



MĀNOA VALLEY  
CHURCH

# Mānoa Connection

Connecting our 'ohana

eNewsletter

April 6, 2022

## ● Pastor Abe's Message

"May we Serve as a 'Thin Place'"



This past month, for the first time in approximately two years, our Preschool and After School Care students met in the church sanctuary for our weekly chapel service. This might not seem like 'big news' to many people, but since the start of the COVID pandemic and the restrictions that have been implemented to help keep our community safe, our chapel services have been held in the church gym (for good reason). March was the first time since starting in my role at Mānoa Valley Church that I had the opportunity to meet with the students in the sanctuary for our chapel service.

That first Tuesday in the sanctuary, I sat at the front stage and watched, as the students walked single file through the center aisle between the rows' pews. There was a buzz of excitement in the air as the echoes of "oohs" and "aaahs" filled the room. The short 30-foot journey from the gym to the sanctuary unexpectedly transported the students to an exciting new place. It felt as if we had taken the group on a field trip.

Many of the students began making observations about the space. They asked a wide range of questions about the sanctuary, with a particular interest, of course, in the beautiful stained glass column at the front of the room. I did my best to answer their questions, and eventually shared with them that the sanctuary was Jesus' house, and that they were always invited to come to His house, no matter their circumstances—even when they were older. That brought joyful laughter and, I think, smiles to the children's faces (we were all masked, so it was difficult to tell). In that moment, it felt as if the sanctuary had become what Christians sometimes describe as a "thin place"—those "rare locales where the distance between Heaven and Earth collapses," as Eric Weiner puts it (*Man Meets God*).



Links

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Amid this sweet moment, I was reminded that we are spiritual beings, and we are physical beings. Our physicality, our physical presence in this world, matters. The places we enter and the spaces that we occupy matter—they are important, and they make a difference.

It occurred to me that for some of the students, this was likely the first time they had stepped foot into a church sanctuary, and their time as a student in our preschool might be the only opportunity in their lives to visit "Jesus' house." For other students, that day was

the start of their long journey of countless visits to spend time with Jesus in His House. Regardless, the gravity and reverence I felt made me think it was a holy moment, and I was convinced to do my best to never take those Tuesday mornings with these children for granted.

As we prepare to reopen our doors for in-person services, I am reminded that this space, the Mānoa Valley Church sanctuary, that we hold so dear, is a gift to us from God—it is His and He's blessed us with it . . . to bless others. May our sanctuary serve and be known as a "thin place" for every person who walks through our doors, and also throughout the Mānoa Valley community and beyond. And may we never take for granted each person that Jesus leads through our doors.

He is Risen, Pastor Abe

### ● **Moderator's Message** by Roger Au



We look forward to seeing each other in person! Mānoa Valley Church will reopen soon for live Sunday worship and Sunday School. Excitement and enthusiasm abound as we plan for Easter! We are so thankful for God's blessings and for the work of our committed volunteers.

While COVID remains active, the local governments have relaxed most of the related restrictions. The conservative philosophy adopted by the Council has kept us safe. We will continue to practice caution, with masks continuing to be required and with accommodations for social distancing. Singing will be welcomed, and the Praise Band will join us at a later time.

Recruitment actions for our new Pastor of Children and Family Ministries are progressing. The Search Committee reviewed resumes for the 50 (yes 50!) applicants. Focused interviews will be conducted in the future with the highly qualified candidates. Significant interest and input have been received from our members for this leadership position. To provide transparency and inclusion, the Council will be involved in the final selection and affirmation of the candidate.



The Mānoa Banyan Court Development has recently drawn much interest. The proposed project, located in the vicinity of the Chinese cemetery, will affect several of our members directly. Although the project is a recurring reporting item at the monthly Neighborhood Board meeting, we will be scheduling an online meeting with Charles Wong of the Lin Yee Chung Association. More details will be provided later.

### ● **Join us for Holy Week and Easter Sunday!**



#### **Palm Sunday**

April 10—Hosanna! Holy Week starts the day we resume in-person worship services.



