



## GARDENA VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

# Giving Thanks To God Who Is Sovereign

BY SUSAN WAKUTA

Happy Thanksgiving! Among God's characteristics such as loving, perfect, and holy, He is sovereign. Sovereign means possessing supreme or ultimate power. This was evident by God's power over the **Harvest Festival** on October 31st which was in person. I may have had multiple ideas of how things looked like or what I would like to see happen; but in the end, it was God and the collaboration of a great core team who made this Harvest Festival possible. While the venue was smaller and limited to the church's Denker parking lot, it was still full of joy and fun for the children who came out that evening. **We greeted 752 family members and 372 were children; 326 of them were not from our church.**

Praise God for an event that simply focused on loving our community. We passed out an exit bag which contained among other things, an autumn craft, an activity book, and a KIDS CHURCH ministry card to connect the children with our church. It was a blessing to see **two new children** come to KidZone and **one child** who came to KIDS CHURCH on the following Sunday.

## Jeremiah 32:17

"Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

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Thank you so much for your generous candy donations. Families were amazed that their child received almost a  $\frac{3}{4}$  **gallon of candy**. The children also received a toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss graciously donated by **Dr. Stephen Hiroshige, Dr. Barry Kadowaki, and Dr. Anne Yamane**. This helped justify the amount of candy that was handed out. (Not really)



The Harvest Festival could not be possible without the **over 70 volunteers** whom God provided. Thank you to **Guest Relations** who kept the parking lot and surrounding areas safe. A new factor was the crosswalk between the church and the Denker parking lot. Praise God for His **protection over everyone**. There were volunteers who made candy and exit bags, executed logistics, built the erector sets, prepared and ran the booths, managed registration, helped with clean-up, and even fed us. We also had awesome performers for our Harvest Festival theme, "Return to Adventure Island," which was our recent Vacation Bible School theme. We were blessed to have the **Beacon Beats, Hula Ministry, and our MC, Ranger Christian**. I am truly grateful for the spirit of unity and love this church has to love God and love people. We are called to be His light in this dark world.

Also, something really cool was the **Mayor of Gardena, Tasha Cerda** donated a Harvest Festival sign for that evening, and it became a great photo op for families since we didn't have a photo booth this year. This reflects the wonderful **relationship** our church has with the City.

Overall, I witnessed God's sovereignty throughout the Harvest Festival. As I thought of all the different elements for this event, I realized how **peaceful** I felt knowing that His Spirit was present and that God was in **control**. How **comforting and wonderful** to know that we can trust a sovereign God who always knows what is best for us. He is worthy of our praise and thanksgiving!

God Bless You~

Susan Wakuta, KIDS CHURCH Elementary Director









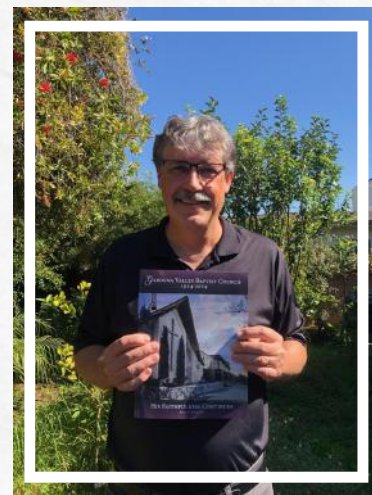
# GVBC History Book

BY DAVID CHENG

After many years, the **GVBC 100th Anniversary History Book** has finally been released. We caught up with the author, **Adam Marshall**, to talk about the journey to publication.

**How did you get involved in writing the history of GVBC?**

*I finished a master's degree in history at Pepperdine in July of 2010. In 2012 I was recruited by David Cheng, Chairman of the GVBC History Committee, to write the history book for the 100th Anniversary celebration (August 16th, 2014).*



**What sources did you use as part of your research and why?**

*I began by circulating a history of Bode, California that I owned among the History Committee. That was my model for this book. I also read a fair amount about Japanese American History in general, and specifically about the Evacuation during World War II. I then focused on Southern California and specifically the South Bay and Gardena. **GVBC does not have an extensive collection of documents** about the church's history because they were **lost during the Evacuation**. Most of the paper trail came from ABCOFLASH (ABCLA) files. I spent a couple of days **scanning documents**: letters between GVBC and the Baptist leadership in LA, church bulletins, memos, etc. I also interviewed and recorded around **35 church members** and used their memories to build the narrative.*

**As you conducted your research, what did you discover about the church that was most surprising?**

*The founding pastors of GVBC (Issei) stood out for making **deep sacrifices and persevering through hardship**. The newspapers of their day did not champion Japanese immigrants and **identified them as a threat** to white farmers, among other things.*

*The **ten families** who guaranteed the church's loan with their **own property** during the 1960s also stood out as examples of great faith.*

**Did researching and writing about the history of GVBC strengthen your faith in any way?**

*The **personal interviews** connected me most with the faith of GVBC'ers. I didn't know many of them well before talking to them, but I got to know them better as we spoke. **The Evacuation** shattered a lot of lives: some lost every penny they had, and some lost businesses or were unable to finish college degrees. People decided afterward about how to pick up the pieces and **start over**. We can't control our circumstances, but we do **make choices** about what to do with negative experiences.*

The GVBC 100th Anniversary History book will be available for purchase in the Courtyard after church service on selected dates in November and December. Adam Marshall will be signing copies at that time. It will also be available for pickup at the church office or by mail order.

