

Pacific CONNECTOR

HAWAII PACIFIC BAPTIST CONVENTION

Every Hawaii Pacific Baptist Church working together to be leaders in

IMPACTING GOD'S KINGDOM throughout the Pacific & Asia.

We are
**HAWAII
PACIFIC**
Missions.



2020 SEP OCT
VOLUME 50, ISSUE 5



For more issues, scan this QR code or go
online to: hpbaptist.net/pacificconnector

Building the Kingdom

Small Steps At a Time

FROM ONE LEADER TO ANOTHER

I pray that this edition of the Pacific Connector finds you physically and spiritually well and blessed.

As many have claimed, 2020 has been a full year already, and we still have more months to go! As I write this letter, today is August 10 — **I am concerned for you.**

►► **I am concerned that you are struggling** under a load of uncertainty and confusion. As the reports and proclamations are shared by our governmental leaders, interpreting the information can be difficult. Your church members may see things differently than you and your church leadership. The stress of uncertainty can drive you to question your ability to lead, your ability to love others, and your ability to serve.

►► **I am concerned that you are withdrawing** into a tighter circle of ministry partners. As everyone seems to be making complicated personal and financial decisions, the tendency to trust others can overwhelm you. Emails and correspondence from past partners fill with requests for help. You may be wrestling with trusting church leaders, other pastors, or current and past ministry partners.

►► **I am concerned that you are not getting physical and spiritual**

rest and renewal. The demands of ministry are always high, but in times of crisis, needs rise even more. As you try to cover every need, you find that your time with God, your family, and yourself begins to disappear. Without rest, your capacity to lead and serve with a clear mind diminishes, and mistakes can occur.

However, I am not concerned about God's faithfulness to strengthen you in these days! He cares for you beyond your understanding, and He desires for your trust in Him entirely. Your struggle with uncertainty is resolved in your confidence in His guidance. Your withdrawal into a tighter circle is released in your understanding that He is working through many others for your benefit. Your lack of rest is refreshed as you realize that He waits to take your burdens in exchange for His support.

God is always faithful, and His Kingdom's work is unfolding in front of us. Let us rise together to see Him do more significant things through us now than ever before. God is empowering us for these days and greater days ahead. His Kingdom



Chris Martin

✉ chris@hpbaptist.net
☎ 808-946-9581

come and His will be done in us as it is in heaven.

Mahalo for the privilege and joy of serving you in our convention of churches. We appreciate your support of our ministries in service to you and our churches for our staff team. We remain ready to respond to your needs, coming alongside you as we navigate these days of uncertainty. God is faithful.

Continue to pray and strive for ways to serve God in obedience together. As always, your HPBC staff team is ready to assist you in any way that we can to advance and support your ministry. If we can serve you, please call us at 808-946-9581 or email me at chris@hpbaptist.net.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chris Martin". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "C" at the beginning.

PacificCONNECTOR

2042 Vancouver Dr, Honolulu HI, 96822
Phone: 808-946-9581
Fax: 808-688-8776

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUBLISHER

Chris Martin
chris@hpbaptist.net
808-946-9581

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EDITOR

Dr. Craig Webb
craig@hpbaptist.net
808-946-9581

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dawn Akutagawa
dawn@hpbaptist.net
808-946-9581

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Brandon Pickett

DESIGNER

Patti Spencer

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

**Steve Gray, Chris Martin,
Stella McMillian, Natalie Nation,
Dr. Craig Webb**

The Pacific Connector highlights people and churches that work to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ by reaching the Pacific and Asia. For information about Pacific Connector or the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention:

email: info@hpbaptist.net
call: (808) 946-9581
fax: (808) 688-8776
write: Pacific Connector
Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention
2042 Vancouver Drive
Honolulu HI, 96822

This publication is provided online free of charge and is available by visiting our website: hpbaptist.net/pacificconnector

The Pacific Connector, was created exclusively for the HPBC by Innovative Faith Resources. For more information, visit: innovativefaith.org

**INNOVATIVE
FAITH RESOURCES**
Media & Financial Services

ABOUT THE COVER

Jack Wattanawongsawang and Prinna Puakpong have served with the IMB in Fukuoka, Japan, since 2016. See story on page 16. Photo courtesy of IMB.