#### **Maundy Thursday**

April 14 - The congregation will receive an email link from the office to access a video for a personal time of reflection.



#### **Good Friday**

April 15 – 7pm service at MVC Sanctuary.



#### **Easter Sunday**

April 17 – Celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with Sunrise Service at 7:00 am in the breezeway. Bring cut flowers to decorate our traditional floral cross or bring a potted Easter lily to decorate our chancel area. Then at our 10:00 am Easter Family Worship, students from our Preschool and After School Care programs will participate in worship as we sing praises to our risen Lord. Easter activities for the children will follow the worship service. Hallelujah, He is risen!

### ● **Sunday School to begin on April 24**

Sunday School is being planned this year during the 10:00 service. The children will exit the service after Children's Moments and go to the gym Child Care Room for Sunday School. It is planned to begin the Sunday after Easter, on April 24th and run through May 22nd at 10:00 am.



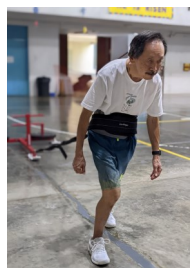
## ● Do You Want to Be Fit4Life? By Paul H. Mark

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)*

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Church in Corinth, advises the Corinthians to take care of their bodies, which is the temple that God gave them. Fast forward to today's modern world. If you are healthy, fit, and understand the Bible, you will be equipped to achieve your unique purpose in life for God - sharing the Good News and leading others to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

With this in mind, **Fit4Life**, a new Manoa Valley Church Connection Group, kicked off on January 19th in the Gym with six participants, including this writer. Following Covid-19 safety protocols and mask-wearing, this free 12-week pilot program met on Wednesdays at 10:30 am.

The Fit4Life program was led by **David Park**, MVC Office Manager and Strength & Nutrition Coach Point B Performance, LLC. Each class consisted of a 45-minute PowerPoint lecture with a Q & A session to help stimulate the brain, followed by 45 minutes of physical training exercises to help reshape the body. Participants learned the science, principles, and essential data needed to create positive change in their health and wellness. Through proper training and coaching, participants worked their bodies to help achieve personal goals.



I signed up for this class to help get in shape and gain some weight to enhance my part-time acting career, improve my tennis game, and other things. The lessons I've learned have provided a better understanding of what it means to be healthy and physically fit. For example, the Three Foundations of Health and Fitness are Sleep, Nutrition/Diet, and Movement/Exercise, and the Three Steps for Change and Progress are Awareness, Plan, and Action. Future Fit4Life classes are being planned and will be announced at a later date.

With proper training and determination, Paul pulls the sled down the length of the gym at a fast pace.



The Fit4Life class wants to “pump-you-up”! Clockwise from bottom left: Ruth Komatsu, Evelyn Chong, Paul H. Mark, Wimberly Grove, Bette Uyeda, Dianne Ishida, and Coach David Park.

## ● All in the 'Ohana

**Makana Milotta (Interim Associate Pastor, Fall 2010–Spring 2012 and Associate Pastor, Fall 2012–Fall 2015)**

Since leaving MVC, Makana has led a very busy life! In 2016 he served as the relief Pastor at Ewa Community Church while their pastor underwent cancer treatment. He also served as long term pulpit supply for Liliuokalani Protestant Church. Finally, in Summer 2017 he accepted a call to Waipahu United Church of Christ as their pastor, where he is to this day.

While ministering to others, his own family has grown. Makana tells us, “We’re now up to three sons and awaiting foster placement to hanai another young child. Konrad was born while we were at MVC, Caspar was born in 2016 and Silas in 2018. We’re living out in Ewa Beach now. The kids are at a charter school program so Veronica has been home taking care of the bulk of the schooling for the boys since the pandemic started.” His wife Veronica was quite involved in activities when at MVC so it is not surprising that she teaches the Elementary Sunday School and also helps out a lot with the various ministries at Waipahu UCC. In their free time the Milotta family likes to camp, hike, and do engineering projects and Makana likes to foil surf with the locals out at White Plains. He says, “We certainly miss coming out to see you all at the Harvest Fair but hopefully we’ll get to see you again soon!”



