

THE SPIRIT NEWSLETTER



CHOOSE LIFE

In our [all-church Bible-reading plan](#), we're finally in Deuteronomy and on the home stretch to finishing the Pentateuch by Thanksgiving Sunday next month! For the past few months, we've been following the story of how God uses Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt toward the Promised Land of Canaan.

What amazes me is that over this entire journey, God is so faithful and yet the people are so fickle. God performs miraculous signs that finally compel Pharaoh to set the Israelites free. God parts the Red Sea so the Israelites can cross over and escape the pursuing Egyptians. God provides a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire to guide the Israelites, he provides manna on a daily basis to feed the Israelites, and he provides the Law so the Israelites realize what it looks like to live holy lives. And yet, what happens time and time again?

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The Israelites forget the faithfulness of God. They complain. They disobey. They begin to do what they think is best. Every time, the Israelites face serious consequences from God. But every time, God shows compassion and blesses them when they return to him.

As believers today, we're a lot like the Israelites. God is so faithful. He sent Jesus to die on the cross to set us free from the slavery of sin. He has sent his Holy Spirit to guide us. He has given us his Word to feed us spiritual truth every day. But we are so fickle. We choose to focus on the urgent matters of daily life and get too busy to spend time with God. We choose the path of anger and unforgiveness instead of grace and humility.



In Deuteronomy 30, Moses is encouraging the Israelites to remain faithful to God as they head into the Promised Land. If they turn toward God, they will reap the rewards of obedience, but if they turn away from God, they will read the consequences of disobedience. Listen to his words in verses 19-20:

*This day I call the heavens
and the earth as witnesses
against you that I have set
before you life and death,
blessings and curses. Now
choose life, so that you and
your children may live and
that you may love the Lord
your God, listen to his voice,
and hold fast to him.*

During this final quarter of 2026, my prayer is that we as a church body would "choose life." Let's spend quality time in prayer and seek God's direction, for our church and for our personal lives. Let's be immersed in the Word of God instead of being immersed in social media and getting caught up in the chaos of the world around us. Let's be willing to initiate difficult conversations with people where we can speak the truth in love, listen with an open mind, and demonstrate God's grace and humility.

Let's honor God as we choose life!

Daniel Matsuda

Senior Pastor

KEEP GARDENA BEAUTIFUL

On Saturday, September 19, 2026, GVBC joined Keep Gardena Beautiful, a city-wide cleanup event. About 40 GVBCers joined together with about 400 city volunteers to garden and pick up trash around local streets and local parks. We did all this even while knowing the trash would collect again and the weeds would grow again. The deeper reason we went out was to be a blessed presence in our community. So, before going out, we circled up to pray together for our city and the other volunteers we would be working with. I heard many stories of us GVBCers being very intentional to connect with others they worked with and very courageous at sharing their own faith and testimonies.

Thank you for your participation and prayers for us as we go beyond our church walls out on local missions. Our presence in city events like these really helps open up doors for our church to participate in other city events like Winter Wonderland. If you are interested, email me directly at james@gvbc.net or just scan this QR code for the online registration:

James Chang

Outreach Pastor



25TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

128 men and women enjoyed a round of golf at the Rio Hondo Golf Club on August 17th. This was the 25th year of a tournament that was started by a few men of faith who loved golf and loved Jesus. They saw an opportunity to help GVBC seminary students with their financial needs. They prayerfully began a process that included dedicated GVBC volunteers and generous donors and sponsors. All involved have enabled seminarians to do God's work at GVBC, local churches, and beyond. 25 years of seminarians have touched and transformed lives, and promoted God's Kingdom. Thank you everyone for your part in God's work!

Frank Nakamura

Golf Tournament Director



SEPTEMBER BOARD UPDATE

At the September Board of Deacons meeting, Pastor Daniel shared about his mini-retreat to pray over God's vision for GVBC. The Board discussed what Pastor Daniel shared and how to implement this vision through preaching and teaching, as well as reorganization of the church's ministry structure and budget to align with this work. We considered the purpose, pace and process of change and welcome further input.

