



MĀNOA VALLEY
CHURCH

Mānoa Connection

Connecting our 'ohana

e-Newsletter

Date: June 2, 2021

● Pastor's Message: 'Talk Story'



One of my favorite things (of many!) I appreciate about Hawaiian culture is the practice of '*olelo Kama'ilio*, or *Talk Story*. For me, it has been a reminder that we are 'human beings', not 'human doings'—something that I 'know', but often struggle to live out.

When we come together to *Talk Story* and put aside our agendas and checklists so that we can be present with the other, it creates a space for something special to happen. There is this earnest hope that I might see you and that you might see me as we share for the sake of sharing—ideas, stories, history, opinions.... When we take the time to *Talk Story*, we intentionally slow down so that we might not miss the gift of the other—the opportunity to get to know our neighbor and give them an opportunity to get to know us.

I've found that more happens when we *Talk Story* than merely 'talk'. If done right, there is also a sacred moment where trust is built, and a gift is given—we trust a person enough to give a part of ourselves to them and they trust us as they give a part of themselves to us. It's in these moments and spaces that we realize that we are not, in fact, strangers or enemies, but rather neighbors, friends, sisters, brothers.... What a beautiful embodiment of how God created us to live!



In the past year, I have had the privilege to *Talk Story* with many people from our church family. I have been humbled as you have trusted me and given me the gift of your stories—stories of life, stories of hope, stories that, more than anything, reflect who the Triune God is and how He is at work in our lives, in our community, and in our world all around us. As followers of Jesus Christ, I believe that our stories are integral to the life of our church and our call and purpose in this world. And if we have the courage to

share our stories and experiences, we might have the opportunity to give the world a glimpse of the Triune God, who so loves the world and lives in us.

This is at the heart of a new initiative that will begin at Mānoa Valley Church this summer called *Talk Story*. The plan for this initiative is to give our congregation opportunities to share stories that reflect our encounters with God and our experiences of His work in our lives. The hope is that as we share our stories of faith, hope, love, struggle, redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, salvation, that opportunities will be created for us to know one another in new ways and that we might bless and encourage others and be blessed as we tell our stories and listen to the stories of others. And as a church family, that our stories would be opportunities where we might build a sacred trust with our neighbors and give them the gift of Jesus Christ.

If you are willing to share your story, it would be video recorded and edited into a 3-5 minute vignette that could be shared during a worship service, in our newsletter, on our website, or in some other way. All of this would be done, of course, only



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with your approval and permission, and if at any time you are not comfortable with sharing your story, you could request its removal at any time, even before it is ever publicly shared.

As I would be one of the primary people who would create these videos, I would cherish this time to spend with you, the storyteller, to meet with you, hear your story (and share a bit of my story, if appropriate), and experience the special and sacred moment that can only happen in a friendship when we *Talk Story*.

Do you have a story you feel called to share that would give the gift of yourself and Jesus Christ to others? I would love to get together with you to *Talk Story*. Please contact me at pastor@manoavalleychurch.org and let's schedule a time to meet!

● Moderator's Message

We need your help! What is your calling?



There has been a recurring call for volunteers in our newsletters. Worship services on Sunday mornings are seen by many as the main body of the work of our church. There is so much more to Mānoa Valley Church. Hearing the laughter of the After School Care Program children, seeing consolation in the meal recipients at the Next Step Shelter, and witnessing the reassurance of Family Promise overnight guests who find safety in our gym. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that “...we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works....” We take joy in supporting the community.

The possibility of **Open Sanctuary** is an exciting new opportunity. Daily, for two mid-day hours, we hope to provide a safe space for people to reflect, pray, and receive prayer at the Church. This is an important service and we need volunteers to serve as ushers to build relationships. Whether monthly or weekly, help is needed and appreciated.

We need additional help to fulfill our mission as the Body of Christ. A good number of members of your Council will be reaching the end of their term this year. If you've ever felt a calling to further help your church, please consider one of the many positions that will be open. From Deacons to Christian Education to Communications to Missions--all need help.



Volunteering to serve the church and the community provides personal growth, development, and satisfaction. Getting to know fellow congregants, with their rich and diverse backgrounds, is inspiring - our members bring a wealth of experience to our organization.

So please contribute your God-given talents in any way that you can. No effort is too little, and every bit helps.

● We Wish Ms. Chris Ching the Best on her Retirement



June 30th marks the last day teacher **Chris Ching** will enter the Mānoa Valley Church Preschool gates and greet others with her shy but omnipresent smile. Thereafter, she will start a well-deserved retirement after working 15 years at our Preschool. Ms. Chris served as an assistant teacher to both the 3-year-old and 4-year-old classes, leading the class when needed. She would read stories to the students and help them with all classroom activities. She was a pro at calming down the youngsters at naptime.

