THE SPIRIT NEWSLETTER



A PARTY FOR THE LOST

We often overthink evangelism and create false obstacles that challenge the need for every believer to share the gospel cure for the punishment of sin. It is always healthy and good for us to read more, study more, develop strategies, assess plans and build systems for evangelism. However no one needs seminary, a masters degree, a class, or incredible theological knowledge in order to participate in evangelism.

Matthew 9:10 teaches us about Matthew's first reaction after believing in the truth of Jesus the Messiah and becoming His follower.

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His first move or play in the new life in Jesus wasn't to sign up for membership class or buy a study bible. Matthew hosts a banquet or a party for his closest friends.

> *10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*
>
> *Matthew 9:10-11*

There is much to be said about Matthew being a Jewish tax collector, which was considered a betrayal to Israelites and working for the enemy (Rome). Jesus reaching out to him in itself is hard to digest for any Jewish reader. Instead of Matthew being embarrassed or ashamed, his newfound joy in Christ and his love for his friends led him to gather as many of them as possible so they too could know the Savior. His central core had been changed by Christ which washed his shame away and moves him to step into a new direction. The Pharisees in this passage react with judgment and criticism. Matthew responds with evidence that the gospel has changed him. He is so moved and overwhelmed with Christ, that his natural instinct is to share.

Lets look at the practical theology here:

Matthew hosts a party.

He does exactly what his culture and lifestyle understand. Banquets were very common among the elite and the rich. He did what would attract most people and his closest friends.

He brought the teacher to them.

He didn't preach for 45 minutes. If he did share, he is most likely sharing his testimony about how he connected the dots to Jesus.

My last lead pastor would often say that we invite people to church to "come and see" and we evangelize to lead them to "come and die". At some point we hope that people would eventually believe in the gospel and devote their life to Jesus. To die to self, to die to their old ways and old life and pursue the new life in Christ.

So here is a question: How are you reaching the lost and making disciples? Where is our joy in the Lord that expresses itself to our friends?

Matthew invites people to his home, builds relational equity, and shares the life transforming good news of the gospel.

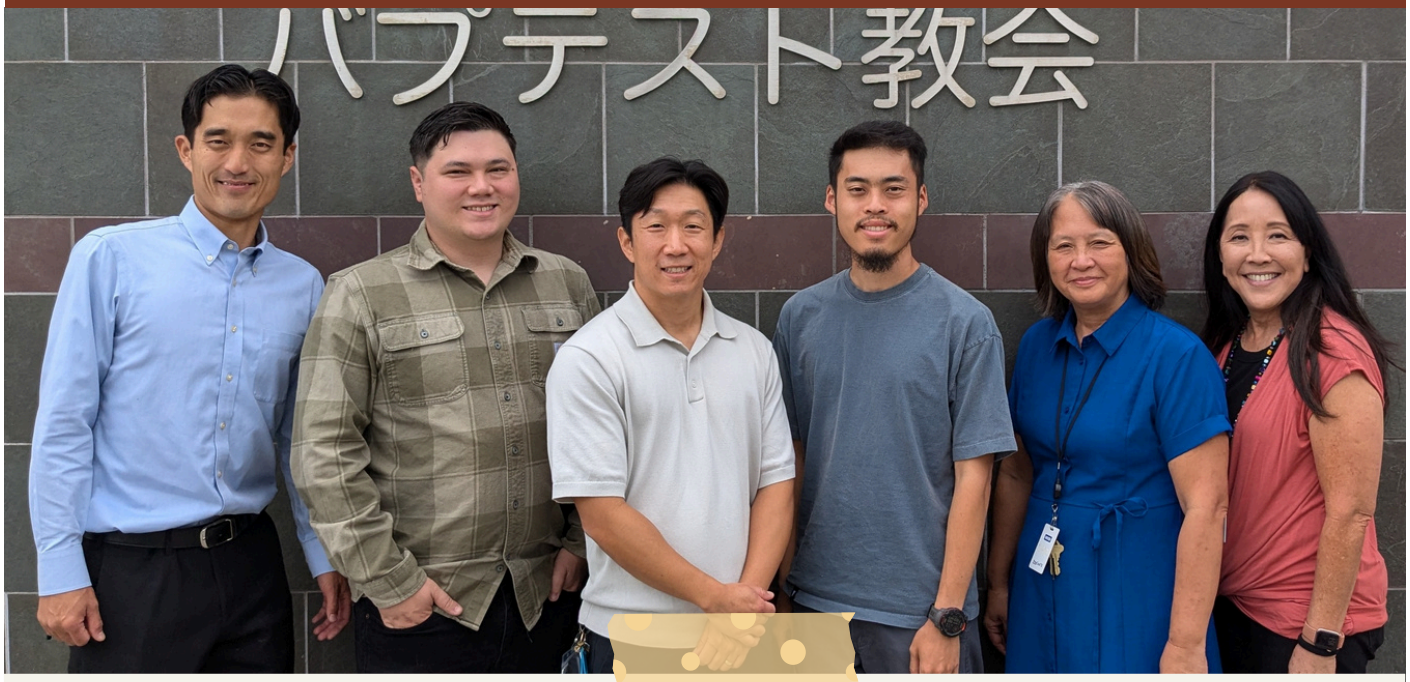
Who is invited to your party?

John Shin

Assistant Pastor

THAILAND SHORT TERM MISSION

From L to R: Shioki Hioki- Team Leader, Stephen Doan, Jason Park, Joshua Matsuda, Emi Osato, and Eltheia Shiozaki.



