

Spirit



Issue 5
March 18, 2015



What's your story?

by Layne Wakuta, Pastoral Intern

What is *your* story? This is the question we asked our middle and high school students at the recent Youth Winter Camp which was held March 6 — 8 at Oak Glen Christian Conference Center. Eighty-five students (109 total) attended the camp and our very own Tommy Park [pictured at right] was our main speaker.



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The weekend focused on learning how to share our testimonies which are the stories of our lives and how God has made a difference in them. As 1 Peter 3:15 states, *"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."*



As our students reflected on the stories of their lives, they were able to see God's faithfulness throughout. This was especially meaningful to our students who grew up in the church and may have felt like they didn't have a testimony because their life story thus far didn't include anything severe or tragic, such as: drug abuse, spending time in jail, etc.



"Everyone has a story," reflected one of our middle-school students. "My life is a basic born-in-a-Christian-family story, but I learned it means God is continually working in my life. He is always faithful. God is good all the time."

Along with our students who have been long-time regular attenders, we also had many first-timers as well. "Thank you for letting me spend a weekend with this awesome Youth Group!" exclaimed one of our first-time high school students. Overall, it was a blessed weekend where we discovered how our stories and God's story come together. One of our high school students summed it up best by saying, "The Bible is a great source for stories of God and how he works, but the stories of the living God now working in our lives is just as powerful."



SWEETHEART'S SNACK SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

HOSTED BY THE ELEMENTARY SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN



The delicious and lovingly prepared buffet for the widows with the Elementary Sunday School children, (top L) Susan Wakuta, Children's Director, Carol Allen, and Maleia Cosare.



The adorable gift of love for each widow and a Valentine card personally signed by a child along with a beautiful rose bouquet.



Miwa Fukushima and family



(Standing L) Ann Marie Labansat, Patti Hatashita, Nancy Watanabe. (Sitting L) Denko Hirose, Molly Nishimoto, and Cyril Nishimoto



A note of appreciation

Our gratitude and appreciation for the delicious breakfast and beautiful roses. Also, for your utmost love, compassion, and kindness to the widows. We are truly blessed and praise the Lord for being part of your Christian family. We are grateful for the many kindnesses you showed us and we appreciate each and every one. THANK YOU! The Koinonia Ladies Group



(L) Phyllis Miller, Josie Ogawa, and Joyce Enos being served by Miku Nakao

“AVALANCHE”

2015 JUNIOR WINTER CAMP

FEBRUARY 13 — 15

BY SUSAN WAKUTA, ELEMENTARY CHILDREN’S DIRECTOR



Enjoying their delicious shakes



Playing a game of gaga ball



“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’” Matthew 25:40

We had a fun-filled, non-stop time at Forest Home. There were eight girls, seven boys, and four counselors who went to camp. For six of the children, it was their first time. Because of the church’s generosity, three children received scholarships to go to camp.

The theme was “Avalanche,” and the children discovered how to love and show kindness like Jesus. These are some of the children’s responses of

demonstrating Christ’s love and kindness back home: Be nicer to my siblings; give more compliments; think before I do something; and be helpful to my parents.

While most of the boys enjoyed playing gaga ball (an advanced game of dodge ball), the other children liked the night game, archery, hikes, shakes, and worship. But the highlight of the camp was when the children experienced a special rope course while wearing a harness and suspended 26 feet in the air. They walked on different obstacles such as planks, a tight rope, and steps. The children loved it; I on the other hand, had to conquer my fear of heights.

We greatly appreciate your prayers and financial support for the children who attended camp. They learned and encountered God in the beautiful mountains; met others from different churches as well as built lasting friendships with each other and with their counselors.



OUR MISSION FIELD

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



Bob & Teresa Matsushima in Madagascar, Africa

Thursday, Masrch 5: Hi GVBC! Bob and I have been in the port of Toamasina, Madagascar for six weeks already and time continues to whiz along. We have had many opportunities to minister. We went with the Mercy Ministries team on hospital visitation to the pediatric ward at Hospital Be (pronounced Bay) one evening. There are six children per ward which is a cramped room with barely enough room for a narrow wooden chair

between each bed. Each patient has at least two to six family members at the bedside — the mother, father, grandparents, and assorted relatives. There is no running water in the hospital and they do not provide meals. So, each family has to fetch water from the hospital courtyard for drinking and washing up and figure out how to buy and prepare meals for their own family. They are the fortunate ones who can enter the hospital and scrape up money to buy medicine for their babies. We went ward-to-ward and had a chance to pray with each family and pray over their babies. Most of the babies were tiny. The healthier ones were 4 lbs. and the premies in the incubators were even tinier! Many of the babies get malaria after birth and languish in the hospital for weeks. But, we were able to hold the parents' hands, smile, pray, and give them hugs of encouragement which bridged our language barrier because we shared God's love with them. I kept thinking about my own grandchild, Mazzy, and how robust she is compared to the tiny Malagasy babies.

