



A Publication of the San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church
"Growing together and reaching out in the love of Christ"

Firmly Rooted

Our Values

Serve Adore Nurture Learn Outreach

"Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him." Col. 2:6a

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The Love of God

*The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell.*

*The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled
And pardoned from His sin.*

*O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure –
The saints' and angels' song.*

-- *The Love of God, Frederick M. Lehman*

Recently I've found myself humming the lines of this hymn in my head. And as I sit here and write this having just returned from our 2019 SanLo Church Retreat, the weekend's theme of "IMAGINE" resonates well with this great song.

Those of you who were at the retreat know that Pastor Gavin Kajikawa challenged us to imagine what it might look like for God to lead us forward as a Christ-centered, Gospel-centered church. And in some ways, an appropriate start to our answer is found in this hymn as it speaks about God's love: "how rich and pure, how measureless and strong!" Our imagination becomes necessary because words start to fall short as we contemplate, "what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge..." (Eph. 3:18-19). The dimension-busting love of God is the starting point for thoughts on what God can and will do through His church as He builds us.

Those of you who were at the retreat may also recall that our speaker asked the leaders if we could think of a sentence or charge for where the Lord is taking SanLo. My answer was Ephesians 1:16-23. A Bible passage. What a cop-out answer, right?? In seriousness, though, here's why I was led to these words of Paul. The Cliff Notes version of that passage (I urge you to go read it, though!) is Paul's continual prayer for the church that God would open the eyes of their hearts in order to know Him – in all the rich, life-changing and immeasurable ways possible.

At the end of the day, life is all about knowing Him. I was drawn to this prayer because truly, what greater thing could we hope for our church family than to find ourselves calling one another – family, friends, neighbors, strangers – to behold and love the greatness of our God displayed in the gospel. Imagine a community whose love for one another and for the lost defies explanation – because its foundation is in the love of Christ that in itself defies explanation as He hung on the cross for sinners.

Imagine a people whose perseverance and joy, through intense suffering, makes no worldly sense – because their hope is set on the eternal promises of a God who raises the dead to life. Imagine a family that gives generously, even painfully – because it is overflowing full from the "immeasurable riches of God's grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." This Easter, let us imagine with one another the love of God, greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell. After all, it's the song we'll be singing forevermore.

-- *Chris Wu*

Small Groups Sharing

Back in January, the Annual Small Groups breakfast was held. We heard encouraging testimonies from individuals like Patrick Napoli and Brian and Jennifer Yun (see below) of what it has meant to them to join a Small Group Bible Study. If you are interested in joining a Small Group, contact any of the leaders or Pastor Eric to find out more.

I grew up going to church, but as a kid, I was always more rebellious than attentive. It wasn't until high school that I started taking God more seriously. I accepted Christ during my high school junior year on a mission trip and attended Bible Study and youth group. As I got older, I wanted to be independent and prepare for my future. Unfortunately, my desire for independence got in the way of what mattered most -- my relationship with Christ.

A few years ago, my brother's wife asked him for a divorce and it shocked my whole family. My mom had encouraged him to go to a small group and give his worries up to God. It has been incredible to see God restore my brother's marriage and transform his life. It was a huge encouragement for me to get involved again.

I've been going to small group for about a year and a half. It's been awesome to see God working in my life and in the lives of others. Something that was always hard for me was letting God take control. Through seeking God's Word, I'm able to give up my worries and not carry my burdens on my own. Bible study has had a huge impact on my life and the support that I've received has been extremely encouraging.

-- Patrick Napoli

I attend the Alameda small group with my wife, Jennifer, and our 19-month-old son, Asher. When I think about our small group and the impact it's had on my faith and life, I feel calmer, Christ centered, and comforted.



When we first started attending SanLo, the church felt like a great fit, but I still felt something was missing. You could tell those in the congregation really got along, and I got the sense that they must get together outside of Sundays. Now that I'm in a small group, I can say I feel comfortable asking anyone in our group out for coffee, childcare advice, food spots, travel destinations, etc. However, it's not limited to fun activities, I also feel confident in asking them for prayer and sharing about anything I may be struggling with spiritually.

I remember prior to accepting my current job, I had shared with the small group that I had to choose between joining Tesla, or continuing to be unemployed and keeping the faith that God would provide something that would be a better fit. Our small group was so supportive with prayers and advice that I ultimately made the decision to pass and keep trusting that God had something else. A short fast forward to now, I absolutely could not be happier with my current job that God did provide for me. I felt like the encouragement and prayers of our small group helped me feel confident I made the right decision.

-- Brian Yun



I'm an introvert, so that means navigating through a larger group takes up a lot of energy. One on one, or smaller groups are way more my jam. So, you would think that after all the suggestions and encouragement to join a small group that it would be a no-brainer. But I was hesitant and put it off for some time. Would the small group be a safe and supportive place? Would the people be open to me, flaws and struggles and all? God had something in store and that was the small group that ended up being near our home.

