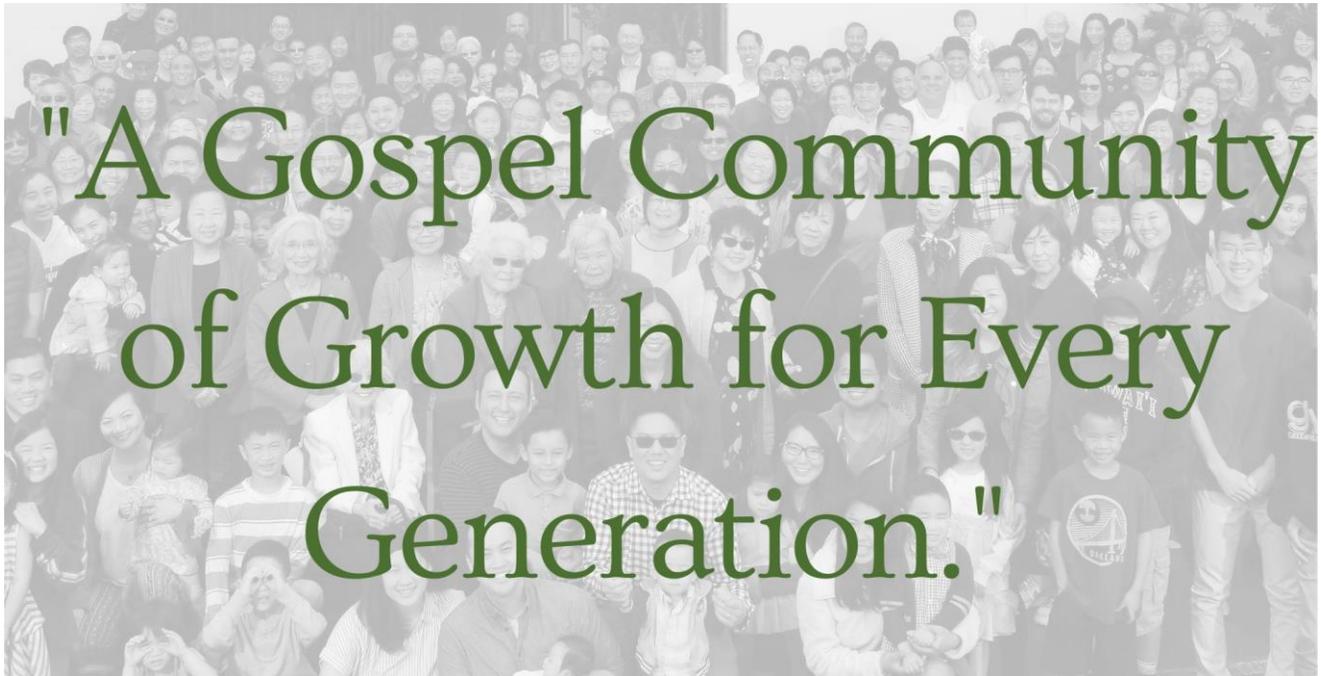


GROWING TOGETHER

A publication of San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church

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



Growing pains. Ugh. My peers, parents' generation and beyond here at SanLo might remember that I was a pretty tall kid. Many of you were my Sunday School teachers and I'd often hear, "Wow! You're so tall! How old are you now?" As a kindergartener, I was taller than my school-assigned 4th grade "study buddy"!! My poor buddy! Growing so quickly meant I'd wake up in the middle of the night with growing pains. My daughter, Megumi, isn't quite as tall as I was but she's experiencing growing pains as well and I tell her it just means that she's growing and that thought excites her (she always wants to measure herself the next morning).

As our church family grows in a variety of ways I expect there to be some growing pains. Just as

my mom, Kathy Tekawa (who just retired), cried after sending out the last Firmly Rooted in December (the newsletter she had started and sent for over 30 years), I cried starting this one. I loved the Firmly Rooted and all that it included (prayer requests, testimonies, fun news bits) and also all the memories that were associated with it (helping the newsletter team, fold, stuff and send) and I realized that as of now this new newsletter isn't going to be the same as the Firmly Rooted. Just like my mom started her job as Administrative Assistant with less hours, I'm starting with half the amount of hours my mom had when she retired so the newsletter is being pruned... with hopes of it growing in the future! During this time of transition though, I'm extremely thankful to have multiple other forms of communication grow. Weekly e-mails, Facebook, Instagram, Zoom

(Continued on page 2)

meetings and podcasts have been some of the new forms of communication...so I encourage you to connect in these ways!

Spiritual growing pains are also never fun, but oh so necessary. This past year with COVID conditions and not being able to meet in person as a church community, we've had to rely on the Holy Spirit to help us grow in patience, perseverance, selflessness, faith, creativity and love as individuals and as a community. I've often thought back to our own church history as a source of comfort when we couldn't meet for THREE years due to the internment of Japanese Americans. God has been so faithful to sustain and grow our church family through many trials and He continues to be faithful during this COVID trial! It's hard to believe we're coming up on a year since we've been able to gather together in person, but I'm thankful we're looking to reopen soon.

