

Spirit

Issue 3

February 8, 2017



DEAR FAMILY,

Well, I am semi-retired from GVBC. The last Sunday Nancy and I were with you — we will never forget. It was very emotional. I must confess that during the first service I had planned I would be able to serve you communion along with the Board of Deacons and staff. I thought this would be a great way to end my time with you by serving you. When Pastor James came and said, “Go sit down”, and he would serve instead, I did not understand and sat down and pouted! It took Kerry and Melissa (our daughters) to tell me to look who was singing, “How Beautiful”, for me to realize Camille Relatado was flown in from Fairbanks, Alaska, to surprise me! Camille had lived with Nancy and me for about 3 years after she graduated from Biola, and we had not seen her for 12 years. All I could do was cry.

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Nancy and I had no idea how many of you would send us letters and gifts. It took us three days to open each card and read them to each other — such kind words and generosity beyond measure. We also learned some of you gave money anonymously to fund the retirement celebration and we will never know who you are. Since we can't send you a personal note, we want to say, Thank you for your big-hearts and generous giving for our wonderful celebration!

So, what are our plans? First, we are not moving. We like our house and our neighborhood and we plan to stay here in Gardena. I will be working with the staff, Board and Core for the next 5 months on a part-time basis. We will visit GVBC worship services during the upcoming months.

During this time of change, it is important for all of you to stay connected and keep the body of Christ (GVBC) healthy. You can do this by joining a Community Group, attending worship regularly, keep the financial support strong, and support our GVBC pastors who will be preaching and leading. They are good! God has so much more for you to do in His name to bring Him glory.

His child,
Pastor Steve

THE POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

PROFILE OF MARK SHIRAIWA

BY KATHY AISO

GOT GOD. I GOT HAPPY — KEION JACKSON

God's unconditional love moved **MARK SHIRAIWA** to have a positive change of heart. At age 11, he and his family left Japan for the U.S. where his dad attended seminary. Mark's father, Masaaki Shiraiwa, had been a pastor in Japan. At his dad's church in Yokohama, Mark accepted the Lord at the age of six. In the states, the family lived in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Princeton, where Mark encountered racial prejudice. Mark and his family faced a sea of icy stares when they ate at different restaurants. Once, when walking down the street, someone shouted racial slurs at him. Mark thought he could eradicate prejudice aimed at him by excelling in school, sports, and English. In time, he discovered — to his dismay — the prejudice lingered, despite his achievements. With a heavy heart, he became angry and bitter.

AFTER MARK'S FAMILY MOVED TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, God intervened in his teenage life. He and his family began attending Union Church of Los Angeles. A friend also introduced him to different Christian services and events by driving him around town. One event was "Funky Friday Night Party" (FFNP), a college and young adult evangelistic outreach at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. As he attended FFNP, he felt loved and accepted for who he was. The Christians he met loved and embraced him. "I could feel God's love," he affirmed. "I realized God loved me so much I had nothing to be angry or bitter about." Through attending FFNP and meeting loving Christians, singing worship songs which touched his heart, and attending church, God's unconditional love replaced the anger and bitterness in his heart. With a transformed heart, he wanted to now completely live for Christ.

FOLLOWING GRADUATION FROM ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL in June 1995, Mark attended UCLA. While attending UCLA, he spent a year as a foreign exchange student at Sophia University (SU) in Japan. At SU, he had a fervent desire to evangelize to his fellow male dorm residents. He took it as a personal mission 24/7 to do personal evangelism which included performing and singing Christian songs while attending classes as a fulltime student. In not knowing his limits because he was continually pushing himself to do more, Mark had a nervous breakdown. When he returned home, God provided him with insightful and helpful counseling at Union Church. This resulted in his restored health.

IN 2001, MARK GRADUATED with a B.S. in Physiological Science from UCLA. After graduation, he wanted to keep his options open if God wanted him in fulltime ministry. He took a job as a banker and began taking seminary courses. When the bank was bought out by another bank, he continued as a mortgage loan officer and part-time seminary student.



He always kept himself busy and it led to another overload. In 2012, after over-extending himself in ministry and work, he had an anxiety attack. The recovery period was long and challenging, but God guided him through. He was able to reduce the workload in his life which allowed him to bring down his stress levels considerably. He still deals with anxiety issues, but he has been able to manage it much better.

MARK IS GRATEFUL FOR HIS LOVING WIFE, NAOMI, who wholeheartedly supports him in his goal to earn a Master's of Divinity degree and serve in fulltime ministry. He is leaving it up to God as to where he will serve, although his heart is with the unsaved in Japan. Mark and Naomi's family also include their two sons — Yuma age eight and Masaki age four.

