Mānoa Connection

MĀNOA VALLEY CHURCH

Connecting our ʻohana

eNewsletter

May 3, 2023

Message from Pastor Abe

An Invitation to ReEngage

Marriage can be one of the most beautiful things two people can experience . . . and it can also be one of the most challenging. It can feel discouraging to browse through social media feeds that are inundated with posts of what seem like perfect marriages, immaculate lives, and flawless families, while you are feeling disconnected from your spouse and your marriage has lost the spark that brought you together. The truth is **all** couples experience ups and downs in their marriage. The key to growth and strength in your marriage isn't trying to have more 'ups' and less 'downs'—it is rooted in how you, as a couple, choose to navigate the ups and downs that you face as a married couple.

If you and your spouse have been looking for a way to strengthen your marriage and build a deeper connection, I would like to invite you to consider being part of ***ReEngage***, a new marriage program at Mānoa Valley Church, designed to help couples grow and thrive in their relationship as they strive to intentionally navigate the ups and downs in their marriage journey well.

Links

Online Donations

Thought For The Day

Like on Facebook

Follow on Instagram

re|engage

ReEngage is an 8-week course that provides a safe and encouraging environment for married couples to explore their relationship and learn practical ways to improve communication, intimacy, and trust. The course is designed to help couples grow closer to each other and to God. Through weekly meetings, couples have the opportunity to connect with each other and with other couples and receive tools and strategies to help strengthen their relationship.

During the program, you'll learn how to:

- Improve communication
- Understand each other's needs
- Resolve conflicts
- Grow in your relationship with God
- Develop a deeper intimacy

ReEngage is not just about fixing problems, it is about investing in your relationship and learning how to thrive together.

ReEngage has been implemented in hundreds of communities to help couples strengthen their marriages. We believe that God has a plan for every marriage, and that every marriage can be transformed, no matter how challenging it may seem.

The next ReEngage cohort will be starting in the next few months and we want to take this opportunity to invite all married couples to join us on this journey of transformation. Whether you've been married for seven months or seventy years, whether your marriage is struggling or thriving, ReEngage is designed to meet you where you are to help you and your spouse in this next season. It's never too early or too late to invest in your marriage.

We encourage you to not miss out on this life-changing experience and incredible opportunity to invest in your marriage and create a stronger, more fulfilling relationship with your spouse. Register for ReEngage today and let us support you as you take the first step towards a stronger, healthier marriage on this journey of love and growth.

Registration is open to married couples or one spouse (if the other spouse is not able to attend). To register or learn more about the program, please email us at **ReEngage@manoavalleychurch.org**.

We look forward to seeing you at ReEngage!

In Christ, Abe

Message From Evelin, Pastor of Children and Family Ministries

Preschool Students Enjoy Field Trips Once Again

After a period of relative seclusion occasioned by the pandemic, the Mānoa Valley Church Preschool (MVCP) students have been on the move! Whether it's in the neighborhood at the Mānoa Public Library, the Farmer's Market, and Safeway or to venues a bit farther such as the Discovery Center in Kakaʻako, the Bishop Museum, or Sun Farms in Hawaii Kai, they are enjoying off-campus trips regularly.

The benefits of field trips to children are manifold: they provide children with real world experiences to reinforce, supplement and solidify the learning that happens in the classroom. Field trips are great for all types of students, including visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners!

Studies show that learning which involves our five senses becomes etched into our memories in new ways, and we are grateful to witness it firsthand! At MVCP, field trips are carefully planned in coordination with each learning unit. When the students were studying insects, they donned their red and yellow MVCP t-shirts and went to the Bishop Museum to check out their Backyard exhibit. Now, during our gardening unit, we spent the morning at a wonderful working farm in Hawaii Kai. Through these immersive experiences, our children make connections between things they are learning in the classroom and the world around them. Their joy and wonder are infectious as the children marvel at God's creation and the greater community around them!

We cannot wait to see where our active learning journey will continue to take the students of MVCP!

Click on photo to enlarge the image.

The MVC Church Council has planned a Special Congregational Meeting on **Sunday, May 21** following the worship service to conduct a ballot vote on **Senior Pastor Abraham Han's** renewal of his Call for the next three years starting on June 1st. Previously, the Council unanimously voted to recommend his contract renewal at their April 24 meeting.

An information packet will be sent to each member 10 days prior to the vote, highlighting Pastor Abe's past performance with a summary report of his three-year ministry and including a look forward over the next 3 to 5 years. Voting will be by secret ballot for members in attendance. For members voting online, all votes will be sent to Dawn Hamada and individual member votes will be kept confidential.

Subject to the congregation's approval of Pastor Han's 3-year contract renewal, a "Congregational Survey for Strategic Planning" will be sent out to all members and non-members for whom we have email or mailing addresses. This survey is to help the Pastor, MVC Leadership and committees to discern and envision the future path of MVC.

Meeting quorum is essential to the vote process so please mark May 21 on your calendar! Mahalo for your continued support

Signing Enables the Hearing Impaired to Worship

Many would agree that worshipping God and understanding the Bible is a basic right and should be available to anyone. We often don't consider, however, people who are hearing impaired or who don't read English text easily. While we have Zoom at MVC on which a person can request closed captions on their computer, what about when a person chooses to attend worship in person?

Thankfully, MVC member **Inga Park Okuna** is a veteran sign language interpreter and offers her talent to the congregation when she attends worship. Inga is a nationally certified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. She received her training at Honolulu Community College and has been working as a freelance interpreter for over 40 years. She enjoys interpreting musicals at Diamond Head Theatre and recently interpreted *Hamilton* when it was performed in Honolulu.