FEATURES

- Sue Nishikawa Week of Prayer and Offering for Hawaii Pacific Missions 4
- East Asian Peoples Affinity — Virtual Mission Trip 6
- Remembering Arnold Goto 7
- HPBC Hosts Virtual Pastors' Retreat for HPBC Pastors 12
- Japanese Family Comes to Faith 16

SEE WHAT GOD IS DOING

- Continuing to Serve the Community 9
- Lanai Baptist Gets Creative with VBS 13
- Churches Working Together to Be Leaders 15

DEPARTMENTS

- Building the Kingdom 2
- Virtual Annual Meeting: Moving Beyond Obsacles 14

RESOURCES

- Future Missionaries Work Through Deepen Discipleship Resource 8



Week of Prayer and Offering FOR HAWAII PACIFIC MISSIONS



**Sue Nishikawa
Offering**
for Hawaii Pacific Missions

As we continue to move forward as Hawaii Pacific Baptists, we see every Hawaii Pacific Baptist Church working together to be leaders in impacting God's Kingdom throughout the Pacific and Asia. We have a unique opportunity as a network of churches to reach the people of the Hawaiian Islands, the South Pacific, Micronesia, and into Asia (Japan, Thailand, South Korea, and the Philippines).

The Sue Nishikawa Week of Prayer and the Sue Nishikawa Offering for Hawaii Pacific Missions are a vital part of our convention's mission. The Sue Nishikawa Offering for Hawaii Pacific Missions exists to encourage and assist churches in their evangelistic outreach, assist in new kingdom work, to establish missions awareness and develop missions training, and to strengthen the

church body and the work of the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention.

God is doing incredible things through our churches as we collaborate for the sake of reaching Hawaii and the Pacific for Christ.

2020 has brought challenges but the Lord continues to work in and through each church and ministry. Together, as a network of churches, we are stronger together.

Join us for eight days of prayer as we focus each day on one island/region within the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention. Through prayer for one another, we can be part of building God's kingdom.

As the needs arise for our churches, we want to be ready to mobilize and assist in the best way possible. It begins with prayer.



Find out more by scanning the
QR code or visit the website at
hpbaptist.net/suenishikawa



Sue Nishikawa Prayer Guide 2020

Day 1

We are
**HAWAII
PACIFIC**
Missions.

During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Body of Christ has come together in ways that were unplanned. Pastors and church leaders took the challenge to bring their congregations together online. Churches gathered each week in unity to encourage and pray together, strengthen their leadership, and navigated through the unknowns. And, the Lord has been faithful.

- Ask the Lord to strengthen pastors and church leaders. Ask God to grant wisdom, discernment, courage, and strength as they proclaim the Gospel, lead the congregation, and provide creative care.
- Ask the Lord to bring a sense of unity among our network of churches as we work together for the Kingdom of God.
- Ask the Lord to bring a heart for missions within our neighborhood and community.
- For each region/island, ask the Lord to bring creative and innovative ways to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Day 2

Big Island / Hawaii Island

The Big Island is home to approximately 187,000 people where twenty Hawaii Pacific Baptist churches serve the island that has the largest landmass among the Hawaiian Islands.

The Big Island Baptist Association cooperates for student ministries, missions, church planting, college ministry, and fellowship.

- Pray for pastors as they work together for outreach and mutual support. Ask the Lord to help seasoned pastors and leaders to encourage younger pastors and churches.
- Pray for leaders as they forge a new partnership with International Mission Board (IMB) personnel in Japan.

Day 3

Maui County

Combined Maui, Lanai, and Molokai have a population of 155,000 with eleven HPBC churches serving these islands. The pandemic has hit Maui County especially hard economically.

- Ask the Lord to relieve the suffering from the high unemployment on Maui due to the pandemic.
- Ask the Lord to help Maui County pastors and leaders as they continue to meet monthly for prayer and fellowship.

Day 4

Oahu Baptists

Oahu with a population of over 950,000 is known as a melting pot with its mixture of cultures and religions. Eighty Hawaii Pacific Baptist churches and missions reach diverse communities.

- Ask the Lord to open the eyes of those who are searching for God.
- Ask the Lord to guide believers to see their island as a mission field.

Day 5

Kauai Baptists

Kauai is home to one of the wettest spots on earth and home to approximately 73,000 people. Four Hawaii Pacific Baptist churches serve the Garden Island.