From January 28 - February 11, 2027, GVBC is sending a short-term mission team to Thailand for 15 days. Our team will again be partnering with long-term American Baptist missionaries Mike and Becky Mann. Over the past 30 years, the Manns, through their organization, Integrated Tribal Development Foundation (ITDF), have completed over 320 water projects for hill tribe villages in the mountainous area of Northern Thailand. The main task of our team will be to add water system capacity for a cluster of Karen hill tribe villages by building a water system. We will be working shoulder-to-shoulder with the Manns, the staff of ITDF and the local villagers.

Clean water for a village changes everything. The primary purpose of this mission trip, however, is to share God's love for the villagers. We will be immersed in the community as we dig trenches, build a water filtration tank, a water storage tank, install faucets and build bathrooms for the village. During this time we will stay 9 nights as the guests of the villagers and have the opportunity to interact with the villagers in their daily lives.

Thank you for your prayers and support!

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Praise God we had a blessed Harvest Festival on October 31st! Despite the rain, we welcomed 247 children; but with parents and other relatives, there were 500 family members who attended. Thank you to the 115 wonderful volunteers who served at this event. Also, we made $1900 in donations for the food. God is good; and what an honor to be a light in our community!

Susan Wakuta

Kids Director



















247 kids

500 family members

115 volunteers

$1,900 raised for children's scholarships

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER BOARD UPDATE

The main topic of conversation in October and November was the proposed 2027 budget. In October, the Board approved the budget and board member nominees to present to the church for adoption at the annual election meeting. However, a few GVBC members joined us at the November meeting to share their heartfelt concerns about the 2027 budget process. They expressed their commitment to GVBC and its congregational nature and asked us to reflect on this as well, not just because we are Baptists, but because throughout our 100+ year history, we have strived to be a church where everyone takes responsibility for its ministries and the budget that supports it.

We agreed that even if it has been imperfect in practice, when we come together, we move mountains. That togetherness comes not from any of the material things this church is blessed with, but from caring for one another as we accept and express God's love.

Pastor Daniel has also been leading discussions with the staff and the Board to reorganize our ministries in ways that we hope will improve communication, strengthen accountability, and grow people in the long run.

With these conversations and the budget process concerns in mind, the decision was made to postpone the congregational vote on the 2027 budget to gather additional input. The congregation will vote on the budget in December, but discussions about the future of our church are ongoing, and we will be seeking input from members as we move forward.

Other topics included:

- Financial statements: For the month of August, revenues were $132,065 and expenses were $120,698. For the month of September, revenues were $109,142 and expenses were $131,469. As of the end of September, we were negative $19,012 for the year, though we are entering what tends to be our strongest season of giving with the upcoming holidays and year-end.

- Remembering Helene Shimane, GVBC member since 12/6/1970, who went home to be with the Lord on 10/4/2026.

- New members: We congratulate and welcome **Stephen Doan, Isaac Kim, Joel Cool-Panama, Brian Park, Jose Luis Sanchez, Stephen Tuggy and Susan Tuggy** to the GVBC church family!

- Scholarships: Congratulations to Elizabeth Doan, Kayla Frerichs, Kiana Frerichs, Robin Lozano and Ashley Ramirez who were awarded Christian Service Scholarship, and Shoki Hioki for a Seminarian Scholarship.

- Harvest Festival: We are grateful to the staff and volunteers who made adjustments that allowed us to have a great event despite the rain!

- Updating internal policies related to staff as we have had changes in the last year and anticipate other transitions in 2027.

Thank you for continuing to pray for the staff, Board and lay ministry leaders. Please pray for open hearts and open communication as we continue to navigate changes. With much appreciation from the Board of Deacons –

Kate Bun, Violet Dresser, Jeff Fujimoto, Paul Hirano, Perry Ishibashi, Amy Kushigemachi, John Nakamura, Cyril Nishimoto, Kenichi Okada, Dave Uratsu, and Gary Yoshiba



FAMILY NEWS

Dear all the people of Hearts for Widows ministry,

Thank you very much for all of you 'Hearts for Widows' Ministry' that created a wonderful place for fellowship and comfort. Your genuine kindness and warmth and hard work are greatly appreciated Your thoughtfulness reminded me that someone must care as though Jesus cares for us. I am very grateful for having me there in the gathering at our church.

Sincerely, Mikki Beermann

Thank you so much for the work and food provided for us at the widow's and widower's luncheon. What a successful event! Everyone had a good time! Thank you for thinking of us!

Love,
Frances Park

MEMORIALS

Donations and Flowers are given in honor or loving memory:

TO	FROM
Helene Shimane	Frances Park
Mits Tamura	Stella Tamura

Monetary donations given in honor or memory of loved ones support the Christian Service Scholarship Fund unless specified.

CALENDAR

Nov 21:	The Forge Men's Fellowship Gathering
Nov 26:	Thanksgiving - Office Closed
Nov 27:	Office Closed
Nov 28:	Work Day Christmas Decorating
	No Table Talk - Men's Ministry
Dec 5:	City of Gardena Craft Booth
Dec 6:	Christmas Potluck
Dec 10:	Anchored Young Mom's Group
Dec 18:	KidZone Christmas Party
	Youth Christmas Banquet
Dec 19:	Handel's Messiah Concert in Japanese
Dec 20:	Christmas Sunday
Dec 24:	Christmas Eve Service

SERVICES

In-Person English: Sundays, 9 AM & 11 AM
Online English: Sundays, 11 AM
In-Person & Online Nihongo: Sundays, 11 AM
In-Person Michi Nihongo: Sundays, 5PM

LINKS

Website: www.gvbc.net
Youtube: www.bit.ly/GVBCyoutube

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