



# The Pearl

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PEARL CITY'S MAGAZINE | APR - JUN 2024 | VOL. 18

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Pastor Sterling Lee

# Words from the Pastor

## Be Jesus

I shared a story at a chapel service some 25 years ago about a mother who was making breakfast for her two sons (*pancakes to be specific*). Her boys, Kevin (*who was 7*), and Ryan (*who was 5*), began to argue over who was going to get the first set of pancakes, the ones coming straight off the grill. They began raising their voices, yelling at each other, going back and forth calling each other names, even running over to the stove, blocking each other out to see who would get those fresh hot pancakes first.

It (*the fresh hot pancakes*) was a pretty big deal to both Kevin and Ryan, and it didn't go unnoticed by their mom who witnessed all of this happening and saw an opportunity for a spiritual lesson. She sat her two sons down and presented them with this question, "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, let my brother have the first pancake... I can wait." There was a pause, and before she could expand on this deep spiritual teaching moment, her older son Kevin turned to his younger brother (*and at this point with a sense of pride, she knew that this was the moment of truth, that this was the defining moment that would make Ryan look up to his older brother for the rest of his life*). So, as Kevin turned to his younger brother and looked straight into his eyes, he said,

"Ryan, YOU can be Jesus!" This was not what their mother had expected, but that is how we are a lot of times in our Christian faith. We want other people to be Jesus. Now, I get this, because it's not always easy walking and living as Jesus did, but it is what God's word instructs us to do in 1 John 2:3-6. It says,

**"We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did."**

John is saying here that yes, it's going to be hard, and yes, it's what God requires; so if we're claiming we have a relationship with Jesus, we need to walk and live as Jesus did. This summer, there will be a multitude of opportunities to serve here at the church, but even more opportunities to live out our faith and be Jesus to others around us. This is not just my hope, but my prayer for our church. So, if we remember anything from these words, remember this: **Whoever claims to live in HIM must walk as Jesus did. Simply put, be Jesus to others!**

## The Pearl

is a magazine by FBC Pearl City

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## thank you

FOR VISITING WITH US!

Thank you so much for taking the time to come and worship with us. We'd love to see you again, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us!



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NEW BEGINNINGS:

# A Fresh Start in April

By Keiko Ishiwata  
(Associate Minister of Japanese-speaking Congregation)

In Japan, the arrival of April marks more than just the blossoming of cherry trees. It heralds the beginning of a new school year—a time of fresh starts, eager faces, and the promise of growth. As students don their crisp uniforms and step into classrooms, they embark on a journey of learning and discovery.

For us, the Japanese-speaking congregation (JSC), this season resonates deeply. We, too, have embarked on a new study—one that transcends textbooks and classroom walls. Our focus? *The Purpose-Driven Life*, penned by Pastor Rick Warren. This powerful book, available in Japanese, invites us to explore the very essence of our existence.

The book sets forth a 40-day immersion plan—a deliberate journey into understanding our purpose. Each chapter invites us to interact with its wisdom, reading it one day at a time. (Actually, we read one day's portion weekly.)

It's never too late to ponder our life's purpose. We are never too old to adjust our life according to God's purpose for our life! Whether we are seasoned believers or new "students" in our faith, the call remains the same: align our lives with God's will. The Bible reveals His heart, and *The Purpose-Driven Life* guides us toward living intentionally.

As the *sakura* (cherry blossoms) petals fall, let's encourage one another. Let's embrace fresh beginnings, just as the Japanese school year does. Whether you are a seasoned believer or someone seeking answers, take that step. Start something new—a journey into God's heart!