Inga explains: "For most people who were deaf at birth or who became deaf before the age of three, English is a second language. It is easier to access communication in one's first language, so for a person who uses ASL, it's much easier to understand an interpreter who provides additional information, facial expressions, etc. ASL does not literally translate each English word. For example, if the English sentence is 'life is a bowl full of cherries' the interpreter would sign something like, 'life is wonderful.' If the English sentence is 'You are the potter, I am the clay,' the interpreter would sign something like: 'God, you take control. You change me,' in ASL.

Inga is available to sign if it's requested beforehand. Interested people can call the office at (808) 988-3271. There are other resources: closed captions on Zoom, **University Avenue Baptist Church,** which has an interpreted service for the deaf, and **Hawaii Church for the Deaf**.

Easter Egg Hunt Celebration at MVC by Maizie Okimoto

It's Easter Sunday and there's a lot of excitement, activity and people. Some are already in the Sanctuary and others are in the breezeway decorating the Floral Cross with sprigs of blossoms. Pre-school and After School Care Program children have come to sing in the Easter Service. Other families are looking forward to the egg hunt that follows the service.

It's a perfect day, except for the rain. While the weather does not affect the message that **Pastor Han** shares with the worshippers, it changes the venue of the Egg Hunt from the playground to indoors in the gym.

Luckily, the Youth--**Sabina** and **Kepler Funasaki**, **Mateo Browning** and **Hunter Bond**--who had volunteered to hide the eggs were not bothered too much. They expertly scattered hundreds of eggs over the gym floor. **Dawn Hamada** announced at the end of worship that the egg hunt would be in the gym and children would be invited to participate by age group.

It seemed like everything had actually been planned for a rainy-day hunt in the gym. There was a peacefulness and quiet joy and acceptance of the change. The parents from the Preschool and After School Care Program easily came together with members of the Christian Education Committee stepping into directional roles to make sure that the egg hunt proceeded safely. Together they helped the children hunt for eggs, redeem the eggs for a snack bag, and receive a lovely Easter Story book.

Everyone was invited to have a hot dog and chips and bystanders enjoyed watching the activities. Children dyed eggs, colored a placemat, and played ring toss or coin toss, activities that had been set up by the ASC leader, **Trisha Honda** and her youth leaders, **McKenzie**, **So Yun**, **Kylee** and **Les**. Supervising the activities in the gym were **Ryan** and **Marcie Hamadon**. **Todd Funasaki** took photos.

Oher MVC volunteers had come early to prepare the food and set up tables--**Grace Nishimura** and her daughter **Darcy**, **Wimberly Grove**, **Evelyn Chong**, **Suzanne Shimabukuro** and **Alene Nakasone**. **Earl Yonehara, Ted Isekawa, Trisha Honda** and **Marilyn Payapaya** also helped. CEC members **Ron Lee**, **Carolyn Okinaga**, **Dawn Hamada**, and **Maizie Okimoto** enjoyed watching the activities while manning the redemption table with parent volunteers from the Preschool. A Preschool parent, **Chad Sakahara,** graciously arranged to have Starbucks coffee. **Mimi Funasaki** and **Kim Funasaki** had helped earlier by getting supplies.

We thank Jesus again for His help this Easter Day 2023. Our best plans were altered with the rain and we felt a great need for His help. In fact, by being together in the gym, we were perfectly gathered to witness the joyful interaction that Jesus had planned for us to experience with Him. **Pastor Evelin Tai**, who oversees our Children and Family Ministries, said, "I was blown away by the whole event. So many people doing so many things to make it happen. I felt so touched and grateful to be part of such a dedicated and serving community. I felt like everyone gave their five loaves and two fish (or whatever they had) and God used it to do something beautiful. Let us pray that everyone who came to the service, including the visiting families and other newcomers as well as the folks who have been coming for decades or their whole lives would come to know God better and be drawn into His love."

Indeed, let us pray that we will all reach out to others in God's Love to serve Him and give of our best to grow strong the Body of Christ at Mānoa Valley Church.

Note: Click on photo to enlarge the image.

Woman's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands

The Woman's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands (WBM) is a group of compassionate Christian women from a variety of churches and ethnic groups seeking to empower women, educate children, and partner with sister organizations sharing similar values. You can learn more here: **WBM Who We Are | hcucc**

The United Church of Christ has been a parent organization to WBM for many years. In April, the organization held its 152nd Annual Meeting! This meeting was held at Central Union Church where they currently have their administrative office. We, at Mānoa Valley Church, look forward to hearing more about this amazing organization when their Executive Director, **Clara Priester**, brings us the message on Sunday, May 14th.

It is appropriate that we will hear from Clara on Mother's Day, sharing inspirational stories of nurturing and support that are inherent to WBM. The Woman's Board of Missions is an organization that has received financial support from MVC through our Mission's giving. We have had members in common for the entire history of Mānoa Valley Church and look forward to many more years of shared ministry!

Strengthen the Church

The Strengthen the Church United Church of Christ offering is shared equally by the local conference and the national setting. The funds raised support leadership development, planting of new churches, youth ministry and innovation in existing congregations.

God is calling our congregations to be the church in new ways and your gift will enable churches to meet the emerging needs in the local community. We will receive this offering on Pentecost Sunday, May 28. Please write your check to Mānoa Valley Church and note STC on the memo line. Thank you for your generosity.

Date	Event
May 14	Mother's Day; Mission Moment speaker Clara Priester, Exec Dir of the Woman's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands
May 21	Special Congregational Meeting after Worship service
May 28	Strengthen the Church offering will be received during Worship service
May 29	Memorial Day holiday—office and Preschool closed