



MĀNOA VALLEY
CHURCH

Mānoa Connection

Connecting our 'ohana

eNewsletter

August 3, 2022

● Pastor Abe's Message




After 22+ years of ministry and service, **Marilyn Payapaya** is retiring from her role as the director of the Mānoa Valley Church Preschool. These days, especially with the world's increasing propensity towards transiency, celebrating *anyone* doing *anything* for over 22 years is becoming more and more rare. And so, for *at least* that reason, I thought it would be appropriate to take a moment to recognize Marilyn, her ministry, and the good work she has done to care for and serve thousands of children and families in Mānoa Valley and beyond throughout the past two decades.




When reflecting on the gift that Marilyn has been to the MVC Preschool, a word that comes to mind is 'dignity.' Though Marilyn possesses and carries herself with a humble dignity which she quietly and unassumingly exudes, that is not what I want to highlight here. Rather, I would like to focus on the dignity that I have witnessed Marilyn impart to each person she encounters. If you have ever been in the same room with Marilyn when she served in her role at the preschool, you would have witnessed her unique ability to see each person in front of her as a child of God, and in turn, treat them with a tremendous amount of love and care.

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Embodying Jesus' love and grace is not always the obvious choice— there have been instances throughout Marilyn's time at the preschool where people (including myself) have wondered about or even questioned some of the decisions that had been made. But time and time again, what eventually became apparent was that each decision that Marilyn made was rooted in Marilyn trying her best to love others with Jesus' love, and extend His grace to all people, even in the most difficult situations. Marilyn consistently chose to follow what she sensed was Jesus' way, over and above all else, even when she was criticized and judged, never intending to lift herself up, but rather provide people opportunities to experience Jesus and His love . . . and that has made all the difference.



As Marilyn retires, there are many reasons for us to celebrate her and the many facets of the work she has done at the preschool. My hope is that as we celebrate her in this season it will be a reminder to each one of us of what Jesus can do through us, in the lives of people and in the world when we prioritize His way over and above all else. In celebrating Marilyn, may we see how God's love can be embodied, His grace can be imparted, His forgiveness can be extended, and hardened hearts

can be made soft, families can find hope and healing, reconciliation can be cultivated, and children can grow in faith as they experience the unending goodness of God.

Thank you, Marilyn, for being so good and faithful to Mānoa Valley Church, the Preschool, the staff, the families, the children . . . and most of all for being so faithful to Jesus Christ. Well done.

In Christ, Abe

● **Moderator’s Message** by Roger Au



We thank and bid a fond aloha to **Marilyn Payapaya**, our beloved Preschool Director, who has retired. She has showered the children with the love of Jesus Christ for twenty-two years!

We also want to recognize and thank super Trustee **Earl Yonehara**. His work for the contract preparation and overseeing the parking lot repair and resealing will help prevent future structural degradation and costly repairs. He did the same for roof modification and repair, which eliminates rainwater ponding and the resultant slip hazard in the preschool area below. Earl also significantly contributes as the chair of the Personnel Committee!



Please set aside time in your busy calendars for the Installation Service for **Pastor Abe**. Much coordination with the Oahu Association and the Hawaii Conference office is required and it will likely be in October. Services are normally held on Sunday afternoons at 4pm to allow other UCC churches to participate.

We wanted to remind friends that hurricane season in Hawaii lasts through November 30th. While the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s outlook for the 2022 hurricane season in the central Pacific predicts below-average activity, it’s best to be prepared. Please review your personal preparations highlighted in two previous newsletters [August 26 2020](#) (click on date) and [September 16 2020](#) (click on date). While individual needs vary, many emergency management organizations recommend that, at a minimum, everyone should prepare a Go-Kit with important items and documents, keep a minimum of one gallon per person per day of water, and keep a three day supply of nonperishable food that does not need preparation. Additionally, people need water for cleaning, bathing, and sanitation. A simple method is to use a stopper in the bathtub or laundry sink.

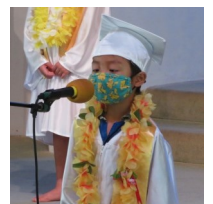
● **News from the Pastor of Children and Family Ministries** by Evelin Tai

On July 15th, the Preschoolers of MVC celebrated together the wonderful milestone of graduation. After some warm words of welcome by **Ms. Marilyn** and **Pastor Abe**, the Honeybee class regaled us with various musical selections including worship songs and Hawaiian songs and hula.



