

## **“Born Again” in the USA**

*By: Allen Chin*

I was born in Sacramento, the eldest of three children. My parents were Chinese immigrants who came to the United States by way of Angel Island. Cantonese was our primary language at home and my childhood years were heavily influenced by traditional Chinese cultural values.

Although my parents were not Christians, they felt that church would be a good place for me to learn English and acquire Western social skills (so long as I did not get too much “religion”). So, I began attending church shortly after kindergarten.

At the age of 13, I was led to Christ with the help of my Sunday school teacher, Eddie Chow. Although I was “on-fire” as a new Christian, I was immature in my faith. On the day I accepted Christ in Sunday school, I did not realize that I could participate in communion later that day in church service.

When I turned 16, my focus changed from church fellowship activities to achieving academic excellence in order to gain college acceptance. My after-school hours and summers were spent working at my parents’ grocery store to pay for tuition and board. I attended the University of California at Berkeley upon graduation from high school.

After several years at Cal, one of my college classmates invited me to a youth rally at the Chinese Community United Methodist Church in Oakland which brought me back into Christian fellowship activities. It was there at the Friday night fellowships where I met my spouse-to-be, Pat Muramoto.

After several years at CCUMC, I began to attend the Berkeley Chinese Community Church, as many of my Cal Berkeley alums were there. I spent nearly a decade there participating in a variety of church service roles starting from Greeter up through Deacon. While there, I had the pleasure of meeting the Associate Pastor, a well-spoken and sharply-dressed pastor named Rod Yee.

However, with two small toddlers, the commute from Pleasanton to Berkeley became a bit of a challenge, so Pat and I decided to look for



**Allen and Pat Chin (back middle) with their daughters, Jessica and Deanna and Allen’s parents. Allen and Pat transferred their membership to our church this past January.**

a church closer to home. We found an early stage Asian-American church in Pleasanton called Valley Gate which was led by Pastor Kenton Jang.

God eventually led us back to a larger Asian American church in Oakland (Christian Layman Church). I had the privilege of serving on its Board of Directors for two terms. During that period, the church went through a season of tremendous change including the departure of its Senior Pastor, re-converging of two congregations, evaluating the merits of purchasing a church building, and reviewing church planting versus multiple services options (to name a few). At CLC, both of our daughters came to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

After taking a break from church leadership at CLC, we visited a number of churches in the greater Tri-Valley area. Although there were a number of mega churches with great preaching and impressive worship services, Pat and I were lost in the crowd.

What drew us to San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church included relevant preaching, friendliness of the congregation, and a growth-oriented Asian-American church. We are very happy now to be a part of this church community and are looking forward to getting to know more people and serving one another.

# SLzJCC Celebrates Easter!

Praise God that we could celebrate Easter as a church family. On Sat., April 4, God blessed our picnic and Easter egg hunt with great weather, delicious food, fun games and lots of eggs and treats for the children.

The 55+ enjoyed delivering Easter gift bags to the residents at Umenoki Gardens and JASEB House on April 7.

The Wednesday Women's Bible Study enjoyed an Easter brunch on Wed., April 8. Over 40 women gathered for a potluck and enjoyed their time of fellowship together.

On Easter Sunday, the Sunday school program was an enjoyable time with our beloved puppets, Red and Stripes, and the children singing as we celebrated Jesus and His resurrection.

Over 240 people gathered for our Easter Worship service which included much rejoicing as we sang to the Lord, giving Him all praise and honor. We heard an inspiring message by Pastor Rod from John 20 and we enjoyed food and fellowship with a reception that followed. We thank God that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins, that He conquered death and was resurrected. Praise Him that we have the awesome privilege of knowing Him personally!



The children enjoy singing their praise to God and sharing about the true meaning of Easter.



Our pastors lead the congregation in "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" for our Easter Worship Service.



The kids await their turn to find their Easter eggs at the All-Church Picnic.



The Women's Bible Study enjoy gathering for their Easter Brunch.

