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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An Answer to Prayer

Since I've become a Christian, over 25 years ago, I've seen how the good Lord hears our prayers and answers them in ways that are beyond our imagination. I have learned that prayer can be a powerful thing. Early this year, I experienced a wondrous aspect of God answering our prayers.

In early February, one of my aunts, who had been living at the same assisted care home as my father, experienced a series of strokes that affected her body in such a way that she was put into hospice care. Her immediate family and her larger family of sister, brother-in-laws, nephews and nieces were put on a sad wait for her passing. During the days that followed our family members came to visit her. While she was unconscious, we hoped that she knew we were visiting. Over the days that I came to visit my aunt, I saw how she was progressively slipping away. It started to cause me great heartache. I began to pray that the Lord would comfort her and ease any pain that she might be experiencing.

As I've experienced over the years, God answered my prayers. He provided skilled and caring hospice nurses that came to visit and provide personal care for my aunt. Over the days that followed, the hospices nurses washed her, helped ease her pain, which allowed her to breathe easier and they applied lotion to her skin. They talked to her and administered care with great respect and privacy, as I experienced one day as I waited outside her room as the hospice nurse bathed her.

Then, one day, I truly knew that the Lord was answering my prayers, as I met the hospice nurse that was caring for my aunt for that day. The nurse was Eiko Kanzaki, a member of our church and a friend. Eiko had no knowledge that she was caring for my aunt. She was covering for the regularly assigned hospice nurse who was unable to come that day. I cannot express how much relief and happiness I felt knowing that Eiko was caring for my aunt. I felt God was telling me personally that He cared and was answering my prayers. He had sent someone to comfort and ease my aunt's pain that was a Christian, a dedicated and caring nurse and a firm believer in prayer.

I did not know that Eiko was going to be God's instrument to answer my prayers. Yet, the fact, He sent her to care for my aunt, made me think about how God can use people to answer our prayers. I'm sure that Eiko's heart for the Lord is an essential part of her daily work, but in this case, the Lord acted to move people and events to use her to answer my prayers. The same thing can happen to you. We can be used by the Lord to answer many prayers without our conscious knowledge. What you decide to do, may not be of your own actions, but the Lord's direction.

Isn't it a wonderful thought to know that the Lord can be using you to provide an answer to prayer? Take the time today to ask the Lord to use you for His glory. *In His Name,*

Jeff Kataoka

NorCal CYA Retreat --

Transforming Lives

God blessed the first NorCal CYA Retreat at Redwood Christian Park with 43 people attending.

Reflections from Dave Wu

"In Transition, but in Transformation" -- That was our theme for the NorCal CYA Retreat and it is something that I kept thinking about before, during, and after the retreat. What does it really mean to *transform*? Many times when we think of transformation, we think of a one-time deal, but this is not true. Transformation is a constant process. God continually wants us to be transformed into the image of Christ. We, however, because of our sinfulness, want to transform ourselves to what *we* want to be. Imagine God trying to mold you into a Christ-like form, however, you keep changing it for your own pleasures and satisfactions. I prayed for continual transformation by God and letting Him change me. This retreat was a great reminder of humility and living a life for God *entirely*. One of the theme verses was Romans 12:2 – *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* The camp site was beautiful, surrounded by redwood trees and green all around. When I thought about conformity, somehow I kept thinking of the green trees. Even though there are so many different kinds of trees, they surround you and they can easily blend in with the scenery. I don't want my life as a Christian to be blended in with the world. I want people to know I am a Christ-follower just by how I live my life. I want my light to shine before men, so they may see good works and give glory to my Father who is in Heaven.

One of my favorite times at the retreat was during the time of communion. I went outside and this red tree caught my attention. I sat under the tree that was filled with sparkling red leaves under the sunshine. I started to meditate on Christ and just enjoy God's creation. Watching the wind blow was like watching God move. I finally had a time of stillness alone, feeling relaxed, and taking that time to slowly breathe in and out. There was no rush to go anywhere or do anything, just that intimate time with God. I sat, leaning against this red tree, feeling the breeze dance across my face. I had my eyes closed, head tilted back, and gently smiled. I know God is transforming me.I want to thank everyone involved with the retreat; your hard work was definitely appreciated! I also want to thank our church family that was constantly praying for us, we definitely felt your presence!

