



MĀNOA VALLEY
CHURCH

Mānoa Connection

Connecting our 'ohana

eNewsletter

June 3, 2026

Pastor Ruchama's Message

Intercessory Prayer Hour



Pastor Ruchama

On May 17th, a few of us gathered for the first Intercessory Prayer Hour. It was a meaningful time together, and one of the main insights we took away was that true intercession begins with seeking God's heart.

We reflected on Abraham's plea for Sodom, focusing on Genesis 18:17, where God says, "Should I hide what I'm about to do from Abraham?" That verse stood out because it reveals God's desire to involve His people in His purposes. Abraham remained in God's presence (Gen. 18:22) and began to care deeply about the things that mattered to God. He was moved by God's compassion for people and compelled to intercede on their behalf.

Ultimately, we look at Jesus Himself, our perfect mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), to see the fullest picture of intercession. Even while suffering on the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). In that moment, He demonstrated the very heart of intercession by pleading for mercy on behalf of those who were crucifying Him. Jesus' love is both deeply personal and radically inclusive, and He invites us to join Him in His ministry of reconciliation. True intercession is standing in the gap for others, allowing Christ's compassion to shape our prayers, and faithfully partnering with Him in His redemptive work.

During our time of prayer, we interceded for our family members, standing in the gap on behalf of the loved ones of our brothers and sisters. As we lifted each family before the Lord, we were reminded that intercession is not only about bringing others before God but also about sharing in one another's burdens and hopes. One of the beautiful aspects of prayer is that it draws us closer not only to God but also to one another.

Whether you've been praying for years or are just getting started, you're welcome to join the next Intercessory Prayer Hour on June 7th after worship in the Upper Room. There's no pressure and no need to have all the right words. Come as you are and with whatever is on your heart. We'd love to have you with us as we seek God together and support one another in prayer.

Explore the Bible





We are excited to launch a new Bible study called *Explore the Bible!* Whether you're new to studying Scripture or have been reading the Bible for years, this will be a wonderful opportunity to explore God's Word more deeply, learn how to engage thoughtfully with Scripture, and grow together in a welcoming environment.

Further details will be communicated in the coming weeks. Come explore the Bible and discover the richness of God's truth together! If you're interested in joining, I'd love to hear from you. Contact me at ruchama@manoavalleychurch.org.



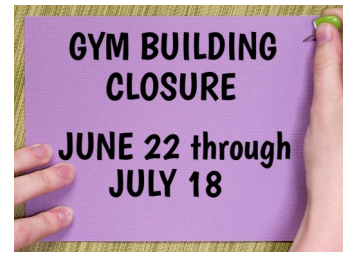
Links

- [Online Donations](#)
- [Thought For The Day](#)
-  [Like on Facebook](#)
-  [Follow on Instagram](#)



Important Notice of the Gym Building Closure

As part of scheduled facility repairs for the long-term care and safety of our church and school community, the gym building will be closed from **June 22 to July 18, 2026**. This work involves repair and painting of the gym ceiling. During this time, **there will be no entry** to the gym or any connected spaces such as the classrooms, Multi-Purpose and Upper Rooms, offices or kitchen. All gym-side programs, activities, rentals, and gatherings will be suspended during this period and there will be no snacks after worship on June 28th.



Sunday worship will continue in the sanctuary as usual. The gym building will reopen only after the work is complete and the space has been tested and cleared for use.

Mahalo for your patience, understanding, and cooperation as we care for our facilities and help keep our church and school community safe.

If you have additional questions, please contact the church office at (808) 988-3271.

Congratulations to MVC's 2026 Graduates!

Mānoa Valley Church commends our very accomplished graduates.

Anastasia Tai, daughter of **Earl** and **Evelin Tai**, graduated from Kaimuki High School on May 23rd. She plans to attend the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, seeking a bachelor's degree in social work. During her high school career, she was awarded two scholarships and graduated summa cum laude.

Logan Uechi received a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Business Administration, Marketing and a minor in Global Studies from Marist University. Her freshman year was spent abroad in Dublin, which she wrote about on page 2 of [this MVC newsletter](#). She also graduated summa cum laude and belongs to the honor societies Alpha Chi, Beta Gamma Sigma, and Alpha Mu Alpha. She is the daughter of **Sarie** and **Steven Uechi** and granddaughter of **Maizie Okimoto**. Next year, Logan plans to work as a credit analyst for First Hawaiian Bank.

Karina Mae Park Okuna graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa with a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science. She will be moving to Seattle to work with the Port of Seattle. Her parents **Inga Park Okuna** and **Neil Okuna** will miss her!

