

# The Pearl

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Pastor Sterling Lee

## Words from the Pastor

# The Importance of Community



In 1965 a longitudinal study (or otherwise known as longitudinal surveys or panel studies) was conducted with residents from Alameda County, which is located in the San Francisco Bay area. The study closely examined the relationship between health and lifestyle choices.

The study involved repeated observations of the same variables (here it was with the people and where they lived) over a period of time. The original cohort of about 7000 participants (which started in 1965) were given health questionnaires in 1965, 1973, 1985, 1988, 1994, and 1999.

The researchers involved with the study found that those who followed 5-6

practices (that they identified) tended to live healthier and longer lives. Those 5-6 practices were as follows:

- Avoiding smoking.
- Regular exercise.
- Maintaining a healthy body weight.
- Good sleeping habits (7-8 hours a night).
- Limiting the consumption of alcohol.
- Healthy social & community ties.

Now, I think that most would agree with this list (at least most of it that is), but that last one wasn't taken as seriously, and for some, it still isn't today. The study found that the most isolated people were 3 times more likely to die than the most relationally connected people. They also discovered that those in the study who had bad health habits--smoking,

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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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no exercise, poor eating, obesity, and alcohol use--but had strong relational connections, these individuals had a significantly longer life expectancy than people who had great health habits, but were physically and socially isolated.

In other words, the study discovered that it's better to eat ice cream and drink smoothies with good friends than to eat broccoli or kale alone. Now, this might be my own personal interpretation, but I believe a lot of this has been affirmed as we, or rather the world, spent close to a year distancing ourselves socially from one another due to the pandemic. That speaks volumes to healthy social and community ties.

In another study by the Journal of the American Medical Association, they took 276 volunteers and infected them with a virus, basically the common cold. Now, in this study, they found that individuals who had deeper

emotional connections (meaning deeper relationships, relational support networks, friend circles), did four times better fighting off illness than those who were more isolated. The individuals with deeper emotional connections appeared to be better equipped to fight off the colds than their relationally unconnected counterparts.

The reason I shared this is that studies like this (the Alameda County Study) confirm at a clinical level what scripture has informed us from the very start, and that is we were to be in relationship with one another, we were created for community. Acts 2:42 says,

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They

sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Luke’s words here describe what being in community was to be like. Being in community is simply being in a place with like-minded individuals, who come together to worship, to grow, encourage, support, pray, and care for each other. If it sounds familiar, it’s because he’s describing the church. I share this because it’s my prayer that we be intentional about being in community with one another this Easter Sunday (March 31st) as we celebrate together the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus!

# You're Invited!

## BRING A FRIEND TO EASTER SUNDAY!

### MARCH 31, 2024

Worship  
Easter Egg Hunt, Games,  
Refreshments, and Fellowship  
Stay tune for more info





# Meet Our New Associate Pastor John Lee



**H**ello FBC Pearl City Ohana, my name is John Lee and I am the new Associate Pastor. My family was overwhelmed by the love and hospitality that was shown to us during our 1st official Sunday (1/7) at church at the 9 a.m. Coffee Hour. Please continue to introduce and re-introduce yourselves to me and my family so we can remember all of your names. We have lived in China for 8 years as IMB missionaries and have been back with family and friends in Hawaii for almost 10 years. My lovely wife, Trisha, works at Hawaii Baptist Academy as the Vice-Principal of the Elementary campus. My two adorable daughters both attend HBA. Cinnamon is an 8th grader and Cassia is a 6th grader.

I love to watch all types of sports, but my favorite sport is basketball. I

am glad that both my daughters enjoy playing basketball for HBA and their club team, Hoops 4 Christ. In my spare time, I also enjoy being a basketball referee as I am able to get some exercise and build relationships with people in the community in hopes of sharing Jesus with them. I love cooking and trying new recipes so if you have some favorites, please share them with me.

As I begin serving at FBC Pearl City, I am looking forward to equipping and working with the members and regular attenders in sharing Christ with their family, friends, co-workers, and community in hopes of bringing more people to worship Jesus at our church. I am excited to help the church body in living out our church core values of Love, Community, Excellence, Service, and Risk Taking. I believe that God will do great things through our church so

that more and more people will praise, worship, and glorify Him.





