



MĀNOA VALLEY  
CHURCH

# Mānoa Connection

*Connecting our 'ohana*

e-Newsletter

Date: May 5, 2021

Dear Mānoa Valley Church Family,



I hope you are well and that you are having a good start to the month of May. As many of you know, 2021 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mānoa Valley Church. And though we are in the midst of many challenges, particularly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded that there are still so many reasons for us to celebrate and be thankful.

Please stay tuned for more news about upcoming events that will provide specific ways that we will recognize this milestone year in the life of our community.

Another exciting bit of news is that a team of people, led by **David Park**, are in the process of creating a new website for our church. This will be an opportunity to build on the good work that has already been done in this area by **Roy Miyahira**, **Jim Yuen**, the faithful members of our Communication Committee, and many other devoted volunteers.



Links

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As we have been preparing for the two items mentioned above (the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the church and our new website), we have recognized the need to have a “bank” of good and creative photographs from the life of our community.



As a fun way to come together as a community to fill this need and share our talents, we will be hosting a photography project to help us collect a library of photographs captured by our own people to use in our print and online materials. We hope that this will be an opportunity to take a moment to share our perspective and also observe what is happening around us in our church, our community, our city, and beyond.

Everyone is welcome to submit photos for this project, regardless of age, experience, or church membership. Submissions can be old or new photos as long as you took them. You may submit photos under any of the following four themes:

- Hope
- 'Ohana/Community
- History
- Open/Miscellaneous

The final deadline for submissions will be June 13, 2021, after which we hope to have a virtual event where we will recognize the work of those who participated in this project.

Photographs are to be submitted online to a private group. Please send an email to [office@manoavalleychurch.org](mailto:office@manoavalleychurch.org) to request to be added to the online group. After receiving your request, the office will send an email with a link to join the group and directions on how to upload your photos. This email will also contain a submission form and release form which you'll be asked to fill out and also submit.

If you have any questions, please contact us by email at [office@manoavalleychurch.org](mailto:office@manoavalleychurch.org) or by phone at (808) 988-3271. We look forward to seeing Mānoa Valley Church through your eyes!

In Christ,

Pastor Abe

## ● Christian Ed Committee Reaches Out to Students: Reconnecting With Jesus at Easter

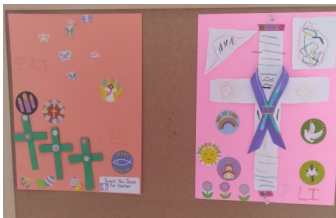
By Maizie Okimoto

When the COVID pandemic closed Mānoa Valley Church facilities in March 2020, Sunday School classes stopped. However, previously our enrollment for SS had dropped from 25 to about five students. On some Sundays our six faithful teachers and helpers outnumbered the students!

Despite these setbacks, the Christian Education Committee (CEC) was determined to stay connected with their Sunday School students. If they could not meet at Sunday School classes or Vacation Bible School, hold Easter Egg hunts and other fun in-person activities, at least they could stay in touch through the mail. The CEC met via Zoom on February 14, 2021 to plan how to reconnect with the Sunday School students and their families. Veteran members **Joanne Funasaki, Maizie Okimoto, Dot Endo, and Carolyn Okinaga** met with new members **Dawn Hamada and Ron Lee**. **Pastor Han** joined the meeting, while **Edna Kano** was unable to attend.

Among the decisions made at the meeting were the following:

- Mail letters to the students and their families from both the 2019 and 2020 school years.
- Create a craft packet to celebrate the Lent/Easter season for the elementary-aged students.



Creating the packet was more easily said than done, especially at a Zoom meeting! But the project moved along from the rough sketch of an Easter poster to the completed kit mailed to the students. It was evident that the committee was supported by the Holy Spirit: technical know-how, purchasing, mailing, communication expertise and hard work seemed to all come together, almost seamlessly.

The children apparently enjoyed the Easter project. After Easter, we received several unsolicited compliments:

- Eli and Zeke sent in photos of themselves happily working on their posters.
- Olivia and Hiro sent in beautiful thank you notes.
- A proud parent expressed delight that her preschooler had joined an older brother to make the paper palm crosses. (The Youth did not participate in the Easter posters but they made all the palm crosses that were sent with the Easter letter to MVC members.)

During Holy Week, Pastor Han sent out an Easter message to the Sunday School staff, students, and their families. Along with the message, he sent two links---one video for the little ones and another for the older students to help them better understand the Easter Story.



Every Easter, Christ continues to gather us at the cross. We are reconnected to the gift of forgiveness of sins and eternal life He freely gives us all. And as we reconcile with Him we learn to share with others His story of Love. The Christian Education Committee surely did just that with their creative and meaningful Easter projects for the children and youth.

## ● MVC Community Shows Environmental Awareness By Richelle Fujioka

Each year since 1970, April 22 is recognized as Earth Day with environmentally-conscious celebrations, speeches, and activities. This year, at a virtual meeting with world leaders, President Biden pledged a 50% decrease in U.S. carbon emissions by 2030. Here in Hawaii, two [“planet-healing, aquatic events”](#) dealing with restoring the Ala Wai Canal and *honu* population were featured in the *Star Advertiser*. Support for this cause is evident at Mānoa Valley Church, a community that cares about the earth.