One of the Board's main responsibilities is reviewing the church's financial statements. For the month of July, revenues were \$107,457 and expenses were \$133,770, and the net after transfers was negative \$25,563. With our summer expenditures, our year-to-date expenses exceed our revenues by \$9,554. We don't like being in negative territory, so we are checking in with various ministries about their budgets, but we also acknowledge that our revenue tends to increase during the holiday months and we hope to make up the deficit before the end of the year.

The Board also acknowledged the hard work of the Golf Committee, which has raised funds to support many seminarians. We asked the committee to consider expanding the use of funds to support leadership development more broadly.



While seminarians continue to be the priority, we hope to grow the leadership capacity of everyone involved in ministry, including lay leaders, when funds are available. We appreciate the Golf Committee's flexibility, and their gift of "putting" on a fun event with a good purpose!

Other topics at the Board meeting included:

- Celebrating the strong sign-ups to volunteer for the Kids, Youth and Guest Relations ministries in August. It was nice to see people of all ages willing to participate in new ways!
- Remembering GVBC members who went home to be with the Lord:
 - **David Araya**, member since 4/6/2010, passed away November 2025 while in Costa Rica
 - **Pam (Premla) Phillip** member since 11/1/2022, passed away 7/11/2026
 - **Nancy Watanabe**, member since 3/6/1990, passed away 7/16/2026

We appreciate your continued prayers and countless other contributions to support GVBC and one another!

Thank you 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

LOCAL & GLOBAL MISSIONS

2027 THAILAND SHORT TERM MISSION TEAM

Next year's Thailand Short Term Missions Team has been selected! Hermann Schurr is Team Mentor but will not be accompanying the team this year. They will travel to Thailand from January 28 to February 11, 2027 and will work with the Integrated Tribal Development Fund (ITDF). GVBC has worked with Mike and Becky Mann (American Baptist International Ministries) since 2015.



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

JOJO AND HEATHER DEGUZMAN - CRU



They have been at Cru headquarters in Orlando since 2019 when doors closed for them in East Asia. Jojo does International Staff Care, and oversees 37 Cru workers in China, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Praise for Jojo and Heather as they visited and cared for staff in Asia in January, and travelled in May 2026 to Southeast Asia conference. Praise that Jojo, Heather, and Audrey were able to attend the conference. Children Aidan and Elijah (college students), Audrey (11th grade this fall).

FRED TANAKA - CHILD EVANGELISM

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the kind consideration you extended to me upon the passing of my wife, Jane Tanaka, with whom I had shared many years of life. Your thoughtfulness during such a difficult time meant more to me than words can fully convey. We were able to hold a peaceful and heartfelt memorial service, and I am truly grateful. Your support made it possible for us to honor her with love and dignity.



I spent much time thinking about how I might express my gratitude for your kindness. Rather than sending a small gift, I felt it would be more meaningful to honor my wife's heart for ministry. With that in mind, I made a donation to the Japan Child Evangelism Fellowship, so your thoughtfulness may be used to support the evangelism of children in Japan - a work to which my wife devoted herself with love. I wish that I could express my gratitude in person. Sincerely yours, Fred.

FAMILY NEWS



Helene Shimane

Please pray for the family of Helene, a longtime member. She went to be with the Lord on October 4th. Her service will be at GVBC on Wednesday October 28th at 10AM, with Pastor Daniel Matsuda officiating.

MEMORIALS

Donations and Flowers are given in honor or loving memory:

TO
Mike Maeda
Frank & Nami Fukuzawa
Gordon Woo

FROM
Mary Maeda
Leigh Fukuzawa
Sharon Koshiyama Woo

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

CALENDAR

Oct 29: Anchored Young Mom's Group
Oct 31: Harvest Festival
Nov 1: Connect (Membership) Class
Nov 7: Holiday Luncheon - Hearts for Widows
Work Day
Nov 8: Annual Election Meeting
Nov 11: Veteran's day - Office Closed
Nov 12: Anchored Young Mom's Group
Nov 14: The Forge Men's Ministry - Table Talk
Nov 21: The Forge Men's Fellowship Gathering
Nov 26: Thanksgiving - Office Closed
Nov 27: Office Closed
Nov 28: Work Day Christmas Decorating

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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