

# “The of the Matter”

A Monthly Source of Information for the Church

## Experiencing God's Love

**“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34, 35**

One of the first commands from Christ was to love one another as He has loved us. The question Sandria and I are reflecting on is whether we truly understand this love that Christ has for us and commands us to fulfill.

One way to reflect on love for me is to ask a simple question: what is love? In looking up a few definitions online, a recurring definition has been... love is a strong or intense “feeling”. While this is likely a limited definition of love, I want to explore the word “feeling” to see how we can understand Christ’s love. After all, love is a feeling just as pain is. We can start by reflecting on Christ’s demonstrated love through His death on the cross.

I think most of us have heard the story of Christ dying on the cross for our sins. This is a story we have heard often, and I know personally, I don’t always take time to reflect on how our Creator, with all available powers, could choose to die on the cross for us. As one might imagine, death on the cross is very painful. In Christ’s story, we know there were events leading up to His death that were both physically and emotionally painful. Crucifixion was considered both a brutal and shameful way to die. With the knowledge of His impending death on the cross, Christ’s love for us was much stronger than His fear of pain. We can understand His love, especially in the moment when He requested the Father to forgive those who were crucifying Him, for they did not know what they were doing.

Some people can relate to the tingling sensation felt when one lays their eyes for the first time on that special someone; the feelings of love and total madness! Whether we express it or not, we know that eyes typically betray us. We know that eyes tell the story even before we get a chance to tell it ourselves. What did the Roman soldiers feel who gazed into Christ’s eyes as they were nailing Him to the cross? I can imagine Jesus opening His eyes, with blood pouring down His face, and looking at those crucifying Him, and all He could feel was love. His feeling of love towards us, His children, was so much more than the pain He felt on the cross. Before He cried out to His Father, He looked at those nailing Him to the cross. The soldiers who gazed at Christ must have felt something when their eyes locked in with His. I think they all must have felt love from His eyes; love like they had never seen or experienced before.

Amid his agonizing pain, as the cross was being lifted and eventually coming to a full rest, Christ had another chance to look at those that came to witness his death. I can imagine the thoughts that ran through His mind at that very moment. Jeremiah 29:11. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of harm, to give you a future and a hope.” Even in great pain, Our Lord Jesus Christ cried out..., “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34. Even on the cross, Jesus thought of the love He had for His children.

The first command that Christ asks of us is to love one another. It is in loving one another that we express the love we have for Him. On our own, we are not capable of the love that Christ is asking for; however, He is more than willing to pour out the Holy Spirit to support us in fulfilling this desire He has for us. He who knows love, He who created us, can help us understand and feel the love that He has for us.

If we have His love, we can forgive seventy times seven. If we have His love, we can persevere in the face of insurmountable hardship and pain. If we have His love, we can break barriers. If we have His love, we can accept the gifts He has instilled in us to impact His children. Let us pray that we progress, minute by minute, hour by hour, and day by day, towards this perfect love.

By Yohana Tuguta, Contributing Editor

# Church News

## God is at Work

There was a small group from the church and hospital who attended the ASI Convention in Kansas City, the first week of August and what a blessing it was! For many of us, this was our first time at ASI. We went with two main goals in mind—to shine light on how God is working mightily in Ukiah and to connect with others who are also on their journey to reach others for Jesus.

Our time and conversations were focused on the marvelous ways God’s Spirit has been working in Ukiah in answer to our prayers for the church, the hospital, the school and the community. We shared how, for months, we had been praying the same prayer, “How can we reach people for Jesus in our community?” And the answer that has come to our hearts is, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord.

And God’s Spirit has been moving. From a few small group Bible studies to several people coming together to pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, it has ignited to groups gathering every morning and many evenings to sing, pray, share and read His Word. We loved being able to share these stories with others at ASI and found that it encouraged not only them, but it strengthened our faith as well!

Another highlight was being able to meet others who are ministering and serving around the world to reach their neighborhoods, towns and cities for Jesus. Some of the stories shared of answered prayers were incredible—from God providing a lifestyle center in the mountains of Malaysia, to a God-directed appointment in the middle of the street in downtown Kansas City to share The Great Controversy with someone! It was a great reminder that whether we are in great cities, or out in remote jungles, or in small towns like Ukiah--God is at work!  
by Kristin Merritt

### OUR VISION STATEMENT

To Know Jesus  
To Share Jesus  
To Follow Jesus  
Changing Lives Today  
And For Eternity

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Filled With The Holy Spirit,  
Discipling,  
Baptizing,  
Teaching with Love  
Preparing All for Jesus’ Return



## Outdoor Church, September 23

Plan to enjoy serenity and God’s creation at **Mill Creek Park** for Sabbath worship.



