

West Oahu Christian Church
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Pastor's Corner...

ADVENT

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us for a while (John 1:14, NIV).”

What does Christmas mean to you? If you're like most, it is a combination of things. As a child, a bit part of Christmas was the two-week vacation from school! Of course, a big bonus was the gift-giving – or shall I say, gift-receiving? ☺ The tree, decorations, lights and fake fireplace all added to the wonderland effect of the season. Of course, there was the story of Jesus' birth, but that was more of an add-on to all the other more important features of the holiday.

Each year I enjoy thumbing through a book by Dr. Paul Maier entitled, *The First Christmas, The True and Unfamiliar Story*. It is filled with cultural and historical details that escape our attention because of our higher priority of seeing the glittering Christmas decorations on homes, and the Honolulu City Lights at Honolulu Hale (City Hall.) As I was perusing this



book again, I came across the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which is believed to contain the cave or grotto where Jesus was born. The pictures are fascinating and unexpected. In very old-ish style, the adornments of the niche present a striking contrast of elegant simplicity and over-the-top ornamentation (at least to the Western eye.) The silver lanterns dangling from the ceiling remind me of the lighting and ceiling fan department of Home Depot!



Constantine during the 4th century AD had this condition as it purposed to overturn the pagan celebration Saturnalia. And we have it today in our Christmas season.

It is interesting that even in this shrine intended to preserve the identity of Jesus' birthplace, there seems to be an excess of sensory input. No doubt it is nothing like the manger where Jesus was born. There is a blend of a form of remembrance along with all we have added to it over time. The first celebrated “Christmas” by Emperor

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Pastor's Corner continued...

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised by this. When God sent his Son to dwell among us, He, Jesus Christ, was the God-Man who was tangible yet beyond comprehension. He was the Holy One who came to the fallen world. He combined the Sacred with the earthly. His presence sanctified all that He touched.

It is possible to become disenchanted and resentful of this sensory overload. Though it may be hard to accept and embrace, the reality is that this is how our Christmas is in our world. It is up to us to look deeper and recover the rich meanings of Christmas. This is not unlike those who lived long ago. So rather than complaining about a condition that won't go away, let's just periodically take the time to quiet our hearts and reflect and marvel of that first Advent. When we do, we have an assurance similar to the one God gave to Solomon by his father David: "If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever (1 Chronicles 28:9, NIV)."

My prayer is that you will find not only the historical Jesus, but the living Jesus this Christmas. Merry Christmas!

Stan

Prayer Requests

Physical Health, Healing and Divine Support:

- ✎ Tomi Doi - dialysis
- ✎ Melvyn Ishikawa - dementia
- ✎ Bob Terukina – Hospice care
- ✎ Mike Teruya – cancer
- ✎ Rev. Yuji Nakamura – recovery from surgery

WOCC and OMS Conference Activities:

- ✎ Church Leaders, deacons
- ✎ God's will and guidance in Conference Restructuring

State, U.S. and World:

- ✎ State, US and World Economy
- ✎ War in Iraq and Afghanistan
- ✎ President, Congress; State leaders, City leaders
- ✎ Pray for righteousness in our country

If you would like to list or change your prayer request, please contact Stan Miyamoto: e-mail: stanmiyamoto@gmail.com, cell phone: 277-2833.



*Give Thanks in all circumstances
for this God's will for you in Christ
Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

A Christmas envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Your contributions are used in the general maintenance and functioning of the church. We ask for your prayerful financial support. Thank you.



Food for Body and Soul

by Joan Doi & Jenny Watanabe

The best place for a scrumptious combination of both is the Women's Fellowship, which meets the 4th Saturday of every month at the Nako's residence. Here the fellowship is sweet, the food absolutely delicious, and the Bible Study thought provoking and up-lifting.

The meeting begins with hot towels to freshen up and hot coffee or tea to whet the appetite. Then we are all treated to a gourmet breakfast. Why gourmet?? Because my usual fanfare of toast, eggs and coffee is no match for the likes of egg plant gratin, French toast casserole, Kyushu style miso soup, and teriyaki fish to name a few. Jane calls us her guinea pigs for trying out new recipes. But, hey! She couldn't get more willing volunteers. Our bottomless cups are constantly refilled while we women are pampered beyond words. What a treat after being on the serving end of the family table all month.

Breakfast is followed by a study of fascinating topics with many references to biblical perspective. We have studied world religions, the occult and will soon be delving into the realm of the cults. "How do these studies apply to me?" you ask. You'd be amazed by how much we are impacted by thoughts and practices, which are contrary to biblical teaching. What better place than in a small group setting to question your beliefs and to come to a better understanding of what you believe and why. You'll be blest because you came. (Joan Doi)

What better way to broaden your knowledge about God? No quizzes, no homework and no pressure! And the breakfast put out by the Nako Ohana...Unbelievable! What a great way to get to know your sisters in Christ. (Jenny Watanabe)

Missions Corner by Roberta Nagano

On November 8th, Nora Handa, a former missionary, shared her thoughts in the service about the Japanese people and the need for missionaries in Japan. Nora goes to Japan about five times a year to help Judy Galley who has been in Japan for 46 years to give her moral support and keep her company.

On December 27th, we will have Sue and Eric Takamoto share during the Sunday School hour and give a short update on their ministry in Sanda, Japan. We look forward to hearing about the work they're doing in that country.

Thank you to all of you who are supporting and praying for these and other missionaries around the world.

Upcoming Events at WOCC:

Mark your calendars and save the dates! Here's what's happening at WOCC! Come join us!

- Sunday, Dec. 20: Light Christmas Potluck Luncheon
- Sunday, Feb. 21: Spring Banquet

More details about these events will be forthcoming.

Ongoing Events:

English Worship Service – 10:45 a.m.

Adult Sunday School – 9:15 a.m.

Children's Church – 10:45 a.m.

Japanese Worship/Bible Study Services – 10:45 a.m.



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West Oahu
Christian Church

VISION STATEMENT
"To develop and
strengthen the
congregation to
actively minister to
the community."

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.wocc-hi.org

Welcome to our Newest Members!

On November 22, 2009, we welcomed four new members to West Oahu Christian Church. They are all from areas around the church. Let's welcome them with a warm aloha spirit!



L – R: Rev. Stan Miyamoto, Martin Arinaga, Kazuko Turner, Nona Nagamine, and Paul Iinuma

Martin Arinaga: A Certified Financial Planner and part owner of Chinen and Arinaga Financial Group, Inc., he lives in Mililani with daughter, Alex.

Kazuko Turner: A transfer from Pali View Baptist Church, she lives in Ewa Beach.

Nona Nagamine: She works at a law firm in downtown and lives in Waiau.

Paul Iinuma: A student at the University of Hawaii, majoring in Math and Japanese. He lives in Pearl City.