Preschool Director **Marilyn Payapaya** says she'll miss Ms. Chris' organized, dependable, and hard-working ways. Of particular note was the way that she would step up when an extra task presented itself, like covering an absent colleague's duties. A church member remarks that Ms. Chris will be sorely missed by the parents and especially the children, some of whom needed the extra TLC which she provided. With her kind heart and dedication to the role of teacher, she supported the children and contributed greatly to the success of the Preschool.

Retirement will allow Ms. Chris to travel and spend time with family, some of whom live on the mainland. She can garden, relax, and make the most of her free time! MVC appreciates her years of service to the Preschool and wishes her well. Here are two ways to say aloha to Ms. Chris: Attend worship on Sunday, June 27th when she will be honored (Contact the MVC office beforehand.) and write a thank you note to her on this electronic card by clicking on this [LINK](#).

● Honors for 2021 Graduates: A Diploma Despite the Pandemic

Special congratulations are in order for this year's graduates who persevered despite the challenges of the pandemic. Whether they studied in classrooms or at home, they remained dedicated to finishing their schools' requirements. Together, they are a portrait of resilience and inspiration. We at Mānoa Valley Church are certainly proud of them!

Tani Yoshioka graduated with honors from Hawaii Baptist Academy. Tani will study at Seattle Pacific University where she hopes to get a degree in biology and pursue medicine. Her parents are Nathan and Jolene Yoshioka.

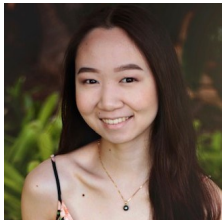
Larkyn Sybounmy, son of Kimberly and Long Sybounmy, graduated from Mid Pacific Institute and will attend Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana this fall.

Kendall Funasaki will graduate from Punahou School and will attend UCLA, majoring in Biology. Her parents are Kimberly & Todd Funasaki and her grandmother is Joanne Funasaki.

Also graduating from Punahou is **Jolie Murashige**, the daughter of Belle and Sean Murashige and granddaughter of Dr. Kuboyama. She will be attending Notre Dame.

Siobhan Oishi, daughter of Jerry and Allison Oishi and granddaughter of the late Sachiko Oishi, received her diploma from Roosevelt and is, at the current time, undecided about future plans.

Brienne Kojima graduated from Leilehua High School and plans to attend UH west Oahu and major in graphic arts. She is the daughter of Dwayne and Deena Kojima and the granddaughter of Raedeen and the late Gary Archuleta.



Tani



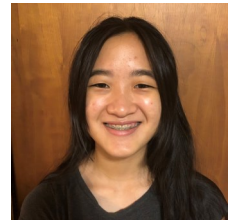
Larkyn



Kendall



Jolie

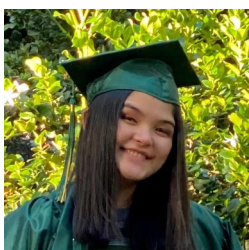


Siobhan

At the college level, **Carter Uechi** received his bachelor's degree from Marist College in New York where he majored in Communications with a concentration in sports medicine. He also minored in business and global studies. Carter continues to work as an assistant teacher at Iolani while he considers his career options. His parents are Steven and Sarie Uechi and his grandmother is Maizie Okimoto.

Carrie Glenn, who is currently serving as the Young Adult Representative on the MVC Council, graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in entrepreneurship from the Shidler College of Business at UH Manoa. Her current plans are to continue working for KCC while she decides about graduate school. Her academic accomplishment was all the more impressive as she dealt with the untimely passing of her mother, Laura Glenn and helping her dad with his recovery.

At the elementary school level, **Giovani Browning** concluded his education at Mānoa School and will be attending Stevenson Middle School. He is the son of Sam and Joy Browning. Concurrently, his brother **Amadeus** finished at Stevenson and will join his brother **Mateo** at Roosevelt High School next year. This is quite a year of transition for the Browning family!



Brienne



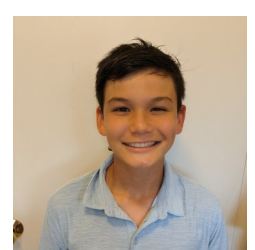
Carter



Carrie



Gio



Ama

What follows is an editorial reflecting the personal view of an MVC member on an important environmental, cultural, and urban planning issue in Honolulu. The newsletter staff has decided to include opinion pieces in *Mānoa Connection* that are written with accurate information and a clear message as a means of allowing individual expression. However, in doing so, we are not necessarily endorsing the opinion. We invite others to express their views on a topic they feel strongly about. Contact **Richelle Fujioka** at rfujioka@punahou.edu if interested.