Photo by Dallas Niyama



# Meet our new **Bookkeeper**

**M**y name is Donna Daoang. My parents emigrated from Korea to Hawaii in the 70's. Born and raised on Oahu, I am a mother of 8 (5 children and 3 step-children), ranging in age from 11-25, and grandmother of 2. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, binge-watching tv and movies, and especially eating out. I keep myself very busy with my children, babysitting my grandchildren, working 4

jobs while also volunteering at my youngest children's schools. My work experience ranges from Banking to Construction to Case Management to Retail and general Office Administration. In my short time at FBC, I have met many wonderful and kind people. I am grateful for the opportunity to be working at FBC and hope to get better acquainted with everyone here!



*Donna Daoang (left) with her family.*

# Meet our **Summer Interns**



## **Emma Allender**

Hi! My name is Emma Allender. I am a 23-year-old from Knoxville, Tennessee. I recently graduated from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee with my bachelor's degree in public relations. I grew up in church and the Lord brought me to faith when I was eight years old. I have a heart for ministry and have served with my local church in student ministry for five years as well as participating in various missional trips. I had the opportunity to do a summer missions internship with the IMB in Birmingham, England in the summer of 2022 which grew my love for vocational ministry. I am excited to serve alongside First Baptist Church Pearl City this upcoming summer and I look forward to meeting many new brothers and sisters in Christ.



## **Nora Grace Dorris**

A little background about myself: I'm from Nashville, Tennessee, and I have pretty much lived there my entire life. I am graduating from Volunteer State Community College in May with my associate degree and am trying to figure out what I will do next semester, whether that be transferring somewhere to get my bachelor's degree or start working. I go to First Baptist Church in Hendersonville and had the amazing opportunity to come to Pearl City last summer with a group of other college students at the church. I'm so excited to be coming back to Pearl City this summer! After being able to come for a week last summer, I knew I wanted to come back at some point but had no idea when that would be. I'm so thankful God opened the door for me to be able to come back this summer and serve with Pearl City! I'm so excited to see how God moves this summer!

# BUILDING AND GROUNDS UPDATE!

## Exciting Updates on Our Church Projects!

We are thrilled to share progress on our ongoing efforts to improve our church facilities

### Completed Projects:

- **Let there be Light!** Brand new lights have been installed both inside and outside the sanctuary. The fluorescent lights in the Building G classrooms and the stairway lightbulb have also been repaired/replaced.
- **That's Cool!** A new air conditioning unit has been installed in the Resource Room
- **Storage Solutions!** 3 out of 4 storage sheds have newly built foundations and shelves
- **A Fresh Coat!** The interior of the church office, exterior of the fellowship hall, exterior of the sanctuary, and the lanai have all been re-painted.
- **Beautiful Benches!** Benches were installed underneath the mango tree
- **In Hot Water!** The water heaters in the Fellowship Hall kitchen and the Hospitality Apartment have been changed
- **Hinging on Hope!** The bookkeepers office door hinge has been repaired and the door knob has been replaced.
- **Posting Pastor!** A 5' x 4' bulletin board was installed in Pastor Sterling's office