## Church News, Cont.

## Camp Wai'anae Mission Trip

by Pastor Eric Kablanow

August 6 through 13 was our long-awaited mission trip to Camp Wai'anae on the west side of the island of Oahu in Hawaii. We had seventeen participants which included eight youth and nine adults. We couldn't have asked for a better group with how well everyone worked together and how smoothly everything went. We got to the camp before dark on August 6 and had a chance to relax a little and explore the grounds. It was nice to have a couple hours to stretch our legs after a long day of traveling.

On Monday morning, we started our projects. We had one group working on staining all the benches in their amphitheater. The benches had been beautifully built last year but the wood hadn't been treated. Our job was to try to stain every possible part we could access so they wouldn't get water damaged. It wasn't a glamorous job, but it was very rewarding to see the benches transform as we worked on them. That project took just over two full days of work and was one of our major projects we completed.

There were two other projects happening at the same time as the benches. The first was some landscaping to be done. They needed some bushes cut down and some plants and flowers put in by the front gate. These projects turned out to be the best learning experiences for some of the youth. They learned to drive a manual transmission vehicle, operate some new tools, and they even learned about putting in drip lines for watering. Several of the youth stayed on this project the whole week because they enjoyed it so much.

The other project happening was completed by two of our skilled adults, Randal Schafer & Greg Niderost. They installed trim on the exterior of some tiny homes for future staff housing. We were very grateful to have them on the trip to take on that project for the camp.



**Camp Wai'anae Mission Trip, cont.**

The fires in Maui were started by the same winds that hit us on Oahu. All week we had been praying for them, as we felt a little closer to the problem. On Friday morning, we had an opportunity to do our part in the relief efforts for the people in Maui. The Hawaii Conference called the camp manager, Randall Maddox, and asked him to put together a truck full of supplies to be sent over in a shipping container. We believe this was possibly the reason God had us go at this time. The camp manager asked us to take the lead on getting the things they needed, as he had an appointment he had to keep. So we got a U-Haul truck and filled it with two 275 gallon fresh water storage tanks, seven military tents, forty-two cots, and a generator. By the time he got home, the truck was largely ready and he was able to focus on getting the approval needed to send it. Without us there, it still would have gotten done, but we were able to carry part of the burden and make that a much easier process for them. God always has a plan for those who are willing.

We didn't just work though. For some activities we went to the beach, snorkeled, surfed, boogie boarded, and explored the north shore. One evening we went to a beach to snorkel, and it was amazing. Everyone saw multiple sea turtles and an abundance of fish and other reef creatures. This may have been everyone's favorite activity. On Sabbath, we also went up to the northeast corner of the island and a few of us walked across a shallow reef to a small island that is a bird sanctuary. It was late in the day, so we didn't stay long, but it was well worth the trip anyway. Overall, the mission trip was a huge success. God blessed the work we did and kept us all safe throughout the travel, work, and play. We truly serve a wonderful God. Thank you for all your prayers and support for this trip.

Please keep Maui in your prayers, as the people there are continuing to discover more loss every day.



Photos by Eric Kablanow

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**Church News**, cont.

In August we were so excited to welcome our Northern California Conference Youth Director, Pastor Eddie Heinrich, and his team to Ukiah. They were here July 31 - August 4 and ran a day camp called Summer on the Run at Ukiah Junior Academy. We had a total of 89 children who attended and it was so much fun to see their smiling faces every day! The kids had opportunities to play exciting outdoor games, practice their climbing skills on a 30' rock wall, make crafts, sing songs, have worship together, and go on the giant, 32' waterslide! They also were given lunch every day which was prepared by volunteers from our church. All of this was provided free of charge to the campers. This program is such a huge witnessing tool and a wonderful way to connect with our UJA students and local community. We were thrilled with the attendance and so thankful that Eddie and his team added Ukiah to their travel schedule this summer and hope to have them return next year. To all who so willingly gave of your time and support, thank you! This was a big production to put together, and the willingness to help from so many people made it all come together. Pastor Eddie shared at the end of the week that he had seen Jesus through our group of volunteers and that the heart for service that they felt and received here was an encouragement to their team. Thank you so much for being a church that embodies the work of Jesus through your prayers, words and actions. May our church continue to be a light to others and our community as we show and share the heart of Jesus.

