



GARDENA VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH



# GVBC CHRISTMAS 2018

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## A WEARY WORLD REJOICES

BY DOUG BROWN, SENIOR PASTOR

There has been much this year that has been wearying. The 2018 wildfire season is the most destructive on record in California, with a total of 7,579 fires burning an area of 1,667,855 acres, the largest amount of burnt acreage recorded in a fire season. More than 10,000 structures have been destroyed exceeding \$2.975 billion in damages. While dozens have lost their lives the actual total number of fatalities is unknown as more than 1,000 people are still reported as missing. Added to this misery there have

been 314 mass shooting incidents in the United States in 2018. The F.B.I. defines a "mass shooting" as the killing of three or more people in a public place. According to the California Crime Statistics and Rates Report and at this point in 2018, there have been 1,176,866 total criminal incidents in the State of California. This includes, assault, larceny and theft, rape, murder, motor vehicle theft and the like. As we read this depressing news we are tempted to despair.



Sometimes it is helpful to consider the source of tiredness. Generally speaking there are two types of weariness. The first is an exhaustion which is produced by a lifestyle of anxiety and stress and the second is a weariness that comes from serving God. With the first there is no fruitfulness or rest because a self-serving existence inevitably leads to disappointment and dissatisfaction. A sinful life lacks fulfillment because catering to temporary lusts leads to emptiness. Furthermore, rest is elusive because our sin nature is a brutal taskmaster never finding contentment. Ephesians 2.12 describes this condition as being “without hope and without God in the world”.

But the second type of weariness is a deeply satisfying tiredness. This is because serving God is marked by purpose and fulfillment. Paul writing in Galatians 6.9 says, “Let us not

become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up”. Paul reminds us of the harvest connected to serving God in spite of the weariness. This creates the opportunity to locate hope in the midst of the life’s exhausting challenges.

The Christmas Carol “O Holy Night”, written in the mid-nineteenth century, reflects both this sense of weariness and yet, hope:

Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth  
The thrill of hope the weary world rejoices

This Christmas season we can chose in the midst of weariness to recognize God’s loving hand all around us. We can choose to rejoice in God’s provision for our hopeless and helpless condition - Jesus Christ, Savior of the world.

Rejoicing,  
Pastor Doug

*But the second  
type of weariness  
is a deeply  
satisfying  
tiredness.*



# THANKSGIVING

## CELEBRATING FREEDOM FROM DEBT

GVBC'S 2018 THANKSGIVING SERVICE

In 2001, GVBC began a dream. We wanted to renew our building facilities in order to continue to minister the love of Jesus Christ in and through our community for many generations to come. With 17 years of giving and 5 Building Campaigns to cover a \$10.5 million payout, on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 18, 2018, we celebrated the completion of our building project. Pastor Steve Langley was welcomed back as our special guest speaker for the service, we had a wonderful all church luncheon provided by Back Home in Lahaina, and, perhaps most importantly, we had Ice Cream carts! God is so good!





# MINISTRY

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY GIVES THANKS

BY SUSAN WAKUTA, CHILDRENS DIRECTOR

Children's ministry thanks God for the great things He has done:

We honored Pastor Doug and Sue during Pastor's Appreciation month. We shared the Gospel message with 405 children at the Harvest Festival. 158 of them were from the City of Gardena alone. And we are looking forward again to welcoming families to Early Childhood's Breakfast in Bethlehem. Jesus is the reason for the season.



*"What really matters is  
GOD's kingdom and  
things which count for  
eternity."*

# AN ETERNAL FOCUS



## PROFILE OF NIKKI UEDA BY KATHY AISO

Recognizing what matters most, Nikki Ueda focuses on the eternal. In promoting God's Kingdom, Nikki has actively served in ministry. While a student at UCLA, Nikki was part of GVBC's college ministry's core team. After graduating from UCLA with a B.A. in Asian American Studies in 2011, Nikki became a leader for the college ministry. Later, Nikki was the Rooted coordinator with Pastor Chris Koga and Brad Toy.

### **A Big Heart for Unifying the Generations at GVBC**

Today, Nikki is part of the Young Adult Planning Team. Along with Pastor Doug Brown, her husband, Mike, and others, Nikki advocates intergenerational unity in our church. Nikki related that bridging differences among the generations would be key to building relationships and forming a community of one at GVBC.

It would encourage the younger generations to get more involved in all ministries, an important factor as GVBC looks towards the future and furthering God's Kingdom. "My husband, Mike and I both have a big heart for unifying the generations in our church," Nikki related.

### **Receiving the Calming Peace of the Holy Spirit**

Nikki's journey to salvation began when her grandmother passed away. The Holy Spirit replaced Nikki's devastating grief over her grandmother's passing with His calming peace. At that moment, Nikki knew she had been touched by God.

This led Nikki on a journey to find out why Jesus was GOD, a question which remained unanswered in her Catholic upbringing. As part of her search for answers, Nikki began attending Generations Covenant Church (GCC). GCC held Sunday morning service at Nikki's high school, North High. After a period of attending GCC, Nikki's questions were answered as she learned about Jesus, salvation, and more about the Bible. With the pastor's help, Nikki received the LORD one Sunday.