Lillie Nakamura, granddaughter of the late **Lillian** and **Bob Nakamura**, former members of MVC, graduated from Roosevelt High School and her brother, **Bennett Nakamura**, graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Jamie Seu graduated from Yale University. She is the daughter of **Carrie Okinaga** and **Scott Seu**. Next year, Jamie will be working in Boston doing clinical research at Mass General.

Congratulations to these graduates and their families who supported them throughout their educational journey! We hope they know that the MVC community will be praying for their safety, good health, and happiness in future endeavors.



Anastasia Tai



Logan Uechi



Altar Flower Donations Requested

Have you considered how you can support the Worship Committee and enhance the church's appearance? Donating a flower arrangement for the pedestal at the altar is one important way. It can be flowers from your garden or a store, a leftover arrangement from an event, or even a blossoming plant.



Elia and Kimberly

If you'd like to contribute in this way, a signup list is posted on the bulletin board directly outside the sanctuary every Sunday and you can choose from available dates and, if you wish, designate the donation in recognition of someone important to you.

Kimberly Akiona and her two brothers recently donated a flower arrangement in memory of their late mother. Here she is pictured with one of her brothers, Elia.



Signup list

Church Support for Preschool Creates a Strong Community

In recognition of the Mother's Day holiday, Mānoa Valley Church's Preschool hosted their annual **Muffins for Mom** celebration on May 8, 2026. It was a beautiful morning dedicated to honoring moms, dads, and any special person in the youngsters' lives. Families sat together, shared breakfast, and created meaningful memories with their classmates.

Heartfelt thanks go out to **Dianne Ishida**, **Bette Uyeda**, and **Pastor Ruchama** for their tremendous help in setting up and preparing the breakfast items enjoyed by our families. Their care and effort made the morning feel warm and welcoming.

A special thank you as well to **Pastor Abe** and **Pastor Ruchama** for greeting families and offering support while lead teacher **Dawn Hamada** was in the classroom caring for some of the children. Their presence helped everything run smoothly and made the guests feel truly welcomed.

One parent recognized the importance of the support from the MVC community and shared that, *"It is great knowing that the school and my child are well taken care of."* Comments like this remind us why these moments matter — they strengthen our community and show families that they are valued and supported.

Honoring moms, dads, and any special person in the youngsters' lives.



Celebrating the Birth of Nolah Rae Berger



With joy and thanksgiving, we celebrate with **Daniel and Jolie Berger** the birth of their daughter, **Nolah Rae Berger**. Nolah arrived Tuesday, May 12, at 7:24 p.m., weighing 6 lbs. 5.9 oz. and measuring 19 inches. She is healthy, beautiful, and deeply loved.

Please join us in praying for Jolie and Daniel and for big brothers **Daniel**, **William**, and **Matthew** as they welcome Nolah into their family. She is also special to her grandmother, **Martha Donozo**, who now has six grandchildren!

Welcome, little sister.

MISSIONS Moments

Family Promise Food Request



Thank you to all who have contributed food or money to our Family Promise Dinners. The children and their parents really appreciate all of the yummy and nutritious food we have provided for their 'OHANA Nights. We won't be taking food in June but will be bringing dinner on **Thursday, July 9, 2026**. If you would like to sign up to bring a dish, veggies, fruits or dessert; please use this [JULY 9 LINK](#) or contact **Inga Park Okuna** at 808-258-3781.

Thank you MVC for sharing God's radical hospitality!



Submitted by **Inga Park Okuna**, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Committee

The following is taken from the *United Church of Christ* Office of Public Policy and Advocacy.

Note: Underlined words are clickable links to receive more information.

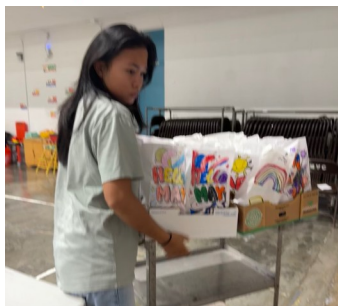
US policy, including diplomatic, political, and military assistance, play a key role in enabling Israel's violations of Palestinians rights and of US law. Congress must press for unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza, accountability for Israel's use of US-supplied weapons to commit violations of international law, ending settler violence and territorial expansion in the West Bank, and holding Israel accountable for its human rights violations of Palestinian prisoners.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is "dire," according to the UN. More than 72,000 Palestinians have been killed there since October 2023, including over 600 since the October 2025 "ceasefire." Israel continues to displace Palestinians and approve new settlements – illegal under international law – in the West Bank, including military and settler violence.