### Upcoming and Ongoing Projects:

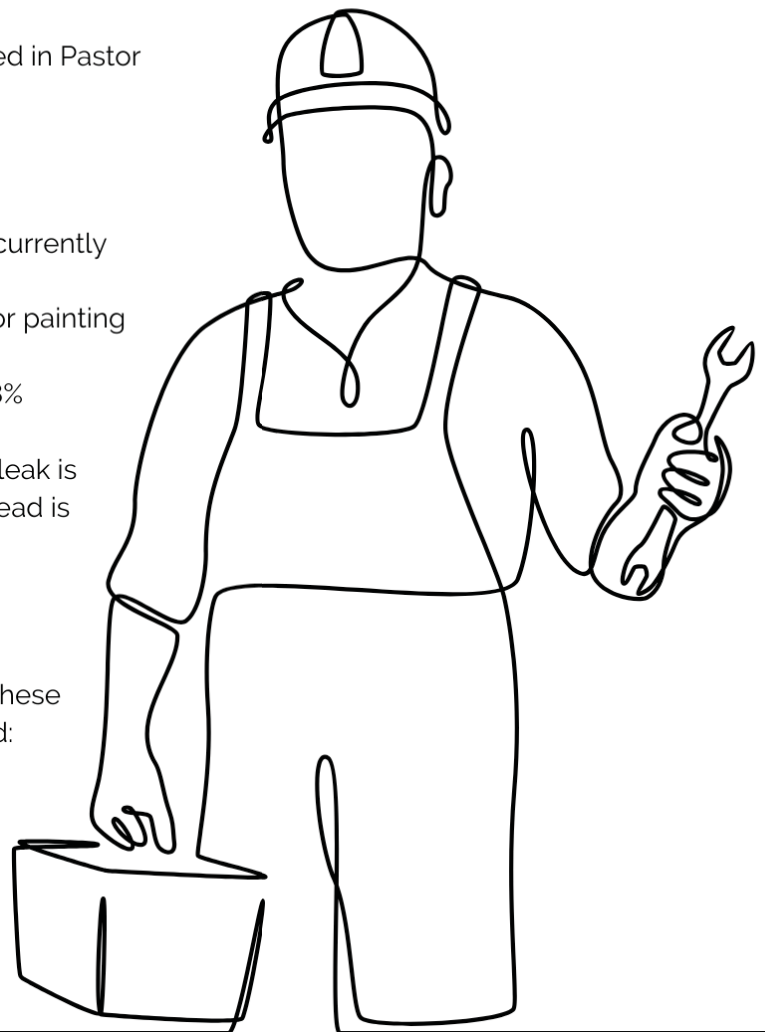
- **Safer Steps!** The concrete steps for Building G is currently being repaired
- **Walking on Solid Ground!** The flooring and interior painting of the Fellowship Hall will be re-done
- **Rail Job!** The painting of the railings have been 98% completed.
- **Plugging the Leak!** In Building A201, a new utility leak is being installed with a new faucet. A new shower head is installed.

### How You Can Help:

We are grateful for the congregation that has made these projects possible! There are still ways to get involved:

- **Volunteer!** Lend a hand with upcoming projects

For more information, please contact Danny Binz at [handymandannyb@gmail.com](mailto:handymandannyb@gmail.com)





# FRONTLINE MINISTRY

## Outlook 2024

**T**his year our church has been working towards bringing back some normalcy to our Sunday worship services since the pandemic. We are excited to see more of our ohana joining us in person for worship and other activities! Welcome back! We've missed worshipping, studying, and serving together with you as a church family.

In January, with the help of our deacons, we began serving communion again every other month. In March we no longer used the offering boxes and our Frontline ushers now assist once again with the passing of the offering bowls during service. We also began serving light refreshments in the lanai on the first Sunday of the month between 8 a.m. worship and Sunday School.

Our Frontline team of volunteers are honored to answer His call to serve in this ministry. There are many reasons for joining this ministry: 1) our love for God, 2) our love for those who join us on Sundays, and 3) an eagerness to extend God's love in welcoming our members and guests as

they come from the parking lots...to the church campus... to the walk to the sanctuary/classes...and returning to their cars.

Our Frontline Ministry team serves at both the 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Sunday services, Thanksgiving Service/ Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and special churchwide events.

There are currently a total of 14 volunteers serving each Sunday with 7 assisting during each worship service. You may have noticed that some of the Ushers, Greeters, Crosswalk, Parking, and Security attendants are there every Sunday! We are blessed by their commitment and dedication to serve the Lord. We truly appreciate all our Frontliners for their faithful service!

IF you want to learn more about this ministry, please email Janis Saiki at [janis.saiki@gmail.com](mailto:janis.saiki@gmail.com) or call Joanne Arakaki at 808-455-2011 or email: [jarakaki@fbcpearlcity.org](mailto:jarakaki@fbcpearlcity.org).