by Kara Gore



## UJA News

## All Things New

by Rick Nelson

The cool gray of the dawn over a still lake as the light grows and colors resurrect.  
 The new green on the hills after a fall rain.  
 The sparkle of the first frost on the fence posts, shimmering in the morning sun.  
 Your first kiss, first car, first job, first home.  
 The first time you held your child in your arms, wrapped tight, wide eyed and full of promise.  
 I remember our youngest's first day of school.  
 Micah was beginning his school career.

He couldn't have been more excited. It was a time filled with all things new. We ordered him some school supplies online. His grandma ordered him some clothes at around the same time. He was told every day when the packages would be arriving because every day, multiple times a day, he would ask when his packages would be here. There was great joy when the packages arrived. Every item was tried on and worn around the house. Backpacks and lunch boxes were zipped and unzipped and toted around in our living room. His only disappointment was that they could not be put to use until the first day of school.

There's something about the first days of school, full of hope and full of promise. New never gets old. It doesn't matter how old you are or what grade you're in, the first day of school is always special. We arrive to this day fresh and ready for a new start. I love seeing the new shoes, backpacks, and binders our students bring, each a token of the hope for a new and better year that each brings with them. Yes, there is something special about the first days of school. There's something about all things new that stirs us in the deep parts of our being.

You can readily see it in our younger children, they haven't yet learned to hide their deepest desires. We all long for the new, ache for it. That longing never seems to be satisfied, no matter how hard we try. New cars get old, new homes need repairs, new school years last just a few short weeks before they become the daily routine. Why is this so?

Could it be that there is a deeper reason for the longing? Could we have been made this way on purpose?

We long for the new because that's the way God made us. We were made for adventure, to explore, to learn new things, to meet new people, to make new discoveries, to grow in understanding. We can only partially satisfy this need for the new while we are still here on this earth.

Heaven and the New Earth, however, is a place where the new never wears off. There will always be new places to explore, new galaxies, new systems and new planets to visit. New hobbies to take up, new music to listen to, new foods to try. New friends to make with new stories to tell. It is a place to age and grow wise without growing old. It is a place of freedom and peace, a place with no worry and complete trust. A place where our deepest friendship will be with a God who we can see and touch and hug and explore the deepest parts of who he is. And it won't get old.

We want more than anything, here at UJA, to teach your children to long for God and look forward to a time when all things are new. . . and the new never gets old.

*"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. . . . I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'*

# UJA News, cont.



Clockwise from top right: Debbie Nelson with 1st grade class, Beth Kablanow with 4th grade class, Dan Kuntz with 9th and 10 grades, Nathan Moravetz with 7th and 8th graders, Peter Garcilazo with 5th and 6th graders, Benji Oliver, assisted by Diana Kurtz, with 2nd and 3rd graders, and Wendi Olivera with the kindergarten class.



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***Please remember the Glenn Miller Memorial Golf Tournament on September 15. The proceeds go to the scholarship fund of UJA!***

**“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”**

Isaiah 40:31

**A Lesson from God's Creation**

By Diana Howe



Have you ever heard of the Bald eagle having an enemy? Some of the words we think of when describing an eagle are: brave, powerful, fast, freedom. They are large birds with wingspans up to 7 ft. and can weigh up to 13 lbs. When diving, they can speed at 100 mph and can live up to 30 years or more in the wild. These birds are truly amazing. However, there is something super amazing that they can do. They can soar up to 10,000 ft high! Because of this ability, there is a special lesson we can learn from it.

If an eagle flies near other bird's nests and territories, especially belonging to the crow, the crow will chase and begin attacking the eagle. While both birds are flying in air, the crow will perch on the eagle's back and begin pecking the neck. However, the eagle does not respond, fight back, or waste energy on the crow. Instead, the eagle does something the crow cannot do. Opening up it's large wings, it begins to soar up as high as possible. The higher the eagle goes, the more difficult it is for the crow to breathe and eventually the crow falls off.