U.S. law, including laws governing foreign military assistance and the use of U.S.-provided arms such as Leahy Laws and section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, prevents the use of U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance to support unlawful harm to civilians, obstruct humanitarian relief, or support actions that violate human rights.

Contact your Congressional Representatives and Senators now to urge them to enforce US laws governing foreign military assistance by cosponsoring the Block the Bombs Act ([H.R. 3565](#)); the Food for Palestinian Children and Families in Gaza Act ([H.R. 7565](#)); and the UNRWA Funding Emergency Restoration Act of 2025 ([H.R.2411/S.898](#)).

KEAUHOU SHELTER
Volunteers are
AWESOME!



Message from David Park, MVC Office Manager and CEO of HB Foundation
Aloha Mānoa Valley Church 'Ohana,

As many of you may already know, I started a nonprofit organization called HB Foundation, which is the entity through which I run the FIT4LIFE program. HB Foundation has entered an exciting new season of growth, and so much of that has only been possible because of the support and partnership of the Mānoa Valley Church community.

What began as a small effort to provide training and education opportunities has continued to grow into something that is now serving multiple generations within our community. Since officially becoming a nonprofit organization in January 2025, HB Foundation has had the opportunity to work with participants ranging in age from 9 to 91 through programs focused on physical health, personal growth, education, and community connection.

Today, HB Foundation offers three core programs:

FIT4LIFE — focused primarily on older adults and healthy aging through guided strength training, movement, and education

ATHLETE4LIFE — designed for student-athletes looking to improve performance, movement quality, confidence, and long-term athletic development

Hoops4Life — a youth basketball development program focused on skill-building, movement, discipline, and mentorship

All of these programs are open to anyone interested in participating. At the same time, one of the core values of HB Foundation is maintaining a high level of coaching quality and individualized attention. Because of that, the programs are intentionally kept small and semi-private, with space currently limited to eight participants per group (with Hoops4Life accommodating up to 10 participants).

As the programs continue to grow, we are incredibly grateful to share that HB Foundation will officially be utilizing Room 116 of the Higuchi Life Center (MVC's gym building) as the future home of the HB Foundation Education & Training Center.



This dedicated space will allow the nonprofit to continue building a consistent and welcoming environment where participants of all ages can learn, train, grow, and build meaningful relationships. The vision for the space includes educational workshops, mentorship opportunities, strength and movement training, and continued community-focused programming.

More than anything, this next step represents partnership.



HB Foundation — and I personally — am deeply thankful to Mānoa Valley Church for the encouragement, trust, and willingness to support this vision. Having the opportunity to continue growing within the church community means a great deal, and it is exciting to see how this space can continue serving people well beyond the walls of a typical training environment.

To help support the build-out of the Education & Training Center, HB Foundation has also launched the HB Foundation Growth Fund, which will help cover flooring, equipment, wall panels, and other improvements needed to prepare the space for long-term use.

We are also currently working on launching our website, where people will soon be able to learn more about the nonprofit, its mission, and its available programs.

In the meantime, anyone interested in learning more can reach out directly to **David Park** at david@hb-foundation.org.

Thank you again to the Mānoa Valley Church community for continuing to be part of this journey.

Let's Support MVC's Harvest Fair!



Arts and crafts items galore

If you enjoy sewing, crafting, ceramics, and other creative activities, please join us in providing items to sell at our annual **Harvest Fair** scheduled for *Saturday, November 7*. People look forward to attending the fair and checking out the many interesting craft and gift items created by our church members and friends.

If you like to bake, you can make some of your favorite cookies, pies, cakes, and other goodies to sell at our fair. Homemade baked goods are always popular items and people look forward to tasting the many delicious pastries made by our church family.



Many gift items will be available.

It's not too early to start working on items to sell at the Harvest Fair and planning your baking schedule. You will not only support the programs of **Mānoa Valley Church** but you will also find pleasure in using and developing your sewing, crafting, and baking skills.

We hope you will participate in this once-a-year major fundraising activity for our Church. If you have any questions, please contact **Bette Uyeda** at auyeda001@hawaii.rr.com.



Date	Event
June 7	Intercessory Prayer, after worship, Upper Room
June 11	Kamehameha Day Holiday, office closed
June 19	Juneteenth Holiday
June 21	Sandwich making for Keauhou Shelter, 9 am, breezeway
June 22	Gym Building closed. Reopens on July 18
June 27	e-Newsletter article deadline