Then the Class of 2022 Superstars class marched in with their cap and gowns. Each child came forward individually to receive their diploma and then announced their future career aspiration. “When I grow up, I want to be a teacher ... a paleontologist ... a firefighter.” Their clear voices burst with pride, hope and joy. Then the parents and friends were treated to a wonderful performance by the Superstars class.

Even though it was graduation and the last day of school, I taught the preschoolers a new word: *koinonia*, which is the Greek New Testament word for “fellowship” or “communal participation”. I shared that, in fact, the preschoolers have been living in *koinonia* this entire year. They have shared their lives with each other and with their teachers and the larger MVC community. They’ve played together, learned and explored together, worshipped God together, broken bread together, sang and danced together. Most importantly, they have loved each other, extended kindness to one another, and forgiven each other when needed. We all can learn from the wonderful example of *koinonia* exhibited by our precious preschool keiki this year.



Congratulations to all the preschoolers and to their families!

● Rally Sunday is Coming Up

Rally Sunday is a time to gather together and welcome the start of Sunday School. This year the day falls on **September 11** during Church service. At that time, we will recognize our Sunday School staff and honor our four returning teachers –**Kristen Kawachi, Lauren Kawachi, Janet Khil, and Jolene Yoshioka** and music assistants **Ruth Komatsu** and **Karen Hamada** who teach the children songs and lead them in praise singing.



Plan to join us in-person on Rally Sunday as we prepare to launch our new Sunday School program. That day, the children will meet their teachers and register for their classes, which will be held during the 10am-11am worship time. Children will attend Church service with their parents and then will leave after Children’s Moments to go to their classes and register in the gym.

Later this month letters will be sent to our Sunday School, Preschool, and After School Care families explaining the change in class schedule and plans for the new semester for the Sunday School. We also want to “rally” others who may want to share their gifts by teaching or assisting with the program. If you feel God calling you to serve in this special way, please contact **Maizie Okimoto** at: maiziemoki@gmail.com. Let’s rally together for our Sunday School students and program!

● All in the ‘Ohana

MVC Lauds Recipient of Two Prestigious Fellowships



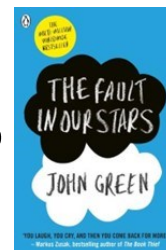
Keoni Williams, son of **Aki Williams**, has been named the 2022 Patsy T. Mink Legislative Fellow as announced by U.S. Representative Kai Kahele, who currently holds the seat once occupied by Mink. This award will allow Keoni, who is interested in public policy and social justice, a chance to learn about the legislative process. To view a video on this award, [CLICK HERE](#).

Earlier, Keoni received a Graduate Degree Fellowship at the East-West Center.

According to Ann Hartman, Dean of the East-West Center Education Program, “Keoni has worked closely with the Pacific Islands Development Program, engaging with Pacific leaders at the highest levels on issues of regional importance.” If you’d like to read more, click on [this link](#) for the U.H. Law School article about Keoni, who is currently a student there. For those who knew Keoni at MVC, this news is not surprising, as he was an avid participant in youth activities who showed great leadership potential.

● Book Club Invitation

The MVC book club has chosen a book popular among teens called *The Fault in Our Stars*, written by John Green. The story focuses on a 16-year-old girl who is attending a cancer support group and shows her struggle to deal with the disease. An unexpected relationship proves significant in this regard. The Book Club plans to meet on Sunday, August 28 at noon and is extending an invitation to youth or others who may have read the book or seen the movie. Contact **Dianne Ishida** at dianne@hawaii.edu if you’re interested in joining the discussion.



● Foodland Give Aloha



Beginning September 1, we will once again participate in the Foodland Give Aloha program. Foodland and the Western Union Foundation will match a portion of any donation you make for Mānoa Valley Church at your nearest Foodland store. You must have a Maika’i card when you make the donation. Foodland is asking that you update your card before making your donation. You can go online by clicking here Foodland.com and click the “Re-enroll Now”

button or see a customer service agent at the store.