We are in the Befriend-a-patient Program and here is photo of my little patient, Fitia, a 2½ year old [pictured above with her mother]. She had plastic surgery to release the scarring from a scald burn which got infected a while back. So, I visit her daily and have gotten to know her parents. This past week, after one month of getting to know her, she finally let me pull her in the wagon during playtime and she sat on my lap for the first time. So, we have established a relationship over the past month. Her father asked us to come tonight and he wants to take our picture together with the family. I thought this was great progress — he took the initiative to want our photo together! Thank you for praying for her healing. Her dressings have been removed except for her right thigh and she is healing well without signs of infection.

Please continue to pray for Mr. S. He had a 16+ lb. tumor removed from the left side of his face. He used the tumor as a pillow (!!!) and it was like having two extra heads. I can't imagine the weight of carrying it around for 18 years! It was the largest tumor the Africa Mercy Ships ever removed. The entire ship was in prayer for him during surgery and you could have heard a pin drop the entire day. He was in surgery for 12 hours. He is healing well and will be released soon. Praise the Lord! This is truly a miracle of God — to survive all those years with the tumor, survive the surgical procedure and heal without infection. The humidity here can be 100% and it is easy to get an infections. So, God has been faithful and brought hope and healing to his life.

May God bless you all at home. We are getting homesick and we miss you all at GVBC. In Christ's love, Teresa & Bob Matsushima



The above photos were taken at the Semato Deaf School. Children are playing a game. You wiggle your face and try to get the biscuit into your mouth. Hilarious. They loved it!



Women from the Fishermen's Group demonstrate their weaving and craft skills.

This is a deaf student who graduated from the Semato Deaf School and is now a teacher there. The children really respect her as she came up from the ranks and is now their teacher. She taught us a Malagasy traditional folk dance and the movements were exactly the SAME as Tanko Bushi (the Japanese coal miner's dance). I was in shock and could not believe my eyes when she taught it. I kept saying to people around me, "Whoa, this is also a Japanese folk dance and the movements are exactly the same! How can this be? Wow! Incredible!"

(Continued on pag 5)

Ken & Diane Kudo, SEPAL Overseas Crusades, Brazil

The Kudos recently welcomed a visit from their son, Kevan; his wife, Yoo-Kyeong, and granddaughter, Kaylie. God used Kevan to share with Christians at the Kudos' church. Kevan was asked by the youth and professionals to share his life experiences while waiting on the Lord to bring Yoo-Kyeong into his life. One of the goals of Kevan's talk was to stimulate a discussion among them about facing questions of personal obedience to the Lord as well as discipleship.

A couple, Edison & Neuza, welcomed Kevan and his family back to Brazil. The two were part of a singles group which met in the Kudos' home over 20 years ago. At that time, people felt the presence of the Spirit of God and many were healed of abuse. A mini-reunion of sorts, Edison & Neuza hosted a dinner, inviting Kevan, Yoo-Kyeong, Kaylie, Ken & Diane. There was wonderful fellowship during the evening. A photo of the happy group is featured in the Kudos' January/February 2015 newsletter. The Kudos request prayer for Edison & Neuza's children as they grow up and make firm decisions to follow Christ.

Throughout the Kudos' years on the mission field, there have been various defining moments. One of the events for the Kudos was being speakers at their annual missions conference in Sao Paulo. Before speaking, the Kudos rejoiced with tears of joy in what God has done in over 50 year of their ministry. Hamilton, who is in charge of the missions committee, recognized the longevity of the Kudos' faithful ministry by presenting them with a *longa caminhada* (the long journey of following Jesus). It left the Kudos' emotionally charged. Hamilton ended by praying for the Kudos and their ministry. With gratitude to all their supporters, the Kudos end their March prayer letter by writing, "Thank you for walking alongside us during such a long pilgrimage. Without you being beside us and behind us, our journey would not have happened."



FAMILY NEWS

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

OUR PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES TO THOSE WHO LOST LOVED ONES

Raymond Gondo and family in the passing of his beloved wife, Michiko. The funeral service was held on Friday, March 13 at the Inglewood Cemetery. Pastor Steve Langley officiated.