Contact the church office for more information.





# Missions Report

BY BOB MATSUSHIMA



Tom and Val Demarest

## Citylights, Long Beach

This has obviously been a difficult time for all, but I want to share a quick story of how God is still at work despite our **limitations**. As a pastor, I have been feeling a little disappointed about how it seemed our opportunities to do ministry have been very limited.

With online services, we are **unable to minister** in the same ways as before, and our in-person services have been moved outside - which I figure would be far from ideal considering how unpredictable our neighborhood can be (that is the nice way of putting it). But I have been amazed how God has been using the **outside service** to draw people! Quite often we have people walking by, stop and sit down and participate in the service.

One couple, stopped as they walked their dog, and so enjoyed the service that they **came back again the next week** and have been regulars now for the past few months. Just this past Sunday, she stood up in service and **gave testimony** through tears about how God had really been using this in her life - about how she had been going through a time of extreme emotional distress and God really met her through these service times and how He has proved to be **her very real strength and her shield**. She has since begun coming to our weekly bible study.

This brought out the truth to me which I needed to be reminded of: when we are feeling limited, our God is completely **UNLIMITED** in what He can do! Thank you so much for your continued support of Citylights Church! Our mighty God is still at work, changing lives and drawing people to Himself.

## October & November Board Updates

BY REX HAYASHI

At the October Board meeting, the Board decided that for better **transparency and communication**, the summary news of the monthly board meetings should be shared with the congregation; and the Spirit was the first choice. **Expect monthly submissions from the Board from now on.** Perry (Moderator) reviewed the following submission.



### *October Board Meetings News:*

- *The Board approved the membership applications for 4 new members.*
- *The Board received a letter of resignation from a Board member.*
- *After contacting the L.A. District Counsel of the Small Business Administration (SBA), it was determined that there are no viable means to contribute to the PPP loan, and it is only by acts of Congress that appropriations can be made.*
- *The Board discussed and approved the 2022 published budget.*
- *Guest Relations submitted an application and was awarded a federal grant to upgrade our church's security, which would pertain to specific facility security upgrades.*
- *Per our constitution, the Board reviewed and approved the Moderator, and the 3 designated representatives for the Pastoral Relations Committee, Personnel Committee, and Board of Deacons/Nihongo Ministry to the Pastoral Search Committee; and recommended 3 at-large members for congregational approval.*

### *November Board Meetings News:*

- *Finances: January to October 2021 donations were about the same as donations in the same period in 2020. As of 9/30/21, we have a \$218K surplus for 2021 which includes the \$170K PPP grant.*
- *The Board agreed with the Women's Ministry to discontinue any tax-deduction for any Women's Ministry scholarship because of more than adequate funding. Likewise, the two existing Women's Ministry scholarships will be combined into the Women's Ministry Scholarship.*
- *The Board approved distribution and selling of the GVBC 100-year history book for \$10 each.*
- *We chose a realtor to represent our church to help us deal with our parking mitigations.*
- *The Board voted to revise the published 2022 budget to accommodate the demand for hybrid services.*





# Family News



## Letters



The Gardena Emergency Food Pantry would like to THANK YOU for your generous donation. For over 40 years, the Food Pantry has been able to extend a helping hand to individuals & families in our community with food, bus tokens, case management and homeless services. Our resources have been impacted due to COVID-19 but your donation allows us to continue to serve our Gardena residents. We appreciate your support, together we will overcome and continue our mission to assist our community.

With gratitude,  
**Team Gardena**

Thank you GVBC for your generosity, love, and care for us. We greatly appreciated all of your notes, gifts, and prayers throughout Pastoral Appreciation Month!

**Your Pastoral Staff**

## New Baby



Parents: Darryl & Elizabeth Tatum  
Born October 22nd, 2021  
6lb. 11oz. 19.5 in.  
long  
**Andie Bear Tatum**



## Condolences



Our sincere condolences to the families who have lost loved ones:

- Russell Nagata on the passing of his mother, **Rose Nagata**. She passed away on October 12th, and her service was on October 26th at Rose Hills
- Nelson & Janet Shirota and family, on the passing of Janet's mother, **Nobuko Ishibashi**. She passed away on October 18th.





# Services

Online English  
Online Nihongo  
In-person English

10:00 AM @ [www.gvbc.net/bulletin](http://www.gvbc.net/bulletin)  
10:00 AM @ [www.gvbc.net/jp](http://www.gvbc.net/jp)  
10:00 AM @ [www.gvbc.net/inperson](http://www.gvbc.net/inperson)

# The Latest

Fall Family Game Night  
Thanksgiving Service  
Christmas Set-Up and Work Day  
All Church Christmas Dinner

11/20 @ 4:00 PM  
11/21 @ 10:00 AM  
11/28  
12/12 @ 5:00 PM

# Important Links

Youtube  
After Service Fellowship  
GVBC App

[www.bit.ly/GVBCyoutube](http://www.bit.ly/GVBCyoutube)  
[www.bit.ly/GVBCfellowship](http://www.bit.ly/GVBCfellowship)  
[www.bit.ly/GVBCapp](http://www.bit.ly/GVBCapp)



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