

HEART-TO-HEART

We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.

A ATTITUDE C CHANGES T THINGS

Working Through Changes

Effective September 1 there was a change at WOCC - Pastor Jason Oshiro is now the Lead Pastor as Pastor Stan has officially retired.

With any change, people may become anxious, feel uneasy, or a sense of loss. However, in this situation, Pastor Stan and the Elders did their best to prepare the church for this change well in advance of Pastor Jason becoming our Lead Pastor. So, this change doesn't feel like a change at all.

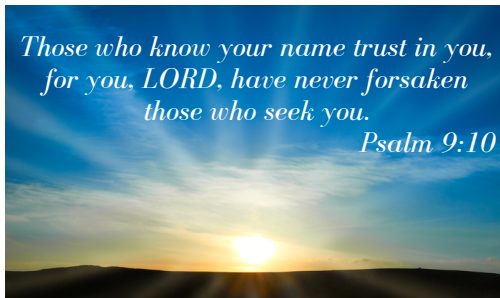
As we move through life, we encounter many situations where we experiences changes. To deal with those changes, we accept it,

fight it, or muddle through it. But we know that we can always count on Jesus to walk beside us through the change. We trust that He will get us through it, and we usually learn something in the process.

During any change in leadership, we need to remember that Jesus is our true leader and that He never changes. Let's keep our eyes on Him and continue to be a church together despite any changes that come our way.

*Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken
those who seek you.*

Psalm 9:10



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Rediscovering the Familiar

by Alli Oshiro

There are certain words and phrases in our Christian life that have become so familiar to us that we stop asking what they actually mean. We sing them in worship. We repeat them in prayer. We see them on shirts, mugs, and social media. And over time, something can happen—we know the words, but we can miss the weight behind them.

This series of articles is an invitation to slow down and take a closer look.

Together, we're going to unpack some of the most familiar verses, symbols, and practices in Christianity. We'll step into their biblical context, their historical background, cultural meaning, and their deeper spiritual significance. Along the way, we'll keep asking a few simple questions: What did this mean when it was first spoken? Why did it matter then? And what does it mean for us now?

My hope is that as we do this, familiar things will grow new roots and what we may have heard a thousand times will produce new fruit in our relationship with Jesus.

Over the next four articles, we'll explore four familiar aspects of the Christian life.

We'll begin by looking at **Your Shepherd's Voice** through the familiar words of John 10. Many of us know that Jesus is our Good Shepherd, but what did His original audience understand when He spoke about sheep, shepherds, thieves, and the gate? As we understand the context of this passage, a more complete picture of Jesus' care, protection, and invitation to abundant life will begin to unfold. We'll ask what it means to recognize His voice among all the others competing for our attention.

Next, we'll turn to **Communion**, one of the most meaningful yet most familiar practices in the life of the church. We'll revisit the Lord's Supper through the eyes of the early church, uncovering how remembrance, gratitude, and repentance meet at the Lord's table. Rather than a ritual, communion invites us into a renewed relationship Jesus.

We'll then look at **Fellowship**. While fellowship is often associated with coffee, conversation, or church events, Scripture presents something far deeper. We'll discover that biblical fellowship is the natural overflow of lives moving closer to Christ—a community marked by a shared pursuit of Jesus. It is the kind of fellowship that strengthens believers.

Finally, we'll explore **Our Daily Worship**. Worship is often seen as music and singing songs, yet the Bible describes it as a life fully surrendered to God. Together, we'll see how worship is expressed in our every day life as a response to God's love.

Whether you've been following Jesus for decades or are just beginning to explore your faith, I hope you'll join me in rediscovering the familiar. Let's slow down long enough to look again, and find the new things God wants to teach us through the truths we've known all along.



"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

- Marcel Proust

I Choose You

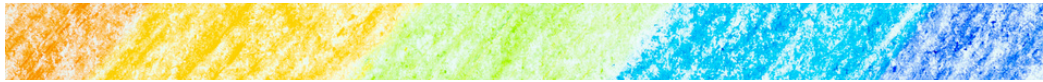
by Jeanne Nagatani

Recently, our Bible study teacher, Paula, made a statement about free will. She said that God gave us free will to make our own choices. In thinking about her statement, I think that if we didn't have free will and if God had forced us to love Him, we could possibly end up not loving Him because we didn't make it a choice. Making a choice to love God makes us love Him more, don't you think?

I recently heard a song by Jon Reddick called I Choose You. Some of the lyrics are as follows:

*I choose You
Nobody loves me the way that You do
I choose You over and over
'Cause You chose me, hey
When I gave You nothing,
You gave everything
All my life, You're calling me closer
So I choose You over and over*

I fell in love with this song when I heard it on the radio. I hope that you make a choice to choose Jesus.



Did You Know?

WOCC rents out the facility to another church group, The Holy Warriors. Recently, the Holy Warriors were able to partner with the Hawaii Foodbank to distribute food to the Waipahu community on the first Saturday of each month. Last month was the first Saturday that they implemented their food drive, and they reported that they served 144 families who participated in the event. They set up a system in the WOCC parking lot where cars drive through, members chat a little with the driver and passengers, the car is then loaded up with bags of food, and the car exits through the back gate.

It was very inspiring to see all of their members joyfully serving the Lord. There was singing and dancing, young people helping to load the cars with food, and smiles for everyone who passed through.



"For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you."

1 Thessalonians 1:4

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Attitudes and Outcomes

by Julie Morita

A few editions ago I wrote an article about a Bible study plan that I was doing to read the Bible in a year. That plan is by the Bible Project and it's "One Story That Leads to Jesus." I'm now on Day 246, and the verses that stood out to me was Matthew 21:28-32, The Parable of the Two Sons. First, I have to mention that phew, I'm finally in the New Testament (woohoo!), and second, going through the Old Testament in this reading plan clearly shows that the Bible is one story that leads to Jesus.

Ok, back to The Parable of the Two Sons. What caught my attention was how the two sons responded. It made me think of my own son. I used to ask him to do stuff, and he would give me all kinds of backtalk and not do what I asked. But once he started responding to my requests with "ok mom," I was happy until I realized that the outcome was the same despite his pleasant response - he didn't follow through. It's just his initial response that made me happy as it seemed that his attitude was about obeying the request. The parable made it clear that it really is about the attitude plus the outcome.

I notice that like the two sons in the parable, my attitude may stink at first, until I come to the realization that I should actually obey and do. So, good to know that God takes that into consideration, that I actually did what He wanted me to do (the outcome). But He, like myself as a parent, would like the attitude to be correct too. I guess that would make me a hypocrite as I do to God what I don't like my children doing to me. Good thing the parenting is kind of done as I'm still a "work in progress" as seen through the eyes of my Lord. Do I really have to 'fess up to my kids that I'm a hypocrite? Stay tuned for that outcome as my attitude stinks about doing that right now.



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"Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God, shining like stars in the universe."

-Philippians 2:14-15

*Please feel free to contact:
Alli Oshiro or Julie Morita
about this newsletter or to
submit an article.*