



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

# Firmly Rooted

*"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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## Trusting God

Our church conference will be holding our General Conference in San Diego this year. The theme is "Trust God" taken from Proverbs 3: 5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." I have been thinking of this theme and verses in the context of San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church. As we approach the end of our fiscal year, I asked myself, are we trusting in Him?

I tend to be a "glass half full" type of person. It has its advantages because being optimistic is much easier than being pessimistic and always looking at the negatives.

As I see it, we have had a very good year as a church body. Our attendance is strong; our prayer groups are caring and dedicated; we now have ten small groups; our membership is growing; our planned budget deficit is smaller than expected; and our staff is absolutely the best. So, why not relax and pat ourselves on the back?

I expressed all of the above to various individuals over the past few months and have been affirmed in almost every instance. I guess we can just continue with what we are doing because we are on the right track. Right?

One of our pastors told me: "Yes, but we still have challenges." I guess he is a "glass half empty" type of person. I have been thinking

about that comment and realize he is right. "A church without a vision will perish." Just as a student receives grades; an employee receives an evaluation; and a parent guides a child, we all need to also look at our developmental needs. If we don't take that next step, we become complacent and lazy and we begin a gradual decline which eventually leads to our downfall. We have much to be thankful for and we can be confident that He is directing us.

But, we cannot stop now. Our job is to continue on the path that He has set before us. "Trust God."

-- Gary Yamashita

## Join us on Easter Sunday!

Come and celebrate and worship our Risen Lord and Savior! Sunday school will meet as usual at 9:30 a.m. Our Easter service begins at 10:45 a.m. and Pastor Rod will bring us the message. There will be a Nichigo Baptismal Service for Yukiko Smith, at 12:30 p.m. Following there will be a joint Easter Reception -- Please bring finger food to share as we celebrate! Have a blessed and meaningful Easter!



# No Random Coincidences with God!

By: Phyllis Wilkinson

*John 5:17: Jesus said to them, "My father is always doing His work. He is working right up to this very day. I am working too."*

We can all look around us and see the evidence of God's work in the beautiful flowers, the birth of a new baby, or a gorgeous sunset. But when little bits of unconnected events happen in our lives, and when we see them all fit together later on, it truly is joyous and amazing to see how God has been working all along, and how clever and ingenious He is. I'd like to share a story of how bits of unconnected "works" all fit together to produce an amazing finished product.

I work for a wonderful lady named Nancy. She has been my best friend since we were 11 years old. We know everything about each other and can be completely honest with each other. One day in early November, she shared with me a strange experience she had the night before. She had been in a deep sleep when she heard a voice clearly say to her, "Go be a nurse." This woke her up and she looked around the room. She knew she had been asleep, but she also knew she heard a voice loud and clear, and the words stuck in her mind. You know how sometimes you have a dream, but after a few minutes, you can't remember what it was about? This did not happen. She asked me, "Do you think it was God talking to me? If it was God, I'd better pay attention to what He said." (It reminded me of how in the Bible, God spoke to Samuel in his sleep).

Well, the thought of Nancy becoming a nurse is about as comprehensible, as me becoming a WNBA basketball player! Nancy is as composed and unexcitable, as I am tall and agile! Once, when she came to the hospital to see me, she became so nervous seeing me with tubes hanging from all over, in her agitation, she accidentally knocked my catheter bag off the side of the bed, and then when the nurse came in to fix it, she accidentally pulled the IV out of my arm!! I could fill volumes of things like this that she does daily! So again, the thought of her being a nurse, is about as far from imaginable as can be, not to mention that by the time she got her license, she'd be old enough to collect social security benefits!

To her credit, and from her respect and obedience to God, she went on-line and searched, "How to become a nurse." A website for the University of

**"There are times when you just know God is working and the Holy Spirit gives you just the words to say right when you need it ... when that happens, it's amazing!"**

**--Phyllis**



Phoenix came up and she hit on it. A few days later, a recruiter named, Stan, from the University called our office. She talked to Stan then said she'd get back to him after the Thanksgiving holiday.

After Thanksgiving, Christmas madness set in, and life shifted into holiday mode, and the call to a new career was put on the back burner. Stan called a couple of times and each time Nancy was out of the office. By the third or fourth call, I told him, I was sorry she hadn't returned his calls and I added that he shouldn't get his hopes too high about getting Nancy to commit to the University's program. He sounded a little upset, so I told him, "Stan, the reason Nancy contacted the University is because she heard a voice in the middle of the night, telling her to 'Be a nurse.' Nancy and I are religious and we try to follow and obey..." He cut me off here, and asked, "Are you guys into astrology?" I said, "NO!"