# What's New with the JSC?

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



In 2024, the Japanese-Speaking Congregation (JSC) of our church is embracing the theme of Ephesians 5:15-17, which encourages us to be mindful of how we live, making the most of every opportunity and understanding the Lord's will. The passage reads:

*"So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."*  
- Ephesians 5:15-17

As we embark on this new year, we recently gathered for a joyous shinnenkai, New Year's celebration. The event was a special occasion where not only JSC members, but church staff members and the 2023 Japan mission team and their families came together. We were also delighted to welcome participants from the Waikiki Japanese service, making it a truly grand celebration of unity among all our Japanese ministry partners.

In addition to our festive gathering, we are excited to announce the commencement of a Japanese Bible study at Plaza Pearl City. The inaugural session on January 18 saw the participation of 11 individuals, and we are filled with anticipation to witness how God will work through this dedicated time of studying His word.

We are grateful for your support and look forward to the journey that lies ahead for JSC in 2024. Together, let us uphold one another in prayer and celebrate the unity and growth as Christ's church!





by Rhysa Lee

# College & Young Adult Happenings



**T**he shutdown. That's where our story begins. Our college and young adult ministry moved to Zoom during the pandemic, and we never quite made it out. Sad, but true. Fast forward to the summer of 2023 and it feels like the world is finally finding its groove again. With a handful of college students and young adults, our revival began.

We kicked off the summer with a beach day, game night, and monthly pickleball days. As we transitioned out

of summer, we had a pop-up coffee shop in the college house, and we launched our weekly Wednesday night Bible study. Although a lot of our group is made up of college students who had gone back to the mainland for the fall semester, we continued to meet every week.

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

- Hebrews 10:24-25

Most weeks, it was just two or three of us hanging out in the college house. We shared the highs and lows of our lives, delved into how the book of James applied to our daily lives, and turned the house into our safe haven. It became the spot where we could be fully known by each other and by God.

connection with each other sure did. From a group of zero to a community of three, it's more than we could have prayed for. Our weekly Bible study now takes place on Monday nights at 6 p.m. in the college house. We've kicked off a series on community, exploring how God wired us for connection in a world that's more connected yet more isolating than ever.

Now, even if you're not a college student or young adult in the post-grad or early career stage, there are still ways you can be part of our crew. Prayer, for starters—pray for God to keep moving in the lives of our students. Spread the word too! Tell the young adults in your life about us. We're hoping to welcome anyone into our community, so we can all grow in our relationship with God side by side. And if you would like to share your testimony and how God has been working in your life, we'd love to bring you over to the house to talk and get to know our group.

A big shoutout to everyone for the support and encouragement. We're on this revival journey for our college and young adult group, and we wouldn't be able to do it without you guys!

Fast forward to 2024, a new year! Our numbers might not have skyrocketed, but our faith and







## *Mahalo Carolyn!*

Sunday, January 28 was a wonderful day of celebration as FBC Pearl City held a Retirement Luncheon for Carolyn Izumigawa who served on staff for 29 years. It was our first churchwide potluck luncheon since Covid and the large gathering ranged from young children to kupunas who came out to honor and show their appreciation for all that Carolyn has done in service for the Lord and our church ohana. Heartfelt love and thanks for Carolyn was shown by the many lei/gift presentations, speeches, and the presence of many well-wishers who showed up to celebrate her life's investment into the Lord's work here with the people and programs of our church.

We wish Carolyn a wonderful, well-deserved retirement and pray for the Lord's blessings on her and her family as she enters this new chapter of her life. The adventure begins! 🥰



# Servant Leadership

## The Quiet and Crucial Work of Deacons



By Sean Oliver,  
*Deacon Chair*

**H**ave you ever wondered about the role of our deacons? Let's go to God's word and learn how it all started in the sixth chapter of Acts.

"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also, Philip, Procorus,

Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them."

