



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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“What’s Next?”

I’ve been asking myself that question a lot lately, as I sit here in May 2020 with no clear future ahead for returning to the office, our kids heading back to school, going on recreational trips, or just coming back to anything resembling the life we knew before SaRS-CoV-2, aka the “coronavirus.” And sometimes I find myself asking that question just simply in response to each day’s activities, decisions, conflicts, and responsibilities. With what seems like 95% of our daily lives now being run out of our homes and nowhere else, it can feel like the spheres of family, work, school, sports/hobbies, friends, you name it...are all overlapping and melded together like never before. One thing just runs into the next.

I look up in the middle of the day after finishing one task and can only ask, “what’s next?” It’s fatiguing and confusing, especially since all the daily transitions we’re used to (e.g. getting in the car, picking up kids from school, heading to the breakroom for lunch, taking that first sip of coffee at work) have changed or gone away.

So the next thing I know, I’m just moving from one task to the next, with hardly a chance to think or reflect. Ironically, with more “freedom” to every day’s structure now, I’m less in control and less at peace than ever. Rhythm is gone. Predictability is gone. The future? Who knows what that will be! So we might as well focus all our energy on today and roll with its

punches. And you know, from a certain point of view, that’s all we can do. One might say that’s all we could do even before COVID-19. After all, the Lord reminds us that there’s no sense in worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow has enough worry for itself (Matt. 6:34). But God knows our daily needs, cares for us dearly, and provides (Matt. 6:25–30). That’s a good word for us indeed.

We don’t know what will happen tomorrow, but we know our good Father who holds us. At the same time, our recent reflection on 2 Peter has reminded me that while we shouldn’t worry about tomorrow, neither has God asked us to close our eyes and forget about the future. We *are* headed somewhere, and there *is* purpose in our everyday that we are making progress toward. Because of what Jesus has done, and the promise of what He will do in the future, we get to hope in a wonderful future that is guaranteed to come.

All of history is working towards the promise of “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13). God will one day soon settle all accounts with His justice and His mercy, and His tomorrow gives peace and purpose to my today. So, while this day may be hard, I know God is working to prepare me for that guaranteed future. He’s getting me ready for “what’s next,” which isn’t more fear and uncertainty and chaos, but peace and life and holiness. I can hardly wait! -- Chris Wu

“Nothing can separate me from Christ’s Love”

I grew up as a happy kid in a typical middle class Christian home in Irvine, but there was also always a longing for love and acceptance. As someone who is sensitive and proud, this longing was hard to fill. At some point, I decided that love and acceptance was not found in people but in me and that I needed to set and meet my own standards. Success was important to me: I was a good student, earned seats in orchestras, won art competitions, and made my parents proud. Being nice was also important: I made efforts to understand people and to enjoy them as them rather than making snap judgments. In this way, I accomplished my definition of success and goodness and filled my longing.

Then I got into UC Berkeley. At first things were great. Classes were doable though not easy; I made friends; I found a church. But starting from sophomore year, my life got upended. I moved into a co-op of 60 women of varying backgrounds that challenged my Christian-Asian-American-Irvine paradigm. In particular, some housemates found Christianity either backwards or offensive and frequently questioned me. I ultimately gave up Christianity when confronted with the pain Christians had inflicted on my housemate-turned-friend because she is a lesbian.

Anyway, I needed to study instead of going to church because for the first time, my academic efforts were not translating to the results I wanted. Success was a moving target impossible to reach. I found myself hoping my classmates would fail to decrease competition and was jealous at my friends' successes. There became a growing hollowness and ugliness in me that I hated and, no longer Christian-identified, I dabbled in other lifestyles and belief systems to deal with it. But at the end of the day, I didn't like me. I was in despair.

I stumbled back to Christianity by accident. While looking for corny jokes online, for whatever reason I switched to looking for answers to my housemates' objections against Christianity and found reasonable answers. I also ended up reading Ecclesiastes. The beginning, "Meaningless, meaningless" caught my attention. The rest of the



We give God praise for Moon, who became a member of SanLo this past February.

book spoke to my experience except the conclusion -- that everything is meaningless outside of God. I researched Christianity in earnest, then, trying to understand it beyond an activity. By God's grace, a church friend from freshman year, who loved me and was still in my life, patiently answered all my questions. I asked her mostly about how she operated. She did life differently and her answers always led to God's love. God's love as a "never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love." It was unlike love from people or self-love. It became apparent as I came to understand that Jesus, whom God sent, died for my unlovable ugliness. He saw it, didn't balk at it, and put it on Himself. Furthermore, He offered His beauty as replacement so that I could live in harmony with Him.

I had the information I needed and wanted Jesus in my life, but I knew I didn't have what my friend did. One evening in frustration (over AOL Instant Messenger), I asked her, "How do you believe???" She responded, "I just do." At that moment, in God's grace, I just did too like a light switch going from off to on. I accepted Christ. I used to consider myself a commitment-phobe, but in actuality I was just very committed to myself. Jesus' commitment that took Him to the cross is the truth that has changed my life. I'm still sensitive, but I'm also less self-protective (less commitment-phobic) because nothing can separate me

from Christ's love. In Christ's love, I am overcoming unknown situations and relationships, failures, and oppositions. Anytime my longing for love and acceptance reappears, I have an inexhaustible Love with me. Being so loved, my hope is that everyone can experience this fullness and one of my greatest joys is seeing that light switch moment in others.

-- Moon Kim



Praise God for all our graduates and those getting promoted – God's blessings upon all of you and your families. Although there won't be the usual promotion/graduation ceremonies, may you know how special you are and we congratulate you and pray for God's abundant blessings upon you all!

Middle School Promotion

- *Braeden Lee-Takaki - Bret Harte Middle School
- *Andrew Mitsuyoshi - Canyon Middle School
- *Micah Nakasone - Bohannon Middle School
- *Allison Oh - Thomas Hart Middle School
- *Jadey Shimada - Lincoln Middle School

High School

- *Samuel Inori - Mt. Eden High School
- *Cale Lee-Takaki - Hayward High School
- *Angela Louie - California Crosspoint Academy High School

Graduate School

- *Rebecca Lum - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) - Samuel Merritt University
- *Jordan Yamamoto - Masters of Arts in Theology - Talbot School of Theology

Grow SANLO Update – **We are so grateful!**

In these challenging times, the church leadership has felt so blessed by your generosity and support. We are extremely grateful for your amazing giving to support our General Fund. We give God praise that our Grow SanLo fund continues to grow, even throughout this challenging time.

We know life has changed for many in the midst of this COVID-19 time, and we understand it may be a challenge to give. We realize that many of you are facing financial hardships of your own, so please do not feel obligated to give in your hardship. If you need assistance, please let us know as we do have a crisis fund available for those in need.

But if you are in a position to give by God's grace during this season, we would be humbled if you can continue to support San Lo's gospel work and ministry especially as we finish off our fiscal year end on May 31st, 2020. **Your giving will help ensure the present and the future to continue to be a gospel community of growth for every generation.**

With Humbled Thanksgiving,
The Elders