- Ask the Lord to draw people to Himself.
- Ask the Lord to move in the communities and to direct the churches as they work together.

Day 6

Asia Baptists

There are 11 HPBC churches in Okinawa, Yokohama, Tokyo, and Himeji, Japan, as well as Seoul and Pyongtaek, South Korea, Bangkok, Thailand, and Manila, Philippines.

Many of the churches of our Asia Baptist Network (ABN) were founded through efforts of the International Mission Board (IMB), but are now self-supporting Hawaii Pacific Baptist churches. Their work continues to reach more of East Asia and Southeast Asia in church planting and missions, as well as serving alongside the other churches of the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention.

- Pray for the pastors and church leaders of ABN churches as they find creative ways to reach their communities for Christ during the pandemic

Day 7

Micronesia

Hawaii Pacific Baptist work in Micronesia (over 600 islands) is primarily in Guam with vibrant multi-cultural churches. The association has worked closely together for evangelism and outreach.

- Ask the Lord to strengthen the churches of Guam and throughout Micronesia.
- Ask the Lord to both revitalize existing congregations and grow new congregations.

Day 8

Samoa

The South Pacific Baptist Association includes 10 churches in Samoa and American Samoa. While most of the churches are primarily Samoan, there are also Korean and Chinese language congregations.

- Pray for the Pastor Training School which meets at Samoa Baptist Academy.
- Pray for Samoa Baptist Churches as the island remains on a Covid-19 island travel ban.

Learn more about these ministries at hpbaptist.net/suenishikawa



East Asian Peoples Affinity **VIRTUAL MISSION TRIP**

imb

Less than 1% of Japan's
126 million people know Jesus.

You and your church are needed to help
share the Gospel with those who
need to hear.

**A PRIVATE VIRTUAL EVENT FOR HPBC
PASTORS AND MISSION LEADERS**

Discover Japan & East Asia

Monday, September 28, 2020

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Hawaii Standard Time via Zoom

Join us for our first private online Discover Event as we visit Japan. Explore different cities virtually and learn about life, faith, and God at work in Japan from missionaries and local Japanese church leaders. See how you and your church can live out the call to proclaim the gospel in East Asia. Hear from IMB leadership about how Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention churches can be part of great commission work in Japan.

Presented in partnership
with our IMB East Asian
Peoples Affinity and the Hawaii
Pacific Baptist Convention Team.

- See the Gospel at work in East Asia
- Build relationships with missionaries in Japan
- Meet local partners impacted by your support
- Intercede for areas of lostness through virtual prayer walks
- Discover new opportunities for your church to help make disciples in Japan

TO REGISTER: scan the QR code or go
to <http://tinyurl.com/register-eastasia>

For more information contact Dr. Craig
Webb, Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention,
1-808-946-9581, craig@hpbaptist.net



This event is specifically for Hawaii Pacific Baptist pastors along with mission leaders and those with a heart for praying for and going to Japan.

SCHEDULE

- | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------------|
| 6:30 p.m. | | Welcome |
| 6:35 p.m. | | Discover East Asia |
| 6:50 p.m. | | Japan on Location |
| | | Discover Japan |
| | | Discover Tokyo |
| | | Discover Yokohama |
| | | Discover Fukuoka |
| | | Discover Kobe |
| | | Summer Olympics |
| 8:00 p.m. | | Live Small Group Q&A |

Remembering

ARNOLD GOTO

Hawaii Baptist Foundation President

Arnold Goto, President of our Hawaii Baptist Foundation, passed away Monday, August 3, 2020.

Arnold enthusiastically served as the President of the Hawaii Baptist Foundation for almost five years, following his faithful service of eight years on its Board of Directors as Chairman of the Board's Development Committee. Hawaii Pacific Baptists have benefited greatly from his dependable service through the Foundation over many years.

Under his leadership, the number of churches participating in investment and planned giving services has increased substantially. It also resulted in a strengthening of the investments for the Hawaii Baptist Academy and the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention.

Paul Oyer, former Foundation President and member at Olivet Baptist said, "Arnold was the strongest possible candidate to assume leadership of the Hawaii Baptist Foundation when he did. I was able to leave the Foundation with confidence in its future under his leadership."

