



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

Firmly Rooted

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"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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Star Bright

*Star light, star bright
First star I see tonight
I wish I may, I wish I might
Have the wish I wish tonight*

This nursery rhyme has been told to many a child since the late nineteenth-century America and has since spread worldwide. This poem stems from the fantasy that good fortune will be befalling those wishing on that first star seen. From childhood and throughout adult life we seem to be inundated with stars. What grade school student doesn't like to get a gold star by their name for turning in their homework on time? It's a sign of positive achievement and bragging rights.

The star status has been attached to individuals that have been elevated by society from ordinary people. It might be their athleticism like a professional baseball player. At a recent event I attended, people were taking turns pitching a baseball into a net and the speed was recorded. One individual with obvious pitching experience and in my eyes throwing very hard achieved 75 mph. Sounds fast, but not when you consider major league pitchers throw around 100 mph. Because very few can throw that fast with accuracy, they call them baseball stars.

Not all individuals that are lifted to star status are for their talent. Does the name William Hung ring a bell? He was a 2003 American Idol contestant who sang so badly the judges were laughing, but became instantly popular, because he gave his best with no regrets. He went on to record three albums and appeared on several talk shows, because of his off key singing. Our culture is

obsessed with stars. There are movie stars, rock stars, and sports stars. Black stars, shooting stars and the Death Star (Star Wars reference). These overshadow the one star we should be focused on as Christmas approaches. The Star of Bethlehem (also called the Christmas Star) was a sign to alert the magi of the birth of Jesus. He is not a fantasy, but the greatest gift of all. Do not idolize stars of the secular world, but worship the one super star in our lives, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 2:2

..., "Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him."

Have a Blessed Christmas!

-- Eric Lee

**Please join us for a
Christmas Celebration!**
Sunday, Dec. 18, 9:30 a.m.
Everyone is invited to join
together to celebrate the birth of
our Lord Jesus through
songs and scripture.
A light breakfast will be served.

Christmas Day Worship Service
Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:45 a.m.
Please enjoy Christmas morning
with your families. Sunday school
is canceled, then join together for
worship and praise of
our Lord Jesus!

Reaching Out Through Love East Bay

Our church joined several other churches for Love East Bay, a community outreach on Sat., Oct. 15. There were several projects that helped serve and bring our community together to demonstrate God's love. Over 40 from our church served in various areas. The Sugiyamas cooked lunch for all the volunteers and many helped serve the lunch at Creekside Community Church in San Leandro.

Elizabeth Devey, Alice Oshiro and Chris Palisoc, share their thoughts on their projects ...

From: Elizabeth Devey

How many opportunities do we have to do something we love, involve others, and encourage someone thousands of miles away? On Oct. 15, I was blessed to be able to do all that and more!

About a couple months ago, Pastor Eric asked me if I would lead the "Making Encouragement Cards" for the Japan Tsunami Victims for Love East Bay. After praying about whether or not I should take on another project, I said yes. I know the Lord was leading my heart to this project. I prayed about how to set up this project in a way that would make this project fun and user friendly.

I decided a "card buffet table" would invite creativity and ease. The group came from different churches, we had 18 adults and 14 children making cards. There was excitement in our crowded room while we decorated cards and wrote notes of encouragement to people over 5,000 miles away, in Japan. As people created cards, there was a sense of unity around the tables, each person took time to comment, give suggestions and encourage each other. We were all working together for one purpose; to put a smile on someone's face, to touch someone's heart with a kind word, and most importantly, to share the love of Jesus Christ with the people of Japan.

If you are ever presented with an opportunity to use your gifts or talents, include others, and encourage someone, take it! God will use the results to His glory. On that day, we made over 200 cards, each adult and child had a wonderful time. Praise God for how He allows us to come together to serve and encourage others.



Elizabeth with Kathy Greer, Director of Love East Bay. Elizabeth enjoys holding Baby Rebekah as her mom makes cards.