Konrad, Makana, Veronica, Silas, and Caspar.

## ● Spring Break Brings a Special Treat for the Children at MVC

As you can see on the calendar of activities, After School Care (ASC) students enjoyed Spring Break at MVC. One of the novelties, however, was not listed there. It was a mini golf course, the brainchild of their leader, **Director Trisha Honda**. Because the students are not allowed to go on field trips at this time, she is constantly looking for ways to create fun experiences. She tells us, "I saw a mini golf course at Windward Mall and thought about making one for the children at MVC." It was constructed of wood and artificial turf, so she searched for those materials at Home Depot. The wood was costly so she improvised, choosing to use the pool noodle toys held together with PVC pipes.

### Manoa Valley Church SPRING BREAK 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
March 14 Sock puppets	March 15 STEM Project: Rockets	March 16 Balloon Monkeys	March 17 Lunch from McDonald's	March 18 Waterplay



Here is the wonderful part of the story. Trisha says, "As I was sketching out the courses and looking at prices, I bumped into the manager. We started chatting and he mentioned that if I write a letter asking for a donation, he would love to help out. He gave me a discount on the artificial turf!" Due to Trisha's ingenuity and initiative and the generosity of Home Depot, the MVC ASC students were able to enjoy three different courses!

## ● United Church of Christ Joins in the Effort to Help the People of Ukraine

Many around the world are concerned for the people of Ukraine who are forced to flee from their homeland or face danger at the hands of the invading Russian troops. While governments attempt to negotiate or apply pressure through sanctions, companies have made their concern known by halting operations in Russia.



We may feel small and helpless, but every action counts. To this end, the United Church of Christ has sent out an *Appeal for the People of Ukraine* described at [THIS LINK](#). They call for prayer and announce that they have partnered with several organizations to "provide shelter, food and other care to war refugees and internally-displaced people." There is a [DONATION PAGE](#) too, with information about how to help. If you feel so moved, click on the above links to find out more. The MVC Missions Committee has allocated a \$1000 donation from its annual mission's budget to this fund.

## ● Sandwich Donation Request

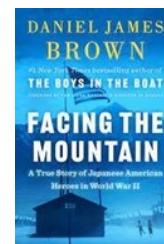


MVC is once again supporting the homeless outreach program at Next Step Shelter and seeks sandwich donations on **Sunday, April 10th**. If you are able to contribute, please click on [THIS LINK](#) to sign up. The Missions Committee respectfully asks that you commit to at least 10 sandwiches, individually-wrapped and labeled.

Sandwiches can be dropped off at the breezeway by 11:30 a.m. Volunteers are welcomed to help pack lunch bags after worship. Questions? Contact Sue Yamamoto at [susan-yamamoto@outlook.com](mailto:susan-yamamoto@outlook.com) or Inga Park Okuna at [ingapark@me.com](mailto: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.

## ● Book Club's Next Selection Focuses on Famous 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment

The MVC Book Club has selected *Facing the Mountain: A True Story of Japanese American Heroes in WWII* by Daniel James Brown, who fastidiously interviewed members of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment and recreated their lives and experiences. According to Michael Schaub, a literary critic for NPR, this book is "more than just the story of a group of young men whose valor helped save a country that spurned them, it's a fascinating, expertly written look at selfless heroes who emerged from one of the darkest periods of American history — soldiers the likes of which this country may never see again." It contains excerpts from letters written by **Rev. Hiro Higuchi**, who served as chaplain to the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment and returned to Hawai'i to help found five churches, among them Mānoa Valley Church.



The Book Club will meet at noon on Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. If interested in joining the Zoom call, contact Richelle Fujioka at [rfujioka@punahou.edu](mailto:rfujioka@punahou.edu).