



GARDENA VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Reunited And It Feels So Good

BY BRAD TOY

It is hard to believe that the last time the College Ministry met in-person for our large group worship service was March 15, 2020. Like other ministries in the church, the College Ministry has spent the last 14 months meeting every Sunday evening online via Zoom. We are so thankful to the Lord that we were able to safely and consistently unite our hearts together in worship, fellowship, intake of the Word, and prayer through an online platform. I believe that God has used the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic to bring about unique ministry and evangelistic opportunities.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 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

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Because the College Ministry met online, we were able to provide a community for students living outside of the area and in some cases outside of the state. Some students, who otherwise would not have stepped foot inside a church, were introduced to the gospel by comfortably joining our Zoom meetings in a non-threatening environment. Students began serving the College ministry by providing critically important technical and audio/video support for our ZOOM meetings. Their faithfulness resulted in a greater capacity to serve and support the church's Sunday Morning online services. Although the events of this past year have not been favorable from a human standpoint, we saw that there were always opportunities to rejoice and to be thankful to God (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

On Sunday, May 16 we will **resume** in-person meetings for the College Ministry. We have the challenge of providing a service on-site while **simultaneously** providing a live online option for those students with health concerns and for those who reside out of the local area. For the students who are able to meet in-person, we need to answer the important question, "**Why should I?**" Why should we resume meeting in-person for any type of church service or ministry when there are tons of online options and when participating over Zoom from home is more convenient and comfortable? Why meet in-person, when we can stay home and meet online? In **Hebrews 10:24-25**, we see that the "meeting together" is the main vehicle that God designed for the church "to spur one another on toward love and good deeds," and the primary way in which we "encourage one another all the more as we see the Day (Christ's return) approaching." But why can't we do this **online**?

We recognize that there was no such thing as an online option in Biblical times, but we do see throughout scripture that there are **many blessings** that come along with meeting in person:

- **Blessings** that come along with singing praise alongside other believers (Colossians 3:15-16)
- **Restoration** that comes along with physical anointing, laying on of hands and praying for each other (James 5:13-16)
- The direct exercising and **development** of our spiritual gifts (Romans 12:4-8)
- Blessings that come along with physical expressions of **fellowship** (2 Corinthians 13:12)
- **Encouragement** and building up of the body through the united hearing of God's Word and fellowship (Acts 2:42)
- **Benefits** from the truest expression of loving deeds toward one another (1 John 3:18)

This list is by no means **exhaustive**, but we believe that Scripture is clear on the spiritual benefits of **meeting physically** in-person. Though we are excited to resume meeting in-person and to enjoy the fellowship that we experienced over a year ago, we do realize that it will be a **gradual process** to "getting back to normal." We realize that there are still safety and health concerns that loom over the world. We desire to serve both those who are **able and unable** to meet in-person. So we covet the prayers of the entire GVBC church family as we begin the road to experiencing fellowship that God designed for the body of Christ. Yes! We've reopened and we'd love to worship with you live!

Brad Toy
College Director



Missions Conference

BY BOB MATSUSHIMA

For God So Loved the World - GVBC Missions Zoom Seminar - April 23, 2021

This special Missions seminar highlighted our partnership with these missionaries and their strategies for spreading the gospel. GVBC has sent teams for the past several years.

56 zoom screens participated with:

- **Phillip and Corene Smith**, Hope Unlimited, Brazil (video)
- **Pastor Makito Matsuda** of Oasis Chapel of Rifu, Japan
- **Mike and Becky Mann**, ABC missionaries to Thailand

The Smiths sent a heartfelt message from Hope Unlimited as they endeavor to rescue at-risk youth in Brazil who would otherwise perish in their bleak and dire situation.



Makito-sensei explained the "Mt Fuji" approach of evangelism and discipleship in Japan. It is a slow maturing process of evangelism unlike the Western approach which emphasizes speedy conversions to Christ. Japanese Christians must share their faith in a culturally sensitive way that often takes time and perseverance. To build genuine life-on-life relationships with their neighbors is an essential part of making disciples.



The Manns shared about their work with the Thailand Lahu Baptist churches and the Karen Baptist churches. They serve as a resource in agriculture, health, education, and water. Mike Mann told his story of studying agriculture in college to use this knowledge in Thailand. He had to switch gears to learn the nuts and bolts of engineering water projects for the ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Foundation). Over 300 water projects have since been completed for rural villages in Thailand.



As some members of GVBC stated:

"I loved the aspects of our congregation learning more about missions, and that we can also deepen relationships with our partners and encourage/pray for them."

"It was a special opportunity to talk candidly with Becky and Mike and hear them connect with our church members who had gone to Thailand."

In all, it was a special and well spent time!

Sanctuary Renovation Update

BY JULIE FONG

Sanctuary Renovations Complete!

It is finished! One of the blessings that came out of our global pandemic is the work we were able to complete updating our Sanctuary. In the season where we couldn't meet in the building, we've been getting some **renovations** out of the way. We've done our best to steward this opportunity, so we would be ready when everyone returned! Praise God for his sovereignty in allowing us the **freedom and flexibility** to work on it while in person meetings were suspended.

Some of the work that was done is quickly seen upon walking into the Sanctuary, like the **new paint, carpet, light fixtures, and chairs**. Big thanks to **Sue Brown, Faith Ishibashi, and Will Kwan** for the time and energy they gave for this project! Each of these elements were thoughtfully considered and chosen by this team. They spent **countless hours** considering design options, looking over details, and making sure everything got done.



Some of the work done is not as easily noticed upon first glance. There are **new projectors, acoustic paneling, and Audio/Visual equipment** that were also put in during this time! These less obvious upgrades will bring **clearer pictures and sound**, causing **less distractions** and allowing **greater focus** to be put on worshipping the Lord.

