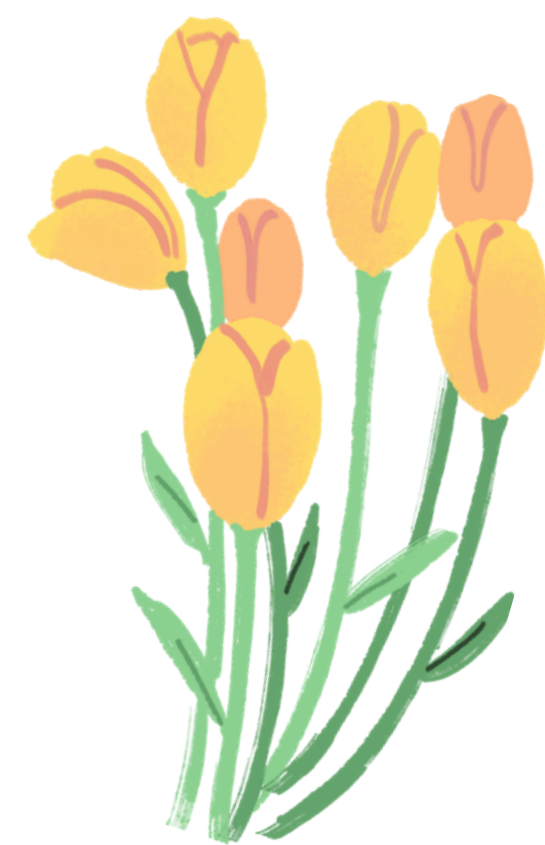


life in the **Light**



Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)

March marks the transition from winter's rest to spring's renewal. It's a symbol of the **growth** we strive for in our walk with Christ. This month, we're highlighting reflections from the youth group on how they've grown through their experiences and lessons learned at our church.

One way I've grown through what I've learned at this church is by learning to forgive others and let go of the past. We all face hardships, and sometimes those hardships involves or are caused by others. It can be difficult to forgive and let go; however, just as Jesus forgave those who did Him wrong and gave His life for others, we should also forgive and move forward.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!" (Isaiah 43:18-19)

-S.K.

My journey from community college to my dream university became a season of profound personal and spiritual growth. When a severe health crisis interrupted my life, God healed me and mentored me through the pastor's wife and daughter, Masami and Jun Asai. Aside from the care for my physical body, they deepened my faith and transformed my perspective entirely on life, including school.

I used to think that I had to exhaust myself chasing traditional markers of academic success, such as doing lots

of volunteer work and internships, getting good grades, and being part of big programs. However, God taught me through Masami-san to view school as a blessing from Him, meant to be enjoyed. She taught me to focus on doing and trying out what I wanted to do and to trust God to handle my future. As a result, I now live a life of freedom and peace. God has given me a boldness that I've never had before. I walk with an unwavering faith that He can easily turn my "impossibles" into reality. With a newly established self-image, He has replaced my insecurities with big dreams and a vision for the future.

"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.'" (Jeremiah 29:11)

-K.T.

About a year and a half ago, I had to quit my part-time job while evacuating due to the Eaton Fire. Since then, a lot has happened in my life, and I have had a difficult time with college studies and with finding a new part-time job.

But recently, I was finally able to get a part-time job that aligns with my character and interests.

In the past year, I spent almost every Saturday going to practice with our church guitar and praise group, the Seraphim. On Sundays, I started leading the Kids' Club with the other youth and junior members. Spending time together praising, and preparing activities and Bible stories for the kids, I found myself thinking less about the challenges in my life.

One day, during the month of March, I received an email offering me a job as a substitute teacher. The process of starting that job went smoothly after that. I thought, "This is God who gave this job opportunity to me," and I really thank God for that. Looking back, I realize that God has been watching me and guiding me to a job that I have been searching for.

"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in even good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

