



(L-R) Evangeline Tsen's dedication; Baptisms of Luke & Hana Speaks, Mike & Nicole Otoguro, & Mana Tatsuki; Junko Kimura sharing the "Joys of Serving" during Volunteer Month

## CORE VALUE: CONNECT

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave His followers some final instructions before He returned to the Father. He told them to go into all the nations, make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to follow all He had commanded.

Last year our church adopted the core values of "Care, Connect, Call and Courage". This year, we are challenging our church family to live out our core value of **CONNECT**.

Connection is a deep and meaningful part of our lives. God models this for us in the trinity as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always connected to each other in community and unity. Genesis 1:27 tells us we have been made in God's image— we have been made to **CONNECT**!

Our core value is focused on "connecting people to people with the goal of connecting them to God". It's normal to keep and cultivate relationships, but we are called to do more than simply connect with others. We have been called to help people **connect with God**!

As a child, I was blessed to have parents who took me to church each Sunday. Church was fun at first, but as I grew older, there were other things I'd rather do. I got along with most of the other

kids, but our relationships didn't really go deeper than having fun together. Then one day, I was invited to go to Disneyland with someone and his friends. That day changed my life. I connected with people and they encouraged me to go to a church camp where I would accept Christ and start relationships that continue to this day. These people were friendly and accepting, but more importantly, people who loved God and wanted me to know Jesus deeper. And it all started with an invitation.

So as we focus on connecting this year, ask yourself:

- How will you **CONNECT** with others?
- How can you invite them into a relationship?
- How can you encourage them to grow in Christ?

I believe you'll be blessed as you read through this month's testimonies on **CONNECT** from **Craig Suzuki, Sam Kim, Kimmie Matsuda, & Steve Garcia**. Let them encourage you and inspire you to accept our Lord's call and live out the value of Connect!

In Christ,  
*Pastor Phil Sakanashi*

### Inside this issue:

Craig Suzuki	2
Sam Kim	2
Kimmie Matsuda	3
Steve Garcia	3
Capital Campaign Update	4

### Save the Date

**Family Promise Week**  
April 9th-16th

**Good Friday Service**  
April 14th @ 7PM

**Easter Sunday**  
April 16th @ 10AM

**Sundays**  
**Japanese Language**  
**Service**  
9:30 AM  
**Worship Service,**  
**Jr. High Sunday**  
**School,**  
**Kid's Church**  
10:00 AM

## ***Testimony shared by Craig Suzuki***



(L-R: Craig, Garrett, & Carson)

My sons (**Garrett & Carson**) and I have been attending MV since September 2016. From our very first visit through a personal invitation, we felt the warmth from the MV family.

I feel the key for me getting connected at MV was two-fold. First, I joined a Life Group. I had the opportunity to meet and fellowship with many wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible tells us how important it is for us to fellowship with one another. *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day approaching," Hebrews 10:24-25.*

Secondly, I started to serve at MV. There is a closeness that develops between people who serve together for a common purpose. Serving has also helped me feel closer to Jesus. When I stepped out of my comfort zone, I needed to put my trust and faith in Jesus. *"For we*

*are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advanced for us to do," Ephesians 2:10.*

It is amazing to see God at work and I can't help but feel closer and more in love with Him. I would encourage everyone to serve in the manner in which God has called you because you are the one who will be blessed. Finally, I feel God is leading me to serve in the Children's Ministry as well as to be a mentor.

The value of CONNECT has played an important role for my family to get closer to Jesus and for us to call Mission Valley our home.

## ***Testimony shared by Sam Kim***



(L-R: Sam & Richard Hsieh, BSF Leader)

I was born and raised in a large Christian church, but stopped attending while in college around 1999. In early 2016 God placed the desire in my heart to return to church. My friends **Takeshi and Kim Yoshino** suggested I check out **Jeff and Chiho Lowe's** church. Although I knew the Lowe's before, I did not know they attended Mission Valley. I first came in July of 2016 and God convicted me to stay.

The first three people I met were **David Chien, Mako Seto,** and **Pastor Phil Sakanashi.** Right away there was a very welcoming feeling. With the help of the Lowes I got connected to a Life Group which David, Mako and Phil are also a part of. Shortly after, I met **Andrew Quesada** who invited me to be part of **Mitz Shiozaki's** Bible study group. They were studying the book,

*Growing In Christ.* A few months later Mako and **Chet Yoshizaki** encouraged me to join their Bible Study Fellowship on Tuesdays. Truthfully I was tentative about joining two Bible studies on top of the Life Group, but I felt the Holy Spirit's nudging. I don't regret joining all of them because God has shown me so much in these last few months.