He is

By Associate Pastor John Lee

# RISEN

*Indeed!*



**W**hat a wonderful celebration of our Lord's Resurrection at FBCPC. We were able to see old, familiar, and new faces in person since the pandemic. Our members invited neighbors, family, and friends to gather for worship, fellowship, and activities for the entire family. We were able to debut our Children's Amphitheater as around 30 of our preschool through elementary-aged students gathered for singing led by Matt and Rhysa and some exciting, Easter-themed games run by our high school and middle school students.

In both our traditional and contemporary services, we started our time together by releasing balloons into the ceiling of our sanctuary to see a tangible way of what the Resurrection entails. The songs, prayer, and sermon pointed everyone to our Resurrected Savior. In between our worship services, we were treated to lots of onolicious savory treats like Portuguese bean soup and bacon-

wrapped Lit'l smokies to the delightful sweet creations of homemade hot cross buns and bread pudding.

Our church staff wants to give a special "shout-out" to everyone who helped to make our Resurrection Sunday a success. We had 3 weekends of building and painting the benches for the Amphitheater; our children's Sunday school teachers extended their time of being with the children to enable our parents to attend worship service without interruption; our worship service Praise and Tech teams; the publicity from our Social Media team; and the many folks who helped to set-up, clean up, pass out postcard invitations to our neighbors, and prayer walk the campus and community in preparation for God to work mightily in the lives of our people. Great is your treasure in heaven! Please join us in prayer that more and more folks will join us for in-person worship in the weeks to come because it's great to see everyone again.









# New Zealand



**K**ia Ora (Aloha) from Auckland! We have now been in New Zealand for 16 months, and God has richly blessed us in every way. Early last year we began serving at a free lunch every Wednesday for students at St Paul's Church. It is located right across the street from two major campuses: The University of Auckland and Auckland University of Technology. We have 100-200 students each week. From that, we began entertaining students with trips to the beach, picnics in the parks, and home-cooked meals in our home. Seven months ago, we began a Bible Discussion Group in our home on Friday nights. We have had almost 40 students visit our group and have averaged about ten per week.

We are literally reaching the world! Our students come from China, India, Sri Lanka, Iran, Japan, Korea, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Samoa, and Germany. These students are willing to be loved and are so open to finding out more about Christianity. On Good Friday,

we baptized three of the students who attend our Friday group. All three are from China.

We also are attending and serving at International Baptist Church, Central Auckland. This church is truly international with 24 nations represented in the congregation of 110. Pastor Erwin leads the church to support us as we seek to make disciples of students so they can make disciples wherever they go after university.

Please pray for us as we work with so many different cultures and levels of English. We have several students who are seriously considering giving their lives to Christ.

We could not do this without your financial and prayerful support. Thank you so much!! We hope to see you in June and give a more personal report of what God is doing.

Blessings,  
Rob and Donna Thommarson



# Fiji

## Pastor Tuks



“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained in order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you...” —*Titus 1:5 ESV*

**A**loha and warm Pacific greetings to you our dear brothers and sisters at First Baptist Church of Pearl City. Thank you for your generosity and prayerful support in enabling me to continue my seminary studies. I am currently studying at the Sydney Missionary and Bible College (Australia) and upon completion of my studies, I hope to help re-establish a theological education for our pastors and leaders. There is a huge need for pastors to fill in the vacant positions in some of our churches, but with no opportunities for training available locally, we feel under-equipped for the huge task before us.

Apart from being a full-time pastor at Namadi Heights Baptist Church, I have also been traveling across other Pacific islands training preachers on how to preach God’s word faithfully and relevantly.

Fiji and the other islands in the South Pacific have a lot of

similarities with the island of Crete where Titus was sent. The cultural influence often overrides everything. The Cretans were known as liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons (Titus 1:12). And the church in Crete had people who were insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers (Titus 1:10). The culture of Crete had influenced the church, so the Apostle Paul suggested that the solution to this problem was to appoint good leaders in the church. If the church in Crete was to influence their culture, then it needed godly, Christ-centered leadership. Similarly, if we are to have healthy churches in Fiji and the South Pacific, then we need godly, Christ-centered leadership in our churches. To develop these leaders, we are in desperate need of a training center to equip them.

