



MĀNOA VALLEY
CHURCH

Mānoa Connection

Connecting our 'ohana

e-Newsletter

Date: August 12, 2020

● Pastor's Message

Dear Mānoa Valley Church Family,



In the midst of these challenging times, my hope and prayer for you is that you have been able to find times of joy and thanksgiving throughout your week. Have you had the opportunity to join MVC's online worship service via Zoom?

For Soo, me, and our boys, one of the highlights of these online services has been seeing all of the faces of the people from our church family and having the opportunity to connect with people during the Zoom Greeting time before the worship service. As I watched all of your smiling faces and listened to people share about what is happening in their lives, I was reminded how God created us to be in relationships and how difficult it has been for all of us to live out this call during the COVID-19 pandemic.

—STAYING—
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As we live through this pandemic, we learn the importance of staying close to our family and loved ones. Their love and support help to keep us strong during these trying and unpredictable times.

During this season, I want you to find safe and appropriate ways to regularly connect with others. Some ways you could do this include taking the time to write a letter or make a call—simply for the sake of checking in and connecting with that person. In the upcoming weeks, we also hope to start small groups via Zoom where people can gather in smaller groups to connect with others and also intentionally grow as disciples of Christ through biblically based studies and discussions. You may be aware that there is already one opportunity to do this through the biweekly prayer meetings on Mondays. If you are interested in joining an online group, or if you would be interested in facilitating a group, could you contact me to explore this further?

I am aware that connecting through technology like video calls isn't always our preferred option, but as we take steps of faith to find creative ways to live in community, I trust the LORD will meet us in those places and not only bless us but also allow us the privilege of being a blessing to others. And if you can't find anyone to connect with, please call me! I would be glad to visit with you (though virtually, for the time being)!

As you encounter God this week, may He immerse you in and with His life and Spirit!

In Christ,
Pastor Abe

● Moderator's Message

God is good! God is great!



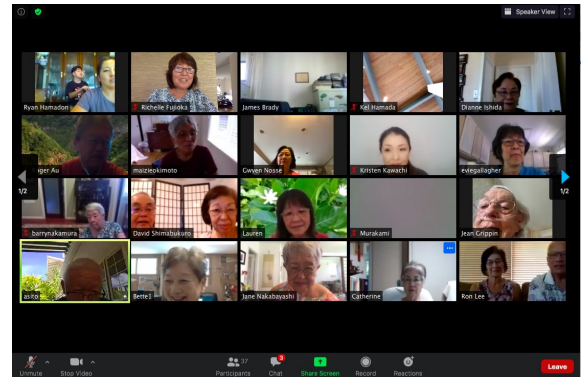
As I look back over the last few weeks, I realize how blessed we have been--as a church to have **Pastor Abe** and his family as part of our Ohana and, as a state, to have been spared from the destruction of Hurricane Douglas. Often when we are faced with dilemmas, opportunities arise that call for creative solutions. I have seen the initiative and resilience of our church leaders, staff, and members...and it has been inspiring! As a church, we have been through a lot of transitions and I believe we have emerged stronger in the process. Even though we are going through a pandemic, as a church, we now have a new called pastor. For me this has been a new experience and a welcomed one.

I pray for Pastor Abe's patience as I, as moderator and we, as a church, transition into this new normal of having a full-time pastor on board. He has taken the lead in proposing the "hybrid" worship service format which we tried this past Sunday. It was amazing to see and interact with everyone on Zoom! While our committees continue to meet, Pastor Abe has provided guidance and a new perspective. Our prayer group continues to meet and I urge you to join us! If you enjoy reading, join our MVC Book Club, which meets on Zoom on the last Sunday of each month. On August 30 our group will discuss *A New Song* by Jan Karon. We have lively, informative discussions, so please consider joining us. Contact me at dianne.ishida@gmail.com for more information.

Please remain safe and healthy while continuing to live as God would want us to live. I pray that you and your families are well. The Church Office is open for messages and Pastor Abe is also available. Please email us at office@manoavalleychurch.org or call 988-3271 if there are needs that we can help you with!

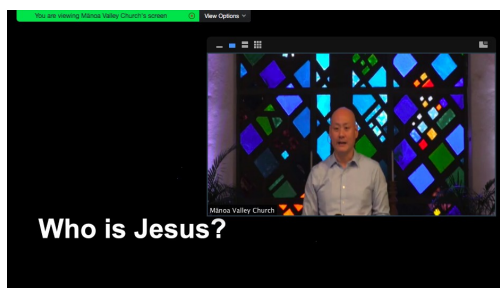
To God Alone be the glory!

Dianne



These are head shots of some of the people we "met" on Zoom before the worship service.

● Worshipping God During the Pandemic



COVID-19 has brought significant changes to our worship experience. Since March when the Church closed, we have conducted our worship every Sunday via a pre-recorded video service. On August 2, 43 technology savvy users from our Church family "came to worship" on Zoom, many with other members in their household who joined them for the service. We had a chance to greet people that we had not seen since March when the Church closed its doors to comply with shelter at home orders. It was wonderful to see people like **Jean Grippen**, **Lillian Nakamura**, **Jane Nakabayashi**, and many others.

We were even able to exchange our greetings and chat with our members and friends on Zoom. After our greeting time, the live worship service began at 10am. This format will continue for at least a few more weeks until we can safely transition to a live worship service at our MVC sanctuary. Each week the Worship Committee will work to improve the online worship experience as we move into our in-person worship service at the sanctuary.