Roxanne, Shirley and Mali making cards

From: Alice Oshiro

I wanted to make blankets. Crafting cards or help serve lunch sounded good too. I would have even settled for pulling weeds at the elderly care home or painting walls for them. But somehow I ended up serving in the bicycle clinic – I don't know a single thing about fixing bikes! In fact, I have a broken one sitting at home in my garage (one that has been in its current state for the past five plus years).

Love East Bay was a ministry that God had laid on my heart many months prior. However, I had my own plans going in. Instead of listening to where God wanted to put me, I told Him where I wanted to go.

The day was humbling to say the least. A series of unfortunate events caused Chris and I to leave Hayward later than we had planned. Following was a succession of wrong turns and misinterpreted Google directions. Upon arriving at the church, we realized that there were two bicycle clinics, and we had doubts about which one we had actually signed up for. We eventually made it to the site only to leave after 45 minutes, 2 bicycles and news of a line at the other site.

When we arrived at our final destination, Chris got right to work – he clearly knew what he was doing as he switched out old seats, replaced tires and inner tubes, adjusted handlebars and installed new brakes. I, on the other hand, didn't know what to do, where to start, or how I would even prove to be helpful. I stood around for a good five or ten minutes before someone summoned me over and asked me to get them a number of items from the supply tent.

But somehow over the course of the day, God worked His miracles despite my shortcomings. Getting swept up in the idea of "being a good person" and helping the community around me, I had forgotten the main reason behind Love East Bay. Yes, part of its mission is to spread love to the communities that we live in and around. However, in my mind it was to spread MY love and share MY strength and talents. I had forgotten that God's love and ability to serve His children is so much greater.

I was blessed to be able to witness children of all ages, races and backgrounds getting their bikes fixed in the name of Jesus Christ and His everlasting love; to witness my brothers and sisters in Christ doing

work for the community in His name; and to see people interacting and working together to reach out to those living right around us at home for God.



Alice learns quickly to fix bikes!

Children arrived at the clinic – some looked as downtrodden and weary as their hand-me-down bikes while others had faces full of hope. But each left with joy dancing in their eyes and gratitude written in their hearts.

God worked wonders that day – even I found ways to be helpful. He placed me out of my comfort zone into “unchartered territories.” I was reminded that all things are possible through Him – whether it was making a blanket, or fixing a bicycle.



From: Chris Palisoc (pictured above)

Volunteering for "Love East Bay" was a pleasurable experience. There were so many kids and people that needed their bikes fixed! It was nice to use my God-given talents to help out the community. It was great to see churches from all around the bay area join in together to serve God in this way.



Frank and Cary help with yard work for their project

Harvest Festival Draws Large Crowd

On Sun., Oct. 31, the church got together and hosted our 14th annual Harvest Festival. About 250 people came out for a night of food, games, prizes, puppets and a lot of fun! By providing a safe place to go on Halloween night, people of all ages were able to come and enjoy a fun evening. Children and adults dressed in friendly costumes and there was much laughter and excitement in the air!

The free dinner included tri-tip steak, pasta, salads, nachos, sandwiches and much more. There was a room dedicated for hand art. The Donut Game, which has become an annual favorite among kids and adults alike, was one of the many games that were a hit. There were ten games in all, each providing plenty of candy and prizes for everyone.

The puppet show had Red and Stripes, our famous puppets, share the gospel message. We give God praise for the countless people who helped with cooking, set-up, games, puppet show, prizes, publicity, decorations, registration, security, and for the church family who donated all the candy and prizes. God blessed the entire evening. Much thanks go out to everyone who made this night a huge success!

-- Pastor Scott

Christmas

C stands for Christchild, born on Christmas day and later died on the cross showing us His way.

H for Heaven, a special place at best where God's ready will go for rest

R Righteous all hope to be, loving and praising God, living happily.

I for Isaiah in the Old Testament need read Learning more of God's Word, a special need.

S is for salvation, hopefully for all mankind to love and except him with heart and mind.

T for trinity, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, the three being our loving God whom we love the most.

M for manger where Baby Jesus lay, where shepherds and wisemen came to pray.

A is for Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, the special one that gave us birth.

S is for Son Jesus born on Christmas day. Let's all give thanks as we bow our heads and pray.

By: Alice Stroude