



# Spirit



**Issue 24**  
**December 17, 2014**



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Dear Friends,

In three weeks our Thailand Missions Team is going to be leaving for a small village in Thailand named Kew Mai Sang. This small village has 11 homes and 58 people with no school and no Christians. They do not have clean water or restrooms in the village. Our goal is to work with our American Baptist Missionaries, Mike & Becky and their son, Rick, to bring water to the village, purify it with a filter system, build storage tanks, and build restrooms. The Manns have done this in over 270 villages in Northern Thailand, so we will supply the muscle to complete these projects for the Kew Mai Sang village. Part of the funds for this Thailand outreach came from our 2013 Advent Conspiracy, and each member of the team raised about 25% of the balance. Your team, led by Pastor Eiji, is:

Naoto Funada  
Grace Hayashi  
Ken Kawahara  
Izumi Kawasaki  
Gerald Mayewaki  
Wayne Tofukuji  
Lauren Yoshiba  
Pastor Steve



(Above) Kew Mai Sang Village  
(Below) a village family



One of the questions raised was, "Why not just send the money to build wells for 2 villages instead of this team going?" The Manns gave us a very compelling answer. Yes, we could build an extra well. It would be more cost effective. But what is more important is the Gospel of Christ. These are Buddhist villages, and to have American Christians come to this small village and labor for a week tells the village how important and loved they are in our eyes. Americans are with them, caring for them, living with them, and meeting their needs in love, which opens the door for the Gospel of Christ.

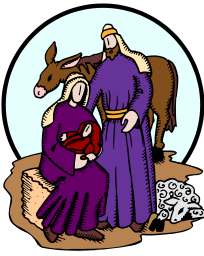
Christmas, the celebration of the Christ child coming to earth to be with us is the opening to the story, the Good News. God loved us, cared for us, ministered to us and died for us. Our going to Kew Mai Sang village in Thailand opens the door for God's love. It's a demonstration of what love does and what's important. It's Emmanuel – God with us.

Pray for the strength of your team as we leave on January 8 and return January 20, 2015. Pray that we are able to accomplish the tasks. Pray for the Kew Mai Sang village (see picture). Pray for the joy of the Lord in all we do. Pray for the making of disciples of Christ in the Kew Mai Sang village.

His child,  
Pastor Steve

# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

BY LINDA HAYASHI



Operation Christmas Child was a great success, as GVBC contributed a total of 618 boxes. This is over 100 more boxes than last year! Our shoebox gifts

have been covered in prayer and are currently on their way to children overseas through the ministry of Samaritan's Purse.

These boxes are used as tools for evangelism; distribution of the boxes includes a Gospel message and further invitation for the children to participate in a local discipleship program.

We are thankful for the church-wide participation which included the English congregation, Nichigo congregation, the youth, and children. GVBC youth prepared over 100 boxes and around 35 high school students and leaders went to the processing center on Saturday, November 29. Thanks to their help, a record number of 78,000 boxes were processed on that one day which was an all-time record.

Many thanks to all who helped share God's love through Operation Christmas Child. Thank you for your faithfulness in helping to spread the Gospel around the world through these special Christmas gifts.

## FRIDAY FOOD MINISTRY

BY GERALD MAYEWAKI



On Nov 21<sup>st</sup>, we welcomed back Sheldon and Naomi Russell from their trip up north, and also Dave Clayton, who returned from knee surgery. Dave was in the kitchen cooking up the spaghetti, while the rest of the team prepared garlic bread, a green salad, veggies, fruit salad, cookies and punch. Students at Cabrillo High, where Somali Imatomi



teaches, put together some Thanksgiving table runners and napkin wrappers. Naomi once again did the shopping and Sheldon provided hymns and prayer. Another wonderful team effort cooking, serving, and cleaning. Praise the Lord!