The government can only allow us to operate if we have the accredited training, which is why I am studying through an Australian accredited institution. Mahalo for your partnership in the gospel.

Pastor Tuks (Pio Nakesu and Namadi Heights Baptist Church)





# Kids' Deaf Camp III

By Grace Poei

**T**hank you to First Baptist Church Pearl City for the use of your facilities and a big mahalo to the numerous volunteers who served at Deaf Camp III in various capacities.

You have made a tremendous impact through Deaf Camp, and you may never see its result, however, I would like to share something that a friend shared with me. She is the only deaf person in her family, and after the death of both parents, she had to hire an interpreter to have an in-depth discussion with her hearing brother to discuss important family matters. Her hearing brother did not sign, communication was limited, and as a result, they did not have a close relationship growing up. After the death of both parents, the relationship became even tenser.



Some of the kids who came to camp come from families where there is one deaf child. One mom shared that she was inspired to become more American Sign Language (ASL) fluent so that she can have a better relationship with her deaf daughter. Some hearing kids at camp were frustrated with being in an environment where ASL is the main communication language and realized that their deaf siblings will never hear, but they can learn to communicate with them. This is huge and will make a long-term impact!

We continue to build relationships at each camp with the kids and their parents and have opportunities to pray with and for these families.

At this camp, we had a professional cook from Tennessee who graduated from culinary school and volunteered to teach cooking classes. Each camper had a gift of a cooking kit with recipes that he or she learned and can practice their skills at home.

Reaching deaf kids and adults in Hawaii has been very difficult -- we had 11 kids at camp, many are siblings. This will be a long-term commitment as we build trust and relationships with deaf families. We live in a broken world; many parents are very leery of who they can trust with their children -- much more so for deaf parents.

We have had several new deaf and hearing adult volunteers with ASL skills at this camp. Some are non-church members, and they are hearing the gospel message through the Bible stories, testimonies, songs, and crafts while being trained for future camps.

We also appreciate those who were taking ASL classes in preparation for the camp. Keep up the great work!

# Vacation Bible School 2024

It's almost summer and time for Vacation Bible School (VBS), five Friday nights of activities for children from 4 years old to those completing 6th grade. This year's theme is SCUBA: diving into friendship with God! Each night will be filled with God's love shared through Bible stories, music, snacks, games, crafts and lots of fun. Register the children in your family and neighborhood, beginning May 5th. If you are interested in joining in the fun as a helper, see the people at our registration table on Sundays or June Masuno.

## FBC Pearl City's Summer VBS 2024

Ages 4 years - 6th Grade

May 31 &  
June 7, 14, 21, 28

6-8:45PM



Register online OR



<https://tinyurl.com/fbcpc2024VBS>

in person  
in courtyard after  
8 & 10:45AM  
worship services

First Baptist Church of Pearl City

# PRAISE + PRAYER NIGHT

MAY 25  
6:00 PM

UNDER THE  
MANGO TREE

# PICKLEBALL PICKLEBALL PICKLEBALL

**4th Sundays  
4PM-6PM**

***in the middle +  
lower parking lots***



## **JOIN US ON 2ND SUNDAYS! SUNDAY BASKETBALL CLUB**

**\*NOTE: During the month of May we  
are meeting on Sunday May 5**

**Come and get some exercise with us**

**Sunday, 3-5pm at Highlands District  
Park Outdoor Courts**

**Bring a friend!**

**BASKETBALL  
CLUB**





FBC PEARL CITY

**The Pearl** is a quarterly magazine published by First Baptist Church of Pearl City.  
*If you want to contribute an article, testimony, news blurb, and/or photo,  
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*Cover Photo by Pastor Sterling Lee*