cooking day!

We can truly make a difference in the lives of these students and help 580 Café do the tremendous ministry that they do! Thank you for your generosity and support!



MINISTRY STAFF SUMMER SCHEDULE

June 23-28: NJAUMC Jr. High Camp

Keith & Viki Inouye will be away from June 23rd through June 28th in order to attend and participate in the National Japanese American United Methodist Jr. High Camp at Camp Lodestar near Wilseyville, CA. Viki is the JA Caucus Camping Board Chair that oversees both Jr. High Camp and Asian Camp. Rev. Keith will preach on Thursday and will provide adult supervision to comply with "safe sanctuary" protocols.

July 4: Office Closed for Independence Day Observance

July 14-19: NJAUMC Asian American Summer Camp

Viki will be away this entire week for Asian Camp while Rev. Keith will likely commute back and forth as needed to preach at camp

and to help with adult supervision. Asian Camp will be held at Camp Gilmore which is adjacent to Malibu Creek State Park (about 22 miles/41 minutes away from WLAUMC)

July 29-August 11: Rev. Becky Hirata on Vacation

Rev. Becky will be enjoying two weeks of vacation from Monday, July 29th through Sunday August 11th. For pastoral emergencies for Nichigo members, please contact the Church Office or Rev. Keith directly on his cell phone.

August 18-24: Rev. Keith & Viki on Vacation

Rev. Keith & Viki will be on vacation from Sunday, August 18th (after worship) through Saturday August 24th.

SUMMER COMMUNITY EVENTS & PROGRAMS

June 22-23: Venice Japanese Community Center Annual Summer Festival "Natsu Matsuri"

The Venice Japanese Community Center takes place on Saturday and Sunday June 22nd (12pm-9pm), and 23rd (11am-8pm) located at 12448 Braddock Dr. Los Angeles, CA 90066. Admission is free! Food, games, martial arts, taiko, ondo dancing, and dancing to the live music of Elemental Funk!

July 27-28: West LA Buddhist Temple Obon

Saturday July 27 (4pm-10pm) and Sunday and July 28 (3pm-9pm), the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple located at 2003 Corinth Ave. West Los Angeles, CA 90025 (just one block south of WLAUMC) will hold it's 74th Annual Obon Festival. There will be dancing, food booths, games, wla taiko drummers, and live music! Go to: www.wlabt.org for more information. Please support our Buddhist Temple neighbors who provide generous parking for us for our Sunday Worship parking needs and other occasions (such as funerals and events)



August 5-9: Kizuna Camp (Japanese Cultural Camp)

This year, our church serves as one of the host sites for the Kizuna organization's Kizuna Camp that is a fun cultural experience for kids focusing on Japanese culture. Kizuna Camp at WLAUMC occurs from Monday through Friday August 5-9! This year's theme is: "Nihon Tabi: Jump Around Japan!" For more information go to: www.gokizuna.org for more information and to register or apply to be a counselor!

OBON FESTIVAL
WLA BUDDHIST TEMPLE PRESENTS THE 74TH ANNUAL
SATURDAY JULY 27 4 PM - 10 PM
SUNDAY JULY 28 3 PM - 9 PM
SCHEDULE FOR BOTH DAYS:
ABAsomics - 4:30pm
WLA Taiko - 5:30pm
Dharma Service - 6pm
Obon Dancing - 6:30pm
Dancing
Food Booths
Games
WLA Taiko
LIVE Music
CONTACTLESS PAYMENTS
RELAXED PARKING
OBON DANCE PRACTICE 7:00 PM
JUNE 25 & 26
JULY 2, 9 & 11
2003 Corinth Ave. West Los Angeles, CA 90025
310.477.7274 • www.wlabt.org • facebook.com/wlabt

June 22 & 23 2021
SAT • 12PM ~ 9PM
SUN • 11AM ~ 8PM
Venice Japanese Community Center, Inc.
ANNUAL SUMMER NATSU MATSURI FESTIVAL
Celebrate • Socialize • Dance
Festival Food Favorites • Obon • Games • Martial Arts • Taiko
Ondo Dancing (Sat. & Sun. 5:30PM-6:30PM)
Japanese Cultural Exhibits
Music and Dance featuring Elemental Funk
ENTERTAINMENT
Elemental Funk
PERFORMING SAT. 7PM-9PM
VJCC • 12448 Braddock Drive • Los Angeles 90066
1 block west of Centinela Boulevard, 1/2 mile north of 90 freeway
Admission is free
PROCEEDS GO TO THE VJCC OPERATING FUND



Tickets On SALE
 Before and After Sunday Worship in Patio
BENEFIT CONCERT

SAT. AUG. 17, 2024 2PM

*Proceeds for WLAUMC Youth Scholarship Fund
 & Japan Noto Earthquake Relief*

Tickets: \$25 pre-sale, \$30 @ door, Students \$10
 Checks payable: WLAUMC, Memo: Benefit Concert

For tickets & add'l info, email: setolui@yahoo.com

Alex Lui, flute
Lorenzo Sanchez, piano

KHACHATURIAN Concerto for Flute and Piano
 CPE BACH Sonata in A minor Wq 132 for solo Flute
 MCGOWAN Cleveland Times
 MOWER Opus di Jazz

Artist Reception with light refreshments



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

If you are experiencing loss, please consider gathering with us as we meet once-a-month to offer support to one another, glean insight and wisdom from one another and from resources that we share, and do so in the context of God's care and love for each us. Our sessions are led by Rev. Keith Inouye and Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka.