The GVBC 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Golf Tournament has blessed the Friday Food Ministry with proceeds totaling \$5,755. We were one of three recipients to receive this amount. Thank you to tournament chairperson Tak Shimazaki, and everyone who helped organize this event. Thank you golfers, volunteers, tee sign sponsors, hole prize & putting contest donors, silent auction donors, and those who donated raffle prizes & donations for tee bags and money, for making this such a fun and meaningful outing for everyone.

It's that busy time of the year again, so, as Pastor Steve says, "Advent! Stay focused! It's all about Jesus!"

Blessings everyone,  
Gerald



# OUR MISSION FIELD

THEREFORE, GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS . . . — MATTHEW 28:19

## **Bob & Teresa Matsushima, Mercy Ships in Madagascar Short-term Mission**

What comes to mind when you hear Madagascar? Is it the animated movie with colorful jungle scenes, big-eyed lemurs, and growling, jungle animals? Well, Bob and I will be serving on Africa Mercy, a surgical ship currently docked in Madagascar. We will be leaving Thursday, January 22, 2015 and return on Tuesday, March 31. Did you know Africa has 25% of the disease burden in the world with only 3% of health care workers? This was a surprising statistic which has moved us to serve in Africa.



In December 2012, Bob and I accompanied 18 GVBC'ers to the Urbana International Missions conference in St. Louis, MO. It was a wonderful time, worshipping in a cavernous stadium with 16,000 college students raising their hands to the Lord; snow falling on us as we walked the city blocks looking for our next seminar; eating on a tight color-coded schedule and when the bell dinged, you had to quickly leave to make room for the next group of 4,000 diners. We had midnight meetings with the pizza-eating college students and God was working on us, breaking our hearts for the poor and disenfranchised people of the third world. It was then that God called Bob to the Mercy Ships ministry. Before we left for the conference, our wise daughter told Bob, "Dad, make sure you pray before you enter the exhibition hall. That is what I did when I went, and God led me straight to the Mission Year booth. He will lead you to the right place, but you have to pray first." Thus, proving our children are often wiser and lead us.

So, Bob prayed and walked into the exhibit hall. Then, boom he came upon the Mercy Ships exhibit and God immediately impressed upon him to, "Go serve in Africa." When Bob told me this, I said, "Africa? You don't even want to go to Mexico with me." But we prayed and cried together and asked for God's leading. So, here we are, 17 immunizations and two years later in the application process. We are finally going to serve. Bob will be on the eye team as an optometrist. He will be screening for cataracts and eye problems which can be surgically repaired. As a retired nurse, I am on the waiting list to be an admit nurse for the surgical wards, but in the meantime, I will be serving in the dining room. Being a waitress and working in a kitchen wasn't necessarily on my bucket list, but I am a willing servant whose husband has been called. So, I am trying to be a supportive better half to Bob in this endeavor.

Many people have approached us asking questions like, "You aren't still going to Africa are you? What about your new granddaughter? What about your new grandchild due in March? You will be gone? Aren't you worried? It's a bad idea to go to Africa now with Ebola. WHAT are you thinking?" But, when God calls, we respond in faith because the Lord has this all in His hand. Of course we are worried. Of course we wonder what will happen in Africa. Of course I am terrified of Ebola, and I worry for my kids and grandkids, as well as my Mom with dementia. We have to trust that the Lord is in control and whatever happens is in His will. Bob and I have prayerfully come to terms with the possibility that we might not return. We even might get sick and have to be left in Africa. And, I reflected upon the missionaries of the early 19th Century who packed their belongings in a coffin as they didn't last the year on the mission field. We had to come to terms with dying and not returning to our home and family and church. But we are claiming the entire Psalm 91:

...God is my refuge and my fortress, My God in whom I trust. (vs. 2)

...He delivers you from the deadly pestilence. (vs. 3)

You will not be afraid...(vs. 5)

He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways (vs. 11)

So, we put our trust in God and pray HIS will be done through us, through our hands, through our lives, through our service and through our commitment to serve the poor. So, your part in all this is to PRAY for us while we are gone. We don't need your financial support, but we do NEED your prayers. Africa is a dark country and God's light needs to shine brightly there. Pray for God's hedge of protection over us, for our family while we are gone, for the ministry God has placed in front of us while we are in Madagascar, for the people's salvation there, and for the medical care we will be providing. God bless you! Bob & Teresa Matsushima