God, the ultimate multi-tasker, was working in the hearts of Josh and Adora Lee to start a small group for the Alameda area, which is where we were living at the time. They were one of the first people to greet us when we started at SanLo.

Their non-intimidating and genuine energy had really struck me, so when they approached us with the idea, there was little hesitancy this time around.

Throughout my life, God has always taken time to make it known that He is working and that it's not just about timing, but it's about His timing. He gently reminds me that His plan is far more perfect than my own. He has been patient to repeat this to me as many times as I need.

Reflecting on our small group, this is yet another example that God's got my back. He knows what I need and when I need it. He brought me the right people at the right time in the right place. He's continuing to encourage me to more quickly fall into the comfort that only He can provide when those inevitable doubts and stresses about life emerge. This is how God has strengthened my faith through small groups.

-- Jennifer Yun

Praise God & Congrats to ...

Keiske and Jennifer Satake, on the birth of their son, Ian Tsuyoshi Satake, on March 6, Ian weighed 6 lbs., 14 oz. and was 20.5 inches long.



Tom and Jenny Camburn on the birth of their son, Ian Bak Yen Camburn, on March 15. Ian weighed 6 lbs., 4 oz. and was 19.5 inches long.

Grow SanLo Update



We praise God for the \$749,000 raised which is 50% toward our goal of \$1.5 million for a new church facility and a great February month! Thank you for your generosity to the Lord as we are half way to our goal!!!

As we approach our fiscal year-end giving in May, we do need your help in order to reach our year-end goal. This is an important factor for us to consider our next steps and be approved for a loan.

As of the end of February, we are tracking very close to our projected budget only being off by \$2,940 from our budget goal at that time. Praise the Lord! However, we still have some ways to go in order to meet our fiscal goal.

	FEB YTD Actual	FEB YTD Budget
Income	\$546,770	\$554,770
Expenses	\$569,062	\$574,772
Net Income:	-\$22,942	Projected variance -\$2,940
Additional Increases:	-\$11,200	
Projected Positive Year Goal:	\$40,000	

Therefore, we want to ask that you might prayerfully consider giving toward our General Fund in order that we might GROW God's family and kingdom in the Bay Area. Please consider making a one-time donation or pledging to make an on-going donation.

GROW SANLO,
The Elder Board

Rev. Eric Yata, Pastor (English)
Rev. Brian Tekawa, Marriage/Family Pastor
Pastor Joshua Scott, Young Adult/Worship Pastor
Pastor Scott Shimada, Assistant Pastor (Youth)

Rev. Sunao Shimada, Pastor (Japanese)
Tomoko Shimada, Director of Christian Education
Atsuko Smart, Administrative Assistant

Stan Naruo, Church Administrator

Kathy Tekawa, Communications Administrator

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 Like us on our Facebook Page!

Any newsbriefs or articles for “Firmly Rooted” should be at the church office by the second Sunday of each month.

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Dated Material
Week ending March 22, 2019

Newsbriefs

- **BAM! Youth Rally** is Fri., April 5, 7:11 p.m. All are welcome to come hear guest speaker, Pastor Kyle Shimazaki, from Seeds of Life Church in Alhambra. Bring your friends to hear the gospel message!

- **Missions Prayer** is every first Sat. of the month. Come on Sat., April 6, 8:30 a.m. to pray for our missionaries. Prayer guides are available. Questions? Contact Stan or Judy Naruo.

- The **55+ group** will visit and bring gifts to the Umenoki and J-Sei homes on Tues., April 9. Meet at the church at 10:15 a.m. Questions? Contact Yumi Fujii.

- **Little House** for families with 5th graders and below is on Fri., April 12, 5:30 p.m. Potluck dinner, devotion for the kids and marriage/parenting tips by Pastor Brian.

- Applications to **serve at JEMS Special Camp** are being accepted. Go to: www.jemsspecialcamp.org. Male Aides are especially needed. Deadline to apply is April 13. Questions? Contact Bruce or Val Satow

- Praise God! There will be a **baptismal service** on Sun., April 28, 12:30 p.m. Please bring finger food to share for the **Fellowship Hour/Baptism Reception** to follow. Those who live in **San Leandro 94578, Oakland, Hayward, and Fremont** are in charge.

- **Pastor Scott is on his scheduled sabbatical** as our Conference gives a sabbatical for every five years of service. Please be aware that the purpose of a

sabbatical is rest and renewal, so please keep your contact to a minimum. If you have concerns for the youth ministry, contact Teon Lee or Kevin Chisaki.

Holy Week – Approaching Easter

There will be an All-Church photo after the 2nd service, 12:15 p.m. on Palm Sunday, April 14. The traditional Palm Sunday Fellowship Hour is canceled due to the Baptism Reception on Sun., April 28.

There will be a Good Friday service on Fri., April 19, 7 p.m. Come worship and remember the day Jesus willingly suffered and died for our sins. Chris Wu will bring the message.

Resurrection Sunday! Come celebrate and worship our Risen Lord and Savior! Easter services are on Sun., April 21, 8:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Pastor Eric will bring the message. Continental breakfast available.