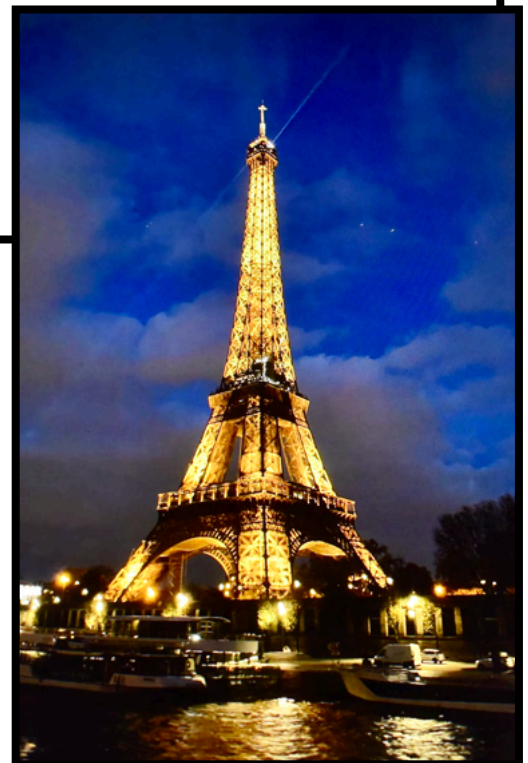
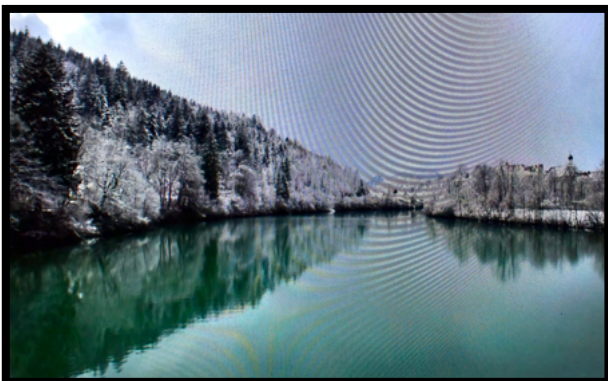
When we pray and trust in Jesus for help, it brings us up to Him. We will soar on eagle wings, because our connection with Jesus is bringing us up to Him beyond 10,000 ft. We do not grow weary, because we are not wasting time fighting with our own strength; instead we are relying on Jesus. We will not faint like the crow who loses oxygen, because our strength will be renewed by the lifting up of our voices to Jesus. This is a promise that Jesus has made for each of us. Remember to always go to Him for everything and He will take care of every enemy.



**Our Trip to Europe** by Lily Pastor

My family has been blessed this year to go on a whirlwind adventure. In late March, we and a group made up of students and parents embarked on a two and a half week tour of Europe. This escapade was led by no other than my English teacher, Rio Lindo's Mr. Yingling, and with his experience of Anglo-Saxon historical, cultural, and artistic knowledge, the trip was enriching and educational. The first destination after a 10 hour flight across the Atlantic, was London, where our group visited the British World War I and II Museum—the first of many to be explored on the trip. My family got to take part in an afternoon tea experience and enjoyed delicious sandwiches, desserts, and of course, teas. The afternoon was spent at the British Museum where we saw ancient artifacts from all over the world—including stone tablets from Babylon stamped with King Nebuchadnezzar's name and seal, along with the Rosetta Stone. We watched the live musical of the classic, *Les Miserables*, in the evening and concluded our first full day. In the next few days, our group traveled to Buckingham Palace to catch a glimpse of the Royal Horse Guard march around the Queen Victoria Memorial. We explored the Tower of London Museum, learning about the prisoners it held and walked through the royal family's Crown Jewel collection. When we made our way to Westminster Abbey to listen to an evensong, it was raining hard, but after the service, we were rewarded with a rainbow over the historic chapel with a golden sunset reflecting off of Big Ben. A short flight took us to the home of Mozart in Salzburg, Austria the next day, and we were happy to attend a classical quartet concert of his works in the very place he once performed—the Mirabell Palace. On the second day in Salzburg, we visited the Fortress Hohensalzburg, saw Mozart's childhood home, and ate warm apple strudel drizzled with vanilla sauce while we sipped hot chocolate. Although it was almost midnight when we arrived in Germany, it was worth it to wake up in the freshly snowed town of Füssen. I think it was my favorite place we visited on this trip just because of how beautiful it was. We bundled up to walk through falling snow and took a horse carriage up to the Neuschwanstein Castle for a tour. We took another train to the medieval town Rothenburg ob der Tauber where we walked the city's 13th century walls and visited shops and bakeries. After taking a bullet train to Paris, we got dinner and saw the city from the top of Montmartre. In the days that followed, we toured Château de Versailles, enjoyed the Louvre, went to the top of Arc de Triomphe, and La Tour Eiffel, saw the restoration of Notre Dame, gazed at the beautiful stained glass Sainte-Chapelle and looked at Monet's pieces in Musée d'Orsay. Our final stop was Italy, and we landed in Rome in time to see the Trevi Fountain as the sun set and to enjoy gelato. We took a day trip to Florence where we saw Michelangelo's 17-foot tall statue of David in the Academia Gallery, and studied other intricate sculptures as well. We marveled at the Duomo di Firenze and looked through the art exhibits of the Uffizi Gallery before heading back to Rome. For our last day we had a tour of the Vatican, ventured through dark catacombs outside the city, went to the Colosseum and finished with walking through the ruins of ancient