Our next WLAUMC Grief Support Group gathering will be Wednesday July 24th, please join us by contacting Rev. Keith or the church. As we usually meet at 11:30am in the Learning Center, lunch is provided.

**THURSDAY BREAKFAST BUNCH
 RESCHEDULED FOR JULY 11TH!**

Our Thursday Breakfast Bunch date for July was previously scheduled for July 4th. HOWEVER we will move our breakfast gathering to July 11th as the restaurant anticipates a higher than normal patronage on that holiday morning along with some other restaurant factors that make our date change necessary. **Please mark your calendar and join us on this rescheduled date!**

As always, our gatherings are never a closed group so please encourage others to join us for these opportunities to build community and get to know each other. Hope to see you then! RSVP to me (so we can inform the restaurant about our numbers and to make name tags). - Rev. Keith

Okaeri Matsuri

Kick off the summer season at the Okaeri Matsuri on Saturday, June 29th at the Terasaki Budokan in Little Tokyo. West LA UMC and Okaeri are long-time collaborative community friends that uplift and affirm our Nikkei LGBTQ+ family and community. This gathering celebrates queer joy as inspired by our Japanese summer festivities. Okaeri Matsuri is open to all LGBTQ+ communities, allies, and friends and includes odori/dancing, performances, games, food, and more! Admission is free, but pre-registration is required.

For more information contact Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka at West LA UMC or visit www.okaeri-la.org. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/okaeri-matsuri-registration-887272795817?aff=oddtcreator>

WHY IS PLASTIC SO BAD ANYWAY? | JAMIE THIERMAN

Starting at the very beginning, plastic was invented in 1907. As I understand it, its popularity really grew in the 1930s with the invention of polyethylene, when plastics usage expanded from less common things like radar insulation, to Tupperware, shopping bags, and nylon stockings. The Guardian states that since 1950, more than 8 billion tons of plastic have been produced.

The properties of plastic make it highly desirable: cheap but durable, strong but light-weight and flexible. It can be molded into practically any shape. Unfortunately these characteristics come with a high cost. Besides the fact that plastic is made from non-renewable resources and its creation produces a multitude of greenhouse gases, its most condemning attribute is simply that it's hard to get rid of. Of that 8+ billion tons of plastic that has been produced since 1950, likely 79% has since accumulated in landfills and the environment. Plastic can take anywhere from 10 to 500 years to break down, and as we already know, it causes major problems to wildlife, plant life, and oceans as it sits around. Additionally when plastic does "break down" it does not biodegrade, but only breaks into smaller and smaller pieces, called microplastics. These microplastics have been found everywhere, from fish blood streams to human breast milk.

While we all are working to cut down on our plastic and any single-use item consumption, it was very heartening to hear the news that we are not alone. The intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution had its fourth meeting (out of five) this last April in Ottawa to discuss a global treaty on plastic pollution. While there were still sharp disagreements about whether to limit plastic production globally, the focus of the meeting has finally moved on from discussing generic ideas to the actual text of the treaty. The final session will meet later this year in South Korea.



Environmental Justice Chair,
Jamie Thierman

“

These **microplastics** have been found everywhere, from **fish blood streams** to **human breast milk**

”

AVAILABLE! REMAINING STOCK OF WLAUMC SPIRIT WEAR

Do you want or need to purchase a WLAUMC T-shirt or polo shirt in our signature purple? Perhaps your old one needs replacing? Now is your chance before our limited remaining stock is all gone!

Contact either Allison Brush or Rev. Keith with your requested size and style and we will let you know what we still have in stock or come to church on Sundays and see them displayed in the patio area. T-shirts and polo shirts are \$10 in women, men and youth sizes. Get yours before we run out!



A Note From Café Aloha:



Café Aloha celebrates Masako Yotsukura's 102nd birthday in June. What a wonderful blessing!



**WLAUMC Memorial Service Remembering Hisako Terasaki
Monday July 22nd at 11:00am**

A beloved member of our congregation, Hisako Terasaki, passed away on April 15, 2024, and a private family service was held at WLAUMC shortly thereafter. To provide an opportunity for our congregation to remember and pay respects to Hisako, a memorial service for the church community will be held on Monday, July 22 at 11am in our church sanctuary. As this is for our immediate congregation, this service is not being publicized beyond the church (another more public memorial is being coordinated by family members).

A potluck lunch reception, coordinated by United Women in Faith, will follow the memorial service in the Social Hall. Guests are invited to contribute by bringing a ready-to-serve dish to share.

West Los Angeles UMC

Ohana Fellowship

Kick-Off!

Saturday, August 10
(10:00 am-1:00 pm)

the spirit of "ohana" in Hawaiian culture emphasizes the importance of family, friends and community...

Ohana is a place for all generations to grow in friendships, explore and share faith, play and enjoy fellowship, find support through one another and have a great time together!

Join us on August 10 as we welcome back past Ohana generations and kick-off the start of a new year together! Activities for children of all ages will be provided.

Invite your friends!

RSVP by August 4th
<https://rb.gy/7orb9e>

Questions? Contact
Kristen Crabtree
805-350-0518

2024

WLAUMC AKI MATSURI

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21
11:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Asian Fall Festival featuring food,
entertainment, children's games & crafts,
plants & produce, cultural exhibits, door
prizes and more!

FREE ADMISSION



West Los Angeles United Methodist Church
1913 Purdue Avenue, LA, CA 90025

310-479-1379 | www.wlaumc.com

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

In-person Services
9:30 AM—English Worship
11:00 AM—Japanese Worship
Online worship at wlaumc.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday
8:30am-12:30 pm
or call the Church Office at
310-479-1379
to speak to the staff

STAFF

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