## **SHERYL SILZER, WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATOR**



Dear All, I'm thankful for your prayers that have sustained me throughout this year. Today I leave for my last workshop of the year in Dallas with an organization called Camino Global (formerly Central American Mission). This will be a six-day workshop. I look forward to working with their team, who want to enhance how their global teams work together. The

(Continued on pag 4)



# OUR MISSION FIELD CONTINUED

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*(Mission Field Continued from pag 3)*

postponement of my planned trip to Africa gave me an opportunity to attend two other conferences. One was the Asian American Ministry Conference held at Talbot School of Theology. Almost 300 people participated, mostly young people in ministry. I led a breakout session and most of the participants are planning on serving as missionaries. That was exciting to see. The other conference was the Evangelical Theological Society in San Diego. They have asked me to plan the Asian American Theology section for next year. I'd appreciate your prayers for wisdom for future opportunities with these groups. Next January I go to Thailand to present a paper to the SEANET Conference for people who minister in Buddhist areas of Asia. I will be the only Asian woman making a presentation. Pray for wisdom as I prepare the paper and get ready for the interaction I'll have with various people and organizations. I'll also be presenting two workshops about the Cultural Self Discovery workshops for multicultural teams. I appreciate your continuing prayers for God's provision for my health and support and for wisdom for my interactions with various people around the world. You are a great encouragement to me. God bless, Sheryl Silzer

## **KEN & DIANE KUDO, SEPAL SAO PAULO, BRAZIL**

The Kudos describe 2014 as a "rollercoaster year" for them and their ministry. There were plenty of opportunities in the following areas: preaching the Gospel to those whom have never heard the Good News of Jesus Christ; healing and deliverance for those who were sexually abused and raped; cheering on and assisting those who came to Christ over 25 years ago as they make an impact for Christ among friends and relatives in Sao Paulo; and praying to God to send the right disciples to serve a 5-15 year period on the mission field. "As we remember all of what has happened this year, we rejoice that the Lord Jesus came to make all of this possible. He is the vine, and we are blessed to be His branches. Merry Christmas!!!" writes the Kudos. Their new granddaughter, a grinning and adorable Kayla, is featured with Ken and Diane in their December newsletter photo.



## **JIM & LETA VAN METER, Paraclete Mission Group**

The Van Meters welcome Advent and describe it as, "An Exercise in Waiting". For the past, present, and future, Advent requires waiting. The past: It took patience on the part of our ancestors from millennia past as they waited century after century for the coming of the Messiah.

The present: In taking care of our own needs, we long for Christ's intervention, waiting patiently for his timing. In the Van Meter's case, Leta's nagging cough led to the discovery of her diaphragm (on the left side) was nearly paralyzed. Her surgery, originally scheduled for mid-November, has been delayed due to your prayers, alternative treatments, and Leta's good progress. Please pray for complete restoration of Leta's diaphragm.

The future: It has been nearly 2,000 years in which the global community of believers have eagerly anticipated the Lord's return. We now patiently await the Lord's promised return. "Surely the return of the Prince of Peace must be any day now. Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus!" writes Jim and Leta.

The Van Meters are grateful because, "The Lord of love came down, comes now, and will come again." They encourage us to remove whatever obstacles which may hinder His intervention in our lives; make straight whatever is crooked in us; smooth out wherever there are rough places; and ready ourselves for His soon-promised, glorious return.



# FAMILY NEWS

**A NEW COMMAND I GIVE YOU: LOVE ONE ANOTHER.” — JOHN 13:34**

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## OUR PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES TO THOSE WHO LOST LOVED ONES

To the family of Thelma Shibata who passed away on Wednesday, December 3. The funeral will be held on Saturday, December 20, at GVBC at 10:00 a.m. A reception will follow. Pastor James Chang will officiate.