Arnold's compassion for others, love for life, and commitment to the Gospel strengthened the lives of everyone he knew. Countless pastors, church leaders, and colleagues have remarked on his generosity, hospitality, and God-given ability to encourage others toward Christ.

Oyer also remarked, "Arnold quickly gained the friendship and respect of his counterparts at the other Baptist state foundations throughout the country."

Arnold served as executive pastor and elder chair at Hawaii Kai Church from January 2009 to December 2015 including 4 years while the church was without a senior pastor. He served alongside a team of elders as they recruited pastoral assistance from across the Southern Baptist Convention, inviting seasoned pastors, professors, and respected denominational leaders to fill the pulpit and provide solid teaching for the congregation. He remained as executive pastor and continued as elder chair



when Pastor Dan Wong became senior pastor and they served together. Dan said about Arnold, "Like his Savior, Arnold Goto loved and served the church at great cost to himself."

Before these ministry roles, Arnold had a successful career as an engineer and business executive with various leading companies. This included being a National Partner with KPMG International, leading his own business consulting firm, serving as managing director at BearingPoint, INC in Los Angeles, the managing director at Oracle in Hawaii, and as a sales representative at Hewlett Packard in Silicon Valley and Hawaii. Arnold was also an FAA-certified Private Pilot and a Registered Professional Engineer.

Arnold is survived by his wife, Cyndy, and their sons Jonathan and Joshua.



Future Missionaries Work Through *Deepen Discipleship* Resource

by Natalie Nation



Five college students from three churches have committed to doing a Bible study that will prepare them to serve overseas next summer.

For one or two months, these college students will live on their own in Tokyo, while working closely with an International Mission Board (IMB) team on the field to "get their feet wet" in overseas missions.

The curriculum they are using is an IMB resource called "Deepen Discipleship" which is used to prepare new personnel prior to being sent overseas. It is a 25-week study with 5 days' worth of content per week.

Each day's study walks you through a reading from the New Testament, a meditation on verses on Scripture, and key questions for self-reflection. There are also activities to help apply the reading and to evaluate your relationship with God as you go through the study.

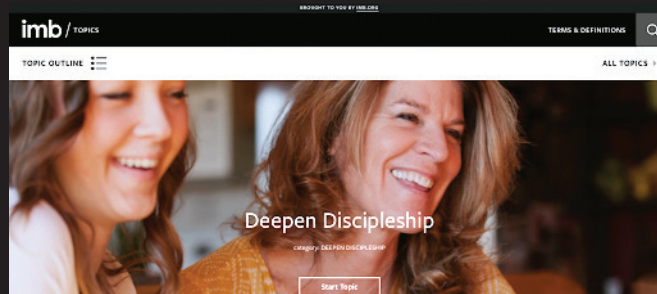
The course is designed to view Scripture through a missional lens with a group of believers to grow closer in discipleship with Jesus.

So far, the college students have expressed enjoying the challenge of not only being in the Word every day but having the opportunity to sit down with God and evaluate their heart based on what they have just read.

"Each week when we gather together, we pray for each other, for our time, and for Japan. We openly talk about what activities challenged us, topics that were encouraging or were difficult to understand in the past

week's reading, and how we saw God move in our lives as a reflection of our time in the Word. We also talk about how God is using the time to grow us closer to Him as He forms us as a team to be ready to serve overseas together. I love getting the front-row view of God's work in their lives as He also refines my heart through this study."

Natalie is an IMB Journeyman delayed from her deployment because of pandemic travel restrictions. The IMB Journeyman program is supported by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.



Anyone can access this free resource by scanning this QR code or going to IMB's website:
<https://imb.pathwright.com/library/>

Continuing to Serve the Community

AS THE PANDEMIC LINGERS

Life Christian Church Serves Families of Roosevelt High School

At the end of July, Pastor Shaw Okawara and Life Christian Church (Oahu) worked with the administration of Roosevelt High School to distribute meat, eggs, and fresh produce food to 200 families economically impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. Besides volunteers from Life Christian, a member of Central Baptist Church participated along with Gay and John Williams from HPBC Disaster Relief.



Antioch Baptist Church holds ABC Keiki Drive

On Saturdays during June and July, members of Antioch Baptist Church (ABC), Oahu prepared and distributed free activity bags for the children of their community. These special bags included weekly activity worksheets, school supplies, arts & crafts projects, and special surprise gifts. Parents drove through the campus to pick up these free gift bags. Oliver Lee is Senior Pastor.