Henry & Jan Law, Liane & Michelle and family in the passing of Jan's mother, Alice Saito. The funeral will be held on Friday, March 27 at Green Hills Chapel at 11:00 a.m. Pastor Daniel Matsuda will officiate.

LETTERS TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Aloha to all you precious members of the Gardena Valley Baptist Church. I hope 2015 is bringing you many happy and healthy days and warmer weather, too. I do miss you folks, but am happily enjoying life here. I truly appreciate your sharing the Spirit newsletter with me. Have a wonderful year!! With Love, Kim Fujiura

Dear Friends, On behalf of the City of Gardena, we would like to extend our sincere thanks for your January 2015 donation of 45 bags and 3 cases of food to our emergency food pantry. Thank you for caring about others in your community. Together we can continue in our mission to try to keep up with the increasing needs of struggling families and individuals in our community during these tough economic times. Sincerely, James Kimmons, Recreation Supervisor, by Susie Santana, Recreation Coordinator

FYI EVENTS CALENDAR

CLASS 101

Sunday, March 22, 12:30 p.m., Room 220. Membership and Baptism. For high school age and up. For those seeking information about GVBC and who would like to become a member and/or be baptized. The next baptism service will be on Sunday, April 12.

A light lunch is provided before each class. Register by checking off the appropriate box on the back of your Connection form or contact Jan Magnani, ext. 0 or e-mail her at: gvbc@gvbc.net [Class number in the subject line].

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Saturdays of March 28, April 25, May 23, June 20, and July 25, 8:00 — 10:00 a.m., Room 113 (by the kitchen). All men welcome to join us as we start up a new video series called :“God at War” from the same producers of “Not a Fan.” Meeting includes a delicious breakfast. Sign up in the Courtyard after the worship services or call the church office.

PALM SUNDAY

March 29, Palm Pierced for our Iniquities, both services in Community Hall, Hula performs.

MAUNDY THURSDAY MEALS (MTM)

Join us as we reflect on the love of Christ the Servant during Holy Week with a potluck meal, hand washing and communion hosted by our Community Groups. If you are not in a group but would like to join a MTM, registration is required at the Narthex or via the church office. Please see flyer for times and locations of MTMs. The cost is bringing one food item to share. We will be partaking of communion at these MTM's instead of our GVBC April communion. For more information, please contact Pastor Annette Kakimoto (Annette@gvbc.net).

GOOD FRIDAY

April 3, 7:00 p.m., “Servant Who Died,” Sanctuary, Children and Youth invited.

BILINGUAL SERVICE

Saturday, April 4, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary. The Bilingual Service 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.

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5

April 5, **English** services at 8:45 and 11:00 a.m., “Servant of God Lifted High.” No communion because it will be taken on Maundy Thursday within the Community Groups. Both services in the Community Hall
Nichigo Communion service at 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary. Refreshments served after the worship services.

OFFICE CLOSED

Monday, April 6

SPECIAL LANDSCAPING DAY

Saturday, April 18, starting at 8:00 a.m. We will be putting in new landscape in 3 areas, the area along the wall on La Salle, the area behind the dumpster, and one of the rental homes. Please mark this on your calendar and come out to help keep our GVBC facilities looking great!

Easter Flowers

We are receiving donations for Easter flowers “In Memory of”, or “In Honor of” your loved one(s). These names will be listed in the Spirit newsletter and the Easter Worship bulletin.

Suggested amount is \$7.00 per flower (checks payable to GVBC) and place in the offering bag. Donations for Easter Flowers go toward decorating our facilities and do not guarantee receiving any flowers. After Easter services, you may take flowers if they are available.

For questions, call Jan in the church office at (310) 323-5683. Thank you!

Deadline: Sunday, March 29, 2015

Easter Refreshments

Finger foods or desserts are needed for our Easter Sunday Services, April 5. Please bring them to the kitchen BEFORE 8:45 a.m. Thank you!