I am closer to God now more than ever which is directly related to studying the Bible and fellowshiping with other Christians. At the same time God is showing me areas where I can improve. I definitely need to read the Bible more consistently outside of my Bible studies. I also need to learn to trust in God's plan for me especially when it does not match mine. This is the most peace I have had in almost two decades and I couldn't have done it alone. For anyone who is lost like I was, I encourage you to seek God first above all and He will provide you with what you need.

I would also encourage everyone to CONNECT with others because you never know where God will lead that interaction. The Lowe's invited the Yoshinos to MV which in turn is how I ended up here. Had it not been for their initiative my story today may not be a testimony.



## *Testimony shared by Kimmie Matsuda*



(L-R: Keith, Kimmie, Kyle, Krystyna, Kaytlyn)

If you were to ask me about all the people and places in the Bible, I would have to ask you to wait while I look it up. However, I do know God blesses me every day and I feel His constant presence in my life. I try not to take Him for granted and I see His greatness in many places such as the laughter, tears, faith, and unconditional love that is shared between my husband, children, and I.

I have been attending MV for about two years. My family and I were looking for a new church and since my husband and Pastor Dave grew up at church together, we decided to visit. Due to the amazing sermons given by the pastors, the worship team's music, friendly congregation, and the connections we made, we ended up staying.

I attend Bible Study Fellowship and am part of a Life Group. As the McDonald's commercial jingle goes, 'I'm loving it!' Serving at Family Promise, Sunday School, the Welcome Desk, Connect Cafe, has been a wonderful path for connecting with others.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer several years ago, I cried because I was scared of the unknown. As soon as I prayed and told God, "I am placing this in Your hands and trusting You 100%," I felt Him carry me through. From this experience, I was able to see how powerful He really is. Today, besides my over-extended waist line, I am in good health! One's spirituality is extremely personal and everybody's walk is unique. Only God knows what His plans are for me, but I am learning to be diligent in prayer and to be faithful in placing my trust in Him.

## *Testimony shared by Steve Garcia*



(L-R: Joy, Kabocha, & Steve)

Being raised Catholic I have always been aware of God's love for me but I never really understood what it meant to walk with Jesus.

While in high school a friend invited me to go to a weekend church camp which is where I was saved. Because my father was in the military we had to move away and I left my church friends behind. Over the next 30 years I would occasionally attend church and even worked with a youth group for a while.

In 2003, **Joy** who had been a very good friend of mine invited me to dinner after Mission Valley's monthly golf outing. At the dinner I was invited to play golf the next month. I played with the group for a few months and then **May Morris** invited me to come to Mission Valley. I went to church with Joy the following Sunday. After the service I was asked to participate in the Christmas program as one of the three wise men. After accepting, I realized I now had to come to church for at least the next month until after the Christmas program.

A year and a half later, I was baptized and have been attending MV ever since, where God has blessed me beyond my wildest dreams. Joy and I grew closer and were married, we moved into a nice home with **Kabocha** our cat, and have made close friends at MV.

I enjoy serving God and allowing Him to use my spiritual gifts in various ways including serving on the A/V team, Golf Ministry, Phase One Design Committee, and attending the Men's Bible study.

I believe it was God's plan for me to come to Mission Valley where I could finally begin my walk with Jesus to share the Word with others and bring them closer to Christ so they may experience God's love the way I have.

**Time Sensitive Material**

## ***CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE by Monica Yoshinaga, Chair***



(Concepts for Mission City Kids)

We are three months into Phase 2 of "The Master's Plan - Bridging the Generations" capital campaign and the Lord has blessed Mission Valley through your prayerful and generous support of the church remodel. Our dream for Phase 2 is to raise funds to create a cleaner, safer, positive and exciting environment for the children to experience

God's joy, for current and future generations.

The Design Committee will be meeting with the architects to solidify the plans for the children's area remodel and Pastor Dave hopes to have the baptistery in place soon!

The English and Nichigo congregations have generously pledged \$223,785 through 2019 for Phase 2. The current campaign balance is \$442,471. Pledge cards are available in the church office and narthex if you have not had a chance to make your commitment yet. We are striving for 100% participation, through your prayers and giving. No gift is too small!

We continue to experience God transforming lives at Mission Valley. During this Lenten season as we prepare for Easter, we encourage you to share your personal story with us and let us know what an impact the church campus and worship center remodel has meant to you.

*"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:19*