While we are excited about these updates, we know that the Sanctuary is just a **resource** that God has given us. I pray that we would use it to the fullest, to know and glorify Him more. We are so blessed to be able to have a building to meet and worship in! Now that these renovations are done, we are **ready** and excited to have **everyone** back in the building worshipping the Lord together!



Going Local: Changing OLC

BY PASTOR JAMES CHANG

This year, GVBC will be shifting our focus from reaching out to children **globally** with Operation Christmas Child to reaching out to children **locally** at an elementary school here in Gardena.

Our global outreach arm will continue on primarily through our Advent Conspiracy projects in Japan, Brazil, and Thailand. These have well positioned our church for long-term and accountable missionary work across the world. However, we have become aware of the need to apply the same mission strategy locally across the street.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus commissions his disciples with a strategic way to spread the gospel, which is the geographical outline for all the book of Acts:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

In other words, the gospel starts with our **neighbors**. Then, the same power that brings the peace of God to our neighbors will become a **testimony** of the power that changes the world.



GVBC, say hello to: **Gardena Chapman Elementary School**



Pastor James Chang & Chapman Principal Sheronda Dowdell

Just a **5 minute drive** from church. Down Western. Left on Marine. The student population is racially diverse, and, as a Title 1 school, 75% of the students receive free/reduced lunches. This early August, our goal will be to help provide every Chapman student a new school backpack filled with needed supplies: pencil box, crayons, markers, colored pencils, and glue sticks. 420 backpacks. 420 students. 420 families. 420 neighbors.

It is important to understand that, working locally with a school, we may not be as explicit... as we may want to be. It is often more effective to show the love of Christ through **actions** before saying anything. This is really just the first step in a **growing** long-term relationship between a local church and a local school—our opportunity to touch the lives of over **400 families** in our city with the love of Jesus Christ.

Stay tuned as we will provide more details on how to participate in this local mission project!



VBS INFORMATION

BY SUSAN WAKUTA, CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

Adventure Island Vacation Bible School, July 12-16, 2021 (SAVE THE DATE)

We invite children, preschool to 5th grade, to embark on an exciting quest at "Adventure Island Vacation Bible School." The children will discover how God's great light shines in the world; and how they can reflect His light in their own lives.

This year, there will be in person VBS at church from Monday, July 12th through Friday, July 16th at 10am-12pm. For those children watching online, we will live stream the morning sessions and have a link to view the rest of VBS on our GVBC KIDS Youtube channel.

Online registration begins on May 30th to June 27th on our GVBC website. Like last year, the children will receive a packet containing items for VBS week. Enrollment is limited, so please register your child(ren) early.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Wakuta at susan@gvbc.net. We look forward to having your child(ren) join us. This is another year of doing VBS quite differently; but we trust God and anticipate the amazing things He will do.

Family News

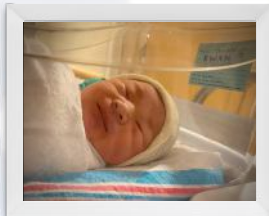
Flowers

Donations and Flowers given in honor or loving memory:

From:	To:
Masao & Peggy Kushigemachi	Dave Yogi Building Fund
Mark & Noreen Ito	Dave Yogi
Tokiko Kawanami	Nellie Ishibashi
Kimiko Yogi	Dave Yogi Building Fund
Katherine Higuchi	Dave Yogi Building Fund
Carolyn Higuchi	Dave Yogi Building Fund
Amy Kato	Fumiko Kitagawa

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

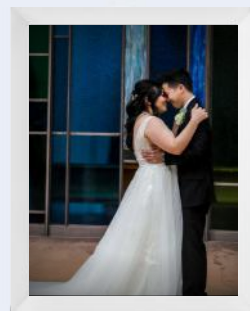
New Baby



Parents: Will & Trisha Kwan
Born Monday, 5/3/21@
12:36pm
6lb. 10 oz. 19.5 in. long
Avery James Eiichi Kwan

Congratulations

Congratulations to **Jayson and Julie (née Shirota) Fong!** They were married at GVBC on April 24th. Pastor Daniel officiated the ceremony.



Letters

Thank you so very much for the gifts to GVBC, it is such an honor and fitting tribute to my mother. Her countless years of volunteering at GVBC as a pre-school assistant beginning in 1974, years of working in the office, and assisting in wedding coordination at the church were some of her fondest memories.

Greg, Chai, and Travis

Dear GVBC family,
Thank you for the beautiful flowers. Also, thank you for your kind and thoughtful expression of sympathy. We are comforted by the many wonderful memories we have of our loving dad. We know he is happy to be reunited with our mom in Heaven.

In appreciation,

Linda, Brian, Sharon, Todd and Families
Herb Kawai March 11-1932 – March 15, 2021

Dear GVBC,

Thank you for the beautiful flowers in honor of Dave. It really was so thoughtful and brightened our home.

Love,

Kimiko, Linda, Mike & Lora Yogi

Condolences

Our deepest sympathies to Teresa Louie and family on the passing of her father, **Peter Ahn.**

Our condolences to the family of **Chieko Kitaoka**, who passed away on May 6th.

Services

Online English
Online Nihongo
In-person English

10:00 AM @ www.gvbc.net/bulletin
10:45 AM @ www.gvbc.net/jp
Register @ www.gvbc.net/inperson

The Latest

GVBC Women's Event: Asking God 5/22 @ 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Important Links

Youtube
After Service Fellowship
GVBC App

www.bit.ly/GVBCyoutube
www.bit.ly/GVBCfellowship
www.bit.ly/GVBCapp



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