



MĀNOA VALLEY
CHURCH

Mānoa Connection

Connecting our 'ohana

eNewsletter

November 5, 2025

Pastor Abe's Message

"The Journeys That Bring Us Home: Stories of Baptism, Belonging, and Grace"



This past Sunday, November 2, we witnessed something beautiful in our sanctuary: three people were baptized and, together with three others, we welcomed six new members into our church family. We saw Kimberly Akiona and Daniel and Jolie Berger baptized, and we received them, along with Randall Fukuji, Charlene Okuda, and Susan Nishida, MD, into membership at Mānoa Valley Church. For me, it was a glimpse of what God is doing among us.

As each person stood before us, I thought about their unique stories—stories that began long before they stepped to the front of the sanctuary, stories about healing and coming home. I'm struck by how down-to-earth and holy their stories are. Baptisms and induction ceremonies can be big public events, but the journey to get there is often quiet and long, filled with countless small choices and events: a friend who prays for us, a passage from the Bible that we read at just the right time, a conversation that makes us feel seen, a decision to change how we've been living. Many of the moments on our spiritual journeys are not flashy, but they are all real and meaningful.

It can be easy to miss what God is doing in us and around us because so much of it happens under the surface of our everyday lives. We can get focused on the daily list of "urgent needs" fighting for our attention or all the details in the areas where we serve. But on Sundays like this, God gently walks us back a few steps to widen our view as we are reminded that the Holy Spirit is at work across our whole community, stitching together stories that take on a more profound meaning when we see them side by side.

For me, the stories of our six newest members highlight what Mānoa Valley Church is striving to be: a community where real people encounter the living Jesus and choose to live life together as we learn to live in and from God's grace and love.

Baptism doesn't graduate anyone into perfection. But it does remind us that we belong to a particular community, and it begins a new chapter of our journey together. And membership doesn't turn someone into a different person overnight. But someone publicly proclaiming, "I'm in. I will walk with you, and I will let you walk with me," matters. That's what makes a church family. We don't promise to have it all together or expect that from each other. We promise not to walk alone.

I'm grateful for the many quiet ways our members make this possible—for all those people who faithfully welcome and care for others.

Thank you to the volunteers who show up week after week—those who set up, lead Children's Ministry, lead us in music,



Links

[Online Donations](#)

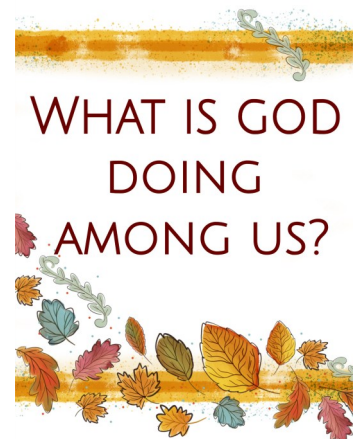
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oversee the A/V needs, and prepare bulletins and slides so we can worship in word and song. I'm grateful for those who pray for our church, and for the many who quietly serve food and create a warm, hospitable space. And to so many others. All of it makes Sundays like this possible.

My hope and prayer is that we keep our eyes open to the larger story God is writing in our community and beyond. The same grace that met our six new sisters and brothers is at work in our neighborhoods, workplaces, classrooms, friend circles, and families.

This week, if you feel led by the Spirit, I encourage you to introduce yourself to one of our new members, offer a prayer to a person who is in need, or share a meal with someone. These seemingly small steps make a big impact as we journey and live life together.

May we be a people who notice, who welcome, and who keep saying "yes" to Jesus.

Christ's Peace, Abe

Welcome to New Members of Our Community!



Randall Fukuji and Charlene Okuda



Jolie and Daniel Berger and family



Susan Nishida, MD,
and Kimberly Akiona

Calling All MVC Members!

Our annual **Fall Congregational Meeting** will be held on **Sunday, November 30 after church service**. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this important gathering of our church members. Agenda items include the review and approval of our Church Operating Budget as well as our Building Fund Budget and the election of our officers and committee members for 2026.

We will also provide an update regarding MVC's various ministry programs and Important events coming up in the fall and holiday season. Learn how you can play an active role in the life of Mānoa Valley Church. Join us at this important congregational meeting!