Lahaina Baptist Continues Weekly Food Distribution

In early August, the Lahaina Baptist Church (Maui) surpassed 20 weeks in a row providing food for the West Maui Community. On week 20, Thursday, August 6, they gave 624 food boxes and 336 produce boxes to families in a drive-through distribution involving dozens of volunteers from the church and community.

According to Jay Wright, pastor of Lahaina Baptist Church, "The community of West Maui has been especially hard hit economically by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. According to official estimates, 52% of West Maui is out of work."



SOMETHING TO Celebrate

Kaunakakai Baptist, Molokai calls Hanale (Henry) Lindo as Interim Pastor



Hanale and Zhintell Lindo pictured with 7 of their 11 grandchildren

On Sunday, July 19, 2020, the Kaunakakai Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee recommended and the church family approved Hanale Lindo to become their Interim Pastor. Hanale and his wife Zhintell are long-time residents of Molokai. Hanale is also a battalion chief for the Maui Fire Department. Hanale and Zhintell have also been active in the work of foster-parenting on Molokai and recently adopted 3 children they had been fostering.

Makakilo Celebrates New Members During the Pandemic



One of the families who recently became members of Makakilo Baptist

Pastor Jon Elliff shared, "Makakilo Baptist Church recently reported 19 adults and 10 children joined their fellowship in the month of July." He added, "In these strange and scary days, we are so thankful we have a mighty God in whom we place all of our trust. With all the bad news all around us, we know that Christ's Kingdom grows, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it! Such a wonderful reminder that God is still on His throne!"

Sarah Williams to Attend Gateway Seminary

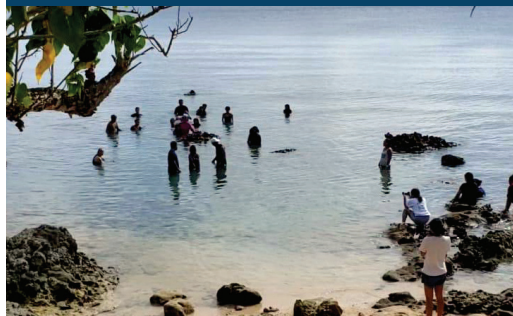
International Ministries intern Sarah Williams has returned to California to pursue her Masters Degree in Christian Counseling at Gateway Baptist Theological Seminary (formerly Golden Gate Seminary). Sarah served alongside Carlye Lawrence, International Ministries director, for the past 2 years helping host student luncheons, global cafes, and the 'big giveaway' for students.

In completing her degree, Sarah wants to help others heal and process life on a deeper level that encourages them to grow in their relationship with the Lord. She plans to pursue overseas missions to serve both missionaries and the community she lives in through counseling.

Some of Sarah's fondest memories about her time in Hawai'i are the relationships she's built with international students, being able to introduce them to Hawai'i/America, learning about the culture of Hawai'i, and investing in Pawa'a Community Church.



Guam Christian Life Fellowship (GCLF) Celebrates Baptisms at Its Annual Camp



GCLF Baptism



GCLF Youth/Family Camp

On July 24-25, 2020, GCLF held its annual Youth/Family Camp with the theme of "Nothing is Impossible!" The camp has always been one of the most anticipated events in the life of GCLF. The highlight of this year's camp was the baptism of Lala Cruz and her adopted son, Nico Natiola. Visit gclf.gu for more info.

Himeji Baptist Church Celebrates Baptism



Himeji Baptist Church (Japan) baptized 4 Persons in the ocean in August. Toshikazu Haruta, Senior Pastor, shared that it was his first ocean baptism in his 38 years of ministry. Baptism candidates had waited since March to be baptized.

John and Christie Nam Earn Seminary Degrees at NOBTS



John and Christie Nam on the NOBTS campus

John and Christie Nam recently received degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS). John graduated with a Masters of Divinity. Christie graduated with a Masters of Divinity in family and marriage counseling.

John was a member and pastoral intern at University Avenue Baptist and served as a worship leader for Waikiki Baptist on Sunday nights. John was involved in the Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) on Oahu and Christie served with International Ministries as a Missionary to international students at the University of Hawaii and a youth leader for International Baptist Fellowship. He has recently accepted a position at the Korean Baptist Church of Gainesville, Florida. They are also expecting their first child! Nam is the son of Chang Hee Nam and Hannah Cho.