To help us navigate through the changing worship format, the Worship Committee will send out instructions regarding how to use the different features on the computer screen. If you have any questions regarding the Zoom worship format or need help with the computer requirements, contact office@manoavalleychurch.org and someone will assist you. If you cannot participate in the Zoom worship service on Sunday, you can view a recording of the worship service on our website (manoavalleychurch.org) later that day. We want to thank the Worship Committee and others who provide the guidelines and technical assistance on how to use Zoom.

When our live, in-person worship service begins, members and friends will be invited to attend a particular service to control the attendance in accordance with social distancing requirements. Stay tuned for more information regarding this in the next few weeks. As we work out this “new normal” of worshipping God, let’s remember that things may change around us but God remains constant and faithful to us. The Scripture declares in Psalm 136:26: *Give thanks to the God of heaven, for His steadfast love endures forever.*

● Let’s Give a Shout-out to Our Video Worship Team!



Since March 29, the Worship Leaders, Children’s Moments presenters and Scripture Readers have faithfully completed their home-recorded videos for Chair **Ruth Komatsu** who compiles them into our weekly worship videos. As we move to livestreaming our services, some leaders will continue to participate via pre-recorded video while others will present live from the MVC sanctuary. Every week’s service will be refreshingly different so keep watching! The praise songs, however, will continue to be pre-recorded as singing live in church is a high-risk activity that could further spread the virus. We do miss live singing but we can still worship God through our music. The virus has pushed us to be creative in how we worship!

● MVC Kicks off New Building Fund for Future Needs

Over the last ten years, Mānoa Valley Church conducted two Capital Campaign pledge drives to finance the renovation of the Hiro Higuchi Christian Life Center and do major repairs. Through your donations and the grants we received, we were able to retire our mortgage and be debt free. That is an amazing feat and we are grateful for your support.

At the Annual Congregational Meeting held in February 2020, the members approved a Reserve Study that laid out a 30-year maintenance plan. The care of our facilities is an ongoing process which will enable us to minister to our members and the wider community. During the next five years we will focus on the following major projects:

- Sanctuary: Repair and refinish the pews, paint the interior, replace the carpet, upgrade the lighting.
- Parking lot: Repair and sealcoat the lot to ensure the safety of our church family and participants.
- Photovoltaic (PV) system: Purchase of the system will significantly reduce our monthly energy bill.
- Church kitchen: Renovate the kitchen and replace appliances, many of which are over 25 years old.
- Church cottage: Paint and repair the cottage which is now 42 years old.

In order to accomplish this, we have started a five-year Building Fund pledge drive. You recently received a pledge card in the mail regarding this. Please consider how you can support the church in keeping our facilities in optimal condition. Your partnership is vital to maintain our beloved Manoa Valley Church. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:14 that *the body does not consist of one member but of many*. Acting together as the Body of Christ, we can accomplish great things. Join all of us in this Building Fund Campaign!



The church cottage will be painted and repaired.

● When Will Students Return to School?

As this issue of MVC’s newsletter goes to press, school is foremost on our minds. Oahu’s public and private schools originally planned to start in August with in-person classes, but the recent upsurge in coronavirus cases led them to opt for distance learning, at least for the time being. Throughout this period of uncertainty our youth told us how they felt about returning to the classroom.



Jamie Seu was upbeat, saying, “Overall I am looking forward to going back to school! It’s been a little hard not being able to see my friends and classmates for months, and I’m excited to see what has changed when we go back.” She acknowledged, however, that socializing wouldn’t be easy, given the structure her school imposed upon the students.

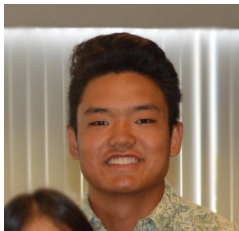
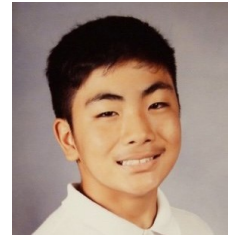
Logan Uechi echoed Jamie's sentiments: "I am looking forward to returning to school because I haven't seen a majority of my classmates since spring break. However, campus and socializing will look a lot different with all the safety measures in place." When she heard of the revised plans, she showed flexibility and optimism, saying, "I'm disappointed that I won't be able to see my friends and play sports, but at least I will have company with my mom working from home and brother, Jason, who will be attending Santa Clara University from home as well. Still, I look forward to going back, driving to school, and decorating my face shield."



Mateo Browning acknowledged that returning to school would help, because during the stay-at-home months he did not learn as much, despite his improvement in making better use of his time. He also mentioned that on the downside, school brings stress. His younger brother **Gio** was also eager to go back because, "I learn things and it's interesting." He ruefully admitted though, that at school he wouldn't have the freedom he had at home to choose his activities like playing video games.



There were some who didn't prefer on-campus instruction. **Ama Browning** candidly told us, "I enjoy staying at home." **Jake Hamadon** was also reluctant to go back to school, but for a different reason. Jake explained: "I wish that we don't go to school *now* since we really have no way to combat COVID-19. In the future when we do develop a vaccine or a possible cure for this virus, I think we should go back to school. Then when the vaccine is mandated and we are required to go to school, we can let out a sigh of relief and be safe to go to school. I do want to see my friends and meet new classmates, but just not right now."



At the college level, **Carter Uechi** felt confident about the arrangements his school has made, stating, "I am looking forward to returning to the classroom because I have an easier time learning when I'm taught in-person. At my school (Marist College in New York), we are going to have a hybrid system which features one class meeting a week in-person and the rest online in order to keep the class size small."

Whatever form their learning takes, we hope for a good school year ahead for our MVC youth. We commend them for adapting to these difficult circumstances!