AS A PASTORAL INTERN, Mark thoroughly enjoys serving alongside Nichigo pastor Eiji Osato. He finds Pastor Eiji's dedication, energy, and efforts for evangelizing the unsaved inspiring. On a personal level, he enjoys Pastor Eiji's company which he finds encouraging and fun. At the Nichigo Sunday morning worship services, Mark leads worship every other Sunday. He also teaches a young-adult Bible study and helps out at the Nichigo Outreach/Fellowship. Mark and Naomi enjoy being a part of GVBC whom they affirm is a supportive community of believers. They are thankful for the fine Children's Ministry program at GVBC for their sons.

MARK'S FAVORITE BIBLE PASSAGE, Psalm 23, reminds him, God protects and guides him throughout life. He is always there as a loving shepherd and guide.

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me,
Thou dost prepare a table before me in the
presence of my enemies;
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup overflows.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow
me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever."*

Mark is continually thankful for the Lord's watchful care over every aspect of his life. He looks forward to serving in fulltime ministry wherever God leads him.



gardena valley baptist church

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

sunday, february 26

community hall

12:30 pm

**bring your own lunch or purchase a Giuliano's Jr.
Torpedo, bag of chips & 1 piece of pie for \$6.**

Turn in registration & monies to Jan at the Narthex Counter.

MUST turn in by Sunday, February 19.

OUR MISSION FIELD

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

KEN & DIANE KUDO, OVERSEAS CRUSADES, SEPAL, SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

“Happy New Year!” writes Ken. Diane’s mother, Lillian Suzuki, recently went home to the Lord. Diane was instrumental in bringing not only her mother but her father, sister, and brother to the Lord. Within a year of Diane’s conversion, each of her family members accepted Christ, having witnessed a marked transformation in Diane.

Diane’s own conversion came about earlier, attending the Church of the Open Door in downtown Los Angeles where she heard Dr. J. Vernon McGee preach. Diane accepted Christ and became deeply rooted in Him as she deeply immersed herself in the Gospel and had fellowship with like-minded Christians. Diane also became active in short-term missions. With Shantiman Mission, Diane lived among the native Indians and whalers in Canada, ministering to them. With another believer, Diana spearheaded a short-term mission trip to witness to Shanty Town residents in Mexico. “These experiences prepared her for a lifelong career as a missionary to the lost in Brazil and it gave her a vision to disciple, multiply, and send leaders to spread the Gospel all over the globe,” writes Ken.



PETE & SHERYL SILZER WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

Sheryl and her college roommate, Jean, were excited to see and hear all about the ministry taking place in Thailand and Asia. During their first week in Thailand, Sheryl presented a paper on how the Buddhist belief in karma drives the Asian concept of reciprocity and how it can be interpreted as good works in the Sian Christian church, resulting in a lack of grace.

Sheryl also gave four workshops. Two workshops were on Cultural Self Discovery while the other two were on the main difference between the east and the west. During the second week, Sheryl and Jean facilitated a Cultural Self-discovery workshop with Mennonite Brethren leaders. The mission is moving in the direction of handing over their leadership to the nationals. They thought by understanding cultural differences it would help them get off to a good start. They continue to reflect on the material which was given and are eager to see the fruit it will bear on their teams.

The highlight of the two-week trip was a tour of the International Zoe Ministry to at-risk children. God has saved many children through the Zoe Ministry. Two of them are now adults and on the staff.

Sheryl thanks you for your prayers. Both Sheryl and Jean spent a day or two in bed, probably reacting to the food they ate. “The trip was not without a few hiccups,” Sheryl wrote.

Please continue to pray for Sheryl as she travels to L.A. (i.e. Talbot Seminary to teach the following weeks: Feb. 8-17, March 1-8, and March 29-April 7).



FAMILY NEWS

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

OUR PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES GO OUT TO

Our condolences to Henry & Shirley Aoto, and Randy and Patty Yanaga and families on the passing of their father, Tom Yanaga, in Colorado. Funeral services will be private.

LETTERS TO OUR GVBC FAMILY

Thank you for helping us honor and celebrate the life of this amazing man [Ryo Komae passed away on December 19, 2016]. We have been touched by the outpouring of love and support that you have sent our way. Thank you for the beautiful flowers presented at Pop's funeral. We appreciate all the love and support offered by the church Body! Glenn & Stephanie Komae, Kent & Jody Komae, Lis Komae, Marcy & Jerry Binya and families

We are so grateful for your love, support and thoughtfulness. With love, The family of Mas Okumura: Frances, Patti Don, & Howard

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

On Sunday, February 5 we extended the Right Hand of Fellowship and welcome our new members:



Daniel & Kelly An
with Lauren



Katie Fujita



Craig Hara



Michele Hirano



Jennifer Yu

FYI EVENTS CALENDAR

OFFICE CLOSED

Monday, February 20. President's Day.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING/LUNCH

Sunday, February 26. How did we do financially in 2016? What will be our direction for 2017? Bring your own lunch or you can purchase a lunch for \$6 and receive a torpedo sandwich, chips, and a slice of pie. Flyer for lunch sign-ups are on the Narthex counter [see page 3 flyer].