The NOBTS Master of Divinity degree consists of a minimum of 83 credit hours and affords specializations in varied and wide-ranging disciplines from biblical languages, Christian theology, pastoral care, counseling, and others. The degree is considered the "standard" degree in graduate theological education.

Celebrate

HPBC Hosts Virtual Pastors' Retreat for HPBC Pastors

Fellowship / Connect / Encourage / Equip / Exhort

On Monday, June 29, 2020, the HPBC staff team hosted a gathering of Hawaii Pacific Baptist pastors via Zoom with guest speaker, Dr. Rodney Woo of the International Baptist Church of Singapore.

The purpose of the retreat was for pastors to fellowship, connect with, encourage each other, and to receive equipping and exhortation.

Forty pastors from the Hawaiian Islands, Bangkok, Okinawa, Mainland Japan, South Korea, Guam, and Texas participated in this 2-hour event.

Responses to a follow-up survey expressed appreciation for the strong teaching from Dr. Woo and an appreciation for the fellowship during the breakout discussions. Several respondents expressed that they would like more opportunities for this type of small-group discussion with pastors. The retreat was intended to fulfill the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention's strategy to empower and mobilize the churches of the HPBC by providing excellent resources for Hawaii Pacific Baptist churches.

Teaching content
is available at
vimeo.com/434103769





Lanai Baptist Gets Creative with Vacation Bible School



This year Lanai Baptist Church (LBC) did things a bit differently with VBS because of the pandemic.

They held a four day VBS "Drive-Thru" where they handed out "tool bags" to parents to take home. Parents were encouraged to help their children work through the material, and for the younger kids we encouraged the parents to read the stories to them. That way the whole family would be involved.

Leaders and volunteers at LBC stuffed the tool bags with that day's VBS lesson as prepared by the teacher for that age group. They also added snacks, toys, and other goodies.

LBC had people drive up and walk up to get their tool bags for their kids.

According to Tim Becher, pastor at LBC, "it went much better than expected and we gave out 204 tool bags. On our biggest day, we gave out 61 bags."

Tim said, "thanks to our church family that helped make this year's VBS fun and successful. Now we pray for the gospel seeds that have been planted to take root and for families to be changed."



2020 Virtual Annual Meeting

MOVING BEYOND OBSTACLES



You, LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God, I can scale a wall. PSALM 18:28-29



With all the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders, and other unknowns for November 2020, the previously scheduled HPBC Annual Meeting in Kona will instead be virtual.

The Arrangements and Programs Committees are recommending to the HPBC Executive Board that rather than an in-person Annual Meeting, a video update with celebrations of what God has done in the past year along with updates from SBC entities will be distributed to Hawaii Pacific Baptists.

The video update will include many of the same elements we usually experience in our Annual Meetings including music, scripture, prayer, updates from Hawaii Pacific Baptists along with greetings from our Southern Baptist Agencies.

We will also get updates from Hawaii Baptist Foundation (include a special memorial moment for Arnold Goto), the Hawaii Baptist Academy, and International Ministries. The

video report will also include reports from various HPBC Committees.

The President of our Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, Dr. Ronnie Floyd, will not only bring greetings, but he will also share our Annual Message.

The Arrangements and Programs Committees along with the HPBC staff team continue to work on the program along with the format. [Watch the hpbaptist.net website](https://www.hpbaptist.net) for more details.



LIVE

@hawaiibaptist

November
5 | 3:00 p.m.
HST

CHURCHES WORK TOGETHER with Harvest Family Life Ministry to Serve Families with *Foster Children*

by Pastor Steve Gray, FBC Wahiawa

Harvest Family Life Ministry of Hawaii (HFLM) is working to build partnerships with churches and businesses in order to minister to families with foster children.

One of the big ministry outreach projects HFLM conducts each year is to gather school supplies and backpacks for foster children and other keiki (children) in need. Several of Hawaii Pacific Baptist churches have been involved with this vital ministry over the years.