-H.N



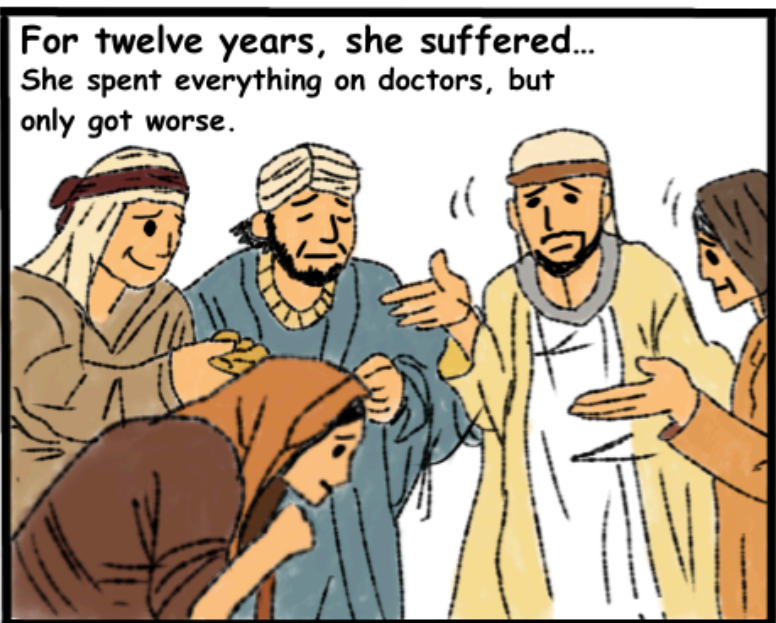
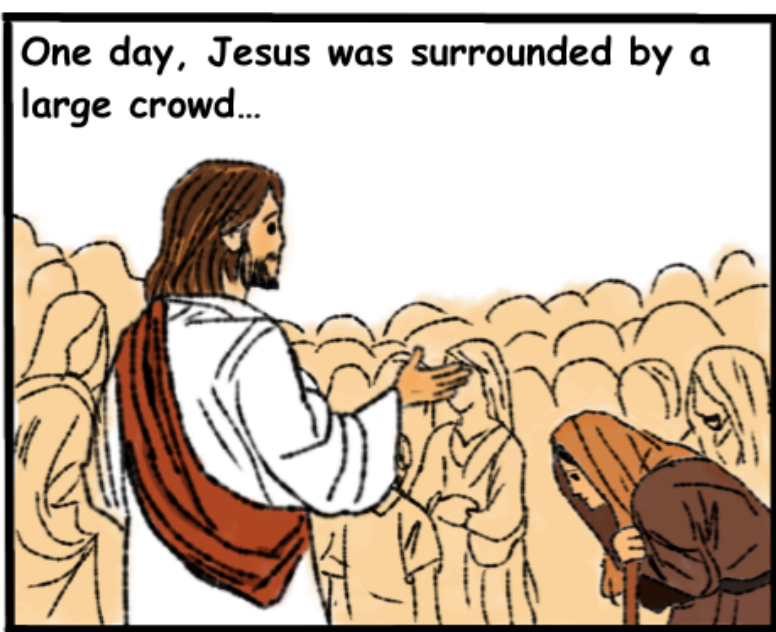
Spring Youth Hiking



As I stepped out of the car onto the Spruce Grove Campground Trail in Arcadia, the fresh scent of the wilderness overwhelmed my senses. The greenery was unlike anything I had seen before on previous hikes. A deep, dark richness emanated from the surrounding flora, merging with the nearby waters to sculpt an emerald, picturesque atmosphere. I tried to take photos, but the camera simply could not translate this vibrant aesthetic. As I've grown older, I've come to see nature as a reflection of the heart of God. Witnessing everything from the vastness of the mountains and trees to the adorable innocence of animals has helped me to gain a better understanding of the gentle nature of my Creator.

In the past, this concept was clouded because I would become lost in a sea of conflicting opinions that often left me feeling excluded and "unrighteous." However, God has taught me to return to His Word to find the truth. Observing how beautifully God clothes the plants, flowers, and trees, and provides sustenance for every living creature, I see how deeply He cares for them. It made me realize: if this is the care God pours into the earth, how much more must He care for me? Romans 5:8 provided the ultimate answer: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God showed me that righteousness isn't earned through my own efforts; it is a gift given to me. He cared for me so much that He sacrificed His own Son to save me, choosing not to see me through my works, but through what Jesus did for me on the cross. Although I cannot change myself, resting in His forgiveness and love is what transforms me to act more like Him. Nature does not strive to reflect God, it simply does—a truth I can learn from the earth. -K.T.

Your Faith Has Healed You (from Matthew 9:20-22) by K.I.



Junior Section

What are you looking forward to this year?

As I turn twelve, I look forward to learning new things this year, not only in school, but also about the Bible. I want to be able to know more about the scriptures and more about God. I want to thank God that I can face this year stronger than last year, because he is with me. -J.M.

What I am looking forward to this year as a 12-year-old is to learn more about God, get along with more people, and grow in many ways. I want to get closer to God because I think learning about Him helps me know what kind of wonderful person He is. I want to spend more time learning about what He teaches and how I can apply that to be a better friend. I also want to get along with more people because it's important to be kind, nice, and understanding. Another thing I really want to do this year is read many books. Reading more will help me learn more about the world He made. Books can teach me about how things work, how people think, and how amazing imagination is. I want to read stories that teach me and books that help me learn new things every day. -Y.S.

DID YOU KNOW...

Easter eggs symbolize the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The shell represents the sealed tomb, and the cracking of the egg represents his emergence from death.

-E.M.



COME & JOIN US!

Sunday Worship:
Japanese Service: 9 AM -
English Service: 11 AM -
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