Deacons are model servants appointed to a local church office. They are deployed to assist the pastors in the ministry, protecting church unity, organizing practical service, and meeting tangible needs of the church and the congregation.

Today in our church, God has begun a new work within the Deacon ministry. The deacons are humbly serving in all areas of the church and this year with the Holy Spirit leading, the deacons will be serving in starting new ministries, serving in existing ministries, and serving and supporting Pastor and the staff with meeting the needs of the church and congregation.



So, let's meet our Deacons:

Deacon Chair – Sean Oliver  
Vice Chair – Matthew Lopez  
Secretary- Lynne Nohara-Kido  
Jackie Tom  
Aileen Potter  
Charlene Vaughn  
Danny Binz  
Ian Pang

We would love to get to know you better, pray for you and your loved ones.


Please join us for the ordination service for our newest deacons, Danny Binz and Ian Pang. It will be held on Sunday, February 18 at 7 p.m.





**Deacon Ordination  
for Danny Binz & Ian Pang**

Sunday, February 18  
at 7:00pm



**SATURDAY 10 FEB**  
*from 6:30 pm*

**WORSHIP  
NIGHT**

**ADORATION +  
REFLECTION**

 the Courtyard



# Deaf Camp Hawaii at FBC Pearl City

by Beryl Corey, *Deaf Church @ Brentwood Baptist, Brentwood, TN*

**T**here is an eight-week-long Deaf Camp in Brentwood, TN that is open to Deaf children beginning at the age of 18 months through seniors in high school. It has grown from a one-day teen gathering to an incredible place for language acquisition, for developing a community for everyone with a Deaf family, and for long-lasting Deaf friends. It is an incredible academic, social, and recreational program.

A 3-day Deaf Camp for the Deaf, hearing siblings, and CODAs made its way to Pearl City. There is no greater way to begin 2024 than to see Deaf children, their siblings and CODAs all running around FBC of Pearl City at Deaf Camp Hawaii. They laugh, they learn, they share, they create, they memorize, they play, they teach, and they perform. Ten children registered for





Deaf Camp Hawaii in March 2023 with eight returning to the camp in January of 2024 for a total of eleven children. The daily activities include crafts, ASL songs, creative games and recreation, team building activities, drama, bible study, and breakfast and lunch.

The TN team is returning to partner with the Hawaii team to provide a 4-day camp March 19 – 22, 2024. It will take a committed Hawaii team of churches and people to keep the momentum going for this to become a forever program for all Deaf children of Hawaii. On January 5th, the children led several songs and performed for their parents and the community. They asked the staff to do one more song! They asked for a fourth day of camp. It is our hope the Hawaii team would dream of a 2-week, day camp and water that dream even bigger!

One of the dreams includes providing a place for all who embrace American Sign Language and be a support for hearing parents with Deaf children. This family unit is the only one in which parents and children do not share the same ethnicity. These families are either Deaf parents with hearing children or hearing parents with Deaf children. The two cultures and languages possess no commonality.

Deaf Camp Hawaii has an opportunity to see families blossom within the ASL community and has an incredible opportunity to lead people to Jesus Christ. God has called the local church to care for orphans and until hearing parents learn/

know ASL very well they cannot develop incredible relationships with their Deaf child; therefore, these Deaf children are orphans within their homes. We are called to preserve these families and foster relationships that we know are possible if ASL is provided to the whole family.

We are planning a Parent Conference in September, and we hope to livestream it to all the cities where we are planting Deaf Camp! We want to be an extension of all God is doing in Hawaii! Thank you so much for partnering with TN to introduce Deaf children and their families to Jesus Christ.





# Deaf Camp Hawaii

By Grace Poei, *University Avenue Baptist Church, Honolulu, HI*

Imagine being in a foreign country, unable to understand the language, the culture is different. As you walk around the community, you observe some people in deep, thoughtful conversation; others are happily chatting, laughing, and you have no idea why. After a few days, it's frustrating, lonely, and you long to hear a familiar tongue. Then your ears pick up words that you understand, familiar expressions that are like a ray of sunshine. Well, that is the best analogy that I can think of that describes how a deaf person feels in the hearing world, unable to communicate, then the excitement when they meet other people who they can sign with.