In a flash, I mentally said, "God, help me to say this correctly for you." I continued, "We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God, sent by God to teach us how we should live, and show us the way to another life after this one, one that lasts forever, and is perfect." (I didn't want to use words like "salvation" or "everlasting life" yet. I thought it better to ease into that.) I said, "We try to follow God's ways and God's directions." Stan said, "Boy. I could use some religion. I've been feeling bad lately. I feel I need some help and direction."

Now, I had just read some little pamphlets the night before, the ones that we get at Easter and Christmas, wrapped in cellophane with candies. I had even brought them to work with me that day. I was trying to decide which was the easiest to understand, because I was going to enclose one with a Christmas card. So the information was fresh in my mind and I was able to calmly explain to Stan the salvation message. (How non-coincidental was that?!) Stan was very receptive. He said, "Man. You're good at this. Do you do this all the time?" I said I'd never shared like this before, and that God must have really wanted him to hear this. So I told him I would pray some

words and he could listen and say them to himself, (as he was also in an office at work), and that I'd pray for him.

When I finished praying, Stan said, "Wow, I feel so much better. I really do. Thank you." I told him I'd e-mail him something he could read to clarify the information we just talked about. So I scanned one of the pamphlets and e-mailed it to him. Here is part of the e-mail I sent him:

**Hi Stan, I'm jazzed. I hope you are too. I told Nancy all about our conversation, and it made her cry! We are both blown away on how God works in mysterious ways. I told you why Nancy contacted University of Phoenix, (that she heard a voice in her sleep that said clearly, "Go be a nurse"), that she didn't know if the voice was God's or not. Now, we both know, it was! He orchestrated our phone conversation. God knows each one of us, and was reaching out to you.**

*Jeremiah 29:11-12 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."*

**I am attaching the "4 steps to Salvation," info that I just "happened" to bring to work today. (This too, could not have been just a coincidence!) I hope you will read through this, and pray the prayer for yourself, asking God into your life. It will be the biggest and best decision you can possibly make in all your life. If you have any questions, please e-mail me back. I'd love to hear from you.**

**With complete sincerity,  
Phyllis and Nancy**

So, God's random acts in Nancy's "dream," my studying the pamphlets, volunteers preparing the pamphlets, and preparing the heart and life of Stan, were really not random at all, but rather, building blocks for a much bigger project, a new life for a lost soul. This gave us both tears and laughs when it was revealed to us.

## Annual Women's Craft Day

All women are invited to a wonderful day of making crafts, having a delicious bento lunch and listening to this year's speaker, Grace Vilain. Craft Day is Sat., April 10, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. A webpage has been set up specifically for Craft Day. Go to: [www.slzjcc.org/craftday](http://www.slzjcc.org/craftday) to retrieve the registration form and to see photos of each craft that will be taught.

## Youth Bonding Time at Annual Snow Retreat



The high school snow retreat, now including junior high students, is an annual retreat to Bear Valley. We trek up Friday to arrive at an awesome three story cabin. This year's retreat was March 12-14. As soon as we got there, some unpacked and others rushed to claim a bed. On Saturday a group of people traveled up the mountain for a fun day on the slopes. Some decided to stay back at the cabin to relax and play games. I chose to stay back at the cabin. I see this weekend as a get away, time to relax and sleep in!

This year the snow retreat was different, but enjoyable. A few regulars did not go, but a lot of new people went. This made it fun because everyone got to meet new people and learn more about people that we already knew. This year I was able to reconnect with Jordan Wong, who I had the opportunity to go to RAV with. I found this to be the highlight of the weekend because we had only seen each other twice since RAV. We got to reconnect and talk about many things.

Another highlight of the weekend is coming together with our brothers and sisters in Christ to worship on Saturday night. We gathered on the top floor to sing songs and play games. After we calmed down from the crazy games thought of by the Fremont boys, we took the time to reflect. It's interesting to hear what people had to say about the packed weekend. What makes the sharing time stand out is the comfort level with the group of people. People were able to share what was on their minds. It was amazing to see how comfortable some people became even only after knowing each other for a day.

-- Jordan Yamamoto