### **Her Focus on the Eternal Grew**

After going on a short-term missions trip to the Suita Bible Gospel Church (SBGC) in Osaka, Japan, Nikki's focus on the eternal grew. Throughout her stay, Nikki marveled at how deeply the people of SBGC loved God and each other. Upon returning home, Nikki's priorities changed as she desired to be more like the SBGC Christians, focusing more on loving God and loving others. It was a change for Nikki, who had a lifelong dream, which began as a child model, of being successful in the entertainment field.

### **Her Father Received the Lord**

Through a mutual friend, Nikki met her future husband, Mike, "From the time I met Mike, I could tell that he's very humble, caring, and compassionate," Nikki shared. Pastor Chris Koga married Nikki and Mike in May 2015 in Camarillo. The Uedas enjoy meeting every week with their community group of four couples. They are hospitable, opening up their home for all meetings.

Through Pastor Ron Matsuda, Nikki's dad, Dennis Kikuchi recently became a Christian. After years of concern for her dad's salvation, Nikki rejoices that her dad is saved and will be with her in heaven.

### **She Seeks to Glorify God**

Nikki's favorite Bible verse, Galatians 2:20 reminds her that Christ within has taken possession of her life. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." As Christ's follower, Nikki wants her life to count for God and eternity.



# MEET OUR NEW INTERNS

## RYAN URATSU

GVBC COMMUNITY MINISTRY INTERN

Hello! I am 24 years old, a recent graduate of Biola University, and am currently enrolled in Talbot Seminary. I grew up here at GVBC learning all about God, his Son, and the gospel through my faithful parents, Sunday School teachers, and, most importantly, Veggie Tales. As the years have gone by God has continued to draw and show me why he is worthy of all my worship and dedication. Some of the things that I enjoy are rock-climbing, competitive games, drinking a hot cup of coffee while wrapped in a blanket, reading a good book, listening to people's stories, and spending time with my family and friends. In this internship I look forward to helping people grow a greater affection, knowledge, and experience of Jesus. I am also looking forward to learning about and getting some hands-on experience in what it means to minister to people.



## MICHELLE DRESSER

GVBC INTERN OF YOUTH & MEDIA



My name is Michelle Dresser and I have been attending GVBC practically my entire life! I first accepted Christ when I was five years old at our annual Harvest Festival, and since then, God has continually stretched and grown my understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ. Through many years of struggling to trust in His plans and purpose for my life, God has humbled me time and time again by revealing that His ways are far greater than mine. In this next upcoming year, I am excited to see how He will use both Media and Youth Ministry to outreach into our Gardena community. Within my internship, my hope and prayer is that God will use me to build up our church and extend His love and kindness towards those who do not know Him yet.

## BEN LEE

GVBC INTERN OF WORSHIP MUSIC

My name is Ben Lee and I am the new Worship Music intern at Gardena Valley Baptist Church! I've always been a big nerd. I love board & video games, fantasy, movies, and Harry Potter to just name a few things. And I especially love music! I started playing violin when I was young, picked up guitar in middle school, and am currently trying to teach myself drums! I grew up in a Christian home and in the church. But God's love didn't become real for me until high school, where my youth leaders showed me compassion and unconditional love in the darkest moment of my life where I felt worthless. Since then, I've been confident that God is always with me and He loves me unconditionally. And out of that love comes my desire to serve God's church. As an intern at GVBC, I look forward to learning more about how God has uniquely created and gifted me, using those gifts to serve the church, and singing praise and worship together with the body of Christ!





# FAMILY NEWS

## FAMILY NEWS

Flowers and donations given in loving memory or honor of:

From:	To:
Marianne Fujita	Mits Fujita
Bob & Teresa Matsushima	Michiko Hayase
Henry & Sanaye Nagami	Michiko Hayase
Jodie, Voltaire, Julie Rivera & Merrick Yoshida	Wallis Yoshida & Maurice Ishimoto
Leigh Fukuzawa & Family	Michito Frank Fukuzawa
Jean Nojima	Lyman Nojima

Missions Ministry Prayer Requests

\* Please pray for the college team and leaders going to the URBANA Missions Conference, December 27-31. Go to [urbana.org](http://urbana.org) for more information.

\* Please pray for the Thailand team as they prepare for their January 16-30, 2019 mission trip. There will be a water project with the Manns and ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Program). For more information about ITDP go to: [itdpinternational.org](http://itdpinternational.org).

## LETTERS TO OUR GVBC FAMILY

GVBC Family,  
A fragrant floral arrangement was delivered for Harold this morning! We're sincerely grateful for this thoughtful gesture. Harold is recovering nicely. Please know that we deeply appreciate your prayers and concern.

Thank you.  
The Kobatas



## DECEMBER MINISTRY OUTLOOK

<b>Dec 8</b>	9 - 11 am Breakfast in Bethlehem (for Children Nursery to Kindergarten)
<b>Dec 23</b>	Christmas Service
<b>Dec 23</b>	Advent Conspiracy 2018 Collection for Hope in Japan, Growth in Thailand, and Future in Brazil
<b>Dec 24</b>	6pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



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