## LETTERS TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Dear GVBC, My sincere and utmost thank you to all the staff, pastors, and friends who so kindly gave me their love, support, prayers, cards, phone calls, delicious food, and visited me at Little Company of Mary Hospital and their rehab facility. Also, thank you — more than words can say — for the beautiful basket of lavender roses sent to me at the hospital. It uplifted me and brightened my day. I'm home now and on my way to recovery. God is faithful! With the Lord's blessings to all, Love in Christ, Evelyn Uyeda



### Welcome new baby

Congratulations to Nathan & Sachiko Dodge (from our Nichigo congregation) in the birth of their new baby boy, Leonardo Tesla, born on Monday, December 8 at 5:00 a.m. Leonard weighed 7 lbs. 7 oz. and he was 18 inches long.

## VISTORS FROM OASIS CHAPEL RIFU, JAPAN

**BY TOMMY PARK**

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Hello GVBC Family!

This March we will have a few visitors from Oasis Chapel Rifu, Japan. We're hoping a few families from GVBC would be willing to host them.

In March 2015, Saki Tanno, a 20-year-old college student, plans to visit us. She has worked with our Japan teams the past two years and we hope to be able to reciprocate the kindness she has shown us. While here she would like to develop her skills in speaking English.

We also hope to host some of the staff from Oasis Chapel, possibly in May, which will include Pastor Makito Matsuda and Ken Matsuda (who visited us last year).

For Saki's visit in March, we're looking for three families who would be willing to host her for the following dates (can be flexible on length of stay):

- March 1-6 (Sunday-Friday)
- March 15-20 (Monday-Friday)
- March 23-26 (Monday-Thursday)

Please let me know if you are interested or if you have any questions. You can contact me at: [thomas.y.park@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.y.park@gmail.com) or through the church office.



**Saki Tanno really wants to improve her English, but please speak slowly**



**(L) Anna Osato, Kie, and Saki at Oasis Chapel in Rifu, Japan.**

# FYI EVENTS CALENDAR

## CLASSES TAUGHT BY PASTOR RON MATSUDA

- ✠ OASIS postponed until Wednesday, February 4.
- ✠ FOLLOWING CHRIST TODAY: Will meet until Sunday, January 11 then restart on Sunday, February 8.

## OFFICE CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Thursday, December 25 Christmas Day and Friday, December 26.

## KIDZONE

Friday, December 19 KidZone Christmas Party  
Friday, December 26 NO KidZone

## BAPTISM SUNDAY

December 28, both services in the sanctuary.

## BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY: BIBLE RESOURCES FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Sunday, Dec. 28, after both services in the Community Hall. Join us for a special event featuring Bibles, reading plans, study aids, apps for technology devices on the Bible, etc. Come talk with GVBC'ers who are personally reading through the Bible or doing so in their Community Groups and experiencing growth through God's Word in life-changing ways. Please contact Pastor Annette Kakimoto, ext. 680, for this new Discipleship Ministry

~2015~

## OFFICE CLOSED

Thursday, January 1 New Year's Day

## OFFICE OPEN

Friday January 2

## BILINGUAL SERVICE

Saturday, January 10, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary. Meets every second Saturday of the month. Refreshments served in Room 201 after the service. Everyone welcome. For more info contact Pastor Eiji Osato, ext. 676, [eiji@gvbc.net](mailto:eiji@gvbc.net).

## HIS LITTLE FEET RETURNS TO GVBC

Sunday, January 25, both worship services in the Community Hall. His Little Feet (HLF) International Children's Choir will be performing at GVBC.

The choir, comprised of 15 children, comes from two countries: Ethiopia and India. His Little Feet travels the United States, being the voice for orphaned and vulnerable children worldwide. The purpose of the tour is to bring awareness to the millions of children around the world in need of care, as well as facilitate opportunities for Americans to respond to the needs of children through giving, sponsoring, going and adopting.