On a broad scale, we are doing our part to decrease carbon emissions. Our Trustees had photovoltaic panels installed on the gym roof to harness the sun's rays for electricity, instead of relying upon fossil fuels, which pollute the environment and are non-renewable resources. The pandemic also brought about eco-friendly behavior by switching us to virtual modes of communication. Instead of driving to meetings or church, we turned to our computers for committee meetings and Sunday worship on Zoom. By receiving this newsletter through email and reading it on your computer, you are helping reduce the consumption of paper. Besides lessening our carbon footprint, there are cost savings from not using paper, ink, printing presses, postage, and the postal service for delivery. Some people prefer hard copies, but they should understand that this adjustment will benefit their grandchildren and future generations. As Senator Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day, said: “The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.”

Speaking of future generations, the lessons of Earth Day are not lost on the youngest members of the MVC community, as the preschool children celebrated Earth Day by first gathering its products and then creating an artistic collage. (See pictures below.)



The big question remains, what can **you** do to maintain our precious resources and contribute to the stability of our planet? **Karina Park-Okuna** is currently collecting bottles, cans, and plastic bottles as part of a recycling project and using the proceeds to benefit outreach programs for the homeless. Several members such as **Heather Flewelling**, **Sue Yamamoto**, and **David Park** can be seen bicycling rather than driving, thus lessening fuel consumption and air pollution. Are any of you engaged in eco-friendly practices? Let us know and we will publicize your efforts!

## ● Spring Chicken Sale Cancelled

The annual Spring Chicken Sale scheduled for May 8 has been cancelled. State Poultry is unable to guarantee that they can supply the number of chicken we will need. Their mainland supplier is experiencing a labor shortage and is unable to process enough chicken.



We appreciate all those who already mailed in their payments or donations. We are working through the refund process. If you have any questions, email **Catherine Miyahira** at [cymiyahira@gmail.com](mailto:cymiyahira@gmail.com).

Remember to discard your tickets and notify anyone to whom you gave tickets. Hopefully we will be able to hold this fundraiser in the future.



## ● A Lei is a Special Gift

Many people in Hawaii recognize May 1<sup>st</sup> as Lei Day or May Day, when schools and entertainment venues have festive programs featuring Hawaiian songs, hula, and a royal court. One highlight is the popular [lei contest](#) held at Kapiolani Park, which this year, had to go virtual.



Mānoa Valley Church has our own official lei-maker, **Shirley Murakami**. Her artistic creations have adorned the shoulders of our pastors, helpers, and guests. A person is blessed to receive a lei from Shirley as it consists of the products of her carefully-tended gardens and represents her time, talent, and devotion to the church. In a recent article from [Hawaii Public Radio](#), Kumu Hula Cody Pueo Pata discussed how a lei is a special offering from its creator: “There’s a moisture that emanates off of the lei.... What we visualize is that the slow release of the intention will then surround that person or place where we are placing this lei. So

to us, a lei isn’t just something pretty; it’s also a vessel through which we can transport and offer our intentions.” Shirley’s heartfelt intention makes her gift of a lei all the more special!



Pastor Abe wears a lei handcrafted by Shirley, which was a gift of aloha from Kel Hamada.

## ● Special Offering Will Benefit the United Church of Christ (UCC) Organization



On May 23<sup>rd</sup> (Pentecost Sunday), we will be collecting the annual UCC-wide special offering known as *Strengthen the Church*. This fund is administered by the Local Church Ministries offices and will help support church growth, pastoral and lay leadership development, and youth and young adult ministries within each conference. Please write checks payable to MVC and on the memo line include the

phrase *Strengthen the Church*. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ. Mahalo.

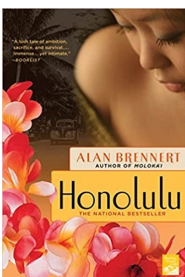
## ● Calling All Graduates!

MVC would like to honor our 2021 graduates, as we do every spring. What an achievement it is to have completed their educational journey under such trying circumstances!

The Christian Education Committee would appreciate your help in identifying those graduates. Please submit names of high school or college graduates, the school they attended, and their parents’ names. We would also like to include photos of these grads and their post-graduation plans in a May or June newsletter. Contact **Maizie Okimoto** (808) 988-6216 or [maizieoki@gmail.com](mailto:maizieoki@gmail.com) or **Joanne Funasaki** (808) 226-3542 or [jtfunasaki@aol.com](mailto:jtfunasaki@aol.com) as soon as possible. Thank you!



## ● Book Club’s Next Selection is *Honolulu*, by Alan Brennert



Learning about racial and ethnic aspects of Hawaii helps us understand our history and culture. In *Honolulu*, a work of historical fiction, Alan Brennert portrays the experience of a Korean picture bride, who takes a chance by leaving South Korea to meet her unknown husband in Honolulu. The story magnifies the difficulties such women faced and also exposes the seamier side of Hawaii’s history. Against this backdrop, the story focuses on one woman’s experience, and since it’s written in the first person, comes across as a compelling tale of ambition, growth, trauma, and sorrow combined. If you choose to read this book, you’re invited to the June 27<sup>th</sup> Book Club meeting to discuss it. Contact Dianne Ishida at [dianne@hawaii.edu](mailto:dianne@hawaii.edu) for the Zoom link.

We’d like to inform our readers that the *Manoa Connection* e-Newsletter will hereafter be emailed on the first Wednesday of each month.