YOUTH WINTER CAMP

Friday, February 24 to Sunday, February 26, Oak Glen. Application through your youth leaders or the office. Contact Layne Wakuta, ext. 682, layne@gvbc.net.

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

Saturday, February 25, 8:30 AM. Our speaker will be Susan Wakuta.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

Sunday, March 12 spring time forward one hour.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EASTER CELEBRATION

Saturday, April 8, 9 AM. For Nursery through Kindergarten and their families. It is a great time to invite your non-Christian family and friends, too! Watch for registration coming next month.

GVBC PRIMETIMERS' TOURS

Note: The Primetimers' Tours are not just for Seniors

- **National Parks of the Southwest:** Monday, May 15 to Saturday, May 20, \$1,795 per person (double occupancy), \$2,290 (single), includes gratuities for driver & tour director. **DEADLINE:** Final payment due no later than **Sunday, March 19**. No refunds after final payment is made. Departs at 8:00 a.m. from New Gardena Hotel.
- **NEW NIXON LIBRARY:** Thursday, June 15, departing at 10:30 a.m., return approximately 5:00 p.m., \$124 per person includes: bus ride (with gratuity for the bus driver); guided tour of the Nixon Library & lunch (restaurant TBD). The library has been closed for a year while undergoing a 15 million dollar renovation. Everything is new with interactive displays and upgraded technology. Also, you can step aboard Marine One, the presidential helicopter Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford to all parts of the globe. **DEADLINE:** Final payment due on **May 21**.
- **Laguna Arts Festival & Pageant of the Masters:** Tuesday, August 15, \$130 per person (includes gratuity for driver). No refunds after final payment is made. Departs at 3:30 p.m. from GVBC. Returns approx. 11:30 p.m.

- **Candlelight Pavilion Dinner Theater:** Wednesday, December 7, departing at 10:00 a.m., \$134 per person. This trip to the Candlelight Pavilion in Claremont. It includes dinner and the program, "Sounds of Christmas". **DEADLINE:** Final payment is due **November 5**. No refunds after final payment is made.

To make reservations, contact Richard or Keiko Imatomi after the worship services or through the church office. Make checks out to GVBC with your trip title in subject line.



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



February 10- Castle Ball
February 17- No KidZone (Jr. Winter Camp)
February 24- Wave



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

Gardena Valley Baptist Church
1630 W. 158th ST
Gardena, CA 90247



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Scholarships for Success

Christian Community Credit Union is awarding \$60,000 in scholarships!

The Christian Community Credit Union's "Scholarships for Success" program is awarding scholarships to qualified students who are members of the Credit Union with an active checking account, attending a college, university, or seminary for the 2017-2018 academic year, and enrolling (per semester/quarter) with 12 units or more for Undergraduate students; six units or more for Graduate students.

For more information about the Scholarships for Success program, please visit the website at:

myCCCU.com/scholarship

DEADLINE: Scholarship applications are due by **March 31**.

You can download scholarship applications at:

myCCCU.COM/promotescholarship

For more info or questions call 800-347-CCCU (2228) or email: info@mycccu.com.



NEXT SPIRIT ISSUE

Available online Wednesday, February 22 at www.gvbc.net "Our Newsletter." Hard copies available in the Narthex and the back of the Community Hall. All articles should be submitted by Sunday, February 19



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E-mail 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

SERMON SERIES: FIRM FOUNDATION

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Pastor James Chang
Strong in the Grace of Jesus

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

The Unchained Word of God

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Firm Foundation to the Master

SUNDAY, MARCH 5/COMMUNION

Righteousness

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

Last Days

GVBC Pastoral Staff

STEVE LANGLEY EXECUTIVE Pastor ext. 0

EIJI OSATO Associate Pastor, Nichigo ext. 676

DANIEL MATSUDA Associate Pastor ext. 681

JAMES CHANG Assistant Pastor ext. 679

ANNETTE KAKIMOTO Assistant Pastor ext. 680

CHRIS KOGA Assistant Pastor

BRAD TOY College-age Director

LAYNE WAKUTA Youth Director ext. 684

SUSAN WAKUTA Children's Director ext. 689

TAMMY HERNANDEZ Early Childhood Coordinator

EMILY NOGUCHI Nursery Coordinator

LEE MATSUNAMI Worship Music & Arts Coordinator