As our church also grows in size (both physically as we look towards buying a new building and in numbers as we're so thankful for guests and new members), it may be hard to let go of the way we used to do things or uncomfortable as we pursue new ways of doing things. But I have FULL CONFIDENCE in our leadership team (pastors and elders) as they humbly and prayerfully follow Jesus' leading. I know our leaders will do their best to keep us firmly rooted in Christ so that we can grow together. It makes the growing pains worth it.

"Let your roots grow down into [Christ], and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." Colossians 2:7

-Jessica Pham, Communications Assistant

SanLo Together - our very own podcast!



Chris Wu began SanLo Together podcasts this past summer. February's podcasts featured Frank Nakasone, Jeff Kataoka, Will Clark and Alex

Nguav. Here are a few fast facts about each but tune in at <https://anchor.fm/sanlo-together> to hear more!!

Frank: Was born in Thailand and spoke Thai until he moved to Hawaii at the age of 4. Met his wife, Betty, at Mount Hermon and helped plant a church in SoCal called Evergreen Southcoast (now Epic Church in Fullerton).

Jeff: Took on a lot of the responsibility as he was the oldest of 3 (including a baby brother) when his mom passed away when he was 12. Grew up in a Buddhist home but came to Christ when his now-wife, Joanne, took him to SanLo as a young adult.

Will: Had only heard of the negative side of churches/Christians via media but was surprised when he came to SanLo in 2018. Received Christ and got baptized in April 2019. Got married to Alex on November 20, 2020.

Alex: Didn't come from a Christian family but went to a Christian school and TRULY came to Christ in high school. Stopped going to church as a young adult but came to SanLo because of her housemates (Camburns). Planned a COVID wedding and got married to Will!!!

COVID-19 Update: Soft Reopening - Safety First!

The Elders are excited to announce that **we will look to begin a soft reopening in March**. Alameda County has allowed churches to meet indoors at a 25% limited capacity. We are taking the added precaution to limit our space to only 40 seats at a time while adhering to proper social distancing and mandatory mask wearing. We will continue our online service in order to ensure that everyone can worship the Lord together.

Here are the essential steps we have taken to safely reopen our doors:

- Submit to the local and state guidelines (1 Peter 2:13-17) and love our neighbors.
- Purchased new tech for continued online services.
- Consulted our own health professionals and church leadership for guidance.
- Ensure touch-less hand washing stations and hand sanitizer stations are ready for use.
- Secured professional cleaning services to disinfect and to clean both English and Nichigo sanctuaries and bathrooms every week.
- Purchased PPE equipment for volunteers.
- Upgraded the air filters in the ventilation system. Windows will be kept open - bring a warm coat!
- Spaced out the seating chairs beyond the six feet requirement.
- Implemented safety protocols - temperature reading, health questionnaire, and health waiver.

Before entering service, we are asking each attendee to complete a health questionnaire, and each attendee will not be able to attend if they do NOT meet any of the health criteria below:

- If you or any member of your household has tested positive or come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (within the last ten days).
- If you or any member of your household has experienced these unexplained COVID-19 symptoms within the past two weeks (e.g. fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea).
- If you have travelled out of the country in the past two weeks.

We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation, and we will not reopen if the situation rises beyond the county's limits. We do look forward to seeing you in person and worshipping the Lord together.

In His Care,
Pastor Eric on behalf of the Elders



GROW SANLO UPDATE

The Elders and staff feel deeply humbled by your giving especially during these challenging days. We have reached a significant point in our Grow SanLo campaign at 82% of our goal, and we have received the pre-approval for a building loan. **Please be in prayer as the Elders discern the next major steps forward and the timing of those steps.**

We also recognize that you may have your own financial hardship during this trying time, so please do not feel obligated to give, and if you need assistance, please let us know as we have a crisis fund to serve those in need. **Thank you again for your faithful giving as we seek to be a gospel community of growth for every generation!**



Coming up...

(Zoom links and details can be found in Weekly E-mails)

In preparation for Easter, we will be taking a break from our Daniel series and will begin "The Suffering Servant"; a study of Passion Week - the week leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

3/07 Palm Sunday of Passion Week: Mark 11:1-11

3/14 Monday of Passion Week: Mark 12:1-34

3/21 Tuesday of Passion Week: Mark 13:1-27

3/28 Thursday of Passion Week: Mark 14:12-31

4/02 Good Friday: Mark 15:21-41

4/04 Easter Sunday: Mark 16:1-13

Events

3/7 After-church meeting via Zoom to discuss re-opening and Grow SanLo update

3/14 Soft re-opening for staff, deacons and elders

3/21 Continued soft re-opening

3/21 One Blood Prayer Fellowship via Zoom

3/28 Church open for those registered (6th grade and above), registration link will be sent via e-mail.

Services will continue to be broadcast via internet.