Rome.  
My family and I made so many unforgettable memories that we will cherish forever.



Photos: Above left; The Fortress Hohen-Salzburg. Right: Eiffel Tower in Paris, France. Left: Fresh snow in Fussen, Germany  
Photographer: Lily Pastor

## Blue Zones

## Giving Back

by Ryan Veness

How our local organizations give back to their community. There are two types of organizations.

There are those that exist only for the sake of making money and then there are those that exist because they see a need and therefore, they have responded to the calling to fill that need. I'd like to do a special shout-out to two very specific organizations that fall into the second category of giving back.

National Night Out is an opportunity for our local Police Departments to connect with their communities, build relationships, create partnership opportunities, and create educational experiences to help make our communities a safer place to call home. Fort Bragg Police Department did just that. They hosted an incredible community gathering of leaders, influencers, businesses, food, and fun at the Bainbridge Park. Our Blue Zones Project team was invited to share our project story with the community and create specific engagement opportunities for citizens to be more active, find their purpose, and experience ways to give back to their community. We were blessed to also partner with the local CHP Officer, Olegario Marin. Officer Marin, brought the departments' "impairment goggles" for the kids and adults alike to experience what it's like to (in a safe and controlled environment) be impaired drivers. Our team brought several Slider Trikes (Thank you NCO, Walk and Bike Mendocino), set up an obstacle course, and let the community work their way through the course wearing the impairment goggles. Once they completed the course, Officer Marin would put them through a series of tests, including walking the line, along with a bean bag toss, to experience how difficult it is to function properly when impaired. Wow, what an educational experience! I can say with certainty, there was carnage to the track, and a ton of laughter as everyone struggled to walk a straight line.

You can never have enough back-to-school events. A special thanks to the AARC and the River for hosting such a successful back to school fair in Ukiah. But, for today, we want to also express our gratitude to Adventist Health. Ensuring that our kids have the proper health clearance to safely participate in Physical Education and extracurricular activities is so vital in mitigating life-threatening issues from coming up during activities. Adventist Health hosted Back-to School Physicals at all three of their sites across the community: AH Ukiah, AH Howard Memorial, and AH Mendocino Coast. Their medical practitioners, office staff, facilities department, marketing team, food services, administration and others all

stepped up to create a seamless event for the students and families living in Mendocino County to get their free back-to-school physicals. Our team had a great time bringing the slider trikes, smoothie bike, and 'Minute-to-win-it' games that allowed them to have a blast, be active, have healthy snacks and find ways to get more involved in the health and well-being of their community. Kids and adults alike had a ton of fun on the trikes (that's right Jennifer and Tim, we are talking about you).

All these events are vital in bringing our community together to celebrate health, relationships, connections, safety, education and so much more. I can't wait for next year's events. The next big event that our team will be doing is setting up shop at the City of Ukiah October's Pumpkin Fest. We are bringing in a Climbing Wall and will have plenty of fun activities for all. Oh, and don't forget to ask us about the "Real-Age Test". You won't want to miss it!