KidZone
Friday Night Activities
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
in the Community Hall



March 20 - Minute to Win-it
March 27 - Scavenger Hunt

April 3 - Good Friday Service
April 10 - Sockey
April 17 - Pizza Night
April 24 - Family Game Night



For more information, contact
Susan Wakuta at
(310) 323-5683 or
e-mail at susan@gvbc.net

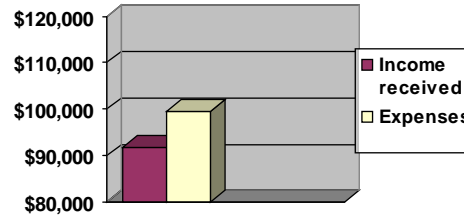
Financial Report

Donations and Flowers given in honor or loving memory

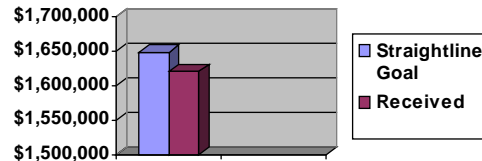
FROM	TO
Ueda Memorial Fund	Edith Matsumura John Matsumura
Kathy Aiso	Paul Aiso
Stan Shibata & Family	for the Pipe Organ Repair
Merrick Yoshida & Jodie & Voltaire Rivera	Thelma Shibata
George & Shig Hirano	Ichiko Yoshida
	65th wedding anniversary & George's 87th birthday for Nehemiah 4
Mits & Marianne Fujita, Paul & Patsy Hasegawa	Herb & Ruth Kawai's
Denko Hirose, June Inouye	60th wedding anniversary
Edith Kunishige, Hiro Nakamoto & Elaine Tanaka, Betty Shiotani	
Susie Shelley	Frank Jr. for Nehemiah 4

Monetary donations given in honor or memory of loved ones support College Scholarship Fund, unless specified.

General Fund - January 2015



Nehemiah 4 - cumulative up to January 2015



Announcements

CHRISTIAN SERVICE SCHOLARSHIPS

This scholarship is given as an encouragement to those who use their Spiritual gifts in Christian service. Up to \$750 will be awarded to applicants. See application in the Narthex for requirements. **DEADLINE** is June 20, no exceptions. For info contact Wendy Nakano, ext. 672, wendy@gvbc.net.

GVBC COOKBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE NOW

Pick up your GVBC cookbook for \$15 each [checks payable to GVBC with "Cookbook" in subject line]. 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! The cookbooks are available after the worship services from the Narthex.

THANKS TO YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS and through the sale of many cookbooks we have raised the funds to restore our pipe organ. Work is scheduled to begin after Easter and is expected to take about 15 weeks. During that time, unfortunately, we will have no pipe organ music for worship services, weddings and funerals. Thank you for supporting our efforts to raise the funds to repair our beloved pipe organ.



NEXT SPIRIT ISSUE

Available online Wednesday, April 1 at 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, March 29.

The **SPIRIT** is copyrighted © 2015 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, Website: www.gvbc.net, Senior Pastor: Steve Langley (310)323-5683, ext. 0, Editor: Susan J. Shelley, ext. 673, 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.



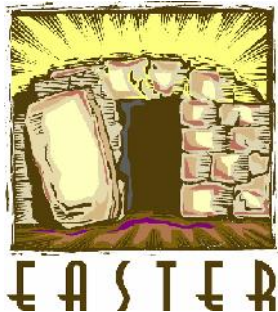
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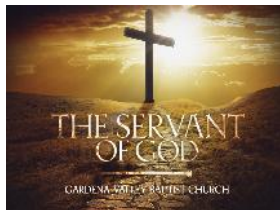
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English Worship Services: 8:45 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Children's Sunday School concurrent

Japanese Worship Service: 10:45 a.m.

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Pastor James Chang ~ Isaiah 50
Unbroken

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29

Both services in the Community Hall
Pastor Daniel Matsuda~ Isaiah 52-53
Palm Pierced for our Iniquities

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 7:00 P.M.

Sanctuary
Servant Who Died
Layne & Susan Wakuta and Pastor James Chang
Children and Youth welcome to join this service

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5

English services at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.
Both services in the Community Hall
Pastor Steve Langley ~Servant of God Lifted High

BAPTISM SUNDAY, APRIL 12

Pastor Steve Langley ~ Nehemiah 5 Finish Line

GVBC Staff

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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 [on leave-of-absence]

BRAD TOY Interim Director of College

LAYNE WAKUTA Pastoral Intern, Middle School ext. 684

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TAMMY HERNANDEZ Early Childhood Coordinator

EMILY NOGUCHI Nursery Coordinator

NAOTO FUNADA Nichigo Worship Coordinator

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JAN MAGNANI Secretary ext. 671

REI ABE Nichigo Secretary ext. 677

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GERALD MAYEWAKI Facilities Assistant

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EDMOND AVIADO Sunday Services Assistant