Deaf Camp Hawaii was a fun place where children learned songs, Bible stories, fun games, and crafts - all planned for deaf kids, where most people sign in their language. Another group of kids who are encouraged to participate are KODA's - Kids Of Deaf Adults. Bilingual, they live in two cultures - the hearing and deaf. One girl said she had so much fun, she didn't want to leave and was so sad every evening when camp was over.

This was a partnership with several churches in Tennessee and Hawaii. We appreciate the generosity of FBCPC, allowing the use of your facilities, and the many volunteers who prepared marvelous meals and snacks.

The next kids' deaf camp is scheduled for March 19-22, 2024, only a few months away! We also have events planned for the deaf community, so talk about Deaf Camp - you may know someone who has relatives, co-workers, or neighbors who are deaf.





# March 19-22 2024

8am - 5:00pm FOUR DAYs

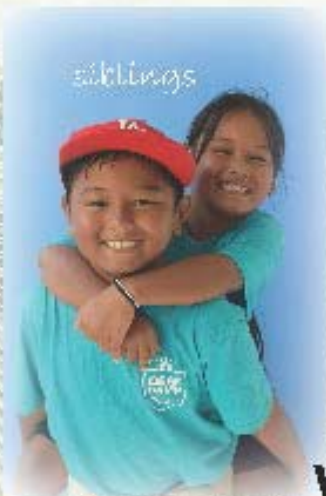


*More info to come...*



## Hawaii DEAF Camp

*First Baptist Church  
Pearl City*



[www.thedeafcamp.com](http://www.thedeafcamp.com)



# Japan

## Towerys in Sendai



**G**reetings from Sendai, Japan! We hope you had a blessed Christmas and a happy new year. It has been a difficult season for many Japanese people because of the Noto Peninsula Earthquake which damaged wide areas of Ishikawa prefecture on January 1st. So many people are still living in temporary shelters, and several hundred middle school students relocated to continue their studies. We are partnering with local Baptist churches to provide aid to those in need. Please pray for everyone involved.

Our ministry grew in many ways last year thanks to generous support from your church. We were able to finish fixing the roof and siding of Hope House which allowed us to have ministry gatherings again. The mission team your church sent in September touched and encouraged many people including us. The team members shared their personal testimonies, performed beautiful hula

dances, sang worship songs, led craft activities for children, and spent quality time with everyone who came to the fellowship. We could tell those who were there were able to feel God's love and hope. Several moms who came to the fellowship have asked when they would be able to see their new friends from Hawaii again. We can't wait to welcome more mission teams from your church. We want to say thank you to the mission team members and everyone who prayed and donated for the mission trip.

We are having ministry gatherings with 3 to 4 different groups of people monthly. Each group is unique and the topics we share are different every time. Some of the moms who attend the gathering regularly are asking more questions about God. One of them, who had attended the fellowship when the mission team was here, has been asking questions about what it means to have a personal relationship with

God. She has two daughters, and they all seem to believe in God. Please pray for those who are seeking God. We pray God will continue to open more doors for us to minister to people who have never heard the gospel.

Thank you for remembering our family in your prayers. Michael had surgery to remove colon cancer and finished 6 months of chemo last year. He had to have another surgery for a hernia in December. The surgery was successful, and he is recovering well. Yu is thankful to have a teaching job and ministries she loves. Luke turned 13 in January and enjoys playing basketball. Logan is 10 and loves taking care of his pets. He still asks when he can go back to Pearl City to look for geckos around the church. We think of you all often and thank God for the ways He has blessed us through your church. Thank you for partnering with us to share the gospel with the Japanese people. May God continue to bless you richly this year.

In Him,  
Michael, Yu, Luke and Logan Towerly











FBC PEARL CITY

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*If you want to contribute an article, testimony, news blurb, and/or photo,  
please email [office@fbcpearlcity.org](mailto:office@fbcpearlcity.org)*

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