For the backpack ministry, Central Baptist Church, Oahu provided volunteers and worked to help gather the supplies. First Baptist Church (FBC) Wahiawa provided supplies, volunteers, and space at the church's property to be used to gather and pack the supplies. Churches and social agencies throughout Hawaii served to help channel the backpacks to the kids.

Over 300 loaded backpacks were delivered on Oahu, 50 were shipped to Maui and 111 were delivered to Molokai through Kaunakakai Baptist.

Brad and Esther McDaniel lead Harvest Family Life Ministry of Hawaii and are members of FBC Wahiawa. Learn more at hflm.org





Japanese Family Comes to Faith

By Stella McMillian, International Mission Board (IMB)

FUKUOKA, Japan (Baptist Press) — When IMB worker Jack Wattanawongsawang and his wife, Prinna, moved to Fukuoka, Japan, at the end of 2016, one of the first things they began to do was prayer walk.

They'd leave their apartment, pick a direction, and just start walking. Along the way, they'd pray for God to lead them to the people He had prepared for them to meet, and for God to direct them to the places He'd prepared for them to go.

And then, they'd pray one more thing. They'd pray specifically for God to open a door for them to share the Gospel with an entire family, and for that whole family to put their faith in Christ.

After years of ministry in Japan, a country where less than half a percent of the population are evangelical Christians, they'd learned that social persecution was a challenging barrier to the Gospel.

"There's a saying in Japan that the nail that sticks out gets hammered down," Jack said. "Becoming a Christian is that. You become a nail that sticks out from your family and from society. So, you get hammered down. That makes it really hard to accept Christ alone."

This past March, the couple celebrated God's answer to four years of prayer as they watched Hatsuko* and her granddaughter Momoka* profess their faith in Christ publicly through baptism. The new believers were far from alone. They were following in the steps of the rest of their family who had all put their faith in Christ over the last several years.

"This is truly a God story that no one could have planned," said Prinna. "Our whole church family was filled with joy."

God first began working in the life of Momoka's brother, who met a Christian when he was in college. That believer led him to faith in Christ and helped him understand the Bible, but after graduation, they lost touch.

Prinna and Jack met the family because Momoka's mother, Yuko*, began attending a cooking class they were teaching at a community center not far from their house. They'd found the community center during a prayer walk when the mission pastor from their sending church, Silverdale Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., came to visit soon after they moved.

They began partnering with a local church plant to use the cooking class to build friendships and share the Gospel. Jack invited the pastor from the church plant to attend the class, and he did.

When the pastor met Yuko, she told him her son was a Christian because of a friend he'd made in college, and she'd always wished she could

meet that friend. It took just a few more minutes of conversation for them to both realize that the pastor was that friend — he'd introduced her son to Christ, and then years later planted a church in Fukuoka.

Prinna invited Yuko to the church, and Yuko and her husband both began attending with their son. As believers invested in them and encouraged them to study the Bible, the Holy Spirit began to work on their hearts. Four months after they first visited the church plant, Yuko and her husband both accepted Christ. The pastor baptized them in the ocean last August.

Momoka was skeptical of her parents' new faith at first. But it was hard to ignore how much gentler and kinder her father had become. He even told her he loved her, something he had rarely done before.

The pastor began coming over to Yuko's house to study the Bible with Yuko and Momoka. That's when Hatsuko first began to understand the Gospel. She would listen to the Bible studies because she lived with her daughter's family.

God used Scripture and the love of local believers to show Momoka and Hatsuko He cared for them, and He was worth surrendering to. Their baptisms this past March were celebrations of more than just their salvation alone. They were celebrations of God's amazing grace to draw a whole family to Himself through the faithful witness of a local church.

"How much we believe God can do is the key. Do we really believe He can save people?" Jack said. "He said He will do it, and He will. Are we begging Him that He would lead us to see His plan and connect the dots and see all that He has prepared?"

When Jack and Prinna first began prayer-walking four years ago, it was often just the two of them. They had no idea how God would answer their prayers.

Today, they still prayer-walk through Fukuoka, but they're not alone anymore. They walk alongside the church God led them to partner with, which now includes three generations of a family who are a constant reminder to them that He is always at work.

"Lead us to the people that you have prepared for us. Lead us to people who will be saved and become our family. Open the door for us to share the Gospel. Save whole families, save whole communities. That's always our prayer," Jack said.

Stella McMillian is a missionary and contributing writer for IMB.