A weekend blessed with spiritual learning, worship, and hearing testimonies from Emily Devey, Ramon West and Val Yu.

Reflections from Tracy Sugiyama

As I work part-time and go to school full-time, I am very busy. To "relax" is not something I get to experience often, so it was nice to get away and attend the CYA retreat! Although I was hesitant at first to sign-up, I was blessed to have had the encouragement and support from friends to go and I am so glad I did! I definitely felt God speaking to me through the great messages by Brian and Eric, and during the small group time that I enjoyed a lot. It helped me reflect on where I am in life and ask myself if what I am doing is for God's glory or mine. I thought about my focus and my purpose in life and realized that I am so consumed by my daily schedule, I do not think or acknowledge God's place in my life and what He has planned for me often enough.

(Continued on inside back page)

Wendy Cheng, Naomi Lue, Tracy Sugiyama, Emily Devey, Steph Cheng and Annie Leung enjoy team bonding for "The Amazing Race" game.

(CYA Retreat continued)

I need to focus more on being productive in my faith then just school and work. With that mindset, I left the retreat with a plan to put more effort into a daily devotional for God's guidance and teaching.

I also want to be more receptive to His purpose and plans for me, even if that means I need to sacrifice what I want for myself. *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is." - Romans 12:2*

I am very thankful to the planning committee who did such a thorough and organized job in putting such an awesome weekend together!

-- ***Tracy Sugiyama***

Blessings for 55+ Field trip!

The 55+ group were able to enjoy two tours in one day as they took a leisurely bus ride to Fairfield.

They first went to the Nippon Industries Production Facility, where Rick Wong, Kiyo and Jeanne Watari's, son-in-law, gave a fascinating tour of his plant that makes delicious brown and mixed rice. Rick generously gave the group many samples to take home.

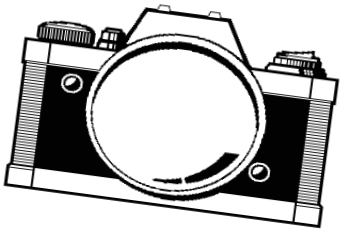
The group then went over to the Jelly Belly factory for another tour and then enjoyed lunch together at the Vintage Caffe in Suisun Valley. God blessed the day with beautiful weather, interesting tours, delicious food, great fellowship and even free samples to come home with! Thank you to Rick Wong and Kiyo and Jeanne Watari for arranging the Nippon Industries tour and to Emi Tabuchi and Yumi Fujii, who faithfully serve the 55+ group and who coordinated the day.

New Photo Directory Coming!!

Our church family is being given an exciting opportunity to take part in a brand new All-Church Photo Directory by Lim Design Photography. Lim Design is offering free portrait sessions, from July 14-17, to all who sign up. **Appointments for portrait sittings are being taken after church on Sundays**. All who participate will receive a free 8 x 10 portrait and a free church directory. To see samples of Karen Lim's work, please visit her website at: **limdesignphotography.com**.

For more information, you may contact Elizabeth Devey at justusgirls@gmail.com

SIGN UP!



2010

- **Cameron Chisaki -- Hercules Middle High School**
- **Jesse Agraz -- Rancho Middle School**
- **Darioen Nakano -- Cleage Albany Middle School**
- **Emily Sugiyama -- Alvarado Middle School**
- **Kristin Yoshioka -- Washington Manor Middle School**

- **Jordan Yamamoto – Foothill High School**
- **Annie Yee – Castro Valley High School**

- **Kevin Masuda, B.A., Business Administration, University of Pacific**
- **Caitlyn Gee, B.S., Business, Cal State University, East Bay**
- **Tien Pham, B.S. Nursing, Cal State University, East Bay**
- **Richard Shinoda, B.S., Athletic Training, Cal State University, Long Beach**
- **Jennifer Wilkinson, B.S., Business, Cal State University, East Bay**
- **Erica Lee, B.A., Communications, Cal Poly Pomona**
- **Lora Honda, B.A., International Economics, Cal State University, San Diego**
- **Brandon Wong, B.A., Communication Studies, minor in Leadership Studies, Azusa Pacific University**
- **Kari Kadomatsu, M.B.A., Law, Chapman University**

A Graduation Potluck will be held