● Save Kaka 'ako Makai by Ron Iwami

In My Opinion

Kaka 'ako Makai (KM) is the last public oceanfront land in urban Honolulu. It is the land bordered by Kewalo Basin on the east, Ala Moana Boulevard to the north, Pier 2 on the west, and the Pacific Ocean to the south.

In 2012, by a swift act of our lawmakers, this land was conveyed to the **Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)**. This single action turned it from “public land” to “trust land.” By that designation, OHA feels entitled to develop it in any way they want. This year was their strongest push to build residential high rises up to 400 feet tall on this prime oceanfront land. If they decided not to build, OHA would have the option to convey the land (sell the land) to a third party so they can build. OHA says that they want to have the same rights as their neighbors who have built nearby towers across Ala Moana Boulevard. However, a law has been in place since 2006 that bans all residential development on this oceanfront land with the intent on keeping it open space and low rise commercial development. OHA took the land deal in 2012 knowing this.

Now OHA wants to lift this ban. People want to preserve it.

Development of residential high rises will create more density to the area and in turn impede public access to the ocean. Free parking is essential to public access. No parking--No Access. Competition by nearby residents for the free parking will intensify. Think Waikiki.

Like me, thousands of people flock to the ocean daily to sustain their body, mind and soul. It is our “cup of coffee” to begin our day. I have been surfing and swimming in this area for 50 years. It is our little bit of country in the city for those who do not have the means to live on the ocean. We are fighting to preserve this special *ocean lifestyle* as a people of this island state. It is one of many things that makes Hawaii special.

For more information, please click on this [LINK](#).

Don't get me wrong, **Friends of Kewalos** and I fully support OHA and its mission to benefit the Hawaiian people. However, in the grand scheme of things for the benefit of *all* residents of Hawaii, we feel strongly against their plans for this oceanfront land, what little we have left.

This year, our lawmakers offered a resolution to form a working group with all parties with the intent of reaching a solution to this nine-year battle. A possibility would be a land swap with State lands near the rail line where residential development is allowed.

OHA has refused to participate. They have vowed to come back in 2022.

How you can help: Go to www.kewalos.org and sign our online petition. Join us by emailing me directly at iwamih001@hawaii.rr.com. I will include you in our email blasts.



With “The Power of the People” and the “Grace of God” we can do this. Mahalo for giving me the opportunity to share our *mana'o*.

Ron Iwami President, Friends of Kewalos Non-profit 501C3

● Easter Project Evokes a Child's Thoughtful Response



As reported in our last e-Newsletter, the Christian Education Committee (CEC) reconnected with their Sunday School pupils during the pandemic by sending them materials for an Easter project, along with a video about the meaning of Easter. The art project consisted of a poster featuring a large cross. One child chose to incorporate meaningful symbols on his poster. According to his mother, "Eli said he decorated his cross with flowers like at Church, hearts for love, and band aids for healing." This simple explanation goes a long way in revealing the impact that church, Children's Moments, and Sunday School have had on Eli. Way to go, CEC!



● Preschoolers Celebrate Boy's and Children's Day



Ms. Cherene's 4/5 year old class created crafts to celebrate Boy's Day and Children's Day. The boys cut out patterns of koi and decorated them. The craft for the girls was to cut out and decorate either a doll or an umbrella. Thank you, Preschoolers, for sharing your project with us.



● Spotlight on Soo



Check out the recent *Midweek* article about our very own **Dr. Benetta (Soo) Chin**, Pastor Abe's wife. You can read about her work at the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, her adjustment to living in Hawaii and her desire to learn how to surf. Click on [THIS LINK](#) and go to page 14 to see the feature.

● Sandwich Donation Request

Mānoa Valley Church is once again supporting the homeless outreach programs at Next Step Shelter in Kaka 'ako and Moili 'ili and requests sandwich donations on Sunday, June 13. Our goal is to share 200 sandwiches with the residents. If you are able to contribute, please click on [this link](#) and sign up.



Sandwiches can be dropped off at the breezeway by 11:30 a.m. on June 13. The Missions Committee could also use volunteers to help pack 100 lunch bags at that time. If you have any questions, contact **Inga Park Okuna** at ingapark@me.com. Thank you for your generosity; the staff and residents of Next Step Shelter appreciate MVC 's steadfast partnership in sharing God's provisions.

● Spring Chicken Sale



In May 2020, the Spring Chicken Sale was not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When faced with the decision of whether to hold a sale in 2021, the Trustees felt that with the availability of the vaccine, it would be safe to hold our yearly fundraiser.

Tickets were ordered and mailed to members and friends of the church. Then two weeks before the pick-up day, we received word from State Poultry that they would not be able to supply the amount of chicken we would require due to the mainland processor's inability to meet our needs.

Despite this setback, so many people generously made a donation or allowed us to keep what they had paid for their chicken purchases that we raised \$8,332. This was on par with past sales. Praise God! Mahalo to all who supported this endeavor.