We are in need of host families to house the children and adult staff for the nights of Thursday, January 22, Friday, January 23, and Saturday, January 24. If you are interested in being a host family, please review the preliminary requirements on the flyer in the Narthex, complete the tear-off and place it in the offering bag or give it to an usher or the Church Office.

Thank you for prayerfully considering this ministry opportunity. Contact [gvbc@gvbc.net](mailto:gvbc@gvbc.net) [subject: Little Feet].

## PRIMETIMER'S KYUSHU SOUTHERN JAPAN TRIP

Depart LAX Tuesday, October 13, Arrive LAX Thursday, October 22. **Cost:** \$4,458 per person (8 nights, 22 meals, ground transportation). **Deposit:** \$200 deposit **DEADLINE** January 13. **Balance of Payment due:** July 13. For questions contact Richard or Keiko Imatomi thru the office.



## FOURTH ADVENT CHRISTMAS SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday, December 21

English: 8:45 & 10:45 a.m.

Light of Love ~ Pastor Steve Langley  
Both services in the Community Hall

Nichigo: 10:45 a.m., Sanctuary  
Pastor Eiji Osato

Bring your **Advent Conspiracy Christmas tree ornament**. Come early to hang your ornament on one of the Christmas trees decorating the Community Hall. There will also be a box for you to place your Advent Conspiracy envelope. Refreshments served after each worship service.



## CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

Wednesday, December 24

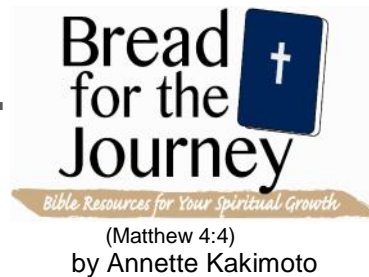
6:00 p.m. family service with a children's Christmas story

11:00 p.m. communion/special music

## DECEMBER 21 CHRISTMAS SUNDAY SNACKS

We need special snacks after our first & second services for our Christmas Sunday. We will gladly accept any donations of finger foods such as cookies, pastries, fruit, etc. Please bring your donations to the kitchen before 8:30 a.m. on December 21. Thank you so much!

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



On Sunday, December 28, after both services, we will be hosting the “Bread for the Journey” Ministry. This will feature actual samples of:

- ❖ Bibles in different translations and styles
- ❖ Books of the Bible handbooks
- ❖ Commentaries, concordances, Bible dictionaries, etc.
- ❖ A free Bible Reading Guide with 4 reading options/tracks
- ❖ How journaling can enhance Bible reflection (for some people!)
- ❖ Bible resources for children
- ❖ How we are teaching our youth about the Bible
- ❖ Internet and technological resources for the Bible
- ❖ Companions on the Way (testimonies by Bible reading partners)
- ❖ Community Groups sharing about reading through the Bible in community

At GVBC, through our Discipleship Ministries, we encourage and equip people to enter into reading God’s written word (the Bible) so as to encounter the Living Word (our Lord Jesus). We find most Christians do not regularly read the Bible because they are too busy and they often do not know what and how to read, reflect and apply what they read. We have therefore introduced a Bible Reading Guide, and having a fellow believer as your Bible Companion on the Way partner to encourage you, as spiritual growth resources. Some GVBC’ers have now begun to read through one of the four Gospels, and eventually read the entire New Testament. Hearts and minds are being transformed as GVBC’ers are applying and sharing God’s truths personally and in community!

Come join us for Bread for the Journey on Sunday, December 28, in the Community Hall. Stop by the many resource tables, staffed by GVBC’ers who are personally reading and savoring God’s Word in their lives and Community Groups. We hope you will begin now in 2014 to look ahead to 2015 with you feeding on God’s Word as your spiritual bread.

## IMPORTANT END-OF-YEAR INFORMATION

### 2014 Tax Deductions

To receive tax credit for 2014, all donations must be postmarked by Wednesday, December 31 or dropped off at the church office by Tuesday, December 30.