MVC Donors Extend Great Generosity



Good news! We had a very successful fundraising campaign with the *Foodland Give Aloha* program. Once again Mānoa Valley Church ranked among the top 100 organizations for donations received. \$9,590 was donated and Foodland matched 38% with their donation of \$3,686.44. This match is the highest it has ever been. For every dollar donated, Foodland added 38 cents, making the grand total for this fundraiser \$13,276.44. The funds raised will help maintain our facilities so we can continue to serve our community. Thank you all for your participation.

Family Promise Hawai'i 'Ohana Meals



Inga Park Okuna, Ruth Komatsu

MVC will be providing dinners to Family Promise parents and children on Thursdays: **November 6, 2025 and December 11, 2025**. The food is served family-style and they request no pasta meals. If you are able to provide a dish, some fruit or vegetables, please sign up using these links: [NOVEMBER 6 LINK](#) and [DECEMBER 11 LINK](#). Please bring your food donations to the church parking lot between 4:45-5 p.m. on the day of the dinner. If you have questions, please contact Inga Park Okuna (ingaparkokuna@gmail.com).

Canned Food Drive for St. Pius X Food Pantry

Let's support our neighbors in Mānoa with a non-perishable food drive on **Sunday, November 16th**. Please bring what you can spare to share! We will collect the food and deliver it to our neighborhood food pantry in time for Thanksgiving. MVC Mission's Committee is committed to supporting organizations doing Christ's work in our community during this challenging economy, especially for those who need support to feed their families.



Missions Committee Announces Gift Card Collection Dates



To our caring and generous congregation, it's the time of the year the Missions Committee humbly requests gift cards for Catholic Charities Kupuna and Waikiki Health Center. Gift cards from grocery stores, Target, and Longs are gratefully welcome. Your gift cards often allow recipients to get necessities.

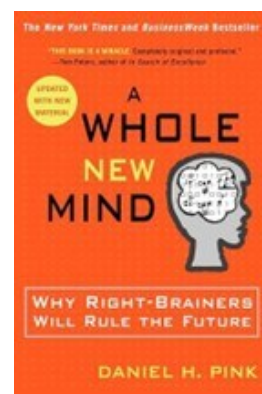
We will be collecting gift cards before and after service on **November 30, 2025 and December 7, 2025**. If you have any questions, please contact **Alisa Au**.

As in the past, the Preschool and After School students are making cards for the kupuna and Waikiki Health Center participants. The children's cards are always a bright spot for the recipients, for they not only contain a gift card, they offer a cheery message and drawing.

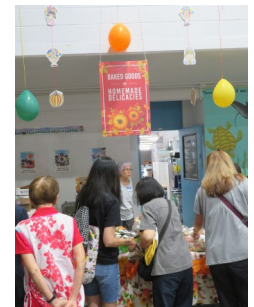
Read About a Holistic Approach to Your Thinking

Lately, MVC's Book Club has been reading works that are very informative, relevant, and inspirational. The last one focused on our treatment of planet Earth, particularly our practices that degrade the environment, but also offered a message of hope based on indigenous teachings.

The current book is **Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind***, published in 2005. It supports creative, or what is often called "right brain" thinking. Because of the changes in technology, developed countries need to have workers who are more conceptual and creative thinkers rather than knowledge/ information-based thinkers, which computers can do better and underdeveloped countries can do cheaper. If you'd like to attend the meeting to discuss this work, it is on **December 14** after worship. Contact Dianne Ishida at dianne@hawaii.edu if you have questions.



Harvest Fair 2025 - A Festive Celebration



Date	Event
Nov. 6	Family Promise dinner donation, drop off by 5:00 pm at the breezeway
Nov. 9	Stewardship Sunday
Nov. 11	Veterans Day, office closed
Nov. 16	Canned Food Drive, breezeway
Nov. 16	Keauhou Shelter sandwich making, 9 am, breezeway
Nov. 23	"Thanksgiving Sunday", Sisters and Brothers in Christ provide snacks
Nov. 27	Thanksgiving, office closed
Nov. 30	Gift Card collection, breezeway
Nov. 30	Congregational Meeting after church service
Dec. 7	Gift Card collection, breezeway
Dec. 7	Mānoa Christmas Parade, 4-6 p.m., details TBA
Dec. 8	Christmas High Tea, 9-11:30 am, Multipurpose Room. Bring your favorite tea cup.
Dec. 11	Family Promise dinner donation, drop off by 5:00 pm at the breezeway
Dec. 13	Christmas Lights Trolley Ride, details TBA
Dec. 14	Book Club Meeting in the Upper Room after church service
Dec. 21	Keauhou Shelter sandwich making, 9 am, breezeway