### Your 2015 Offering Envelopes are Available for Pick Up

Please save us postage by remembering to pick up your numbered offering envelopes, available either in the back of the Community Hall or in the Narthex. If you do not have a numbered box and would like one, please contact Wendy Nakano in the church office, ext. 672 or [wendy@gvbc.net](mailto:wendy@gvbc.net)

### **GVBC Cookbooks “Recipes and Remembrances: Nisei Favorites”**

Cookbooks are now available, \$15 each. Proceeds go to the “Pipe Organ Repair” fund. The first printing of the cookbook was in 1966, and proceeds were used to purchase the organ! Makes a great Christmas gift.



### **NEXT SPIRIT ISSUE**

Available online Wednesday, January 7, 2015 at [www.gvbc.net](http://www.gvbc.net), “Our Newsletter.” Hard copies available in the Narthex and in the back of the Community Hall. All articles should be submitted by Sunday, Jan. 4.

The **SPIRIT** is copyrighted © 2014 and a publication of Gardena Valley Baptist Church, 1630 W. 158th Street, Gardena, CA., 90247, (310)323-5683, FAX: (310)768-2783, Email: [gvbc@gvbc.net](mailto:gvbc@gvbc.net), Website: [www.gvbc.net](http://www.gvbc.net), Senior Pastor: Steve Langley (310)323-5683, ext. 0, Editor: Susan J. Shelley, ext. 673, [susie@gvbc.net](mailto:susie@gvbc.net). Office hours: 9:00am—5:00pm. The **Spirit** is published twice a month to keep members and friends informed of programs of the church and to report news about GVBC and its people. Announcements, praise, prayer requests, and letters are welcome. Articles are subject to editing and/or postponement.





Gardena Valley Baptist Church  
1630 W. 158th Street  
Gardena, CA 90247-3712

**Phone** (310) 323-5683

**Website** [www.gvbc.net](http://www.gvbc.net)

**E-mail** [gvbc@gvbc.net](mailto:gvbc@gvbc.net)

**Twitter** <http://twitter.com/gvbc>



**English Worship Services: 8:45 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.**

Children's Sunday School concurrent

**Japanese Worship Service: 10:45 a.m.**

Children's Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., Room 206

### **CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21**

Both Services in the Community Hall

Fourth Advent

Pastor Steve Langley ~ Light of Love

Hanging of the Advent Christmas Ornaments

### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

in the Community Hall

6 p.m. Family Service with children's Christmas Story

11 p.m. Communion/Special music

### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28/BAPTISMS**

Both Services in the Sanctuary

### **SUNDAY, JANUARY 4**

Both Services in the Community Hall

Come Forward Prayer and Communion

### **GVBC Staff**

STEVE LANGLEY Senior Pastor ext. 0

DANIEL MATSUDA Associate Pastor, Youth ext. 681

EIJI OSATO Associate Pastor, Nichigo ext. 676

JAMES CHANG Assistant Pastor, Neighborhood ext. 679

ANNETTE KAKIMOTO Assistant Pastor, Leadership Dev. ext. 680

CHRIS KOGA Assistant Pastor

BRAD TOY Interim Director of College

LAYNE WAKUTA Pastoral Intern, Middle School ext. 684

SUSAN WAKUTA Elementary Children's Director ext. 689

TAMMY HERNANDEZ Early Childhood Coordinator

EMILY NOGUCHI Nursery Coordinator

NAOTO FUNADA Nichigo Worship Coordinator

WENDY NAKANO Office Manager ext. 672

PEGGY KUSHIGEMACHI Financial Assistant ext. 675

JAN MAGNANI Secretary ext. 671

REI ABE Nichigo Secretary ext. 677

AUBREY MATSUNAMI Christian Educ. Secretary ext. 678

SUSIE SHELLEY Newsletter Editor ext. 673

SOCORRO "COCO" KAGAWA Maintenance Assistant

GERALD MAYEWAKI Facilities Assistant

JAI PHETSOMPHOU Maintenance Assistant

ROBERT KATO Sunday Services Assistant

EDMOND AVIADO Sunday Services Assistant